

A Breath of Freedom

The Civil Rights Struggle, African
American GIs, and Germany

Maria Höhn

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Martin Klimke

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Revolutionary Alliances: The Rise of Black Power

On February 17, 1968, the auditorium of the Technical University in West Berlin was packed. More than 5,000 international guests had come to the divided city to attend the Vietnam Congress, a gathering of intellectuals, activists, and students determined to voice their opposition to the war in Southeast Asia in one of the hot spots of the Cold War. In a variety of plenary sessions, workshops, and demonstrations, international antiwar activists deliberated ways to stop the war effort and establish a global opposition network. One of them was Dale Smith, a delegate of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In his speech to the congress, Smith reflected on the transformation that the civil rights struggle had undergone since the mid-1960s and offered a passionate plea for a move from protest to resistance: "We have allowed the forms of our protest to be determined by others.... We believe that the war in Vietnam is being waged exclusively against the Vietnamese, but we, too, are its victims.... This is not only a war against the Vietnamese people. It is a war against us and against the bit of humanity that remains to us." As a consequence, Smith called for a greater militancy and resolve, emphasizing the solidarity that citizens of the West should feel with the Vietnamese: "As long as parents in Vietnam cry about their children, the parents in the US should also cry about their children."¹

Congress participants greeted Smith's words with enthusiastic applause. His hosts, members of the German Socialist Student League (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund [SDS]), seconded Smith's views with equal conviction. One of its representatives, Rudi Dutschke, a sociology student from the Free University, expressed the same kind of urgency. Exclaiming that "[i]n Vietnam, we are also battered every single day, and that is no image and no phrase," Dutschke argued that this kind of solidarity went beyond mere rhetoric. Just like Smith, Dutschke contended that the war had immediate consequences for the political struggles at home and could possibly launch "a long period of authoritarian world domination from Washington to Vladivostok." Therefore, people should come together to create a "second front" to fight against "global imperialism" as represented by the United States.²

The Vietnam Congress displayed a revolutionary alliance between civil rights and Black Power activists and their West German supporters with an explicit global agenda. From the very beginning, African American activists had seen their struggle for racial equality in the United States in international perspective and as part of a larger struggle against colonialism in Africa, Asia, and South America. Organizations such as the NAACP, the Council of African Affairs (CAA), and the National Negro Congress (NNC), in campaigns for human rights and colonial independence, helped to intensify the quest to put an end to oppression around the globe, particularly during World War II and the early postwar years. Yet the Cold War and the emergence of McCarthyism thwarted this aim. Political pressure to present a united, anticommunist front led the NAACP to abandon its international agenda and focus on domestic progress. Public critics of U.S. race relations such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson were dismissed and marginalized, and their ability to travel overseas was hampered by the State Department.³ Although many African American activists and civil rights leaders only grudgingly acquiesced and continued to look beyond national borders in private, they publicly conformed to the Cold War domestic focus. Finally, in the second half of the 1960s, the Black Power movement was able to break this ideological consensus by popularizing the connection between discrimination at home and oppression and imperialism in the Third World, returning to the debates in the African American community of the interwar years. Dale Smith's articulation of his solidarity and identification with the Vietnamese at the West Berlin congress exemplified this strategy.⁴

The Vietnam Congress marked the climax of another development that had been building throughout the 1960s, as well, beginning with growing German awareness of the American civil rights movement. West Germans had not only learned about the civil rights struggle through high profile events such as the 1964 visit of Martin Luther King Jr. and the general media coverage. German emigrants from the 1930s, tourists, and Germans working in the United States, as well as exchange students, also transported information about developments on the other side of the Atlantic back home.

One such student was Günter Amendt of Frankfurt, who had spent an extended period in Berkeley in 1964 and visited people across the United States. Only a few months after King's visit to Germany, Amendt recounted his experiences in the leftist periodical *neue kritik*. Highlighting the enthusiasm white Northern students had exhibited for the civil rights movement during "Freedom Summer," a voter registration drive and educational campaign for the African American community in Mississippi coorganized by SNCC in the summer of 1964, Amendt noted a shift. In his view, it had become "more than just a race movement struggling for integration." As civil rights activists had come to acknowledge that there was "a close correlation between black skin color and [one's] economic circumstance," they had adjusted their goals so that the movement was now "rooted in a desire for change in American society."⁵



Figure 35 SNCC delegate Dale Smith and West German student leader Rudi Dutschke during the Vietnam Congress in West Berlin, February 17, 1968 (ullstein bild/The Granger Collection, New York).

The mainstream German press recognized this shift as well. The West German weekly *Die Zeit* wrote that, although, formally, "the chains of legal segregation and degradation have been broken... racial separation has de facto remained," manifesting itself in the urban ghettos of the North and the Southern resistance against federal integration laws.⁶ Nonetheless, the press hailed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as major political achievements that would make institutionalized racism difficult to maintain, since this legislation established African Americans as an important constituency in U.S. politics.⁷

Despite these legal advancements, many journalists in the Federal Republic voiced great concern about the rise of violence and the racial tension in American cities, for example, characterizing "[w]hat began as a struggle for the basic rights of blacks" as "becoming a latent war of civil rights."⁸ Especially after the riots in Watts, a neighborhood of Los Angeles,

in August 1965, and similar racial confrontations in Newark and Detroit in July 1967, German observers feared that the conflict had spun out of control. As one journalist asked anxiously, "Is this another one of those 'hot summers' that have been disturbing the population of the United States sporadically for five years now? Or is it already the open rebellion, the civil war between black and white?"⁹

The rise of Black Power was registered with similar worries in the West German press. As Dr. King was faced with the militant ideology of Malcolm X and the more radical positions of SNCC representatives such as Stokely Carmichael, who became chairman of the organization in 1966, he was perceived as having lost control over the direction of the civil rights movement.¹⁰ Consequently, many journalists expected that the campaign would splinter and drift onto "a collision course" with the political establishment, which would endanger the very idea of racial integration.¹¹ In sum, the mainstream West German media propagated an image of the United States as a country haunted by its racial problems. Domestic opposition to the war in Vietnam, the emergence of a counterculture, and the availability of the birth-control pill all exacerbated the sense of crisis in the United States, where the racial conflict seemed to be tearing the social fabric apart.¹²

However, from the mid-1960s onward, West Germany had to face some problems of its own. After the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949, the country had experienced an unprecedented economic boom. Because of the Cold War, the young West German democracy soon found its way back into the international community as a crucial partner in the Western alliance. Domestically, the country was shaped by the fourteen-year reign of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1949–1963), who steered the country toward a path of political and social stability. At the same time, however, Adenauer's policies of Western alignment and the specter of the Federal Republic's rearmament propelled by the United States drove substantial numbers of dissenting West Germans onto the streets during the 1950s. In addition, the nation only very slowly came to terms with the legacies of Nazism, and several political and administrative decision makers remained tainted by their questionable past.¹³ Furthermore, the country's political culture continued to be influenced by authoritarian notions; for example, its rigid anticommunism led to the ban of the Communist Party in 1956. Similarly, in 1962, the press and the executive branch were provoked only too easily into a showdown concerning what came to be known as the "Spiegel Affair": Defense Minister Franz-Josef Strauss had initiated the unlawful arrest of journalists for alleged treason, thereby overstepping his powers and violating due process. Despite the relative political and social stability of the Adenauer years, these other persistent issues prompted many domestic and foreign observers to wonder, as German philosopher Karl Jaspers phrased it in a widely read book in the mid-1960s, where the Federal Republic was drifting.¹⁴

In the second half of the decade, West Germans' concerns about the strength of their democracy mounted with the debate about the so-called

emergency laws. These threatened to vastly expand executive powers if a vaguely defined state of internal or external emergency should arise. In response, the trade unions, pacifists, and parts of the Social Democratic Party came together in a broad-based coalition to safeguard constitutional rights and to oppose this potential weakening of democracy, which they perceived as similar to the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. They were joined by a small but vocal minority of university students who criticized the lack of democracy in the country's university system. They also lamented a Cold War mentality that stifled domestic political culture and constrained foreign policy. The main organization representing these views was the SDS. Originally the youth organization of the Social Democratic Party, the SDS was expelled by party elders in 1962 and moved closer to the international New Left.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the SDS and its key representatives had entertained strong connections to their peers in the United States. As a result, the political strategies and techniques of the American New Left and the civil rights movement profoundly influenced them.¹⁵ Karl Dietrich (also known as KD) Wolff, German SDS president from 1967–1968, is a case in point. Having grown up in rural Hesse, Wolff first came into contact with the United States when American troops arrived in Germany in early 1945. It was his encounter with the generosity of a black GI that left the most striking impression on him, as on so many of his generation:

[A] tank drives into the Schlosshof, the turret with cannon twists around once, and a big black GI with sweat-glistening face jumps down. The mothers, the nannies, the children watch him, keeping their distance. Suddenly, the GI has gum and little bars of Cadbury's chocolate in his hand. Yet we are not supposed to "fraternize"; the mothers hold us children back. I am able to slip under their arms. The GI rolls me an orange, the first one in my entire life.¹⁶

But Wolff had other direct experiences with American culture and the civil rights movement, as well. As an adolescent, he frequented U.S.-sponsored "America Houses," which provided West Germans of his generation ample access to American literature, and in 1959, he traveled to Michigan as a high school exchange student with the support of the U.S. government's "Youth for Understanding" program. At a local Quaker youth club in Michigan, Wolff learned about the civil rights movement for the first time, as well as about the lunch counter sit-in conducted by four African American students in Greensboro, North Carolina, in February 1960 and the "Freedom Rides" to integrate interstate travel into the South the following year. After his return to Germany, he continued to watch the development of the civil rights struggle, and when he later enrolled at the universities of Marburg, Freiburg, and Frankfurt, he came across the SDS.

At that point, the SDS, in addition to advocating democratic university reform and more freedom in West Germany's political culture, was also

becoming a part of the international opposition to the war in Vietnam. Responding to the escalation of the American war effort, it organized anti-war rallies, teach-ins, and conferences with speakers such as German émigré and Frankfurt School philosopher Herbert Marcuse in 1965/1966. By the end of 1966, the SDS had established itself as the leading representative of opposition to the Vietnam War in the Federal Republic.

In the meantime, the Berlin chapter of the SDS spearheaded by Rudi Dutschke was gaining more and more ground in the overall organization. Dutschke and others pushed their interpretation of the war as an imperialist effort to suppress revolutionary forces and liberation movements in impoverished countries around the world. Faced with this situation, the task of opposition groups in the industrialized countries of the West was to show solidarity with the "Third World" by weakening imperialism from within. In addition to demonstrations, political education, and direct action campaigns, this strategy included reaching out to the domestic opposition in the United States.

Since the mid-1960s, the German SDS had paid close attention to the radicalization of the civil rights movements and its key players. It had not only adopted the protest methods of its African American peers, but also frequently borrowed political ideas and phrases from the civil rights struggle.¹⁷ During its national convention in September 1967, the organization officially declared its solidarity with the rising black power faction in the movement. From the students' perspective, the nonviolent strategy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been unable to effect meaningful social change for most African Americans since it had failed to overcome fundamental economic inequities in U.S. society. As SDS member Gerhardt Amendt observed after two months of study in Harlem in 1967, "The successes of the civil rights movement celebrated in the press have demonstrably reached only the small black middle class; they have changed nothing in the living conditions of ghetto residents."¹⁸

Proponents of "black nationalism" such as Malcolm X, for their part, saw the civil rights struggle in the United States as part of an international class struggle to be waged in solidarity with liberation movements worldwide. With this view, they found immediate support among members of the German SDS. As the organization declared in one of its resolutions at the 1967 national convention,

The violent struggle of the blacks who conceive of themselves as 'Afro-Americans' in the USA makes the solidarity with the national liberation movements of the Third World concrete. As they create a second Vietnam in the USA itself, their struggle against American capitalism is tied, in practice, to the international class struggle against imperialism.¹⁹

In the eyes of West German activists, the transformation of SNCC and the call for Black Power illustrated the emergence of yet another front in the battle against U.S. imperialism—this time from within.

Members of the SDS had met key representatives of the Black Power movement not only in the United States during visits or exchange years but also during international conferences. In July 1967, for example, an SDS delegation traveled to London to participate in the congress "Dialectics of Liberation," where they heard Stokely Carmichael speak.²⁰ Bernward Vesper, a member of the delegation, described this experience, which had a profound impact on him:

A couple of hours later Carmichael. The auditorium is now black and brown. Dock workers, students. And Carmichael hammers it into them to strike back. "If we have to die, then we will strike back!" And for the first time, I hear: "We are the majority, we, the colored people of the world! We will confront imperialism in its heartland, and if we do not gain the freedom to be humans, we will burn America down from one coast to the other!"²¹

After the congress, Vesper began to publish German translations of Black Power and Black Nationalism literature through his publishing house, thereby supplying a growing demand among his peers.²² His fiancée Gudrun Ensslin, who would later become one of the leaders of the West German terrorist group the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion [RAF]), supported him in these efforts. Ensslin had studied in the United States, was active in the GI desertion campaign in West Germany, and helped with the translation of these texts. Both Vesper and Ensslin understood Black Power as a prime example for the global dimension of revolutionary struggle at the end of the 1960s. In its militancy and determination, they also viewed it as a reference point and role model for their own efforts in the industrialized countries of the West. As Vesper wrote, "the freedom struggle of the colored people of the whole world is also the hope for the whites cut off from their future."²³

The murder of Dr. King on April 4, 1968, only six weeks after the Vietnam Congress in West Berlin, seemed to confirm the failure of nonviolence and the legitimacy of Black Power. Whereas official obituaries, silent demonstrations, and other expressions of mourning across the Federal Republic emphasized King's achievements for nonviolent social and political change in the United States, West German activists interpreted his murder differently. Despite their previous criticism of King, his killing now became a clarion call for revolutionary action on behalf of his legacy. As Berlin activist Ekkehart Krippendorff proclaimed, "We are the ones who must satisfy his demand for a truly revolutionary change of our society in our own way as well. We have learned from his methods and also from his own insights on the nature of the society in which we ourselves live. The legacy of Martin Luther King is, for us, the continuation of his social-revolutionary struggle with his—but also with our—methods, here in our own country."²⁴

The assassination attempt on West German student leader Rudi Dutschke only seven days later lent an even greater urgency to this task. Dutschke's

assailant, a struggling loner named Josef Bachmann, claimed that he had been inspired by the murder of King. Among activists, this reinforced the notion that both the civil rights movement in the United States and the student movement in the Federal Republic were exposed to similar threats. This comparison was heavily contested in public. As a local newspaper in Hamburg wrote, "Berlin is not Memphis, and the Federal Republic is not America. Here we do not have a race problem rupturing a whole people with its profound social aspects. Here we do not have the Ku-Klux-Klan or fanatical race opponents on both sides."²⁵

Despite these objections, West German activists continued to pursue the coalition with the militant parts of black America. KD Wolff, especially, can be credited for elevating this affiliation to the next level at the end of the 1960s. After his tenure as German SDS president, Wolff went on a lecture tour through Canada and the United States at the invitation of the American SDS in February 1969. In California, he visited the headquarters of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, as well as its chairman Bobby Seale. There he established a long-lasting relationship with the group that would deepen in the following years through correspondence, mutual visits, and publications in each other's journals.

During his stay in the United States, Wolff had the chance to elaborate on this connection when subpoenaed to a hearing of the Senate internal security subcommittee. Confronted by the infamous segregationist senator Strom Thurmond from South Carolina, Wolff declared the SDS's solidarity with the Black Panthers: "The victories of the movement in the United States are considered our victories...the repression against the radical movement in the United States, which is being stepped up, is repression against us."²⁶ When he expanded on the persecution of the Black Panther Party in the United States, the officials questioning him asked, in a deliberately provoking and potentially racist manner, whether he was talking about "animal species" or "people." Wolff's answer elicited an enthusiastic response among his many supporters in the audience: "Well, I would like to say one thing to that. I prefer panthers to pigs."²⁷

After his return to Germany, Wolff launched the Black Panther Solidarity Committee in Frankfurt in November 1969. The committee became part of the international support network that emerged after one of the party's imprisoned leaders, Eldridge Cleaver, escaped from U.S. custody in November 1968. The Black Panther Party's minister for information, who had risen to national prominence when his prison memoir, *Soul on Ice*, had been published in 1968, had gone on to set up his base in Algiers in 1969, where he headed the party's international section.²⁸ Within this international solidarity network, Wolff's committee had three major goals:

1. Education about the party's struggles and about the fascist terror of the ruling class in the USA.
2. Agitation and propaganda among GIs stationed in Germany.
3. Material support of the Black Panthers.²⁹

In practice, this meant that the committee would produce and sell German translations of key texts of the party both to inform people and collect funds for its cause. It did so through Wolff's publication house "Roter Stern," which disseminated the words of Eldridge Cleaver, the party's cofounder Huey Newton, and others to a West German audience.³⁰ In addition, the committee organized solidarity demonstrations, film screenings, and went to local high schools educating people about the African American civil rights struggle and the Black Power movement. Wolff also launched a reading group called "Red Panthers," which introduced young blue-collar apprentices and trainees from the region to the texts of the Black Panthers and other literature from the socialist canon.

But it was not only the shared struggle against the war in Vietnam or a general anti-imperialist ideology that connected West German students to the Black Panthers at the end of the 1960s. Another essential feature reflected in these activists' solidarity efforts was the deep disillusionment they felt with the United States. Growing up in postwar Germany, the young generation had welcomed the material benefits of the Marshall Plan in the reconstruction of the country and eagerly embraced American popular culture as part of the U.S. occupation. Whether it was fashion, music, or movies, the American way of life exercised a profound influence, strongly attracting German youth, especially because their parents often viewed it critically. Jazz, GIs, and Hollywood conveyed a new cultural openness and individualism, testing social conventions and traditional hierarchies.³¹



Figure 36 African American exchange students from Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) at a Black Panther solidarity rally at the University of Frankfurt, 1971 (Barbara Klemm, Frankfurt/Main).

Politically, German youth perceived the United States as a force of democracy and freedom, an example for the Federal Republic to emulate. In this positive climate, the rising awareness of Jim Crow racism, bolstered by media representations of U.S. authorities' brutal reactions to integration efforts and civil rights demonstrations in Little Rock or Birmingham, dealt a massive blow to the image of the United States among young people. As one of them recalls, "When one saw that blacks have fewer rights and white Americans come here and tell us that all people are equal before the law, one suddenly had to admit that a considerable contradiction between claims and reality existed."³²

Their disappointment grew in proportion to the escalation of the Vietnam War, which provoked them to anger, cynicism, and frustration with the seeming hypocrisy of the nation they had admired: America's official portrayal as the leader of the "Free West" in the face of its political actions at home and abroad seemed false. As racial tensions in the United States grew and the conflict in Southeast Asia intensified, the positive image of the American government began to crumble. More importantly, West German activists began to characterize American policy as "fascist," comparing it to Nazi Germany, as one of them recently recalled:

We voiced criticism that started with the insight that, for example, racism had led to the murder of the Jews in the concentration camps, and one saw that blacks in America were treated brutally like scum, that people had recognized that one had to take sides, and with the blacks, with the civil rights movement and not with the Ku-Klux-Klan or other similar crazies or the American government.³³

These rhetorical references were applied not just to Vietnam; the legacies of Nazi ideology and the German atrocities during World War II were also apparent in how this young generation perceived the discrimination against African Americans in the United States. During his high school year in Michigan, for example, German SDS president Wolff shocked his American hosts, the local Rotary Club, when, after reciting the pledge of allegiance at a local Boy Scout meeting, he interjected "in a voice shrill with apprehension: 'Except for Jews, Negroes, and all the other nasty foreigners!'"³⁴

Dagmar Schultz, another German activist who had spent time living in the United States, where she was active in the civil rights movement in the South in the 1960s, also noted similarities between attitudes in the South and the Nazi past.³⁵ In a 1965 account, she explained how public reactions to her interactions with African Americans prompted her to compare the situation in the United States to Nazi Germany and made her sensitive toward the notion of "collective guilt." When local police harassed them for their activities, for example, Schultz linked this behavior to the hatred and sadism of personnel in German concentration camps.³⁶ Reflecting on her experience, Schultz concluded: "The similarities and differences

between Hitler's Germany and Mississippi have often been disputed, but one common conclusion is certain: The practice of a system founded on racial dominance has a devastating effect on individuals as well as on humanity in general."³⁷ In the mid-1980s, Schultz would contribute to raising awareness about the history and situation of blacks and black women in Germany, coediting the first volume on Afro-German identity from a female perspective.³⁸

Strikingly, such comparisons to Nazi Germany were also applied in reverse, that is, by the mainstream West German press in more critical evaluations of the Black Power movement. For example, one paper depicted Malcolm X as a "black Goebbels." Another compared a speech by H. Rap Brown, who became SNCC chairman in 1967 and the Black Panther Party's minister of justice the year after, to the rhetoric of the Nazi propaganda minister's total war speech in the Berlin Sportpalast in February 1943.³⁹ These depictions sometimes converged with racist prejudices and superficial stereotypes rooted in German colonialism, such as characterizations of urban race riots in the United States as a "breakout of the jungle" or portrayals of black people as naturally more emotional and prone to ecstatic and erratic behavior than other people.⁴⁰ However, more enlightened observers of African American culture also voiced their opposition to what they perceived as radical excesses in the civil rights struggle under the banner of black nationalism. In 1970, Joachim-Ernst Behrendt, who as a music journalist and producer became one of the most acclaimed authorities on jazz in the Federal Republic, openly accused Eldridge Cleaver and Leroi Jones of propagating an ideology that bore fascist tendencies.⁴¹

This did not, however, detract members of the Black Panther Solidarity Committee and the radical parts of the West German Left from their position in any way. Their comparison of the German past with current racial discrimination in the United States strengthened their solidarity with Black Power and served as a boost for greater militancy. That way, they not only situated their individual campaigns in a worldwide revolutionary uprising of the suppressed classes but also construed them as a belated resistance to contemporary injustices they deemed similar to the atrocities of Nazism—an attempt to avoid both their own victimization and atone for the sins of their parents. In imitation of the Black Panthers, as well as of revolutionary inspirations such as Che Guevara or Frantz Fanon, some of them came to regard violence as a legitimate tool for individual liberation and empowerment. In their view, the African American minority was an "internal colony" in the United States. The Federal Republic and the transatlantic alliance, on the other hand, were in an "external colonial relationship" that implicated West Germans in the crimes committed by "U.S. imperialism" worldwide. As a consequence, attacking this association and representatives of the West German and U.S. government became political and moral imperatives.⁴²

This notion is particularly evident in West German terrorist groups of the 1970s. In June 1970, the RAF—the most well-known of these—published

its founding manifesto in the underground newspaper *agit 883*, which featured a black panther alongside a Russian Kalashnikov (later the visual trademark of the group).⁴³ In its writings, the group also frequently referred to the Black Panthers and even adopted their language, for example, when labeling the police "pigs" (using the English word).⁴⁴ Most importantly, however, the RAF admired the outbreak of violence in the urban race riots in the United States and considered it an example for its own actions: "The Afro-Americans and their allies did not weigh the distribution of power of the classes, nor did they count the divisions of the counterrevolution. They did not calculate their chances. They just let themselves go for a moment and turned their violence against their oppressors. In the streets of Watts, they ignited the fire of the revolution, which will not go out before their final victory."⁴⁵ In the eyes of the RAF, the Black Panthers became both a role model and partner in what they conceived of as an international revolutionary struggle stretching from Vietnam, Africa, and South America all the way to the industrialized countries of the West.

In addition to these political alliances, German activists' affinity with the African American cause also stemmed from a deep fascination with the "authentic," which white Germans, more generally, saw represented in their concepts of blackness and black culture. Afros, blues, and soul music, as well as a variety of consumer products associated with blackness and frequently advertised with African American models, are just a few of the many examples of cultural items young people in West Germany eagerly identified with in the 1960/1970s.⁴⁶ They came to see whiteness as the epitome of reason and conformity, whereas blackness seemed to represent emotionality, fulfillment, freedom, and empowerment. By admiring and emulating black role models, they strove to transcend the constraints of their own society and create a new identity in solidarity with black people worldwide, often projecting their own desires onto African American militants as a result.

This sort of projection is particularly apparent in the case of Angela Davis, who emerged as the undisputed icon of the black power struggle at the beginning of the 1970s, both in the capitalist Federal Republic and in the communist German Democratic Republic. Born in 1944 in Birmingham, Alabama, to African American middle-class parents, Davis established an especially meaningful personal and intellectual association with Germany early on. This began when she became interested in German philosophy through her studies with Herbert Marcuse at Brandeis University. Then, from 1965 to 1967, she studied at the University of Frankfurt with another key thinker of the Frankfurt School, Theodor W. Adorno, as well as his students Jürgen Habermas and Oskar Negt. During that time and through Adorno's seminars, Davis became acquainted with members of the German SDS and also participated in demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. She even traveled to the congress on "Dialectics of Liberation" in July 1967 together with the delegation of the German SDS, after which she decided to return to the United States to support the Black Power movement.⁴⁷ In

California, where she continued her studies with Herbert Marcuse, who had moved from Brandeis to the University of California at San Diego, she joined SNCC and eventually the American Communist Party (CPUSA), soon advancing as a leading intellectual representative of black power after being appointed to an assistant professorship at UCLA.

In the course of 1970, her association with the Soledad Brothers, a group of black prisoners at the Californian Soledad Prison in Salinas, brought her international notoriety. Davis had become involved in the defense campaign of the three inmates, who were accused of murdering a prison guard and were facing capital punishment. Davis gave speeches about the California penitentiary system, helped with the legal aid, and met the family of George Jackson, who was one of the inmates. In August 1970, his younger brother Jonathan Jackson entered a Marin County courtroom armed and took the presiding judge, the assistant district attorney, and a member of the jury hostage in an attempt to free three other inmates who stood trial that day. In a subsequent shootout with the police, both hostages and kidnappers died. Soon thereafter, the police ascertained that the guns used in the kidnapping attempt were registered in Angela Davis's name. The authorities immediately indicted her for being an accomplice to criminal conspiracy, kidnapping, and homicide, and issued a warrant for her arrest. Though she was charged in August, she evaded capture for two months—until October 1970—during which she was on the FBI's list of Ten Most Wanted Criminals.

As Davis's former peers in the Federal Republic reacted with shock, anger, and disbelief, Herbert Marcuse fueled these feelings through agitation on her behalf.⁴⁸ Only a month after her arrest, Marcuse published a call for solidarity in an Austrian leftist journal, arguing that her story was "the story of a threefold political repression: against a woman, against a militant black woman, against a leftist rebel." Whether or not Davis was guilty, Marcuse stressed, the trial itself would be unjust as "the trial of a society of violence and injustice, of a society responsible for the situation Angela finds herself in today." In his view, she was "fighting for her life," so strong action was needed: "only a powerful protest, a protest that is present everywhere and cannot be stifled, can save her life."⁴⁹

This was exactly the kind of protest Davis's West German supporters had in mind. The Black Panther Solidarity Committee in Frankfurt had started to disseminate informational material on the Soledad Brothers illuminating the background of Davis's indictment as early as September 1970.⁵⁰ The committee's strategy was to launch a public information campaign to build up international pressure for her to be acquitted.⁵¹ On November 24, 1970, about a thousand students gathered for a Frankfurt teach-in, where they listened to speeches by KD Wolff and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, among others.

Davis's plight garnered support from more established sectors as well. On December 22, 1970, faculty members of the University of Frankfurt—with the support of the rector of the university—issued a call for solidarity with

Angela Davis, condemning "U.S. imperialism" with surprisingly harsh language. They expressed their concern that she was being

charged and convicted for her participation in organizing resistance to a system that ha[d], for centuries, subjected the colored population of America to the most ruthless economic and cultural exploitation. Within this system, a hundred thousand murdered Vietnamese serve[d] the same purpose as the feared judicial murder of Angela Davis: the maintenance of rotted, historically obsolete power and privileges.⁵²

As this statement shows, the notion that Angela Davis's case represented a concerted attempt by U.S. authorities to criminalize and silence the Black Power movement in a "prefascist" manner underlay most of these efforts.⁵³

The Angela Davis Solidarity Committee, founded in May 1971, held this view as well. As a politically independent body, the committee's goal was to coordinate all support campaigns for Angela Davis in the Federal Republic.⁵⁴ It provided basic information about Davis's life, her studies with Marcuse and her time in Frankfurt, her work in the African American freedom movement, as well as the upcoming trial. Given Germany's racist history, the committee felt that it had special obligation to shine a light on racial discrimination in other parts of the world: "The German people, especially, have a right to be educated about the ongoing racism in the



Figure 37 On March 13, 1971, women's groups in Frankfurt organized a women and children's demonstration in support of Angela Davis, in which about 200 participants marched to the U.S. General Consulate to deliver a petition (Manfred Tripp/Archiv: Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung).⁵⁵

world. And precisely those who have made their inner peace with the Jews should consider that their credibility depends on their willingness to fight without compromise against the social causes of racial discrimination, wherever it appears." Solidarity with Angela Davis, according to the committee, not only expressed opposition to a system whose "inhumanity" had been "unveiled by its genocide in Vietnam," but also served as an indicator of whether Germans had come to terms with the Nazi past by testing their readiness to speak out against a supposed return of fascism at home or abroad.⁵⁶

Within this framework, the German past functioned as an interpretative lens through which the struggle of African Americans was displayed for a West German audience. As a consequence, support for Davis was considered just as important for Germany as it was for the United States. A group of activists at the Free University's John F. Kennedy Institute summed up this perceived link between Angela Davis's situation and their own: "In the USA, as in the Federal Republic, we must prevent political organizations from being criminalized and, therefore, liquidated without the need for the state to legitimize its actions, by propaganda campaigns of the state apparatus and the bourgeois press.... The struggle to free Angela Davis is thus directly linked to the struggle for our own democratic rights."⁵⁷

* * *

On June 3–4, 1972, the Angela Davis Solidarity Committee organized a congress "Am Beispiel Angela Davis" (The Example of Angela Davis), which drew more than 10,000 people for the opening rally at the Frankfurt Opernplatz. Once again, the congress participants highlighted the exemplary character of the case, emphasizing that fighting for a fair trial for Angela Davis was tantamount to fighting for democracy at home. In addition to drawing these analogies, the congress also prompted discussion about the legitimacy of violence for social change. Only a few days before the congress opened, key members of the RAF (Andreas Baader, Holger Meins, and Jan-Carl Raspe) had been arrested after a series of terrorist attacks in May. These included bombings at a U.S. military installation in Frankfurt, law enforcement agencies in Augsburg and Munich, the Axel Springer publishing house in Hamburg, the European headquarters of the U.S. Army in Heidelberg, as well as an assassination attempt on a federal judge in Karlsruhe, which all together caused the death of four U.S. soldiers and injured seventy-four other people. Therefore, the congress took place in an unsettled atmosphere marked by nationwide searches and media hysteria. This situation transformed a solidarity event for an African American activist into a central forum for discussing pressing domestic concerns, including terrorism, the legitimacy of militant actions, and the state's monopoly on violence in the Federal Republic.

Consequently, the congress "Am Beispiel Angela Davis" was as much a soul-searching of the West German Left at the beginning of the 1970s as

it was about the African American struggle in the United States. Despite honest compassion and concerns for her fate, West Germans, in a sense, used Angela Davis as yet another Black Power icon upon which to project the hope of an international revolutionary alliance. As Herbert Marcuse observed in 1969, Davis was the "ideal victim" for this sort of projection: "She is black, she is militant, she is a communist, she is highly intelligent, and she is pretty—and this combination is more than the system can take!"⁵⁸ Together with the personal connection she had to the Federal Republic, these features spurred the solidarity movement for Angela Davis in West Germany, which to many observers seemed even more active than that in the United States. However, even these widespread solidarity efforts were no match for the government-orchestrated campaign for the civil rights struggle and the "heroine of the other America" on the other side of the Wall, in communist East Germany.

- country's global solidarity and openness. See Günter Wirth, memoir, unpublished manuscript, December 2008, 59. For the series of publications, most of which Günter Wirth facilitated in various ways, see Martin Luther King, "Mein Weg zur Gewaltlosigkeit," *Zeichen der Zeit* 19 (1965): 41–47; Martin Luther King, *Die neue Richtung unseres Zeitalters: Nobelpreisrede in der Aula der Universität Oslo am 11. Dez. 1964* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1965/1966); King, *Warum wir nicht warten können*; Günter Wirth, *Martin Luther King, Christ in der Welt* 5 (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1965; 8th ed., 1989); Theo Lehmann, *Blues and Trouble*, with a preface by Martin Luther King (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1966); Anneliese Vahl, *Martin Luther King: Stationen auf dem Wege. Berichte und Selbstzeugnisse* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968); Coretta Scott King, *Mein Leben mit Martin Luther King*, trans. Christa Wegen (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1971); Stanislav N. Kondraschow, *Martin Luther King: Leben und Kampf eines amerikanischen Negerführers* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1972).
55. See, e.g., the case of Gregor Meusel: Gregor Meusel, "Träumer und schöpferischer Extremist: Martin Luther King und dessen Ausstrahlung auf die Friedens- und Bürgerrechtsbewegung in der DDR," Martin-Luther-King-Zentrum, Werdau, e.V., <http://www.king-zentrum.de/>. See also Deutscher Bundestag, ed., *Materialien der Enquete-Kommission "Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED-Diktatur in Deutschland,"* vol. 1 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1995), 1, 221ff.; Erhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949–1989*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Links, 1997), 193, 393. For King's influence on Joachim Gauck, East German civil rights activist and first Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Archives (1990–2000), see Norbert Robers, *Joachim Gauck. Die Biografie einer Institution* (Berlin: Henschel, 2000); 71f.; Joachim Gauck, *Winter im Sommer—Frühling im Herbst: Erinnerungen* (Munich: Siedler, 2009), 210f.; Joachim Gauck, "Freiheit—Verantwortung—Gemeinsinn: Wir in unserem Staat," Speech, Deutsches Theater Berlin, June 22, 2010, available at www.joachim-gauck.de
 56. Apart from the texts cited above, the following publications make reference to King's visit: Lerone Bennett, *What Manner of Man: A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 3rd rev. ed. (Chicago: Johnson, 1968), 224; Helmut Giese, "Steine der Hoffnung vom Berg der Verzweiflung," *Berliner Sonntagsblatt*, April 2, 1978, 5; David Lewis, *King: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 254; Georg Meusel, "Mit Kreditkarte über die Mauer," *Der Freitag*, September 24, 2004, 18; Kanishk Tharoor, "Martin Luther King in Berlin: Marienkirche or the Brandenburg Gate?" <http://www.opendemocracy.net>, April 8, 2008; Jane Dailey, "Obama's Omission," *Chicago Tribune*, July 30, 2008, 19; Stefan Appellius, "Let My People Go," *einestages/SPIEGEL online*, September 13, 2009, <http://einestages.spiegel.de/page/Home.html>.
 57. Although speculations already abounded during King's time in Berlin that he might be honored by the Nobel committee, the decision was announced only a month later, in October 1964. See Ernst Luuk, "Ist die Bank der Gerechtigkeit bankrott?" *Berliner Stimme*, September 12, 1964, 3.
 58. "Red Berlin Admits Popular Rights Leader without Pass."
 59. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Günter Wirth, facsimile, in King, *Warum wir nicht warten können*, 2nd ed., 197.
 60. "Noble Prize Winner's Triumph in Europe," *Ebony*, November 1964, 6.
 61. "Germans Acted Different on King's Visit," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 21, 1964, 39.
 62. Siemon-Netto, "Wir sprachen mit dem Negerführer Dr. Luther King."
 63. "Speaking of Walls," *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 13, 1964, 4. Already in the summer, King had received an invitation from a graduate of Morris Brown College who was the Post Quartermaster of the Seventh Army Training Center at

Grafenwöhr in Bavaria to come and visit, noting that the base had "several Negro officers here with key and responsible positions." Referring to his obligations in the United States and the need to keep his visit to Germany brief, King, however, regretfully declined to visit the base. See Captain Thomas J. Holman to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., June 1, 1964; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Captain Thomas J. Holman, August 10, Papers of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 59:16, KCA.

64. Quoted in William Weart, "Dr. King Assails Policy at Girard," *New York Times*, August 4, 1968, 19. This "kind of Berlin wall to keep the colored children of God out" (King's words) was finally removed in 1968 when the Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of the school, thereby upholding previous rulings that deemed the exclusion of African American students a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment; the first black and Asian students were admitted to Girard College in the fall semester. See Jesse Lewis, "King Supports NAACP in Girard College Drive," *Washington Post*, August 4, 1965, A6; *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Revelle W. Brown*, U.S. Court of Appeals Third Circuit, 392 F.2d 120, Decided March 7, 1968.
65. Early examples were the conclusions King drew from his visits to Ghana in 1957 and to India in 1959. See, e.g., Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 176f., 185; Kevin K. Gaines, "The Civil Rights Movement in World Perspective," in *America on the World Stage: A Global Approach to U.S. History/The Organization of American Historians*, ed. Gary W. Reichard and Ted Dickson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 197–98.
66. For Dr. King's Nobel lecture, see http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html.
67. Quoted in Taylor Branch, "Globalizing King's Legacy," *New York Times*, January 16, 2006, A15. For other examples of King's global consciousness, see Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line. American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 110, 160, 167; Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 254.

6 Revolutionary Alliances: The Rise of Black Power

1. SDS Westberlin und Internationales Nachrichten- und Forschungsinstitut (INFI), ed., *Der Kampf des vietnamesischen Volkes und die Globalstrategie des Imperialismus: Internationaler Vietnam-Kongress 17./18. Februar 1968 Westberlin* (Berlin: SDS, 1968), 139f.
2. Rudi Dutschke, *Internationaler Emanzipationskampf*, 123.
3. Carol Anderson, "From Hope to Disillusion: African Americans, the United Nations, and the Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1947," *Diplomatic History* 20.4 (Fall 1996): 531–63; idem, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Penny von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 61ff.; James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961*

- (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Nikihil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 134–84; Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 94.1 (2007): 75–96; Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Carol Anderson, “International Conscience, the Cold War, and Apartheid: The NAACP’s Alliance with the Reverend Michael Scott for South West Africa’s Liberation, 1946–1951,” *Journal of World History* 19.3 (September 2008): 297–325.
4. See, e.g., Singh, *Black Is a Country*, 184–93; Besenia Rodriguez, “‘Long Live Third World Unity! Long Live Internationalism!’ Huey P. Newton’s Revolutionary Intercommunalism,” in *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line*, ed. Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 149–73; Robyn Spencer, “Merely One Link in the Worldwide Revolution: Internationalism, State Repression, and the Black Panther Party, 1966–1972,” in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, ed. Michael West, William Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 215–31. For the growing literature on the internationalist streak of the African American civil rights movement, see endnote 12 in the introduction above.
 5. Günter Amendt, “Die Studentenrevolte in Berkeley,” *neue kritik* 28 (February 1965): 5–7, 7.
 6. Joachim Schwelien, “Nach der Freiheit die Gleichheit,” *Die Zeit*, October 22, 1965, 32. See also Imanuel Geiss, “Freisein im Lande der Freiheit: Zur Geschichte der Bürgerrechtsbewegung in den USA,” *Atomzeitalter* 5/6 (June/July 1965) 190–96.
 7. “The political scene in the South will change. A candidate who promises his (white) voters that he will fight until he drops to retain segregation will no longer have a chance of getting elected.” Quoted in Hanns Krammer, “Das Negerelend bleibt Amerikas Bürde,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (hereafter SZ), August 17, 1965, 3.
 8. Joachim Schwelien, “Weiße Übermacht—schwarze Macht,” *Die Zeit*, August 19, 1966, 3.
 9. “Der Rassenkampf wird zum Bürgerkrieg...,” SZ, July 26, 1967, 3.
 10. Herbert von Borch, “Als Schwarzer in Vietnam streben?” SZ, June 21, 1966, 9; Manfred Riedel, “Die ‘Schwarze Macht’ pocht auf ihr Recht,” *Die Welt*, June 28, 1966, 5.
 11. “Was und warum,” *Der Spiegel*, August 7, 1967, 67–73, 73.
 12. Philipp Gassert, “Blick über den Atlantik: DIE ZEIT und Amerika in den 1960er Jahren,” in Christian Haase und Axel Schildt, eds., *DIE ZEIT und die Bonner Republik. Eine meinungsbildende Wochenzeitung zwischen Wiederbewaffnung und Wiedervereinigung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008), 65–83.
 13. Philipp Gassert and Alan Steinweis, eds., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955–1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).
 14. Karl Jaspers, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik? Tatsachen, Gefahren, Chancen* (Munich: Piper, 1966); idem, *The Future of Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
 15. For a detailed discussion, see Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany & the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
 16. Karl Dietrich Wolff, “‘Amis’ and ‘Naners’: With Americans in Hesse since 1945,” in *Amerikaner in Hessen: Eine besondere Beziehung im Wandel der Zeit*, ed. Gundula Bavendamm (Hanau: Cocon-Verlag, 2008), 127–46, online version at www.aacvr-germany.org/online_publications.
 17. The text of the flyer “Von diesem Gespräch haben wir nichts zu erwarten”—created by a group around Rudi Dutschke during conflicts about university reform at the Free University—was, e.g., inspired by a speech by Stokely Carmichael. See Siegward Lönnendonker, Bernd Rabehl, and Jochen Staadt, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der Trennung von der SPD* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 164.
 18. Gerhard Amendt, “Das Elend der amerikanischen Neger,” *Frankfurter Rundschau* (hereafter FR), January 27, 1968, Supplement *Zeit und Bild*, 1.
 19. “Die XXII. Ordentliche Delegiertenkonferenz des SDS (Resolutionen und Beschlüsse),” 26, in Papers of Ronny Loewy, vol. 1 (SDS 1966–1970), Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, Hamburg (hereafter HIS).
 20. See also the German publication of his speech in Stokely Carmichael, “Black Power,” *Kursbuch* 16 (March 1969): 111–30.
 21. Bernward Vesper, *Die Reise* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1989), 588f.
 22. See, e.g., Bernward Vesper, ed., *Black Power. Ursachen des Guerilla-Kampfes in den Vereinigten Staaten*, Voltaire Flugschriften 14 (Berlin: Voltaire, 1967); Michael Schneider, ed., *Malcolm X: Schwarze Gewalt. Reden* (Frankfurt: Edition Voltaire, 1968); Stokely Carmichael, *Die Dritte Welt, unsere Welt. Thesen zur Schwarzen Revolution*, Voltaire Flugschriften 29 (Berlin: Voltaire, 1969); Robert F. Williams and Robert B. Bigg, *Großstadtguerilla*, Voltaire Flugschriften 24 (Berlin: Voltaire, 1969).
 23. Vesper, ed., *Black Power*, 3.
 24. Ekkehart Krippendorff, “Über Martin Luther King,” *Berliner Extra-Dienst* 29/11, April 10, 1968, 10.
 25. Quoted in “‘Eine Krankheit ist ausgebrochen,’” *Bild am Sonntag*, April 14, 1968, 6. With respect to the attack on Dutschke and the murder of King, for members of the Kommune I, a West Berlin countercultural group influenced by Situationism, this strategy of polarization and provocation of violence was regrettably true. See Aribert Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann: Avantgardist, Protestler, Radikaler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 188–90.
 26. “Testimony of Karl-Dietrich Wolff. Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary,” U.S. Senate, 91st Cong., 1st Sess., March 14 and 18, 1969 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 7.
 27. *Ibid.*, 15f.
 28. For the international dimension of the Black Panther Party, see Jennifer B. Smith, *An International History of the Black Panther Party* (New York: Garland, 1999); Michael L. Clemons and Charles E. Jones, “Global Solidarity: The Black Panther Party in the International Arena,” in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy*, ed. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (New York: Routledge, 2001), 20–39; Besenia Rodriguez, “‘Long Live Third World Unity! Long Live Internationalism!’ Huey P. Newton’s Revolutionary Intercommunalism”; Robyn Spencer, “Merely One Link in the Worldwide Revolution.”
 29. Black Panther Solidaritätskomitee, “Solidaritätskomitee für die Black-Panther-Partei,” *Sozialistische Correspondenz-Info* 24, December 6, 1969, 11. See also Maria Höhn, “The Black Panther Solidarity Committee and the Trial of the Ramstein 2,” in *Changing the World, Changing the Self: Political Protest and Collective Identities in 1960/70s West Germany and the United States*, ed. Belinda Davis, Wilfried Mausbach, Martin Klimke, and Carla MacDougall (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 215–39.
 30. Bobby Seale, *Der Prozeß gegen Bobby Seale: Rassismus und politische Justiz in den USA* (Frankfurt: Roter Stern, 1970); Eldridge Cleaver, *Zur Klassenanalyse der*

- Black Panther Partei: Erziehung und Revolution* (Frankfurt: Roter Stern, 1970); Michael Tabor, *Harlem: Kapitalismus & Heroin = Völkermord* (Frankfurt: Roter Stern, 1970); Huey Newton, *Selbstverteidigung* (Frankfurt: Roter Stern, 1971). See also the series of articles by Helmut Reinicke on revolutionary movements in the United States: Helmut Reinicke, "berichte aus ameriKKKa (1)," *Sozialistische Correspondenz-Info* 34/35, February 28, 1970, 29–34; idem, "berichte aus ameriKKKa (2)," *Sozialistische Correspondenz-Info* 37, March 14, 1970, 23–25. A reader with this title also emerged from the Verlag Roter Stern, eds., *LERNEN: subversive. ameriKKKa: ein Lese-Bilder-Buch* (Frankfurt: Verlag Roter Stern, 1974). For the financial calculations of the committee, see Karl Dietrich Wolff, "Überlegungen zur Internationalismusfrage," *Sozialistische Correspondenz-Info* 34/35, February 28, 1970, 26–28, 27.
31. See Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
 32. Bommi Baumann, "God bless America: Die USA als Vorbild für die 68er," in *Radikales Amerika. Wie die amerikanische Protestbewegung Deutschland veränderte*, ed. Bommi Baumann and Till Meyer (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 2007), 9–36, 15.
 33. Ibid., 15. For the increasing comparison of the Vietnam conflict to Auschwitz in the West German antiwar movement, see also Wilfried Mausbach, "Auschwitz and Vietnam: West German Protest against America's War during the 1960s," in *America, the Vietnam War and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*, ed. Andreas Daum, Lloyd Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 279–98. For the significance of the Nazi past, see also Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Hitler's Children? The German 1968 Movement in the Shadow of the Nazi Past," in *Memories of 1968: International Perspectives*, ed. Ingo Cornils and Sarah Waters (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 79–101.
 34. Summoned to the board of the Rotary Club the next day, Wolff recalls his reaction after being asked by the club's president how, after the Holocaust, he, as a German, could make such a remark: "At the time, I found the question outrageous—the older I get, the more important I find it, and it has stayed with me throughout my entire life." Wolff, "Amis" and "Naner," online version.
 35. From 1963 to 1972, Schultz studied and worked in the United States and became active in the civil rights movement. In September 1965, she took up a teaching position at a black college in Mississippi (Rust College in Holly Springs), where she got involved with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).
 36. Dagmar Schultz, "Seltsam schönes Land—Land der Ungerechtigkeit," *Frankfurter Hefte* 9 (1966): 627–34, 633.
 37. Ibid., 634. See also Dagmar Schultz, "Witnessing whiteness—ein persönliches Zeugnis," in *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte: kritische Weissseinsforschung in Deutschland*, ed. Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, and Susan Arndt (Münster: Unrast, 2005), 514–29.
 38. May Ayim, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, eds., *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1986). For the English version, see idem, *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992). See also the conclusion of this book.
 39. Klaus Harpprecht, "Der schwarze Tribun," *Christ und Welt*, August 5, 1966, 28; N. B., "Schwarze Demagogie," *FAZ*, July 13, 1968, "Ereignisse und Gestalten," Supplement 160. On this issue, see also Sabine Broeck, "The Erotics of African-American Endurance, Or: On the Right Side of History? White (West)-German

- Public Sentiment between Pornotroping and Civil Rights Solidarity," in *German and African American Crossovers: Two Centuries of Contact*, ed. Larry Greene and Anke Ortlepp (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, forthcoming).
40. Hans Steinitz, "Wie krank ist Amerika?" *Rheinischer Merkur*, August 4, 1967, 24; N. B., *Schwarze Demagogie*.
 41. Joachim E. Berendt, "Den Schwarzen der USA fehlen die Politiker," *Frankfurter Hefte* 5 (1970): 339–42, 340.
 42. See Black Panther Solidaritätskomitee, "Solidaritätsveranstaltung mit der Black Panther Partei: Connie Matthews," Flyer, April 18, 1970, in USA BPP, Black Panther Party, Box, German SDS Papers, APO-Archive, Free University of Berlin, Berlin (hereafter APOB); Brigitte Heinrich, "Die Unterstützung des US-Imperialismus durch die BRD und die Auswirkungen im Innern," in *Am Beispiel Angela Davis: Der Kongreß in Frankfurt*, ed. Angela Davis Solidaritätskomitee (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1972), 159–69, esp. 164.
 43. RAF, "Die Rote Armee aufbauen!" *agit 883* 62, June 5, 1970, 6. See also Michael Hahn, "Land der Superpigs: Wie agit 883 mit Black Panthers und Weathermen die 'zweite Front in den Metropolen eröffnete,'" in *agit 883: Bewegung, Revolte, Underground in Westberlin, 1969–1972*, ed. Rotaprint 25 (Hamburg: Assoziation A, 2006), 141–55.
 44. RAF, "Das Konzept Stadtguerilla," in *Rote Armee Fraktion: Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF*, ed. ID-Verlag (Berlin: ID-Verlag, 1997), 35.
 45. RAF, "Über den bewaffneten Kampf in Westeuropa," in *RAF: Texte und Materialien*, 71.
 46. Moritz Ege, *Schwarz werden: "Afroamerikanophilie" in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007); Detlef Siegfried, "White Negroes: The Fascination of the Authentic in the West German Counterculture of the 1960s," in *Changing the World*, ed. Davis et al., 191–214.
 47. Angela Davis, *An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974), 133–45.
 48. See Detlev Claussen, "Zur Verhaftung von Angela Davis," *Sozialistische Correspondenz-Info* 56/57 (November 11, 1970): 18–20. For the early reception in West Germany, see Jürgen Leinemann, "Sind schwarze Häftlinge in USA Kriegsgefangene?" *Frankfurter Rundschau am Abend*, August 20, 1970.
 49. Herbert Marcuse, "Helft Angela," *Neues Forum* 17 (November 1970): 1020, quoted in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946–1995*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Rogner & Bernhard, 1998), 727f.
 50. Black Panther Solidaritätskomitee, "Zum Prozeß gegen die Soledad Brothers," "Letter to the Government of FRG." Letter, 1970, 10/22, 5–8, in USA BPP, Black Panther Party, Box, German SDS Papers, APOB.
 51. As the distributed paper declared, "The Soledad Brothers will only find justice in the court of Salinas if we, by our actions, make it impossible for the state to execute them." Quoted in *ibid.*, 8.
 52. "Solidarität mit Angela Davis," *FR*, December 22, 1970.
 53. Oskar Negt, "Der Fall Angela Davis," *konkret*, January 28, 1971, 52–54, quoted in Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, vol. 2, 732.
 54. Angela Davis Solidaritätskomitee, ed., *Am Beispiel Angela Davis: Der Kongreß in Frankfurt* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1972), 2. The committee was founded by Manfred Clemenz, Lothar Menne, Oskar Negt, Claudio Pozzoli, and Klaus Vack.
 55. "Angela Davis women and children solidarity demonstration," Flyer, 1971, 03/13, in USA BPP, Black Panther Party, Box, German SDS Papers, APOB; see also Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, vol. 1, 506.
 56. Angela Davis Solidaritätskomitee, "Freiheit für Angela Davis!" Wall Paper, 1971, 11, in USA BPP, Black Panther Party, Box, German SDS Papers, APOB.

57. Initiativgruppe Angela Davis am John F. Kennedy Institut, "[Call for solidarity with Angela Davis]," Flyer, undated, in USA BPP, Black Panther Party, Box, German SDS papers, APOB.
58. Herbert Marcuse, Speech during an Angela Davis Rally at Berkeley, October 24, 1969, in Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt/Main, Herbert-Marcuse-Archiv, quoted in Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, vol. 2, 689. On the role of women in the civil rights and black power movements, see most recently Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle* (New York: NYU Press, 2009).

7 Heroes of the Other America: East German Solidarity with the African American Freedom Struggle

1. For the history of the GDR, see Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Konrad Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999); Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Andrew Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
2. Constitution of East Germany, October 7, 1949, Article 6, paragraph 2, in *Dokumente des Geteilten Deutschland: Quellentexte zur Rechtslage des Deutschen Reiches, der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. Ingo von Münch (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1976), 301–23, 302.
3. Klaus Bollinger, *Freedom Now—Freiheit sofort! Die Negerbevölkerung der USA im Kampf um Demokratie* (Berlin: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1968), 4f.
4. Kongress für Bürgerliche Rechte, New York 1951, *Rassenmord! Wir klagen an! Petition an die Vereinten Nationen zum Schutze der Negerbevölkerung in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, translated by Hermann Stürmer (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1953). The citation for the original English petition is William Patterson, ed., *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government against the Negro People* (New York: Civil Rights Congress, 1951). For the Civil Rights Congress and the 1951 petition, see Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987); Charles Martin, "Internationalizing 'The American Dilemma': The Civil Rights Congress and the 1951 Genocide Petition to the United Nations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16.4 (Summer 1997): 35–61.
5. Kongress für Bürgerliche Rechte, *Rassenmord*, 8ff.
6. Emphasis original. Bollinger, *Freedom Now*, 5. See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, ed., *The Anti-Imperialist Liberation Struggle of the Afro-Asian and Latin American Peoples and the German Democratic Republic* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1964).
7. Bollinger, *Freedom Now*, 4.
8. See Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963* (New York: Holt, 2001), 496–553. Patricia

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10. Honorary Degree Certificate, Faculty of Economics, Humboldt University, November 3, 1958, in Ehrenpromotion, W. E. B. Du Bois, Humboldt University Archive, Berlin (hereafter HUAB). See also W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy of Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International, 1968), 23.
11. Heinz Mohrmann to Wilhelm Girnus, East German Minister for Higher Education, Explanation for the Award of Honorary Degree to W. E. B. Du Bois, October 28, 1958, in Ehrenpromotion, W. E. B. Du Bois, HUAB. See also "Ansprache des Dekans der Wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin Professor Dr. rer. pol. (hab.) Heinz Mohrmann, anlässlich der Ehrenpromotion von Prof. Dr. Dr. Du Bois, New York," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* 8.1 (1958/59): 111–13.
12. The birthday delegation included Deputy Foreign Minister Otto Winzer, the head of the African desk at the East German Foreign Ministry Gottfried Lessing, and Karl-Heinz Kern, acting chairman of the GDR's trade office in Ghana. Condolences were offered by Georg Heiderich, head of the East German trade delegation in Ghana in August 1963, and a wreath was laid at Du Bois's grave by Gerald Götting in December 1963. For the visits to Ghana and East German obituaries, as well as the perception of Du Bois in East Germany and the details of his visit in 1958, see Hamilton Beck, "Censoring Your Ally: W. E. B. Du Bois in the German Democratic Republic," in *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World*, ed. David McBride, Leroy Hopkins, and Carol Blackshire-Belay (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998), 197–232, esp. 221.
13. See Oliver Harrington, *Bootsie and Others: A Selection of Cartoons* (New York: Dodd, 1958); Oliver Harrington, *Soul Shots: Political Cartoons by Ollie Harrington* (New York: Longview, 1972); Oliver Harrington, *Why I Left America and Other Essays* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993); M. Thomas Inge, ed., *Dark Laughter: The Satiric Art of Oliver W. Harrington* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993). See also Chapter 3.
14. Regrettably, Oliver Harrington has not yet found the attention of a biographer. On Harrington's friendship to Paul Robeson, see Ollie Harrington, "In einem schwarzen Ghetto," *Das Magazin* 7, July 1971, 23–28. See also Aribert Schroeder, "Ollie Harrington: His Portrait Drawn on the Basis of East German (GDR) Secret Service Files," in *German and African American Crossovers: Two Centuries of Contact*, ed. Larry Greene and Anke Ortlepp (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, forthcoming). For his 1972 visit to the offices of the *Chicago Daily Defender*, see Robert McClory, "Ollie Harrington: Bootsie Artist Visits U.S.," *Chicago Daily Defender*, October 21, 1972, 1. For examples of his artwork, an image gallery, as well as further information about Oliver Harrington, see www.aacvr-germany.org/harrington.

THE
COLD WAR
AND THE
COLOR LINE

American Race Relations in the Global Arena

e
THOMAS BORSTELMANN

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sume a stance against revolution, per se, as an historical means of change" in South Africa. It was instead only "communist inspired, supported or directed subversion or insurgency" that had to be totally opposed. This truism of American Cold War strategy had a peculiar meaning in a realm of white supremacy where the South African Communist Party was closely allied with the country's leading opposition group, the ANC. The ANC thus qualified as an organization of unacceptable revolutionaries, because it, U.S. officials believed, was "dominated by the Communist Party at the leadership level."¹¹⁴

By refusing to understand the Communist Party's legitimacy in the eyes of Africans in South Africa, the Kennedy administration identified Mandela and his colleagues as dangerous enemies of the United States. Mandela himself was neither "a Communist nor a member of the CP," as he told the court during his 1964 trial on charges of sabotage, but an admirer of the British and American political systems who sought some form of socialism in his country. The lawyer-turned-guerrilla reminded listeners that Communists both abroad and at home had been stronger opponents of apartheid than had non-Communists, with the result that many Africans "today tend to equate freedom with Communism."¹¹⁵ To the U.S. government, however, ANC members were not freedom fighters but "subversives." For all their racial liberalism and their distaste for racist brutality, the president and his advisers shared the fundamental assumption of their White House predecessors that the South African regime was a legitimate government. The changes in racial consciousness that were just beginning among white Americans in the early 1960s were not yet far enough advanced to induce elite white policymakers to question that elemental understanding. Similarly, African Americans had not established themselves as an influential voice on U.S. African policy, as they would by the 1980s.¹¹⁶ Anti-Communist racial totalitarianism may have been problematic and even abhorrent to American leaders, but it was not yet illegitimate.¹¹⁷

Perhaps the most intriguing piece of evidence for the continuing close ties between Washington and Pretoria in the Kennedy years was the role that the CIA apparently played in helping South African security forces arrest Mandela outside Durban on 5 August 1962. The defense and intelligence establishments of the two countries worked closely together. This relationship was reconfirmed by the 15 June 1962 agreement on a tracking station, which included arrangements for South African purchases of U.S. weapons.¹¹⁸ South Africa's departure a year earlier from the British Commonwealth had meant a decline in British intelligence support, and Pretoria's relatively small

intelligence folders were happy to receive help from the well-funded and experienced CIA. Their mutual anti-Communism and suspicion of Third World nationalists inclined them to a similar view of the ANC, and the agency had at least one source within Umkhonto we Sizwe (the Spear of the Nation), the ANC's military wing, which Mandela headed.¹¹⁹ Thus, reports that emerged in 1990 of the CIA tipping off South African authorities to Mandela's whereabouts in August 1962 fit well with established relationships of the time, even if those reports have yet to be confirmed with documentation.¹²⁰ The pattern also accounts for the evident sympathies of the FBI with segregationists in the U.S. South at the same time. Abroad as at home, American security agencies tended to array U.S. power on the white supremacist side in racial conflicts, especially when the president and his chief advisers generally paid little attention to the details of southern African policy, focusing instead on priorities north of the equator.¹²¹

Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement in International Context

In John Kennedy's ideal world, there would have been neither Communists nor racists. Unfortunately for him, the real world had plenty of both. His presidency, he declared in his inaugural address, would be "a celebration of freedom," and indeed the early 1960s were a time of epic struggles to extend freedom. But there was a central conflict during the Kennedy years about what people most needed to be freed from or kept free from: Communism or racism. Anti-Communists looked mostly for freedom abroad, while antiracists focused on freedom at home. The president and his advisers believed firmly that the spread of Communism, by destroying free enterprise and the principle of political liberty, would remove the economic and political structures necessary for further social improvements.

Kennedy saw himself as the national and international leader with the clearest vision of the greatest threat to human liberty, and he tended to look at civil rights organizers as unruly followers inclined to jump out of line, run up to the front, and seize the spotlight for a less important cause. When confronted by Theodore Hesburgh, chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and president of the University of Notre Dame, with problems like the absence of blacks in the Alabama National Guard, the president responded, "Look, Father, I may have to send the Alabama National Guard to Berlin tomorrow and I don't want to have to do it in the middle of a revolution at

home."¹²² Like Dwight Eisenhower, Kennedy grew frustrated with both sides in the conflict in the American South, as neither side seemed to him to be keeping its eyes on the ultimate prize of the Cold War and worldwide stability. Indeed, both civil rights organizers and those resisting them found race relations at home far more important in their daily lives than events in far-off Berlin or Vietnam. This was a perspective quite alien to the president.

The one way the civil rights movement could get the Kennedy administration's full attention was to clearly impact U.S. foreign relations. The president feared how easily another Little Rock crisis might happen, embarrassing the country before a global audience. Robert Kennedy explained the administration's international logic in his first speech on civil rights as attorney general, given at the University of Georgia. He argued that the graduation of the two African Americans just admitted there "will without question aid and assist the fight against Communist political infiltration and understood the politics of John Kennedy disliked racial discrimination and understood the nation's association with white supremacy: appointing dozens of blacks to important posts in the administration, desegregating the Coast Guard Academy, and hosting many more people of color at the White House than all of his predecessors combined. The contrast with Eisenhower, at the symbolic level, could not have been starker.¹²⁴

Kennedy's primary concern about the civil rights movement was controlling it: moderating its tactics, channeling its demands, and limiting the social instability it stirred up in the South.¹²⁵ In this sense he fit King's famous description of "the white moderate" who agreed with the goals but not the direct action methods of the movement, "who paternalistically feels that he can set the time-table for another man's freedom," and whose greater devotion to order than justice, King believed, was blacks' "greatest stumbling block in the stride toward freedom."¹²⁶ Even in his symbolic actions Kennedy would go only so far. He refused for two and a half years the appeals from within and outside his administration to provide moral leadership to the nation on the issue of racial equality, despite widespread and extraordinary violence against American citizens throughout the South.¹²⁷ Indeed, the administration seemed determined to remain as neutral as possible in what increasingly looked like low-level warfare across the former Confederacy.¹²⁸

The day before astronaut Alan Shepard lifted off on the first manned space flight on 5 May 1961, a group of young Americans set off to explore another new frontier of freedom, this one south of the Mason-Dixon line. The

Kennedy strategy of co-opting civil rights organizers to minimize racial polarization began with the Freedom Riders of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). While the Freedom Riders sought to force the Kennedy administration to uphold federal court rulings against segregated transportation, the White House desperately wanted to avoid such a confrontation with white Southern authorities. The timing was crucial: the president, embarrassed by the debacle of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba a few weeks earlier, was about to meet Soviet chief Nikita Khrushchev for the first time at a summit conference in Vienna. The violence and terror that greeted the riders in Alabama, and the international attention they received, deepened the president's embarrassment and anger. The Freedom Riders, Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach remembered, were seen in the White House "as a pain in the ass."¹²⁹

By contrast, James Farmer and the other organizers of the rides believed they were on the front lines of the struggle for freedom. There was no more important business for the U.S. government, as they saw it, than the protection of the rights and safety of its own citizens, especially on the eve of any conference in which it would be posing again as the leader of the "free world." Focused on how the Soviets could use such violent incidents to demean the reputation of the United States abroad, Kennedy and his advisers did not see that for civil rights workers, the Deep South was like the Soviet Union in its negation of liberty and the rule of law and its determination to crush dissent. Here was a great irony: loudly anti-Communist Southern local authorities ruling a chunk of the "free world" in quasi-totalitarian fashion.¹³⁰

The Kennedy administration was relieved to emerge from 1961 with no further major racial incidents, but the next year confronted the president with another version of Eisenhower's crisis at Little Rock. The vast, heavily armed throng of segregationists that tried to prevent James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi on 1 October 1962 was abetted by state officials all the way up to Governor Ross Barnett, and the riot that ensued brought precisely the kind of negative international attention Kennedy feared. Observers around the globe were stunned when members of the white mob killed a foreign reporter, Paul Guihard of the *London Daily Sketch*, along with another bystander, and wounded 166 federal marshals (28 of them by gunfire).¹³¹ Like Eisenhower with Arkansas five years earlier, Kennedy was forced to send thousands of U.S. troops to Oxford to restrain white American savagery being displayed on television for a world audience. And like

Eisenhower, he was learning how treacherous the white Southern politicians of his party could be.¹³²

The international context of the Ole Miss debacle was evident to many participants, though it was understood differently by different parties. The whites chanting "Go to Cuba, nigger lovers, go to Cuba!" at federal marshals captured the regional sentiment that the U.S. government should attend to the Cold War and leave Southern racial matters to the South, while the attorney general's half-joking question about photographs of Soviet missile installations in Cuba—"Can these things reach Oxford, Mississippi?"—suggested instead that the Cold War could no longer be fought effectively with people like Barnett in power. "The eyes of the nation and all the world are upon you and upon all of us," the president reminded Mississippians in a nationally televised address as the unrest escalated.¹³³

Kennedy's tolerance for traditional Dixie mayhem across the color line ran out the following spring in Birmingham, "the Johannesburg of America." Brutality rained down with particular viciousness on the civil rights campaign that began there in early April and elicited for the first time a widespread and violent black response, across class lines.¹³⁴ Reporters and cameras from all over the country and the world poured into Alabama, capturing appalling scenes of police violence for a national and international audience. The international context was again crucial, as the founding conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was meeting simultaneously in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda warned Kennedy that the "ears and eyes of the world are concentrated on events in Alabama," and a Nigerian journalist observed that the United States appeared to be becoming "the most barbarian state in the world."¹³⁵ The global attention encouraged civil rights activists, who were putting their bodies on the line in Birmingham. At the height of the crisis, King reminded anti-segregation protesters that they were succeeding in forcing the U.S. government to take their side in the conflict because "the United States is concerned about its image. When things started happening down here, Mr. Kennedy got disturbed. For Mr. Kennedy . . . is battling for the minds and the hearts of men in Asia and Africa," who would no longer respect an America that allowed Jim Crow to survive.¹³⁶ One marcher turned the anti-Communist language of segregationists back against them with a sign reading, "Khrushchev can eat here—why can't we?"¹³⁷

Full-scale street warfare and international opprobrium were too much, even for the cautious Kennedys. Disturbed by both the violence of local au-

thorities and the willingness of so many blacks in Birmingham to fight back against the police, the president and his advisers recognized that the civil rights movement and American race relations stood poised on the brink of a more confrontational stage. Kennedy knew he must act forcefully to head off escalation; he had to provide leadership to the nation by framing the issue, for the first time, in moral terms.¹³⁸ He was not giving up on white Southern leaders, with whom he still had to work, but he was going to push them harder. He tried with Alabama governor George Wallace during a brief, shared helicopter ride from Muscle Shoals to Huntsville, but it was not a fruitful experience. Kennedy told the governor that for the good of Birmingham itself, the city must begin treating its black citizens more fairly if it was ever to be restored to social and economic health. Wallace responded with two of the oldest canards of white supremacists: the problem in Birmingham was "the influence of outside leadership," and King was "a faker" interested primarily in competing with Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth to see "who could go to bed with the most nigger women, and white and red women, too." Annoyed, Kennedy insisted on the seriousness of the black insurgency in Alabama and urged the governor to accommodate it.¹³⁹ Those present for the conversation could not have been surprised that it was the action of Wallace three weeks later, in symbolically attempting to prevent the desegregation of the last all-white state university in the nation, that finally moved Kennedy to seize the presidential bully pulpit on behalf of racial equality.

In his 11 June 1963 nationally televised address on the "moral crisis" facing the nation, Kennedy took sides as he had never done before. The atypical fervor with which he spoke reflected both personal revulsion at the violence inflicted on black Southerners and a determination to get new civil rights legislation passed by Congress in order—as Robert Kennedy put it—to get "people off the streets and the situation under control." The president made the international context for desegregation clear in his speech: "When Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only." The struggle against Communism, he argued, now required the full racial integration of American public life. There would have to be more freedom at the heart of the "free world."¹⁴⁰ But the timing of the speech also suggested that the administration's view of the relationship between anti-Communism and antiracism might be changing, with the latter no longer merely an aid to the former. The day before, Kennedy had given a major address at American University calling for peace and a reexamination of American attitudes toward the Soviet Union. While perhaps coincidental, these two key speeches

together pointed toward a future without either Jim Crow or the Cold War.¹⁴¹

Kennedy's call for full desegregation was intended for an international as well as national audience. Rusk instructed all U.S. ambassadors abroad to bear down on the task of countering the "extremely negative reactions" that racial incidents at home had elicited "from all parts of [the] world." The administration, he reminded them, was "keenly aware" of the impact of such incidents on the nation's image overseas, and the president's speech should be disseminated as widely as possible, as should the country's achievements to date in desegregation.¹⁴² As hoped, Kennedy's civil rights bill was widely applauded in the *Third World* and especially in Africa, where newspaper pictures of police dogs attacking unarmed African Americans in the South—so reminiscent of apartheid and colonialism—had made a deep impact. Africans noted how different Kennedy's stand was from Eisenhower's, and some commentators even suggested comparisons to Abraham Lincoln.¹⁴³ But there was also a "strong note of skepticism" about how much progress was being made toward real equality in the United States, and State Department officials worried that the outlook for America's reputation in Africa was "likely to become worse" as reports of racial violence continued to mount.¹⁴⁴ The evidence along these lines was not encouraging: the most symbolic white Southern response to Kennedy's speech came a few hours later, when Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers was gunned down in his front yard. The president himself had turned a corner, but whether he could pull segregationists around that corner with him remained an open question.¹⁴⁵

African Americans, meanwhile, were moving rapidly down the road away from that corner, leaving the Kennedy administration to straddle a growing racial divide. The president's success in channeling the March on Washington in August into support for his civil rights bill marked the apex of the peaceful, integrated stage of the civil rights movement.¹⁴⁶ But antiracist organizers were increasingly disillusioned by the failure of the federal government to protect the lives and safety of American citizens in the South from the predations of local authorities. For a growing number of SNCC and CORE activists and their supporters by late 1963, the Kennedy administration was beginning to seem almost as much the enemy as the Ku Klux Klan and local law enforcement officers. One elderly black woman in Albany, Georgia, captured this rising sentiment in her response to a plea from activist attorney C. B. King not to lose patience with Washington: "You know what, lawyer, the Federal government ain't nothing but a white man."¹⁴⁷ The president,

never enamored of civil rights organizers to begin with, reciprocated the feelings, privately referring to SNCC members as "sons of bitches" with an "investment in violence."¹⁴⁸

White Southerners would have been pleased to know of such sentiments in the White House, for they deeply resented Kennedy's new support for civil rights legislation. The sharp increase in Republican voters in the South in the 1962 congressional elections, encouraged by the crisis at the University of Mississippi, had offered early evidence of the white backlash developing against greater national Democratic Party support for racial equality.¹⁴⁹ Dissenting Southerners vied with Kennedy to preempt the meaning of the language of the Cold War. While the president reprimanded segregationists' inadequate commitment to anti-Communism—"Why can a Communist eat at a lunch counter in Selma, Alabama, while a black American veteran cannot?"—George Wallace argued the opposite, insisting that the federal government that now sought "to persecute the international white minority" was filled with "the same people who told us that Castro was a 'good Democratic soul' [and] that Mao Tse Tung was only an 'Agrarian Reformer.'"¹⁵⁰ Segregationists noted accurately enough that racial egalitarianism in the South was a subversive idea, and one supported by those other subversives: Communists. "Some of these niggers down here would just as soon vote for Castro or Khrushchev," Sheriff Z. T. Mathews explained to reporters after intimidating a voter-registration rally in Terrell County, Georgia, in July 1962.¹⁵¹ That Kennedy acted like a Soviet dictator seemed obvious to those white Mississippians who, after the Ole Miss crisis, put on their cars the license plate legend "Kennedy's Hungary" in reference to the Soviet Union's brutal repression of the revolution in Budapest in 1956.¹⁵² The slogan that best captured segregationists' views of the connections between foreign affairs and the American South was the sign greeting Robert Kennedy along the road into Montgomery in April 1963: "No Kennedy Congo Here."¹⁵³ Many white Southerners believed they were not just like whites in Eastern Europe but even more like embattled white settlers in Africa, facing an onslaught of imminent black political participation and perhaps revenge with the support of the meddling U.S. government. Gus Noble, president of the Canton Citizens' Council, warned that equal rights in Mississippi would lead to the same horrors that had supposedly happened in former African colonies of Britain and France: "Those natives were not prepared for self-government. They were unstable. They are each other."¹⁵⁴ By the end of his presidency, in sum, Kennedy found himself increasingly alienated from elements on both ends sides the growing

racial divide in the South, even as he committed himself to ending racial discrimination in the United States.

Africans and Jim Crow

People of the Third World had long been interested in how people of color were treated in the United States, but it was only in the Kennedy years that significant numbers of Africans began viewing events on television or coming to America as diplomats and finding out some of the answers for themselves. Many African visitors were skeptical of the explanations offered for the continued widespread racial discrimination in the leading nation of the "free world." U.S. officials most often cited the federal system of government, with its reserved rights for states and local communities, as restricting the national government's ability to ensure racial equality. Most Third World observers, along with many Europeans, found this argument less than convincing, especially in light of the awesome power of the U.S. government to project military might around the globe.¹⁵⁵ If true, were white supremacists in the United States even more powerful than the extraordinary figure of the president himself? Outspoken internationalist and civil rights advocate Robert Williams, who was engaged in an increasingly violent conflict with the Ku Klux Klan in Monroe, North Carolina, tweaked Kennedy's nose on precisely these grounds in 1961. In his famous telegram read aloud at the UN by the Cuban ambassador during debate on the American role at the Bay of Pigs, Williams said that in light of U.S. aid to those fighting tyranny abroad, "oppressed Negroes in [the] South urgently request tanks, artillery, bombs, money, and the use of American airfields and white mercenaries to crush the racist tyrants who have betrayed the American Revolution and Civil War." There was considerable applause among the darker-hued delegates in the General Assembly, just as there was appreciation for the suggestion of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana that Africans might offer a Reverse Peace Corps to teach respectful human relations to Americans.¹⁵⁶

Africans in the early 1960s continued to experience the United States primarily through New York and Washington. Since the spring of 1960, the State Department had been deeply concerned about how UN delegates from the new nations south of the Sahara would be treated by New Yorkers. Rusk and Adlai Stevenson were well aware of "the problem posed by representatives of African nations seeking suitable housing and office accommoda-

tions." That the presence of foreign diplomats in the nation's most cosmopolitan city should pose a "problem" indicated how clearly the Kennedy administration understood that racial discrimination remained a national rather than a Southern phenomenon. The U.S. mission to the UN went to great efforts to prepare the city's hotels, restaurants, and real estate agents for the novel experience of large numbers of nonwhite foreigners arriving with expectations of dignified treatment. The administration even arranged for private funding to hire a "trilingual specialist" to help African diplomats and their families find suitable housing arrangements while shielding them from white American racial prejudice—a kind of house hunting without humiliation. The contrast to the degree of federal government concern about dark-skinned Americans' experiences of discrimination in Manhattan and elsewhere was difficult to miss, especially for African Americans. The Cold War was the key to unlocking the Kennedy administration's concern about racism, and African independence had created a vast new source of potential embarrassment that the president and his advisers sought to preempt.¹⁵⁷

Washington was a Southern town with a strong Jim Crow tradition, and diplomats of color were even more anxious about being posted there than New York. In a precise mirror image of how most American diplomats viewed positions in Africa, African ambassadors and their families and staffs found the American capital—the nerve center of the "free world"—to be a true "hardship post." Well aware of white racial violence in the South, Africans not only worried about finding decent housing but even feared being assaulted on the streets of Washington. Some African officials bound for the First World sought to be posted instead to Europe, which they considered much safer.¹⁵⁸ Eisenhower's desegregation of public accommodations in Washington, combined with the Kennedy administration's presence and concern, had in fact created a limited oasis there. But most African diplomats came to Washington by car from New York, and once they crossed the Delaware River on Route 40, they quickly discovered how unwelcome they were. In Delaware and Maryland they were regularly refused service in restaurants, humiliated, and harassed. Washington, surrounded by segregationist states, seemed to be for African visitors what West Berlin, surrounded by Communist East Germany, was for Western visitors: an isolated citadel deep in hostile territory, safely reachable only by air or by two restricted highways off which one dared not venture.

An important part of the logic of American Cold War strategy had been the belief that the more that new nations learned about the principal antago-

civil rights achievements and in southern Africa against the wave of independence ending colonial rule. Such vestiges of white supremacy, he knew, hindered his effort to promote a racially egalitarian Western alliance as a more attractive alternative to the Third World than Soviet or Chinese Communism. As a moderate man of the political center, Johnson believed that he occupied the middle ground between black and white extremism, and he sought to co-opt the energies of both.¹

THE PERILOUS PATH TO EQUALITY

THE YEARS OF Lyndon Johnson's presidency marked both the apex of legislative racial equality in the United States and the culmination of racial violence in American cities and in Vietnam. From the great heights of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the political landscape fell away precipitously to terrifying uprisings in Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit, and more than a hundred other cities at home and a full-scale war between Americans and Asians abroad. For most American soldiers in Vietnam, the devastating combat took place increasingly along racial, rather than political, lines: the enemy was not just Communists but the Vietnamese. Moreover, rotating U.S. forces brought with them the sharpening racial tensions from home, so that black and white soldiers were often openly at odds with one another, even while fighting a single enemy. The Johnson administration confronted a downward spiral of racial antagonism and polarization rather than the era of racial progress and unity that it had worked so hard to promote. This pattern of racial crisis emerged between 1964 and 1968 not only in the United States and in Vietnam but also in southern Africa, forcing American policymakers to pursue a largely unsuccessful strategy of containing racial conflict both at home and abroad.

In the United States as well as in the Third World, Johnson tried to keep civil rights activists and anticolonial nationalists identified with the liberal, Western reformist model of his Great Society. He struggled to isolate them from the twin siren songs of Soviet Communism and nonwhite (black, African, or Asian) nationalism. As the most energetic proponent of racial equality to occupy the White House, Johnson hoped to become the *real* leader of the civil rights movement as well as of the non-Communist world. He also labored to blunt the impact of the white backlash in the United States against

Lyndon Johnson, Civil Rights, and the Third World

Lyndon Johnson had experienced poverty as a child in the raw Texas hill country, but he entered the White House as one of the wealthiest presidents in U.S. history. His trajectory to political and material success represented the elemental American dream, and he was determined to embody national unity as the president of all Americans. His interest in the welfare of working people of all colors and his dislike of barriers to equal opportunity were legendary among those who knew him.² The liberalism of the Great Society involved helping those who were less fortunate. For Johnson such an approach was deeply genuine—and profoundly paternalistic. He craved love, appreciation, and recognition from those around him and from the public at large. As long as those receiving his assistance were sufficiently grateful to their patron from those he was trying to help dismayed Johnson and shriveled his generous instincts. By 1967 he would recite to his staff his civil rights achievements and lament: "I asked so little in return. Just a little thanks. Just a little appreciation. That's all. But look at what I got instead. Riots in 175 cities. Looting. Burning. Shooting. It ruined everything."⁴ After 1965 the beleaguered president felt swamped by ingratitude from every direction: rioting African Americans, intransigent Vietnamese nationalists, and rebellious anti-war liberals who derailed his reelection. "How is it possible," he asked, "that all these people could be so ungrateful to me after I had given them so much?"⁵

Johnson knew little of other cultures. He had traveled abroad only rarely before becoming vice president. Like many of his generation, he assumed unquestioningly that American values were universal. He expected other peoples to admire the achievements of the United States and to aspire to similar affluence. On an official visit to Senegal's independence ceremonies in April

1961, he toured a small rural community and told the village chief: "I came to Kayar because I was a farm boy, too, in Texas. It's a long way from Texas to Kayar, but we both produce peanuts and both want the same thing: a higher standard of living for the people."⁶ He let his enthusiasm fill in for cultural sensitivity when abroad, plunging into crowds to shake hands and kiss babies and ignoring advisers' warnings about dirt, disease, and diplomatic dignity. Although he had once announced that the trouble with foreigners "is that they're not like folks you were reared with," he treated them as if they could become so.⁷ Johnson's vision of racial inclusiveness showed in his physical enthusiasm for African, Middle Eastern, and especially Asian crowds—"little brown people . . . packed as close as you could pack sardines"—whom he viewed as the salt of the earth.⁸ By contrast, Scandinavians and other white northern Europeans often struck him as stuffy and unresponsive.⁹ It was almost as though his dislike for northeastern elites and greater ease with Southerners and Westerners in the United States were mirrored abroad in an uneasiness with Europeans and a warmer feeling for people of the Third World.

As with people of color at home, however, Johnson expected his relationship with Africans and Asians to be that of a generous patron. In contrast to John Kennedy, who hated even to have to talk about agricultural policy, Johnson loved animals and the ranching and farming life. He believed that all farmers, whether in West Africa, Texas, or Vietnam, were essentially alike. He spoke frequently of building another Tennessee Valley Authority for the Mekong River, reflecting his desire to export the benefits of the New Deal and the Great Society for which he had worked so hard at home.¹⁰ He was therefore mystified when the Vietnamese did not seem to appreciate his largesse. He once exclaimed to his aide Bill Moyers, "My God, I've offered Ho Chi Minh \$100 million to build a Mekong Valley. If that'd been [American labor leader] George Meany he'd have snapped it [up]!" Robert Komer, Johnson's assistant to the national security adviser, remembered that Johnson "felt no particular need to delve into what made Vietnamese Vietnamese—as opposed to Americans or Greeks or Chinese."¹¹ In contrast to Ho, those South Vietnamese officials who emulated Americans made sense to the president. His compliment to the much shorter General Nguyen Cao Ky upon meeting him in Honolulu in February 1966 suggested his paternal delight: "Boy, you speak just like an American."¹²

Johnson's chauvinism had the peculiar flavor of his home state. His favorite historical analogy was that defining piece of Texan pride and nostalgia, the Alamo. "Vietnam," he asserted more than once, "is just like the Alamo. Hell,

it's just like if you were down at that gate and you were surrounded and you damn well needed somebody. Well by God, I'm going to go—and I thank the Lord that I've got men who want to go with me, from McNamara right on down to the littlest private who's carrying a gun."¹³ He was intensely proud of his two sons-in-law and their service in Vietnam. But the rising toll of American casualties there appalled and grieved him, even as he made decisions that further increased their numbers. He seemed less and less able to relax as the war to preserve a non-Communist South Vietnam continued. He gave up drinking his favorite Cutty Sark whiskey and, unable to sleep, appeared frequently in the White House operations room in the middle of the night to check on American casualties. Unlike many domestic opponents of the war who began to sympathize and even identify with the victims of the American war in Vietnam and with other Third World peoples, Johnson continued to focus on American lives. His attorney general, Ramsey Clark, recalled about the president: "I never sensed any concern for the other side. How many did the Vietnamese lose? How many were killed in the village? How many South Vietnamese, how many North Vietnamese, how many Vietnamese? It was *our* lives, *our* country; and they didn't figure, those people."¹⁴ As the war in Vietnam slipped away from him, Johnson seemed less and less engaged with those "little brown people" he had originally hoped to help.

In Africa there were no Alamos. Unlike most Americans in the early 1960s, Johnson did not derive his ideas of Africa from Tarzan movies and exotic animals in *National Geographic*. He had visited the continent once and at least thought of it in terms of people. In his sentimental but sincere fashion, he reflected on his trip to West Africa as vice president: "You know, in Senegal, when I looked into the eyes of the mothers there, they had the same look as the people in Texas, the mothers in Texas. All mothers want the best for their children, and the mothers in Senegal were no different from the white mothers in Texas."¹⁵ If his great humanity allowed him to ignore skin color and cultural differences more than most Americans of his generation, Johnson's relentless political calculations ensured that he would avoid any new American engagement in an area of political turmoil and limited strategic significance to the United States. Domestic politics were his love, and Vietnam his distraction and eventual obsession. Crises in the Dominican Republic, the Middle East, and Europe took what little other time he and his advisers had, and Africa remained—as it had been for all his predecessors—the lowest priority in, literally, the world. Angered at a State Department spokesman's public acknowledgment of the new combat role of American personnel

in Vietnam in the spring of 1965, Johnson made clear his version of diplomatic and political irrelevance: "He'll be giving his future briefings somewhere in Africa!"¹⁶

Both Africans and Vietnamese had reason to doubt Johnson's interest in them when he took the oath of office in November 1963, and most African Americans were also skeptical about their new president. Black Justice Department official Roger Wilkins remembered that "he was a Texan, and to me Texas was South, and he sounded South, and that's where my enemies were, more than in the Soviet Union, more than in North Korea." Other black leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., suspected that their strongest white allies might well be "converted" Southerners. As political strategist and Johnson adviser Louis Martin put it, "a reconstructed Southerner is really far more liberal than a liberal Yankee."¹⁷ Freed from the segregationist white Texan constituency to which he had long bowed on racial matters, Johnson swiftly jettisoned his previous record of accommodating segregationism. "You know segregation is absolutely crazy," Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach recalled the president telling him. "Eighty percent of the world is not white, and we have to live in this world as we have to live with everybody else in it."¹⁸

In his ascent from the South, Johnson cut himself loose from close ties with segregationist Southern Democrats in Congress. A product of their base in the American version of one-party states, Southern Democrats' disproportionate seniority and power in Congress had long mocked the idea of equality before the law in the United States. As vice president and then president, Johnson knew their power but grew to despise the virulent racism of such men as Mississippi senator James Eastland and that "runty little bastard," Alabama governor George Wallace. Johnson loved to mimic and caricature Eastland in private: "Jim Eastland could be standing right in the middle of the worst Mississippi flood ever known, and he'd say the niggers caused it, helped out some by the Communists."¹⁹ Johnson understood that "if you can convince the lowest white man that he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you."²⁰ Johnson's anger about the dangerous demagoguery of Southern leaders boiled over after a frustrating December 1966 meeting at his Texas ranch with Southern Democratic governors who complained of his betrayal of his regional heritage: "Niggah! Niggah! That's all they said to me all day. Hell, there's one thing they'd better know. If I don't achieve anything else while I'm President, I intend to wipe

that word out . . . the English language and make it impossible for people to come here and shout 'Niggah! Niggah!' to me and the American people."²¹ To no small extent, he succeeded in that endeavor.

The Southerner who may have bothered Johnson the most was his former senatorial ally and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. Fulbright's anger at Johnson's misleading representation of events during the American occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1965 blossomed into an early public dissent from the administration's policies in Vietnam. The segregationist senator became identified with concern for nonwhite peoples in Southeast Asia, while the integrationist president called down a war of destruction on the Vietnamese people. Johnson resented this obvious irony and preferred a different interpretation of the two men's views on race and Vietnam: all Fulbright "thinks about is England, the Marshall Plan or Europe. He doesn't give a damn about Asians because they're brown."²² The president believed that he understood the Alamo analogy and that Ho Chi Minh and Southeast Asian Communists—latter-day equivalents of Santa Anna and the Mexicans—represented a clear threat to American national security. "Now, Fulbright and Mansfield and Lippmann and RFK don't see this," he argued, "because they think of the South Vietnamese as yellow people not worth protecting."²³ The White House staff unsuccessfully sought ways to use Johnson's professed racial liberalism as a means of undercutting Fulbright's authority on foreign relations with the nonwhite Third World.²⁴

Leaving behind most white Southern leaders, Johnson constructed close alliances with the heads of the major civil rights organizations. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP had the greatest access to the president, grounded in their shared belief in legislative lobbying, litigation, and voter registration as the paths to racial equality. A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Whitney Young of the National Urban League were close seconds. African Americans like Young and Reverend Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia earned the appreciation of the president and his advisers for their determined efforts at improving the daily lives of urban black Americans combined with their refusal to criticize the war in Vietnam. The administration was delighted with the election of such mainstream black Democratic politicians as Carl Stokes as mayor of Cleveland. White House staffer John Roche referred to Stokes's victory as "the kind of 'black power' we need in the Democratic Party."²⁵

Johnson put much less trust in the younger, grassroots activists of the Stu-

dent Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress on Racial Equality, and he grew increasingly skeptical about—and hostile toward—Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The ultimate political insider, Johnson rejected mass public demonstrations in favor of the careful application of interest group pressure on members of Congress, the source, he believed, of real social change. "You cannot find one minority group," he told a gathering of black candidates for elective office in October 1966, "that wasn't able to ultimately overcome its oppression by the ballots, by learning to use its power, P-O-W-E-R, capital at the polls, P-O-L-L-S."²⁶ In the later years of his administration, as many younger civil rights workers rejected liberalism in favor of black power and Marxism and as impoverished black communities in the North erupted each summer in riots, Johnson struggled to understand those developments. He listened carefully to extensive FBI reports on black radicals, and he sent advisers to tour burned-out areas and talk with residents. But Vietnam swallowed his attention, and for all his goodwill, the president could not fully comprehend the changing mood of black America. White House aide Sherwin Markham reported back to him that staying in the black neighborhoods of Chicago "was almost like visiting a foreign country—and the ghetto Negro tends to look on us and our government as foreign."²⁷ After visiting Baltimore, Bill Moyers agreed: "We didn't even speak the same language."²⁸ James Farmer of CORE remembered how Johnson "was much better able to understand" the courteous, middle-class representatives of the NAACP and the National Urban League than he could "the angry young blacks who would tell it like it is, and call him an MF [motherfucker]." Farmer emphasized the paternalism of Johnson's older Southern manner, which did not "give very well with angry young black militants."²⁹

Johnson was a most unusual Cold War era president. "I do not want to be the President who built empires, or sought grandeur, or extended dominion," he told the nation in a televised address in March 1965. His heart was set instead on regenerating America itself, by eliminating poverty and racial discrimination at home in order for the United States to realize more fully its promise as a model society for the world.³⁰ He took office in November 1963 on the heels of Kennedy's assassination, during a lull in international tensions due to the recent resolution of the Cuban missile crisis and the nuclear test ban treaty, which offered an opportunity to focus on domestic matters. Warning aide Richard Goodwin, "Those civil righters are going to have to wear sneakers to keep up with me," Johnson moved swiftly to make "that

moral commitment" to racial equality which he had urged John Kennedy to do in the summer of 1963. He had told Kennedy and his advisers that "the Negroes are tired of this patient stuff and tired of this piecemeal stuff." It was time, he had said, for the president to proclaim the immorality of racial discrimination, and it would be best to do it in the South while looking white Southerners right "in the face."³¹ Johnson did exactly that in a rousing October 1964 campaign speech in New Orleans.³²

Johnson knew that he was trying to ride the back of the tiger of the civil rights movement. The laborious, dangerous work of black Southerners had created the unusual opportunity he now seized to push civil rights legislation through a reluctant Congress. He believed it was time for a sympathetic administration to take over the leadership of the forces of change in the country, guiding them into responsible legislative reform. Johnson and his advisers also considered it crucial to minimize what they saw as extraneous mass demonstrations that provoked the fears of white conservatives and increased opposition to Great Society programs. In shepherding through the limited civil rights bills of 1957 and 1960 as Senate majority leader, he had sought to co-opt the energies and demands of the rising civil rights movement. So again, in 1964 and early 1965, he championed more substantial civil rights measures partly because he believed they were the right thing to do, but partly to siphon off the energies of the now much larger civil rights constituency. The president knew how much his support for racial equality would cost him and the Democratic Party in terms of white votes, especially in the South, and he was determined to contain further black political demands that would exacerbate that white backlash.³³

Johnson's success in eliminating legal barriers to racial equality in the United States was embodied most dramatically in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The president wielded his particular skills—as a Southerner, as the preeminent legislator of his generation if not of the century, and as the recent master of the Senate—to make use of the opportunity provided by the national grief over the posthumously revered Kennedy.³⁴ He also appointed more African Americans to executive branch positions than the combined total from all previous administrations and pushed through comprehensive immigration reform in October 1965 to eliminate the racially discriminatory national origins system.³⁵ The international mood encouraged Johnson's reforms, as Africans and others paid close attention to American race relations and were disturbed by ongoing discrimination and violence against blacks, incipient race riots, and the developing

white backlash represented by Republican nominee Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential campaign. Secretary of State Dean Rusk of Georgia emphasized in December 1963 the central importance for American foreign relations of a national commitment to racial equality: "We are looked upon as a leader . . . and when we fail to meet our commitments, this has a major impact on other countries."³⁶ The Johnson administration hoped that its leadership in civil rights would restrain criticisms of the U.S. government by people of color both at home and abroad. Black Americans, who ranged from conservative to radical, and the Third World might thus be maintained as parts of a large, liberal, "free world" alliance, which could outmaneuver threats from both the Communist left and the white supremacist right.³⁷

Promoting Equality and Restraining Polarization

By the summer of 1964, just eight months after the new president took the oath of office, events in the United States and abroad began to strain his strategy of limiting and defusing racial conflict. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on 2 July, in the midst of a season of extraordinary violence by the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi. A week earlier, three civil rights workers had disappeared in Neshoba County, Mississippi, victims of the forceful response of white residents of the Magnolia State to "the Invasion," as some called the Mississippi Summer Project to register black voters. Sixteen days after the Civil Rights Act became law, the first major race riot of the decade ignited in Harlem, signifying a rejection of white liberalism and its gradualist approach to solving problems of racial discrimination and poverty. Writer and black nationalist Julius Lester observed that the riveting news from Mississippi slipped from the front pages "when Harlem held its own summer project to protest the murder of a thirteen-year-old boy by a policeman. Summer projects, northern style, usually involve filling Coke bottles with gasoline, stuffing rags down the neck, and lighting them."³⁸ White resentment of such actions—dubbed "Goldwater rallies" by gloomy Democratic Party strategists—fueled the Arizona senator's nomination that same month.³⁹

Trouble abroad quickly added to trouble at home. In early August Congress passed the Tonkin Gulf resolution, granting Johnson a free hand in dealing with the situation in Southeast Asia. Civil rights workers listening to the president's radio announcement of air strikes against North Vietnam worried that the administration was embarking on another war before the

struggle to liberate Mississippi and the rest of the South was won.⁴⁰ The very next day, 5 August, rebels in the Congo captured the city of Stanleyville, provoking a crisis in central Africa that quickly led to the use of white mercenaries, American planes, and Belgian paratroopers to free white hostages held by African forces. The Johnson administration's aspiration to manage and control the forces of racial polarization represented an uncertain prospect, but the president believed, with reason, that his best days were still ahead.

The American response to the Congolese rebellion derived from the Johnson administration's determination to avoid entanglements in Africa. Outside South Africa, whose anti-Communist white government seemed firmly in control, the continent held little economic or strategic significance for Americans. Anti-American rhetoric from such radical nationalists as Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah made Johnson wary. Even the explicit efforts of the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union to increase their influence there did not deeply trouble the administration, given the combination of Africans' poverty and strong nationalism. Unlike Southeast Asia, this was one part of the world to which American officials did not simplistically apply the domino theory. Africanists in the State Department generally lacked influence with Johnson, Rusk, and National Security Advisers McGeorge Bundy and Walt Rostow, while Defense, Commerce, and Treasury Department officials were far more concerned with South Africa than the rest of the continent. Key power broker George Ball, the undersecretary of state, had strong Europeanist inclinations that undergirded his determination to stay close to the British and avoid any other potential Third World morasses like Vietnam.⁴¹

In addition, by 1963 the initial romantic enthusiasm for African independence of many white American liberals, both in and out of government, had begun to ebb. The corruption, economic failings, and one-party rule of many new governments on the continent were helping drain away the interest in newly independent Africa evident in the Kennedy years.⁴² Liberals in the Johnson administration no longer seemed so confident about making an analogy to the United States in 1776, in which Africans were seen as doing what white Americans had had to do two centuries earlier. Indeed, liberals worried more about the version of that analogy promoted by conservatives, who viewed Africans not as the white Americans but rather as the Native Americans, with white settlers in southern Africa seen instead as the true spiritual kinfolk of American pioneers.⁴³ This disillusionment with Africa coincided with rising militancy among elements of the civil rights movement and

consequent white liberal dismay. Black folks everywhere, it seemed to whites like Lyndon Johnson, were getting harder to deal with.

African leaders were disappointed by the Johnson administration's lack of interest in them. They admired the president's commitment to civil rights legislation, but racial violence in Birmingham, Selma, Harlem, and elsewhere and the white backlash symbolized by Goldwater troubled them. They missed Kennedy and his greater interest in their continent, and they resented the American use of white mercenaries in the Congo and ongoing U.S. ties to the white minority regimes to the south.⁴⁴ The close American relationship with NATO partner Portugal did not improve the American image among Africans. In May 1964, for example, two deserters from the Portuguese army surfaced in the Congo to denounce the Lisbon government for its indiscriminate slaughter of civilians across the border in Angola, while the U.S. ambassador to Portugal toured Angola during the same month and publicly praised Portuguese colonial practices.⁴⁵ Robert Komer of the NSC optimistically summarized the problem for the president. The Azores base (which the U.S. leased from Portugal), he wrote, "makes it hard to be anti-Portuguese, while the UK's economic stake in Rhodesia and South Africa makes us reluctant to push them too hard." Since Africans could not ignore these concerns, he concluded, "to the extent that we can stray slightly ahead on these issues instead of being reluctantly dragged toward the inevitable, we can keep our African affairs in reasonably good repair." Staying only slightly ahead of white supremacy did not, however, represent the kind of leadership that Africans hoped the United States might provide.⁴⁶

In the Congo in the summer of 1964, the American government quickly fell behind on an issue of great symbolic importance to much of Africa. After the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from the country in June and the return of Moïse Tshombe from exile in fascist Spain as the new prime minister on 5 July, much of the huge, unintegrated nation rose up in simultaneous but uncoordinated rebellions. Tshombe had made himself into perhaps the most hated black political figure in Africa through his leadership of the unsuccessful Karanga secession of 1960-1963, his ready use of white mercenary troops against fellow Congolese, his intimate ties with colonialist Belgian enterprises, and, above all, his responsibility for the murder of the Congolese independence leader and first prime minister Patrice Lumumba.⁴⁷ With a third of the country falling quickly into rebel hands, the Central Intelligence Agency warned Johnson that the pro-Western Tshombe's odds of political survival were only "about even." "Should Tshombe fall," the agency warned, "the

prospects are dark. Extremists would be likely to gain increased influence in Leopoldville, secessionist regimes might break off and disorder would spread."⁴⁸ The Johnson administration's primary concern was to avoid the dissolution of this centrally located African nation, especially at the hands of leftist rebels. This was no time for "another Cuba." Johnson himself had long appreciated Tshombe as an African who openly admired the United States and disliked Communists, and the president failed to recognize the depths of African loathing for a man so closely identified with colonialist interests.⁴⁹

The American response to the crisis in the Congo was to have the CIA organize a private air force to bolster Tshombe's government forces while working with him and the Belgians to hire a mercenary army of some seven hundred white South Africans, Rhodesians, and Europeans to quell the uprisings.⁵⁰ Having helped change the odds in favor of the government forces, the problem for the Johnson administration became one of managing the political fallout on the rest of the continent. George Ball either betrayed nearly inconceivable ignorance of American actions or simply deceived journalist Walter Lippmann in a conversation on 25 August, claiming that the United States was not involved at all in the Congo. Ball's metaphor aptly revealed the American view of the continent: the administration recognized, he said, that it "should not get bogged down in the African swamp." The undersecretary of state identified the ongoing problem for Washington officials regarding African affairs as the limits on "our ability to control" the Congolese and other governments there. Working in the "swamp," it seemed, was perilous, unpredictable, and not very rewarding. It should be strictly a last resort.⁵¹

The Congo in 1964 represented the first use of mercenaries as a direct instrument of U.S. policy in Africa. The white supremacist attitudes of South African and Rhodesian soldiers of fortune created obvious problems for an American government seeking to promote the appearance of a racially egalitarian alliance against leftist influences worldwide. British mercenary leader Mike Hoare explained to a white comrade that "we have a great mission here. The Africans have gotten used to the idea that they can do what they like to us whites, that they can trample on us and spit on us."⁵² His attitude mirrored that of an increasing number of white Americans in late 1964 regarding African Americans. It seemed in one sense that the Johnson administration was colluding with the white backlash in Africa at the same time it was fending off the domestic version of that backlash in the United States. Journalist David Halberstam suggested the irony of the situation by noting that hiring

South African mercenaries to bring peace to the Congo was like the mayor of New York City bringing in the Mississippi Highway Patrol to halt riots in Harlem.⁵³ The Johnson administration's obtrusiveness about African sensitivities and realities surfaced again with the selection of Charles W. Englehard to represent the United States at Zambia's independence celebrations on 24 October. A major financial contributor to Johnson's campaigns, Englehard was well known in Africa as the largest American investor in South Africa and an intimate friend and enthusiastic supporter of the apartheid regime in Pretoria. The editors of the journal *Africa Today* declared him "no more fit to speak for the U.S. in Africa than is Governor George Wallace or the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan."⁵⁴

In November Congolese rebels in Stanleyville seized two thousand white foreigners, mostly Belgians but also several Americans, as a hostage shield against an approaching force of mercenaries and Congolese government troops. On 24 November American planes flying from a British base on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic dropped Belgian paratroopers in a largely successful mission to rescue the hostages, although a few dozen were executed at the last minute by their captors. That same day the mercenaries also reached Stanleyville, and the combined mercenary and Belgian forces made swift and brutal work of the rebels and many civilians. As Bundy had warned Johnson a week earlier, an American role in the operation would carry with it "real political costs in the Congo" and in Africa generally, but the storm of criticism that followed seemed to dissipate quickly over the next few months.⁵⁵

Africans objected to the rescue operation because they saw it as a reassertion of external white control over the sovereignty of an African state. They were appalled by Tshombe's use of white mercenaries against fellow Congolese, especially as they learned of what even the CIA admitted were the mercenaries' tactics of terrorizing civilian populations through robbery, rape, beatings, torture, and murder. While *Life* magazine described them as resembling "rough-hewn college boys," the mercenaries' attitudes were more accurately encapsulated in the answer Wally Harper, a South African, gave to a journalist's question regarding how he felt about fighting and killing people in the Congo: "Well, I've done a lot of cattle farming, you know, and killing a lot of beasts; it's just like, you know, cattle farming, and just seeing dead beasts all over the place. It didn't worry me at all."⁵⁶ Africans intensely resented both Western actions and news reports that valued white lives more highly than black lives. A Kenyan delegate at the UN Security Council re-

jected America... claims that the hostage rescue was a humanitarian operation: "Where is this humanitarianism when the white mercenaries are allowed full license to murder innocent African men, women and children? ... Where is this humanitarianism when American Negroes are brutally done to death in Mississippi and elsewhere?"⁵⁷ African American leaders across the political spectrum shared this skepticism, from Martin Luther King, Jr., with his mild but firm criticism to Malcolm X and his searing denunciation. Returning to New York from his second trip to Africa on the very day of the Stanleyville rescue, Malcolm called Tshombe "the worst African on earth" and the American policy of supporting him "insane." He warned that Africans were beginning to recognize the common ground in the U.S. government's apparent disregard for black lives in both the American South and the Congo.⁵⁸

White Americans saw matters differently. The Johnson administration, the media, and the predominantly white public all overlooked the atrocities committed by the mercenaries against Congolese civilians. They focused exclusively on the white hostages and abuses by the rebels, and they were disgusted by African condemnations of the rescue effort as "imperialist aggression." The scenario of white hostages tormented by "savage" kidnappers touched a deep nerve in the American psyche, stirring emblematic memories of generations of violent European-Native American conflict, refreshed and distorted by the Hollywood westerns of the post-World War II era. This scenario also touched old fears of plantation slave revolts and potential black rapists, especially in the white South. Coming so soon after another summer of well-publicized white brutality against nonviolent blacks in the American South, the Congo involvement pushed many politically moderate Americans, whether reluctantly or eagerly, toward the more traditional color-coding of savagery in the American national narrative. The U.S. ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson accused African critics of "black racism," and *Time* magazine highlighted reports of rebel cannibalism and sexual mutilation of European nuns and priests. Citing the selfless medical work of American missionary physician Paul Carlson among the Congolese poor, *Time* put his picture on its cover and argued that his murder proved "that Black African civilization ... is largely a pretense." The magazine blasted African criticisms of the rescue operation in revealing fashion: "The sane part of the world could only wonder whether Black Africa can be taken seriously at all, or whether, for the foreseeable future, it is beyond the reach of reason."⁵⁹

Here, ultimately, was the problem: the West was "sane" and Africa was not,

at least for now. Grounded in a fanciful depiction of the Congolese rebellion and its aftermath, one intended by its proponents to justify the CIA's actions, *Time's* conclusion about black Africans echoed claims of black immaturity long promoted by white Southerners to justify black subjugation. Bundy chose the paternalistic image of disobedient children in explaining the problem to Johnson in January 1965. Citing Africans' "willful misunderstanding of our paratroop rescue," the national security adviser recommended some careful, parental management of African feelings in the new year.⁶⁰

As the political and racial crisis deepened in the Congo in the summer and fall of 1964, Johnson was confronted at home with the spreading dissatisfaction of African Americans with Democratic Party leadership.⁶¹ A sharp split became evident at the party's national convention in Atlantic City in August, where simmering tensions between civil rights activists and the Democratic Party boiled over. Organizers in the South had for years faced violence and danger on a daily basis as they tried to register blacks to vote. They had operated in conditions often similar in many respects to those of a war zone. They perceived their opponents as the local Democratic Party elites, with the Ku Klux Klan as their enforcers.⁶² The slow pace of change in the South and the persistence of white brutality were fraying the commitment of many organizers to nonviolence, especially among the less religiously motivated SNCC workers.⁶³ The violence of the white response to the Mississippi Summer Project further deepened their alienation, as did the ongoing failure of the federal government to protect civil rights workers.

When Johnson and the national Democratic Party then rejected the bid of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to be seated in Atlantic City as the only democratically elected delegation from that state, accepting the all-white party regulars instead, many civil rights workers had had enough. With Washington's dominant party seemingly on the side of white Southern authorities, America itself appeared to many as no more than Mississippi writ large. They found it increasingly hard to disagree with Malcolm X's advice that "the best way to stop the Ku Klux Klan is to talk to the Ku Klux Klan in the only language it understands, for you can't talk French to someone who speaks German and communicate." The road to black power was opening up, and SNCC's Stokely Carmichael would soon conclude about the Democratic Party that it was "as ludicrous for Negroes to join as it would have been for Jews to join the Nazi Party in the 1930s."⁶⁴

Like Africans abroad, African Americans at home were proving difficult for the Johnson administration to manage or control. During the fall presiden-

tial campaign. JOE and SNCC refused the administration's request through Roy Wilkins and civil rights activist Bayard Rustin for a moratorium on demonstrations to avoid encouraging further negative white reactions. The crux of Johnson's problem with the MFDP at Atlantic City had been its rejection of his compromise offer of two at-large delegates, as the president's forces refused to allow any possible dissenters to mar his renomination triumph.⁶⁵ Johnson believed he had to preserve the support of white Southerners for his reelection, and they had threatened to walk out of the convention if the black Mississippians were seated. Frustrated by televised pictures of MFDP pickets protesting the seating of the regular Mississippi delegates, the president seized his phone to order the top official of one of the national television networks, "Get your goddamn cameras off the niggers out front and back on the speaker's stand inside, goddamn it!"⁶⁶ Even his stalwart supporter Wilkins had to admit that Johnson's display of political power in defeating the MFDP, eased by access to FBI wiretaps of MFDP strategy sessions in Atlantic City, "wasn't one of his finest hours." "The lasting sense of grievance," Wilkins noted, caused "terrible damage to relations between white liberals and black organizers."⁶⁷

Johnson's black support was beginning to slip away on the left at the same time as whites were starting to abandon him on the right. Much of the civil rights movement clearly had different perspectives and goals than the White House: social transformation of America from below versus gradualist leadership from above; distrust of rigid anti-Communism versus global leadership of the non-Communist world; and rejection of the legitimacy of Jim Crow versus respect for Southern officials. Perhaps the most crucial difference came in their views of the white Southern leadership. For civil rights workers, white supremacists like George Wallace and Jim Eastland were dire enemies in a struggle for control and direction of the American South. Black organizers were appalled that the U.S. government could send enormous armies halfway around the globe to defend the "free world," while refusing to order even one American soldier into the South to protect the legal right of American citizens to vote. For the White House, however, segregationist officials were an obnoxious but crucial part of the power structure of the federal and state governments and the Democratic Party—undoubtedly stubborn and backward-looking, but part of the respected leadership of the United States. Like the white authorities in southern Africa, they were in no way an enemy against whom the U.S. government should use force. For better or worse, Johnson believed, they were a part of "us."⁶⁸

Despite these differences with the civil rights movement, the Johnson administration managed through 1964 to fend off most of the forces of racial polarization and keep its liberal coalition moving forward. Johnson's leadership in passing the landmark Civil Rights Act had been superb, and he succeeded in keeping the American role in Vietnam out of the fall presidential campaign. A landslide 61 percent of the voters—including almost all blacks casting ballots—elected him in November, sweeping into office as well a large Democratic majority in Congress more liberal than any in thirty years. Goldwater carried only his native Arizona and five states in the Deep South. While this portentous shift of white Southern voters away from a fellow Southerner and toward the Republican party suggested eventual trouble, for now Johnson savored his mandate for continued liberal reform, especially in the area of his starkest difference with Goldwater: civil rights. White supremacists in South Africa confirmed that reading of the election, registering their dismay that Goldwater did not symbolize what one representative of apartheid had anticipated as a "triumph of conservatism in the West," which would have allowed the United States to shake off its "sickly humanism."⁶⁹

An explosion of racial violence in Alabama four months later, on 7 March 1965, shocked the American people and provided Lyndon Johnson with his greatest opportunity to demonstrate his leadership of the nation. Viewers of the Sunday evening ABC television movie *Judgment at Nuremberg* were treated to the irony of a news flash showing home-grown, state-supported storm trooper activity right in the United States. Heavily armed Alabama state troopers and Dallas County sheriffs viciously assaulted a line of peaceful, unarmed civil rights marchers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge outside Selma. Television cameras captured the ferocity of the beatings for a national and international audience. Having just been reassured a few months earlier that the events in Stanleyville showed racial savagery to be a problem of Africans (and perhaps their descendants), Americans and their Texan president were dismayed by the most brutal repression yet of any civil rights demonstration. No surreptitious act of night riders, this was a full-scale riot by the uniformed authorities of an American state.⁷⁰

What did the events at Selma mean? For most white Alabamians, the police action saved them from the indignity of hundreds of black Americans marching symbolically down the Jefferson Davis Highway to Montgomery, the capital of the old Confederacy. The Alabama state legislature passed a resolution charging the marchers with conducting sexual orgies, leading several nuns in the group to joke about their lost reputations. SNCC chairman John

Lewis responded to the questions of the press: "These white segregationists always think about fornication. That's why you see so many shades of brown on this march."⁷¹ For Vice President Hubert Humphrey and some others in the administration, the issue was not carnal but ideological: they believed Communist agents among the Selma demonstrators had successfully provoked a violent confrontation.⁷² For FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover the problem was one of both sexual and political subversion, but he also understood that the strong national reaction against the police violence meant the ending of an era of quiet FBI alliance with Southern authorities in the defense of Jim Crow.⁷³ Perhaps the most illuminating evidence of the nature of the Alabama conflict appeared in the symbolism of flags: black Selma high schoolers in the march carried both the Stars and Stripes and the blue flag of the United Nations, while state patrol cars bore Confederate flags on their front license plates, and the capitol dome in Montgomery flew the Confederate flag above the Alabama state flag. Displaying the only American flags in sight and proclaiming their connection to a larger international community, young black Alabamians in their own state seemed to be walking through a foreign country.⁷⁴

The events in Selma unfolded in a troubling international context. On the day after state troopers assaulted African American and white civil rights activists in Alabama, the first 3,500 U.S. marines waded ashore in South Vietnam to defend the Danang airbase. With his skull fractured by a police baton, John Lewis declared angrily, "I don't see how President Johnson can send troops to Vietnam [and] the Congo . . . and can't send troops to Selma, Alabama." Lewis and others could not believe that democracy deserved greater defense abroad than at home.⁷⁵ Harris Wofford, the associate director of the Peace Corps, flew to Montgomery on 8 March to join a second march because after "two years in Africa, I knew afresh that America's relationship with the world depended on how speedily and fully we ended racial discrimination at home."⁷⁶ That same day Bundy warned Johnson that "U.S. prestige and influence on the African Continent have never been lower," endangering American strategic, economic, and political interests there. The problem, Bundy said in language again implying a parental analogy, was that Africans were not convinced that anyone at the highest level of the U.S. government cared about them, while diplomats from China and the Soviet Union lavished public attention on them.⁷⁷ Events like those in Selma did little to improve African confidence in the United States and its leadership in a multiracial world. In a public meeting about American ties to South Africa, CORE's

James Farmer argued that "the fight against aggression and for equality is essentially the same struggle in South Africa and in Selma."⁷⁸ The Johnson administration would not have disagreed, but its primary concern was not swiftly achieving racial equality but avoiding friction and instability. In speech notes made three days after the Selma incident, Johnson defined America's mission in Africa as "[a]verting racial conflicts between [the white-ruled] parts of Southern Africa and the rest of the continent."⁷⁹

Domestically, Johnson seized the opportunity arising from the national outrage about what came to be called Bloody Sunday in Selma to make a pre-emptive strike against further racial polarization. Aware that many younger African Americans agreed with SNCC's James Forman—"If we can't sit at the table of democracy, then we'll knock the fucking legs off"—the president delivered the most famous speech of his career to a joint session of Congress on 15 March.⁸⁰ "We have already waited a hundred years and more" since equality was promised, he pronounced in his most serious tone, "and the time for waiting is gone." With a determination unusual even for this forceful man, the president demanded that Congress pass a national voting rights bill to guarantee finally the most basic right of citizenship to all Americans. Selma marked a turning point in the nation's "unending search for freedom," he said, just as surely as Concord, Lexington, and Appomattox had done generations earlier. In a final twist that shocked even his most sympathetic listeners, Johnson seemed to identify himself, the U.S. government, and the American people for the first time fully with the cause of the civil rights movement. Pausing for emphasis, he declared: "And we . . . shall . . . overcome!" Stunned, the audience sat silent for an instant as one Southern congressman murmured, "Goddamn." Then the room erupted in a sustained standing ovation.⁸¹

Martin Luther King, Jr., watching the speech on television in a Selma living room, began to cry, something his aides had not seen before. Roy Wilkins, who was sitting in the audience on Capitol Hill that night, remembered that "at that moment, I confess, I loved L.B.J." At this high-water mark of the movement for racial justice in the United States, Lyndon Johnson was in the lead. He followed through by sending federal troops to protect the reconstituted marchers in Alabama and by pushing the Voting Rights Act through Congress with remarkable speed despite a Southern filibuster.⁸² His assistants made certain that the international audience did not miss the significance of the stand he had taken, sending copies of his speech to the leader of each African nation.⁸³ In a graduation address at Howard University

on 4 June, Johnson went further in his support for African Americans by laying out the logic of what would become known as affirmative action: "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, and then say you are free to compete with all the others, and still just believe that you have been completely fair." He "spelled out the meaning of full integration for Negroes," the noted black novelist Ralph Ellison recalled, in a way no other president ever had.⁸⁴

Trouble in Vietnam, Los Angeles, and Rhodesia

The spring of 1965 marked the turning point in the Johnson administration's journey from great success to deep failure. From the moral heights of leading the campaign for national voting rights legislation at home, the president and his advisers tumbled toward the boggy ground of the Southeast Asian quagmire, the troubled waters of urban violence at home, and the swamp of white supremacy in southern Africa. The administration's growing international involvements, first in the brief occupation of the Dominican Republic in late April and then in the shift to a full-blown ground war in Vietnam in July, brought an end to most of its impressive domestic achievements in the areas of economic and racial justice.

The issue of race was never far below the surface for American policymakers dealing with Southeast Asia. General Maxwell Taylor, the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, laid out for the Joint Chiefs of Staff his strong reservations about committing American ground combat troops to the country: "The white-faced soldier, armed, equipped and trained as he is, is not a suitable guerrilla fighter for the Asian forests and jungles."⁸⁵ Administration officials on both sides of the debate about further involvement in Vietnam feared what dissenter George Ball called "the appearance of a white man's war."⁸⁶ Johnson's appointment in July of Major Hugh Robinson as the first black military aide to a U.S. president seemed no coincidence in this regard.⁸⁷ McGeorge Bundy advised the president to reject Ball's recommendation to withdraw from Indochina, but not before receiving "pretty tight and hard analyses of some disputed questions like the following . . . What are the chances of our getting into a white man's war with all the brown men against us or apathetic?"⁸⁸ The Johnson administration believed it could not afford to pull out of Vietnam, even as it acknowledged the likely racial character of a deeper involvement in the war there.

- and the *Struggle to Save American Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), chap. 6, "The South Africa Years."
106. CIA, "The South-West Africa Issue in the United Nations," 19 April 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL.
107. Satterthwaite to Rusk, 16 May 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL.
108. Noer, "New Frontiers and Old Priorities," 277; Mahoney, *JFK*, 241-242; Christopher Coker, *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 27. McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, 352; Noer, "New Frontiers and Old Priorities," 275.
109. Bundy to Kennedy, 13 July 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL; Rusk to Harriman, 15 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-63, 21:635.
110. Rusk to U.S. Embassy in South Africa, 25 October 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-63, 21:611.
111. *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress—The Struggle against Apartheid: A Documentary Survey*, ed. Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 89-90.
112. Satterthwaite to Rusk, 6 May 1963, enclosed in C. K. (Carl Kaysen) to Kennedy, 16 May 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL.
113. Satterthwaite to Rusk, 18 December 1962, enclosing "Country Internal Defense Plan," NSF, box 3, JFKL.
114. Mandela, excerpt from courtroom statement, Rivonia trial, 20 April 1964, in Johns and Davis, *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress*, 115-133. See also "The Communist Party in South Africa" [from *Africa Report*, March 1961], NSF, box 2, JFKL.
115. Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 129-132.
116. CIA, "Subversive Movements in South Africa," 10 May 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL; Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 206; Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited*, 192; Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 138-139. The supposedly coincidental timing of a visit to Durban by a U.S. naval task force on 31 May 1961, the day South Africa officially became an independent republic, was doubted by African observers. They tended instead to see U.S. marines demonstrating flame throwers and machine guns and U.S. helicopters flying over African neighborhoods as evidence of American support for the Pretoria government. Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited*, 192.
118. Satterthwaite to State Department, 17 March 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-63, 6:8-619, esp. n. 4; Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited*, 188.
119. CIA, "Subversive Movements in South Africa," NSF, box 3, JFKL. This docu-

ment has also been reprinted in Mokoena, *South Africa and the United States*, 188-194.

120. Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel, "CIA Tip Led to '62 Arrest of Mandela: Ex-Official Tells of US 'Coup' to Aid S. Africa," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 10 June 1990, 1, 14.

121. Albright and Kunstel, "CIA Tip." Two days before the president's death, Robert Kennedy told Bundy that regarding black liberation fighters in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Angola, and Mozambique, "I gather that we really don't have much of a policy or we are just beginning to develop one." Such ignorance of the CIA's possible involvement in an area deemed peripheral seems perfectly plausible, despite Robert Kennedy's central role in administration policy on civil rights and on many international issues. Robert Kennedy to Bundy, 20 November 1963, NSF, Confidential File, box 76, LBJL.

122. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 59-60.

123. Branch, *Paving the Waters*, 414 (quotation), 606; Chafe, "Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement"; Strober, "Let Us Begin Anew," 282; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 60; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 161; O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 201.

124. Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 52-53; Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 4-5; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 162-164; Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 281; Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 141. Senior figures in the administration

shared this attention to racial symbolism and its impact abroad, from Robert Kennedy initially recommending William Hastie for the first opening on the highest court ("It would mean so much overseas that we had a Negro on the Supreme Court") to Lyndon Johnson's reaction while watching the lift-off of the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth ("If John Glenn were only a Negro"). Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 41; Miller, *Lyndon*, 278. Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 90-91, 95-105, 113-117, 128-131, 144-147; Chafe, "Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement"; O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 236-237.

126. King to "My dear Fellow Clergymen," ("Letter from a Birmingham Jail"), 16 April 1963, copy in Burke Marshall Papers, box 8, JFKL (also reprinted in William H. Chafe and Harvard Sitkoff, eds., *A History of Our Time*, 3d ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1991]).

127. Wofford to Kennedy, 29 May 1961, Howard K. Smith, CBS weekly news analysis, 21 May 1961, and Wofford to Kennedy, 23 January 1962, in President's Office Files, box 67, JFKL.

128. Dittmer, *Local People*, 169; Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 44; O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 122.

129. "Negro Leaders Seek Halt in Freedom Ride Testing; Murrow Cites Reaction,"

- New York Times*, 25 June 1961, 1; O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 211-212 (quotation); Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 145; Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 125, 155-156; Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 280-283; Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 56-68; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 472-479; Dittmer, *Local People*, 92-94.
130. Both antiracist organizers and some journalists were well aware of this ironic analogy of the South to the Soviet Union; see, for example, Dittmer, *Local People*, 90-91, and Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 114-115.
131. Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 110-111; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 356, 364.
132. Andrew Young, OHT, p. 5, LBJL; Dittmer, *Local People*, 138-142.
133. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 665 (whites, president); Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 380 (attorney general). From the perspective of local civil rights workers, as John Dittmer has shown, the whole crisis at Oxford was a "sideshow"—created by a solo operator, Meredith—to the real agenda of the slow, steady organizing of black communities across the Magnolia State. See Dittmer, *Local People*, 138. The Kennedys, similarly, saw Meredith as a grandstander who was partly responsible for the crisis and the harm it caused to American interests abroad.
134. Chafe, "Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement," 71; Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 133-135; Glenn T. Askew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
135. Korry to Rusk, 23 May 1963, and "Status Report of African Reactions to Civil Rights in the United States," 6 July 1963, enclosed in Read to Bundy, 8 July 1963, both in NSF, box 3, JFKL; "Reaction to Racial Tension in Birmingham, Alabama," 14 May 1963, and Wilson to Kennedy, 17 May 1963, both in President's Office Files, box 96, JFKL; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 783-786.
136. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 791.
137. Ibid., photograph no. 60, following p. 688.
138. O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 226; Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 86-87.
139. Memorandum of Kennedy-Wallace conversation, 18 May 1963, President's Office Files, box 96, JFKL.
140. Tom Wicker, "Kennedy Sees 'Moral Crisis' in U.S.," *New York Times*, 12 June 1963, 1, 20; Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 91-93 (Robert Kennedy); Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 354-356.
141. Tad Szulc, "Kennedy Asks Break in Cold War," *New York Times*, 11 June 1963, 1; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 217.
142. Rusk to all American diplomatic and consular posts, 19 June 1963, and Ken-

- nedly to all American diplomatic and consular posts, 19 June 1963, in NSF, box 3, JFKL.
143. "Status Report of African Reactions to Civil Rights in the United States," 6 July 1963, enclosed in Read to Bundy, 7 July 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL; "Status Report of African Reactions to Civil Rights in the United States," 12 July 1963, and "Recent Worldwide Comment on the U.S. Racial Problem," 19 July 1963, in NSF, box 295, JFKL.
144. "Status Report of African Reactions to Civil Rights in the United States," 12 July 1963, and "Recent Worldwide Comment on the U.S. Racial Problem," 19 July 1963, in NSF, box 295, JFKL.
145. Stern, *Calculating Visions*, 89; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 825. Ross Barnett's appearance at the subsequent trial of Evers's accused killer, Byron De La Beckwith, was no more encouraging. Medgar's wife, Myrlie, recalls Barnett walking into the courtroom, slapping Beckwith warmly on the shoulder, and sitting down next to him. Jurors had no trouble discerning the message from their governor that this man should be acquitted, and he was. Beckwith was re-tried and convicted thirty years later, when new evidence of official tampering with the trial came to light. Claudia Dreifus, "The Widow Gets Her Verdict," *New York Times Magazine*, 27 November 1994.
146. James Farmer, "The March on Washington: The Zenith of the Southern Movement," in *New Directions in Civil Rights Studies*, ed. Armstead L. Robinson and Patricia Sullivan (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 31-32; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 580; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 185.
147. O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 120 (quotation); Dittmer, *Local People*, 128; Lawson, *Running for Freedom*, 83-86.
148. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 169-170.
149. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 431; Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 187.
150. Thomas J. Friedman, "Cold War without End," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August 1993, 45 ("Why can't"); O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 222 ("to persecute"); Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 161 ("the same people").
151. Lewis, *Portrait of a Decade*, 146.
152. Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 139.
153. Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 120.
154. Dittmer, *Local People*, 255.
155. USIA, "Recent Worldwide Comment on the U.S. Racial Problem," 19 July 1963, NSF, box 295, JFKL; "Reaction to Racial Tension in Birmingham, Alabama," 14 May 1963, President's Office Files, box 96, JFKL; Harold R. Isaacs, "American Race Relations and the United States Image in World Affairs," *Journal of Human Relations* 10 (Winter-Spring 1962): 266-280.

156. Forman, *Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 177-178 (quotation); Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 305.
157. Wallner to Rusk, 31 January 1961, NSF, box 2, JFKL; Romano, "No Diplomatic Immunity."
158. Wofford to Kennedy, 23 January 1962, President's Office Files, box 67, JFKL; Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 149; Cabell Phillips, "U.S. Is Worried by Capital's Bias," *New York Times*, 26 May 1961, 26; "The Color Line in Diplomacy," *U.S. News and World Report*, 27 March 1961, 78-79; "When African Diplomats Come to Washington," *U.S. News and World Report*, 12 June 1961, 86-88.
159. Sanjuan to Chief of Protocol, 21 September 1961, enclosed in Battle to Dutton, 29 September 1961, NSF, box 2, JFKL.
160. Mahoney, *JFK*, 23. For Rusk's steep learning curve on this issue, see Schoenbaum, *Waging Peace and War*, 381-382.
161. Isaacs, *The New World of Negro Americans*, 17-18.
162. "Big Step Ahead on a High Road," *Life*, 8 December 1961, 32-39; "Department Urges Maryland to Pass Public Accommodations Bill," *Department of State Bulletin*, 2 October 1961, 551-552; "Troubled Route," *Time*, 13 October 1961; Timothy P. Maga, "Barling the 'Ugly American' at Home: The Special Protocol Service and the New Frontier, 1961-63," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 3, 1 (1992): 126-142; Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 120-123; McKay, *Africa in World Politics*, 405-407; Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 126-127.
163. Williams to Rusk, 23 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-63, 21:338.
164. Memorandum of conversation, 23 November 1962, *ibid.*, 622-624.
165. Jon Nordheimer, "A Creek, Negro Run, Is the Source of Debate," *New York Times*, 3 November 1994, B6.
166. King, "The Time For Freedom Has Come," *New York Times Magazine*, 10 September 1961, 25, 118-119.
167. King to "My dear Fellow Clergymen," 16 April 1963, in Chafe and Sitkoff, *A History of Our Time*, 187.
168. Horace Mann Bond, "Howe and Isaacs in the Bush: The Ram in the Thicket" [1961], reprinted in Hill and Kilson, *Apropos of Africa*, 278-288; Ferguson to State Department, 18 December 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-54, 11:70; McKay, *Africa*, 392-393.
169. James Reston, "Copper Sun, Scarlet Sea, What Is Africa to Me?" *New York Times*, 17 February 1961, 26; "Riot in Gallery Halts U.N. Debate," *New York Times*, 16 February 1961, 1, 10.
170. Wofford address to the National Civil Liberties Clearing House, 23 March 1961, President's Office Files, box 97, JFKL.

171. See Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; Plummer, *Rising Wind*; Duberman, *Robeson*; Horne, *Black and Red*.
 172. Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 129-132.
 173. Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, 266; Houser, "Freedom's Struggle Crosses Oceans and Mountains," 186-187.
 174. Jonathan Zimmerman, "Beyond Double Consciousness: Black Peace Corps Volunteers in Africa, 1961-1971," *Journal of American History* 82 (December 1995): 1015-1018.
 175. O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 225.
 176. Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 705.
 177. State Department, "Guidelines for Policy and Operations: Republic of South Africa," May 1962, NSF, box 2, JFKL.
 178. Williams to Rusk, 12 June 1963, NSF, box 3, JFKL.
 179. Rusk to Kennedy, 21 June 1963, NSF, boxes 158-161, JFKL (quotation); Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 144-146.
 180. Isaacs, *The New World of Negro Americans*, 16.
 181. See, for example, Dittmer, *Local People*, 211, and Peter G. Bourne, *Jimmy Carter: A Comprehensive Biography from Plains to Postpresidency* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 140.
- 5. The Perilous Path to Equality*
1. Steven F. Lawson, "Mixing Moderation with Militancy," in *The Johnson Years*, vol. 3, *LBJ at Home and Abroad*, ed. Robert A. Divine (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 105; Bruce Miroff, "Presidential Leverage over Social Movements: The Johnson White House and Civil Rights," *Journal of Politics* 43, 1 (February 1981): 21-22. Julius Lester suggested black radicals' awareness of Johnson's desire to co-opt them when he referred to the president's extraordinary civil rights speech of 15 March 1965 with its declaration, "We shall overcome": "One began having nightmares of Lyndon Johnson standing before a joint session of Congress and closing an address with the words 'Black Power!'" Julius Lester, *Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mammy* (New York: Dial, 1968), 112-114.
 2. Eric F. Goldman, *The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 352; Joseph A. Califano, Jr., *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson: The White House Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 24, 196-203.
 3. Clifford Alexander, OHT, 13-15, LBJL; Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), x; Lawson, "Mixing Moderation with Militancy," 100.
 4. Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, 340.

5. *Ibid.*, 10-11.

6. Miller, *Lyndon*, 280-282 (quotation); Waldo Heinrichs, "Lyndon B. Johnson: Change and Continuity," in *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*, ed. Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 25-26; Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, 194.

7. Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 15.

8. Miller, *Lyndon*, 455-456.

9. *Ibid.*, 294; Heinrichs, "Lyndon B. Johnson," 25.

10. Lloyd C. Gardner, *Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1995).

11. Miller, *Lyndon*, 466.

12. Sandra C. Taylor, "Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnamese," in *Shadow on the White House: Presidents and the Vietnam War, 1945-1975*, ed. David L. Anderson (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 123. Johnson was not exaggerating: the speech Ky had just given in Honolulu had been prepared by the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Woods, *Fulbright*, 403-404.

13. Ronnie Dugger, *The Politician—The Life and Times of Lyndon Johnson: The Drive for Power, from the Frontier to Master of the Senate* (New York: Norton, 1982), 32.

14. Miller, *Lyndon*, 489-490; Bruce J. Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994), 142.

15. Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 298; Roy Wilkins, OHT, 6, LBJL.

16. David M. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 31-32 (quotation); Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*, 134; Terence Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," in *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*, ed. Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 245-248; Gerald E. Thomas, "The Black Revolt: The United States and Africa in the 1960s," in *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations during the 1960s*, ed. Diane B. Kunz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 326-327.

17. Roger Wilkins, *A Man's Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 132; Louis Martin, OHT, 15, LBJL; Andrew Young, OHT, 19, LBJL; Ramsey Clark, OHT (III), 19-20, LBJL.

18. "Lyndon Johnson and the Civil Rights Revolution: A Panel Discussion," in *Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Uses of Power*, ed. Bernard J. Firestone and Robert C. Vogt (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1988), 181 (quotation); Robert Dallek, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York:

Oxford University Press, 1991), 519-520; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 111-121. Johnson liked to explain his conservative voting record as a congressman and senator from Texas as a matter of simple survival: "There's nothing in the world more useless than a dead liberal." Miller, *Lyndon*, 69.

19. Califano, *Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 56; Miller, *Lyndon*, 177.

20. Dallek, *Lone Star Rising*, 583-584.

21. Califano, *Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 177-178.

22. *Ibid.*, 337 (quotation); Miller, *Lyndon*, 187-188.

23. Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 413.

24. O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 289.

25. Lawson, "Mixing Moderation with Militancy," 83-86, 96-99, 104-105.

26. Miller, *Lyndon*, 454-455.

27. Markman to Johnson, 1 February 1967, WHCF Welfare, box 28, LBJL.

28. Robert Sherrill, *The Accidental President* (New York: Grossman, 1967), 191.

29. James Farmer, OHT (II), 27-28, LBJL; Lawson, "Mixing Moderation with Militancy," 97-100; Miller, *Lyndon*, 435; Wilkins, *A Man's Life*, 242.

30. Johnson, "The American Promise," remarks to a joint session of Congress, 15 March 1965, NSF, CF, box 77, LBJL; H. W. Brands, *The Wages of Globalism: Lyndon Johnson and the Limits of American Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4, 27-28.

31. Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 257-258 ("sneakers"); "Edison Dictaphone Recording: LBJ-Sorensen," 3 June 1963, George Reedy Office Files, box 1, LBJL.

32. Goldman, *Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 245-248.

33. James Farmer, OHT (II), 19-20, 25, LBJL; Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 172-73; Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism*, 76.

34. Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 243, 296, 300-301; Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors*, 45; Fire, *Richard B. Russell*, 404-405; Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 313-314.

35. Undated, unsigned memo, Marvin Watson Office Files, box 18, LBJL.

36. Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*, 147 (quotation); Carl Rowan to Johnson, 21 July 1964, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL; David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 169; Piero Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!": The United States, the Mercenaries, and the Congo, 1964-65, "Diplomatic History" 18, 2 (Spring 1994): 222, n. 81; C. Eric Lincoln, "The Race Problem and International Relations," *New South* 21, 4 (Fall 1966): 2-3.

37. Harold R. Isaacs, "Color in World Affairs," *Foreign Affairs* 47 (January 1969): 247-250; Lawson, "Mixing Moderation with Militancy," 104-106.

38. Lester, *Look Out, Whitey!* 22-23.

39. Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 222.

40. Thomas R. West and James W. Mooney, eds., *To Redeem a Nation: A History and Anthology of the Civil Rights Movement* (St. James, N.Y.: Brandywine, 1993), 219.

41. Haynes to Komer, 2 November 1965, NSF, CF, box 97, LBJL; transcript of telephone conversation, Ball and Greenfield, 10 November 1965, George Ball Papers, box 1, LBJL; Komer to Johnson, 16 June 1965, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL; Anthony Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option: American Policy toward Southern Rhodesia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 67-70; Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," 246-251; Henry F. Graff, *The Tuesday Cabinet: Deliberation and Decision on Peace and War under Lyndon B. Johnson* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 75-76.

42. Staniland, *American Intellectuals and African Nationalists*, 99-139.

43. *Ibid.*, 229-231.

44. Carl Rowan to Johnson, 21 July 1964, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL; Rowan to Bundy, 29 September 1964, NSF, International Meetings and Travel File, boxes 33, 34, LBJL; Lincoln, "The Race Problem and International Relations," 12; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 237.

45. "Angola Genocide Laid to Portugal," *New York Times*, 24 May 1964, clipping in NSF, CF, boxes 79, 80, LBJL; Attwood to Rusk, 1 June 1964, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL.

46. Komer to Johnson, 16 June 1965, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL; Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, 117; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 207-208, n. 5; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 230-232.

47. Crawford Young, "Rebellion and the Congo," in *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rothberg and Ali A. Mazrui (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 969-1011, esp. 969-74, 1000-1007; Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," 257.

48. CIA, "Short-Term Prospects for the Tshombe Government in the Congo," 5 August 1964, NSF, National Intelligence Estimates, boxes 8, 9, LBJL. From the agency's perspective, Tshombe evidently did not qualify as an "extremist."

49. Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*, 38-39, 118-119; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 208-209; Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," 256; Mahoney, *JFK*, 289.

50. "How C.I.A. Put 'Instant Air Force' into Congo," *New York Times*, 26 April 1966, 1, 30; Mahoney, *JFK*, 230.

51. Transcript of telephone conversation, Lippmann and Ball, 25 August 1964, Ball Papers, box 2, LBJL.

52. Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 207-208, 216-217.

53. Mahoney, *JFK*, 230. Burke Marshall of the Justice Department remembered

the all-white Mississippi Highway Patrol in 1964 as "better than a lot of sheriffs" in the state but still "full of very, very low-grade types of police officers, to put it mildly." Marshall, OHT, 31, LBJL.

54. "Opinion: Englehard in Zambia" [editorial], *Africa Today* 11, 8 (October 1964): 3.

55. *Memos of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: McGeorge Bundy to President Johnson, 1963-1966* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1985; microfilm, 4 reels), contains many of Bundy's key memos to Johnson and other administration officials. See Bundy to Johnson, 16 November 1964, reel 2, frame 47; Young, "Rebellion and the Congo," 974-975; Lake, *The "Tar Baby" Option*, 75-76.

56. Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 218, 231.

57. Segal, *The Race War*, 108-110 (quotation); Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," 258-259.

58. Malcolm X, *The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*, ed. Archie Epps (New York: Morrow, 1968), 165-168 (quotation); "Dr. King Advocates Congo Withdrawal," *New York Times*, 14 December 1964, 3; Houser, "Freedom's Struggle Crosses Oceans and Mountains," 184; Moore, *Castro, the Blacks, and Africa*, 188-192; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 233, 236.

59. "The Congo Massacre," *Time*, 4 December 1964, 28-32; Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda," 260; Mintet, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited*, 152-153; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming!" 230-233.

60. Bundy to Johnson, 19 January 1965, in Bundy, *Memos of the Special Assistant*, reel 2, frame 314.

61. Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 341-509.

62. The precise level of violence against blacks in the South in the 1960s eludes measurement, but tantalizing bits of evidence suggest that the visible part may have been merely the tip of a hidden iceberg. The FBI investigation of the murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman in Neshoba County, Mississippi, in the summer of 1964, for example, included the dredging of swamps, which recovered several black corpses and parts of many more. South American-style "disappearances" seem to have been more than a remote possibility. Other forms of violence abounded as well, of course, such as coerced sexual relations between white law officers and African American women. On both of these matters, see O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 173. On the analogy to war, see David Halberstam, *The Children* (New York: Random House, 1998), 7-8.

63. Richard H. King, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University, 1992), 167-168, 174-175; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the*

- Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 175.
64. Epps, *The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*, 172; Herbert H. Haines, *Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream, 1954-1970* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 57.
 65. James Farmer, OHT (II), 2-6, LBJL.
 66. Sherrill, *The Accidental President*, 19 (quotation); Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 168.
 67. Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 305; O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 185-190; David J. Garrow, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis* (New York: Norton, 1981), 118-119.
 68. The increasingly different perspectives of the White House and the civil rights movement could also be seen in Johnson's use of prominent Republican and former CIA chief Allen Dulles as an emissary to Mississippi in the summer of 1964 to investigate Klan violence. The president and his advisers were clearly pleased to use Dulles's mission as an effective form of public pressure on the recalcitrant head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, embarrassing the bureau into taking a more active role in heading off further Klan violence. Civil rights activists Aaron Henry, Bob Moses, Dave Dennis, and Lawrence Guyot, meeting briefly with Dulles in Jackson on 25 June, were less impressed with the prominent Republican. Pressed to explain his suggestion to them that "we want this mess cleaned up," Dulles continued: "Well, these civil rights demonstrations are causing this kind of friction, and we're just not gonna have it, even if we have to bring troops in here." Aghast, Henry muttered, "You talkin' to the wrong people." Burke Marshall, OHT, 30-31, LBJL; O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 167.
 69. Memorandum of Conversation, 12 November 1964, NSF, CF, box 78, LBJL; Miller, *Lyndon*, 398.
 70. Lawson, *Running for Freedom*, 112; O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 196. See also Garrow, *Protest at Selma*.
 71. Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 194.
 72. Wilkins, *A Man's Life*, 150-153.
 73. O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 197-198.
 74. Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 189, 193.
 75. Carson, *In Struggle*, 159 (quotation); Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 306.
 76. Wofford, *Of Kennedys and Kings*, 178.
 77. Bundy to Johnson, 8 March 1965, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL.
 78. "Selma Violence Likened to That in South Africa," *Washington Post*, 22 March 1965, clipping, NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL.
 79. Johnson, "Outline of Informal Speech," undated [10 March 1965], NSF, CF, box 76, LBJL.

80. Carson, *In Struggle*, 160 (quotation); Lawson, *Running for Freedom*, 112-113.
81. Johnson, "The American Promise," 15 March 1965, NSF, CF, box 77, LBJL; Califano, *Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 56; Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 332. Even Johnson's most critical biographer has acknowledged the extraordinary power of this speech. Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Means of Ascent* (New York: Knopf, 1990), xix-xx.
82. Caro, *Means of Ascent*, xx-xxii; Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 307, 311.
83. Bundy to Read, 10 May 1965, NSF, CF, box 77, LBJL.
84. Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 166; "An Interview with Ralph Ellison" [1967], Harry McPherson Office Files, box 55, LBJL.
85. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors*, 38.
86. Larry Berman, "Coming to Grips with Lyndon Johnson's War," *Diplomatic History* 17 (Fall 1993): 523 (quotation), 525; Drinnon, *Facing West*, 447.
87. Califano, *Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 23.
88. Barrett, *Uncertain Warriors*, 32.
89. Bundy to Johnson, 12 August 1965, Bundy, *Memos of the Special Assistant*, reel 3, frame 442.
90. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 197-198* (emphasis in original).
91. David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Morrow, 1986), 429-430, 438, 453.
92. Carson, *In Struggle*, 183-184.
93. O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 191.
94. "Civil Rights: The Deacons," *Newsweek*, 2 August 1965, 28-29.
95. California Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, *Violence in the City—An End or a Beginning* (Los Angeles, 1965), 1-2.
96. Not simply an undirected "riot," the events in Watts constituted what CBS Radio called "an insurrection against all authority" that targeted almost exclusively white-owned properties. Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 36-39.
97. One of the most original comments came from former president Herbert Hoover, who implied, in what might be considered a vehicular theory of social control, that blacks had no reason to riot because "our 19 million Negroes probably own more automobiles than all the 220 million Russians and the 200 million African Negroes put together." O'Reilly, "Racial Matters," 237.
98. Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, 304-305 (quotation); Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, 313.
99. Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism*, 112.
100. Califano, *Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, 59-63.
101. *Ibid.*, 61-62; California Governor's Commission, *Violence in the City*, 22-23.

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CHAPTER 10

Not only did I enter high school with a new name, but also with a completely new insight into the life of Negroes in Mississippi. I was now working for one of the meanest white women in town, and a week before school started Emmett Till was killed.

Up until his death, I had heard of Negroes found floating in a river or dead somewhere with their bodies riddled with bullets. But I didn't know the mystery behind these killings then. I remember once when I was only seven I heard Mama and one of my aunts talking about some Negro who had been beaten to death. "Just like them low-down skunks killed him they will do the same to us," Mama had said. When I asked her who killed the man and why, she said, "An Evil Spirit killed him. You gotta be a good girl or it will kill you too." So since I was seven, I had lived in fear of that "Evil Spirit." It took me eight years to learn what that spirit was.

I was coming from school the evening I heard about Emmet Till's death. There was a whole group of us, girls and boys, walking down the road headed home. A group of about six high school boys were walking a few paces ahead of me and several other girls. We were laughing and talking about something that had happened in school that day. However, the six boys in front of us weren't talking very loud. Usually they kept up so much noise. But today they were just walking and talking among themselves. All of a sudden they began to shout at each other.

"Man, what in the hell do you mean?"

"What I mean is these goddamned white folks is gonna start some shit here you just watch!"

"That boy wasn't but fourteen years old and they killed him. Now what kin a fourteen-year-old boy do with a

white woman? What if he did whistle at her, he might have thought the whore was pretty."

"Look at all these white men here that's fucking over our women. Everybody knows it too and what's done about that? Look how many white babies we got walking around in our neighborhoods. Their mama's ain't white either. That boy was from Chicago, shit, everybody fuck everybody up there. He probably didn't even think of the bitch as white."

What they were saying shocked me. I knew all of those boys and I had never heard them talk like that. We walked on behind them for a while listening. Questions about who was killed, where, and why started running through my mind. I walked up to one of the boys.

"Eddie, what boy was killed?"

"Moody, where've you been?" he asked me. "Everybody talking about that fourteen-year-old boy who was killed in Greenwood by some white men. You don't know nothing that's going on besides what's in them books of yours, huh?"

Standing there before the rest of the girls, I felt so stupid. It was then that I realized I really didn't know what was going on all around me. It wasn't that I was dumb. It was just that ever since I was nine, I'd had to work after school and do my lessons on lunch hour. I never had time to learn anything, to hang around with people my own age. And you never were told anything by adults.

That evening when I stopped off at the house on my way to Mrs. Burke's, Mama was singing. Any other day she would have been yelling at Adline and Junior them to take off their school clothes. I wondered if she knew about Emmet Till. The way she was singing she had something on her mind and it wasn't pleasant either.

I got a shoe, you got a shoe,
All of God's chillun got shoes;
When I get to hebben, I'm gonna put on my shoes,
And gonna tromp all over God's hebben.
When I get to hebben I'm gonna put on my shoes,
And gonna walk all over God's hebben.

Mama was dishing up beans like she didn't know anyone was home. Adline, Junior, and James had just thrown

their books down and sat themselves at the table. I didn't usually eat before I went to work. But I wanted to ask Mama about Emmett Till. So I ate and thought of some way of asking her.

"These beans are some good, Mama," I said, trying to sense her mood.

"Why is you eating anyway? You gonna be late for work. You know how Miss Burke is," she said to me.

"I don't have much to do this evening. I kin get it done before I leave work," I said.

The conversation stopped after that. Then Mama started humming that song again.

When I get to hebben, I'm gonna put on my shoes,
And gonna tromp all over God's hebben.

She put a plate on the floor for Jennie Ann and Jerry.

"Jennie Ann! you and Jerry sit down here and eat and don't put beans all over this floor."

Ralph, the baby, started crying, and she went in the bedroom to give him his bottle. I got up and followed her.

"Mama, did you hear about that fourteen-year-old Negro boy who was killed a little over a week ago by some white men?" I asked her.

"Where did you hear that?" she said angrily.

"Boy, everybody really thinks I am dumb or deaf or something. I heard Eddie them talking about it this evening coming from school."

"Eddie them better watch how they go around here talking. These white folks git a hold of it they gonna be in trouble," she said.

"What are they gonna be in trouble about, Mama? People got a right to talk, ain't they?"

"You go on to work before you is late. And don't you let on like you know nothing about that boy being killed before Miss Burke them. Just do your work like you don't know nothing," she said. "That boy's a lot better off in heaven than he is here," she continued and then started singing again.

On my way to Mrs. Burke's that evening, Mama's words kept running through my mind. "Just do your work like you don't know nothing." "Why is Mama acting so scared?"

I thought. "And what if Mrs. Burke knew we knew? Why must I pretend I don't know? Why are these people killing Negroes? What did Emmett Till do besides whistle at that woman?"

By the time I got to work, I had worked my nerves up some. I was shaking as I walked up on the porch. "Do your work like you don't know nothing." But once I got inside, I couldn't have acted normal if Mrs. Burke were paying me to be myself.

I was so nervous, I spent most of the evening avoiding them going about the house dusting and sweeping. Everything went along fairly well until dinner was served.

"Don, Wayne, and Mama, y'all come on to dinner. Essie, you can wash up the pots and dishes in the sink now. Then after dinner you won't have as many," Mrs. Burke called to me.

If I had the power to mysteriously disappear at that moment, I would have. They used the breakfast table in the kitchen for most of their meals. The dining room was only used for Sunday dinner or when they had company. I wished they had company tonight so they could eat in the dining room while I was at the kitchen sink.

"I forgot the bread," Mrs. Burke said when they were all seated. "Essie, will you cut it and put it on the table for me?"

I took the cornbread, cut it in squares, and put it on a small round dish. Just as I was about to set it on the table, Wayne yelled at the cat. I dropped the plate and the bread went all over the floor.

"Never mind, Essie," Mrs. Burke said angrily as she got up and got some white bread from the breadbox.

I didn't say anything. I picked up the cornbread from around the table and went back to the dishes. As soon as I got to the sink, I dropped a saucer on the floor and broke it. Didn't anyone say a word until I had picked up the pieces.

"Essie, I bought some new cleanser today. It's setting on the bathroom shelf. See if it will remove the stains in the tub," Mrs. Burke said.

I went to the bathroom to clean the tub. By the time I got through with it, it was snow white. I spent a whole hour

scrubbing it. I had removed the stains in no time but I kept scrubbing until they finished dinner.

When they had finished and gone into the living room as usual to watch TV, Mrs. Burke called me to eat. I took a clean plate out of the cabinet and sat down. Just as I was putting the first forkful of food in my mouth, Mrs. Burke entered the kitchen.

"Essie, did you hear about that fourteen-year-old boy who was killed in Greenwood?" she asked me, sitting down in one of the chairs opposite me.

"No, I didn't hear that," I answered, almost choking on the food.

"Do you know why he was killed?" she asked and I didn't answer.

"He was killed because he got out of his place with a white woman. A boy from Mississippi would have known better than that. This boy was from Chicago. Negroes up North have no respect for people. They think they can get away with anything. He just came to Mississippi and put a whole lot of notions in the boys' heads here and stirred up a lot of trouble," she said passionately.

"How old are you, Essie?" she asked me after a pause.

"Fourteen. I will soon be fifteen though," I said.

"See, that boy was just fourteen too. It's a shame he had to die so soon." She was so red in the face, she looked as if she was on fire.

When she left the kitchen I sat there with my mouth open and my food untouched. I couldn't have eaten now if I were starving. "Just do your work like you don't know nothing" ran through my mind again and I began washing the dishes.

I went home shaking like a leaf on a tree. For the first time out of all her trying, Mrs. Burke had made me feel like rotten garbage. Many times she had tried to instill fear within me and subdue me and had given up. But when she talked about Emmett Till there was something in her voice that sent chills and fear all over me.

Before Emmett Till's murder, I had known the fear of hunger, hell, and the Devil. But now there was a new fear known to me—the fear of being killed just because I was black. This was the worst of my fears. I knew once I got

food, the fear of starving to death would leave. I also was told that if I were a good girl, I wouldn't have to fear the Devil or hell. But I didn't know what one had to do or not do as a Negro not to be killed. Probably just being a Negro period was enough, I thought.

A few days later, I went to work and Mrs. Burke had about eight women over for tea. They were all sitting around in the living room when I got there. She told me she was having a "guild meeting," and asked me to help her serve the cookies and tea.

After helping her, I started cleaning the house. I always swept the hallway and porch first. As I was sweeping the hall, I could hear them talking. When I heard the word "nigger," I stopped sweeping and listened. Mrs. Burke must have sensed this, because she suddenly came to the door.

"Essie, finish the hall and clean the bathroom," she said hesitantly. "Then you can go for today. I am not making dinner tonight." Then she went back in the living room with the rest of the ladies.

Before she interrupted my listening, I had picked up the words "NAACP" and "that organization." Because they were talking about niggers, I knew NAACP had something to do with Negroes. All that night I kept wondering what could that NAACP mean?

Later when I was sitting in the kitchen at home doing my lessons, I decided to ask Mama. It was about twelve-thirty. Everyone was in bed but me. When Mama came in to put some milk in Ralph's bottle, I said, "Mama, what do NAACP mean?"

"Where did you git that from?" she asked me, spilling milk all over the floor.

"Mrs. Burke had a meeting tonight—"

"What kind of meeting?" she asked, cutting me off.

"I don't know. She had some women over—she said it was a guild meeting," I said.

"A guild meeting," she repeated.

"Yes, they were talking about Negroes and I heard some woman say 'that NAACP' and another 'that organization,' meaning the same thing."

"What else did they say?" she asked me.

"That's all I heard. Mrs. Burke must have thought I was listening, so she told me to clean the bathroom and leave."

"Don't you ever mention that word around Mrs. Burke or no other white person, you heah! Finish your lesson and cut that light out and go to bed," Mama said angrily and left the kitchen.

"With a Mama like that you'll never learn anything," I thought as I got into bed. All night long I thought about Emmet Till and the NAACP. I even got up to look up NAACP in my little concise dictionary. But I didn't find it.

The next day at school, I decided to ask my homeroom teacher Mrs. Rice the meaning of NAACP. When the bell sounded for lunch, I remained in my seat as the other students left the room.

"Are you going to spend your lunch hour studying again today, Moody?" Mrs. Rice asked me.

"Can I ask you a question, Mrs. Rice?" I asked her.

"You may ask me a question, yes, but I don't know if you can or not," she said.

"What does the word NAACP mean?" I asked.

"Why do you want to know?"

"The lady I worked for had a meeting and I overheard the word mentioned."

"What else did you hear?"

"Nothing. I didn't know what NAACP meant, that's all." I felt like I was on the witness stand or something.

"Well, next time your boss has another meeting you listen more carefully. NAACP is a Negro organization that was established a long time ago to help Negroes gain a few basic rights," she said.

"What's it gotta do with the Emmett Till murder?" I asked.

"They are trying to get a conviction in Emmett Till's case. You see the NAACP is trying to do a lot for the Negroes and get the right to vote for Negroes in the South. I shouldn't be telling you all this. And don't you dare breathe a word of what I said. It could cost me my job if word got out I was teaching my students such. I gotta go to lunch and you should go outside too because it's nice and sunny out today," she said leaving the room. "We'll talk more when I have time."

About a week later, Mrs. Rice had me over for Sunday

dinner, and I spent about five hours with her. Within that time, I digested a good meal and accumulated a whole new pool of knowledge about Negroes being butchered and slaughtered by whites in the South. After Mrs. Rice had told me all this, I felt like the lowest animal on earth. At least when other animals (hogs, cows, etc.) were killed by man, they were used as food. But when man was butchered or killed by man, in the case of Negroes by whites, they were left lying on a road or found floating in a river or something.

Mrs. Rice got to be something like a mother to me. She told me anything I wanted to know. And made me promise that I would keep all this information she was passing on to me to myself. She said she couldn't, rather didn't, want to talk about these things to the other teachers, that they would tell Mr. Willis and she would be fired. At the end of that year she was fired. I never found out why. I haven't seen her since then.

CHAPTER 11

I was fifteen years old when I began to hate people. I hated the white men who murdered Emmett Till and I hated all the other whites who were responsible for the countless murders Mrs. Rice had told me about and those I vaguely remembered from childhood. But I also hated Negroes. I hated them for not standing up and doing something about the murders. In fact, I think I had a stronger resentment toward Negroes for letting the whites kill them than toward the whites. Anyway, it was at this stage in my life that I began to look upon Negro men as cowards. I could not respect them for smiling in a white man's face, addressing him as Mr. So-and-So, saying yessuh and nossuh when after they were home behind closed doors that same white man was a son of a bitch, a bastard, or any other name more suitable than mister.

Emmett Till's murder provoked a lot of anger and excitement among whites in Centreville. Now just about every evening when I got to work, Mrs. Burke had to attend a guild meeting. She had more women coming over now than ever. She and her friends had organized canvassing teams and a telephone campaign, to solicit for new members. Within a couple of months most of the whites in Centreville were taking part in the Guild. The meetings were initially held in the various houses. There were lawn parties and church gatherings. Then when it began to get cold, they were held in the high school auditorium.

After the Guild had organized about two-thirds of the whites in Centreville, all kinds of happenings were unveiled. The talk was on. White housewives began firing their maids and scolding their husbands and the Negro communities were full of whispered gossip.

The most talked-about subject was a love affair Mr. Fox,

to. She said, "I thought you knew. I'm secretary of the NAACP chapter here on campus."

"I didn't even know they had a chapter here," I said.

"Why don't you become a member? We're starting a voter registration drive in Hinds County and we need canvassers. Besides, it would give you something to do in your spare time, now that you don't see Dave any more."

I promised her that I would go to the next meeting. All that night I didn't sleep. Everything started coming back to me. I thought of Samuel O'Quinn. I thought of how he had been shot in the back with a shotgun because they suspected him of being a member. I thought of Reverend Dupree and his family who had been run out of Woodville when I was a senior in high school, and all he had done was to get up and mention NAACP in a sermon. The more I remembered the killings, beatings, and intimidations, the more I worried what might possibly happen to me or my family if I joined the NAACP. But I knew I was going to join, anyway. I had wanted to for a long time.

CHAPTER 21

A few weeks after I got involved with the Tougaloo chapter of the NAACP, they organized a demonstration at the state fair in Jackson. Just before it was to come off, Medgar Evers came to campus and gave a big hearty speech about how "Jackson was gonna move." Tougaloo sent four picketers to the fair, and one of them was Dave Jones. Because he was chosen to be the spokesman for the group, he was the first to be interviewed on TV. That evening when the demonstration was televised on all the news programs, it seemed as though every girl in the dorm was down in the lounge in front of the set. They were all shooting off about how they would take part in the next demonstration. The girl Dave was now seeing was running all around talking about how good he looked.

Dave and the other demonstrators had been arrested and were to be bailed out around eight that night. By eight-thirty a lot of us were sitting outside on the dormitory steps awaiting their arrival, and they still hadn't shown up. One of the girls had just gone inside to call the NAACP headquarters in Jackson, when suddenly two police cars came speeding through the campus. Students came running from every building. Within minutes the police cars were completely surrounded, blocked in from every direction. There were two cops in the front seat of each car. They looked frightened to death of us. When the students got out of the cars, they were hugged, kissed, and congratulated for well over an hour. All during this time the cops remained in their seats behind locked doors. Finally someone started singing "We Shall Overcome," and everyone joined in. When we finished singing, someone suggested we go to the football field and have a big rally. In minutes every student was on the football field singing all kinds of freedom songs, giving

testimonies as to what we were going to do, and praying and carrying on something terrible. The rally ended at twelve-thirty and by this time, all the students were ready to tear Jackson to pieces.

The following evening Medgar Evers again came to campus to, as he put it, "get some of Tougaloo's spirit and try and spread it around all over Jackson." He gave us a good pep talk and said we would be called upon from time to time to demonstrate.

That spring term I had really wanted to do well in all my subjects, but I had become so wrapped up in the Movement that by the time mid-semester grades came out, I had barely a one-point average. Other students who had gotten involved with the NAACP were actually flunking. I started concentrating more on my work—with little success. It seemed as though everything was going wrong.

In addition to my academic problems, I was running out of money. In May I was so broke, I could not pay my last month's bill and was forced to write Mama and ask her to send me thirty dollars. A couple of weeks went by without a letter from her. If Mama had the money, I knew she would have sent it. Apparently she didn't have it, but why didn't she write anyway? Finally I got a letter from Adline, who was working in New Orleans. Mama had written Adline and asked her to send me some money, because Raymond wouldn't let her send me any herself. Adline could only spare ten dollars, and she wrote me that she was sorry I had gone to Tougaloo when I knew I could not afford it.

The letter made me so mad that I was sick all the next week. I decided to write Emma and ask her for the thirty dollars. She sent me forty right away and said that she and my daddy would have helped me more and that they wanted to, but my daddy had been bothered with his back and had not been working.

Emma's money took care of the spring term, but now I was faced with the problem of the summer. I had to make up some credits in summer school, and I was counting on getting a student loan.

One day as I passed the main bulletin board on campus, I noticed a memorandum from the Dean, saying that applications for federal loans had to be turned in before the

week was up. The next day I stopped in at the Dean's office to pick up a form. His secretary told me that I was too late. There were too many applicants already. I went to see the Dean, and had to give him my whole damn life history. I didn't like that at all, but I needed the money. I told him I wouldn't be able to graduate next year if I couldn't go to summer school. He wasn't very encouraging, but he gave me a form to fill out just in case one of the other students had a change in plans. My luck was so bad, I didn't believe this could possibly happen.

By now I was so low I needed someone's comfort. I started seeing Dave again, and the same old trouble started. But this time I didn't care so much. School would be out soon and I wouldn't see him again. Dave would graduate if anyone did. He had even received a Woodrow Wilson fellowship.

I took my final exams and was preparing to leave the campus, when I received a notice from the Dean's office. It said that I had been given the sum of one hundred fifty dollars to assist me in summer school. Even though I had asked for three hundred, I started feeling better—better than I had felt in a long time. I didn't know how I would manage on a hundred and fifty dollars, but I knew I would find some way to do it.

During the summer a white student moved into the room across the hall from me. Her name was Joan Trumpauer, and she told me she worked for SNCC as a secretary. In a short time we got to know each other very well, and soon I was going into Jackson with Joan and hanging out at her office. SNCC was starting a voter registration drive in the Delta (Greenwood and Greenville) and was recruiting students at Tougaloo. When they asked me if I wanted to canvass every other weekend, I agreed to go.

The first time I went to the Delta, I was with three other girls. A local family put us up and we slept two to a room. The second time I was there I stayed at the Freedom House—a huge white frame house that SNCC was renting from a widow for sixty dollars a month. This time I was with Bettye Poole, who had been canvassing for SNCC for a couple of months, and Carolyn Quinn, a new recruit like me. We arrived at the Freedom House on a Friday night

about twelve-thirty and found fifteen boys all sleeping in one large room on triple-decker beds. They were all sleeping in their clothes. Some of the boys got up and we played cards for a while. A couple of them were from McComb, Mississippi, which was only twenty miles from Centreville. We cracked jokes about how bad the whites were in Wilkinson County. Around 2 A.M. I started to get sleepy and asked where the girls were going to stay. I was told we were going to stay right in the same room with all those boys. I was some shocked. Now I understood why Bettye Poole was wearing jeans; just then she was climbing into one of the empty bunks and settling down for the night. Here I was with only a transparent nylon pajama set to sleep in. Carolyn Quinn wasn't prepared either. The two of us just sat up in chairs until some extra pairs of pants were found for us. The boys explained that they slept in their clothes because they had had bomb threats, and had to be ready to run anytime. They all slept here in this one big room because it was sheltered by another house.

The next morning I woke up to the sounds of someone banging on a skillet and hollering, "Come and get it! Come and get it!" When we walked in the kitchen, the boy who'd made the racket said, "All right, girls, take over. Us boys have been cooking all week." Most of the guys were angry because he had gotten them up in that manner, but they didn't make a big fuss over it. Carolyn and I started cooking. When we announced that the food was ready, the boys ran over each other to get to the kitchen. It seemed they thought the food would disappear. It did. Within five minutes, everything on the table was gone. The food ran out and three boys were left standing in line.

I really got to like all of the SNCC workers. I had never known people so willing and determined to help others. I thought Bob Moses, the director of SNCC in Mississippi, was Jesus Christ in the flesh. A lot of other people thought of him as J.C., too.

The SNCC workers who were employed full-time were paid only ten dollars a week. They could do more with that ten dollars than most people I knew could do with fifty. Sometimes when we were in the Delta, the boys would take us out. We did not finish with our work some Saturdays until ten or eleven, and all the Negro places had a

twelve o'clock curfew. But we would have more fun in an hour than most people could have in twenty-four. We would often go to one place where the boys had made friends with the waitresses, and they would sneak us fifths of liquor. Those SNCC boys had friends everywhere, among the Negroes, that is. Most whites were just waiting for the chance to kill them all off.

I guess mostly the SNCC workers were just lucky. Most of them had missed a bullet by an inch or so on many occasions. Threats didn't stop them. They just kept going all the time. One Saturday we got to Greenville and discovered that the office had been bombed Friday night. The office was located up two flights of outside steps in a little broken-down building. It seemed as though a real hard wind would have blown it away. The bomb knocked the steps off, but that didn't stop the rally on Saturday night. Some of the boys made steps. When the new steps began to collapse, we ended up using a ladder. I remember when the rally ended, we found that the ladder was gone. For a few minutes we were real scared. We just knew some whites had moved it. We were all standing up there in the doorway wondering what to do. There was only one exit, and it was too high up to jump from. We figured we were going to be blown up. It seemed as though the whites had finally trapped us. The high school students were about to panic, when suddenly one of the SNCC boys came walking up with the ladder and yelled up to ask if the excitement was over. A lot of the other guys were mad enough to hit him. Those that did only tapped him lightly and smiled as they did it. "The nerve of those guys!" I thought.

Things didn't seem to be coming along too well in the Delta. On Saturdays we would spend all day canvassing and often at night we would have mass rallies. But these were usually poorly attended. Many Negroes were afraid to come. In the beginning some were even afraid to talk to us. Most of these old plantation Negroes had been brainwashed so by the whites, they really thought that only whites were supposed to vote. There were even a few who had never heard of voting. The only thing most of them knew was how to handle a hoe. For years they had demonstrated how well they could do that. Some of them had cal-

luses on their hands so thick they would hide them if they noticed you looking at them.

On Sundays we usually went to Negro churches to speak. We were split into groups according to our religious affiliation. We were supposed to know how to reach those with the same faith as ourselves. In church we hoped to be able to reach many more Negroes. We knew that even those that slammed doors in our faces or said, "I don't want no part of voting" would be there. There would also be the schoolteachers and the middle-class professional Negroes who dared not participate. They knew that once they did, they would lose that \$250 a month job. But the people started getting wise to us. Most of them stopped coming to church. They knew if they came, they would have to face us. Then the ministers started asking us not to come because we scared their congregations away. SNCC had to come up with a new strategy.

As the work continued that summer, people began to come around. I guess they saw that our intentions were good. But some began getting fired from their jobs, thrown off plantations and left homeless. They could often find somewhere else to stay, but food and clothing became a problem. SNCC started to send representatives to Northern college campuses. They went begging for food, clothing and money for the people in Mississippi, and the food, clothing and money started coming in. The Delta Negroes still didn't understand the voting, but they knew they had found friends, friends they could trust.

That summer I could feel myself beginning to change. For the first time I began to think something would be done about whites killing, beating, and misusing Negroes. I knew I was going to be a part of whatever happened.

A week before summer school ended, I was in town shopping with Rose, a girl from the dorm. We had planned to split cab fare back to campus, but discovered we did not have enough money. Cab fare out to Tougaloo was \$2.50 and bus fare was thirty-five cents one way. We decided to take the Trailways back. When we got to the station, I suggested to Rose that we use the white side. "I'm game if you are," she said.

I walked in the white entrance. When I looked back, I saw that Rose had not followed. I decided I would not go back to see what had happened, because she would try and talk me out of it. As I was buying my ticket, she walked up behind me.

"Shit, Moody, I thought you were kidding," she said.

I didn't answer. I was noticing the reaction of the man behind the counter. He stood looking at me as if he were paralyzed.

"Make that two tickets, please," I said to him.

"Where is the other one to?" he said.

"Both to Tougaloo," I said.

As he was getting the tickets for us, another man had gotten on the phone. He kept looking at us as he was talking. I think he was reporting to the police what was taking place. The man that sold us the tickets acted as if that was the last thing in the world he wanted to do. He slapped the tickets down on the counter, and threw the change at me. The change fell off the counter and rolled over the floor. That bastard had the nerve to laugh as we picked it up. Rose and I sat opposite each other, so we could see what was happening throughout the terminal. The bus was to leave at three-thirty, and we had gotten there about two-forty-five. We had some time to wait. Rose had a watch. I asked her to keep a check on the time.

People came in and stared. Some even laughed. Nothing happened until a bunch of white soldiers sat with us and started talking. The conversation had gone on for some time when a Negro woman got off one of the incoming buses. She saw us sitting in there and walked right in. She had about six small children with her. The little Negro children started running around the station picking up things from the counter and asking if they could buy them. At that point the excitement started. A drunken white man walked into the station behind the Negro lady with all the children. He started cursing, calling us all kinds of niggers.

"Get them little dirty swines outta heah," he said, pulling one of the little boys to the door.

"Take your filthy hands off my child," the Negro woman said. "What's going on here anyway?"

"They got a place for you folks, now why don't you

take them chilluns of yours and go on right over there?" the drunkard said, pointing to the Negro side of the bus station.

The lady looked at us. I guess she wanted us to say something. Rose and I just sat there. Finally she realized a sit-in or something was going on. She took her children and hurried out of the door. Instead of going to the Negro side, she went back on the bus. She looked as though she was really angry with us.

After that the drunkard started yelling at us. I didn't get too scared, but Rose was now shaking. She had begun to smoke cigarettes one after the other. She looked at her watch. "Moody, we have missed the bus," she said.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"It's almost four-thirty."

"They didn't even announce that the bus was loading," I said.

I walked over to the man at the ticket counter. "Has the bus come in that's going to Tougaloo?" I asked him.

"One just left," he said.

"You didn't announce that the bus was in."

"Are you telling me how to do my job?" he said. "I hear you niggers at Tougaloo think you run Mississippi."

"When is the next bus?" I asked.

"Five-thirty," he said, very indignant.

I went back and told Rose that the next bus left at five-thirty. She wanted to leave, but I insisted that we stay. Just as I was trying to explain to her why we should not leave, the white drunk walked up behind her. He had what appeared to be a wine bottle in his hand.

"Talk to me, Rose," I said.

"What's going on?" Rose said, almost shouting.

"Nothing. Stop acting so damn scared and start talking," I said.

The drunk walked up behind her and held the bottle up as though he was going to hit her on the head. All the time, I was looking him straight in the face as if to say, "Would you, would you really hit her?" Rose knew someone was behind her. She wouldn't have been able to talk or act normal if someone in the station threatened to shoot her if she didn't. The drunkard saw that I was pleading with him. He cursed me, throwing the bottle on the floor and break-

ing it. At this point, more people got all rallied up. They had now started shouting catcalls from every direction. Some bus drivers walked into the station. "What's wrong? What's going on heah?" one of them shouted. One took a chair and sat right in front of us. "Do you girls want to see a show?" he said. "Did you come here for a little entertainment?"

We didn't say anything.

"I guess you didn't. I'll put it on anyhow," he said. "Now here's how white folks entertain," putting his thumbs in his ears and wiggling his fingers, kicking his feet and making all kind of facial expressions. The rest of the whites in the bus station laughed and laughed at him. Some asked him to imitate a monkey, Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers. His performance went on for what seemed to be a good thirty minutes. When he finished, or rather got tired of, clowning, he said, "Now some of you other people give them what they really came for."

All this time the man was still on the phone talking to someone. We were sure he was talking to the police. Some of the other people that were sitting around in the bus station starting shouting remarks. I guess they were taking the advice of the bus driver. Again Rose looked at her watch to report that we had missed the second bus. It was almost a quarter to seven.

We didn't know what to do. The place was getting more tense by the minute. People had now begun to crowd around us.

"Let's go, Moody," Rose began to plead with me. "If you don't I'll leave you here," she said.

I knew she meant it, and I didn't want to be left alone. The crowd was going to get violent any minute now.

"O.K., Rose, let's go," I said. "Don't turn your back to anyone, though."

We got up and walked backward to the door. The crowd followed us just three or four feet away. Some were threatening to kick us out—or throw us all the way to Tougaloo, and a lot of other possible and impossible things.

Rose and I hit the swinging doors with our backs at the same time. The doors closed immediately behind us. We were now outside the station not knowing what to do or where to run. We were afraid to leave. We were at the

back of the station and thought the mob would be waiting for us if we ran around in front and tried to leave. Any moment now, those that had followed us would be on us again. We were standing there just going to pieces.

"Get in this here car," a Negro voice said.

I glanced to one side and saw that Rose was getting into the back seat. At that moment the mob was coming toward me through the doors. I just started moving backward until I fell into the car. The driver sped away.

After we had gotten blocks away from the station, I was still looking out of the back window to see who would follow. No one had. For the first time I looked to see who was driving the car and asked the driver who he was. He said he was a minister, that he worked at the bus station part-time. He asked us not to ever try and sit-in again without first planning it with an organization.

"You girls just can't go around doing things on your own," he said. He drove us all the way to campus, then made us feel bad by telling us he probably would get fired. He said he was on a thirty-minute break. That's a Negro preacher for you.

Summer school ended the following week. I headed for New Orleans to get that good three weeks of work in before the fall term of my senior year began.

PART 4 THE MOVEMENT

CHAPTER 30

I didn't stay long in New Orleans—just a couple of days—because I realized I had no way of making any money during the next two weeks. I was a little sorry I had quit my job at the restaurant so soon. The evening after I got back, Tim and Carol, a white married couple from California working with New Orleans CORE, stopped by the apartment and asked if I wanted to ride into Mississippi with them the following morning. They were going to visit a friend of theirs who had been arrested in the Canton Freedom Day march. I just couldn't resist that free ride to Mississippi.

The following morning I was back in Canton, ready to start work on the Summer Project. As soon as I had left my suitcase at the Freedom House, I went to see Mrs. Chinn. I found her looking terribly depressed.

"Anne," she said, "if I were you and didn't have no ties to Canton, I wouldn't waste no time here. Looka here, alla that work we put into that march and McKinley almost beaten to death and things are even worse than they were before. These niggers done went into hiding again, scared to stick their heads outta the door. C.O.'s in jail, them goddamn cops coming by my house every night, just about to drive me crazy. This ain't the way, Anne. This just ain't the way. We ain't big enough to do it by ourselves."

I had never seen Mrs. Chinn that depressed. What she said got me to thinking real hard. I walked around Canton for hours looking at the familiar streets. There were hardly any Negroes to be seen. The whole place looked dead. Walking past the jail, I saw C. O. Chinn coming in with the chain gang. They had been out digging ditches all day and he was filthy from head to toe. When he saw me, he waved trying to look happy. I couldn't hardly bring myself

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to wave back. I walked away as quickly as I could. I couldn't get that picture of C.O. out of my mind. A year ago when I first came to Canton, C.O. was a big man in town, one of Canton's wealthiest Negroes. He had opened up Canton for the Movement. He had sacrificed and lost all he had trying to get the Negroes moving. Now he was trying to look happy on a chain gang!

I felt worse about everything than I had ever felt before. Mrs. Chinn's words kept pounding through my head: "We ain't big enough to do it by ourselves." My head began to ache. I found myself running. I was trying to get away. I felt like the walls of Mississippi were closing in on me and Mrs. Chinn and C.O. and all the other Negroes in the state, crushing us. I had to get out and let the world know what was happening to us. I ran faster, and faster. I soon got back to the Freedom House out of breath, just in time to stumble into Dave Dennis' car and head for Jackson. About twenty minutes later, Dave was parking in front of the COFO headquarters on Lynch Street. Parked right in front of us was a Greyhound bus. The motor was running and smoke was shooting out of its exhaust pipe. It looked and sounded like it was about to pull off. Getting out of the car, I saw Bob Moses holding the door open waving good-bye to the people inside. I ran up to him and asked:

"Hey Bob, where's this bus going?"

"Oh! Moody, I'm glad you came. Can you go? We need you to testify," he said.

"Testify? What do you . . . ?"

"Hey Moody! C'mon get on, we're going to Washington!" It was little twelve-year-old Gene Young, leaning his head out of the window. As the bus began to pull out, Bob grabbed the door and held it for me. I just managed to squeeze in. The bus was packed. To avoid the staring, smiling faces I knew, I just bopped down between Gene and his friend. As soon as the bus was really moving, everybody began singing, "We Shall Overcome." I closed my eyes and leaned back in the seat listening to them.

We shall overcome, We shall overcome
We shall overcome some day.
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day.

"C'mon, Annie Moody, wake up! Get the Spirit on!" little Gene yelled right in my ear. I opened my eyes and looked at him.

"We're gonna go up there to Washington and we're gonna tell 'em somethin' at those COFO hearings. We're gonna tell 'em what Mississippi is all *about*," Gene said excitedly, joining in the singing. His eyes were gleaming with life and he clapped his hands in time with the song. Watching him, I felt very old.

The truth will make us free,
The truth will make us free,
The truth will make us free some day.
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
The truth will make us free some day.

Suddenly he looked at me again and saw that I still wasn't singing.

"Moody, what's wrong? What's the matter with you? You cracking up or something?" he asked, looking worried for the first time. When I didn't answer, he gave me a puzzled look and joined the singing again, but this time he was not so lively.

I sat there listening to "We Shall Overcome," looking out of the window at the passing Mississippi landscape. Images of all that had happened kept crossing my mind: the Taplin burning, the Birmingham church bombing, Medgar Evers' murder, the blood gushing out of McKinley's head, and all the other murders. I saw the face of Mrs. Chinn as she said, "We ain't big enough to do it by ourselves," C.O.'s face when he gave me that pitiful wave from the chain gang. I could feel the tears welling up in my eyes.

"Moody . . ." it was little Gene again interrupting his singing. "Moody, we're gonna git things straight in Washington, huh?"

I didn't answer him. I knew I didn't have to. He looked as if he knew exactly what I was thinking.

"I wonder: I wonder."

We shall overcome, We shall overcome
We shall overcome some day.

I WONDER. I really WONDER.

Nicht nur mein Sieg

Rede von Angela Davis am 11. September 1972,
Berlin – Friedrichstadt-Palast

Freundschaft! Liebe Genossinnen und Genossen, lieber Genosse Honecker, liebe Genossen Mitglieder des Zentralkomitees der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei! Liebe Genossen Mitglieder der Freien Deutschen Jugend, liebe Genossen Pioniere! Auf meiner Reise habe ich bisher sehr schöne Augenblicke erlebt, und dies ist ein Augenblick der größten Freude in meinem Leben. Diese Kundgebung ruft in mir jenes Bild wach, als ich noch im Gefängnis war und meine Schwester Fania hier zu euch sprach und euch aufforderte, den Kampf für meine Befreiung fortzusetzen. Sie brachte mir eure Botschaft in das Gefängnis nach Kalifornien. Ich bin nicht nur glücklich, hier in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, im sozialistischen Deutschland zu sein, sondern speziell in Berlin, in der Stadt, in der die X. Weltfestspiele der Jugend stattfinden werden.

In meinem Namen und im Namen meiner Genossen Kendra Alexander und Franklin Alexander möchte ich euch, dem Zentralkomitee der SED, dem Ministerrat und der Freien Deutschen Jugend für die Einladung zum Besuch der DDR herzlich danken. Ich bringe auch die allerherzlichsten Grüße von meiner Partei, der Kommunistischen Partei der USA, und von unserer Jugendorganisation, dem Bund Junger Arbeiter für die Befreiung. Und in unser aller Namen möchte ich meinen ganz tief empfundenen Dank aussprechen für eine so großartige Kampagne, die ihr für meine Befreiung geführt habt. Ich möchte vor allem den Jungen Pionieren sagen, daß die Tausende und Abertausende Kartengrüße, die mich in meiner Gefängniszelle erreichten, eine große Quelle des Mutes waren.

Im Haus eines Freundes in San Jose gibt es eine große Garage, die gefüllt ist

mit Millionen von Briefen und Karten von der Jugend der sozialistischen Länder und besonders von der Jugend der DDR. Die vielen, vielen Briefe, die sich hier auf der Bühne befinden, werden wir in die Vereinigten Staaten mitnehmen und einen Weg finden, um sie vielen Menschen zu zeigen, damit sie sehen, was proletarischer Internationalismus bedeutet.

Mit den vielen, vielen Briefen und Karten, die an mich geschrieben wurden, und den Protestschreiben an die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten, die geschrieben wurden von den Jugendlichen, von Arbeitern und Studenten und von Wissenschaftlern, damit hat die Bevölkerung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik bei der Regierung meines Landes eine nachhaltige Wirkung erzielt. Die Sowjetunion, die Völker der Sowjetunion, die Bevölkerung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und die Völker der sozialistischen Länder gingen voran in der großen Bewegung der fortschrittlichen Kräfte der ganzen Welt, die zu meiner Befreiung führte.

Der Sieg, der mit meiner Befreiung erreicht wurde, ist nicht nur mein Sieg, und es ging auch nicht darum, nur eine Gefangene aus den Fängen der politischen Unterdrückung der USA zu befreien. Dieser Sieg ist eine Lehre für die Menschen in der ganzen Welt: Wenn die Unterdrückten in der ganzen Welt sich zusammenschließen, dann haben wir in uns die Macht, die es uns erlaubt, eines Tages bald den Imperialismus zu besiegen.

Vor allem und zuallererst lehrt es uns, daß wir imstande sind, dem Völkermord in Indochina ein Ende zu setzen.

Genossinnen und Genossen! Wir kommen aus einem Land, dessen Regierung und dessen herrschende Klasse Napalmbomben und andere Bomben auf kleine Kinder in Vietnam werfen. Wir kommen aus einem Land, wo der Rassismus kleine schwarze Kinder ständig und jeden Tag angreift. Wir kommen aus einem Land, wo die Arbeiterklasse die Früchte ihrer Arbeit geben muss, damit die Reichen ihre Profite erzielen und damit die wahnsinnige Sucht nach kapitalistischem Profit befriedigt wird. Aber wie eure Genossen hier bereits gesagt haben: Das ist nicht das Amerika, das wir vertreten. Wir vertreten das andere Amerika, das Amerika der Arbeiterklasse, das Amerika der schwarzen Menschen, der Puertorikaner, der mexikanischen Amerikaner, der Asiaten dort und der einheimischen Indianer. Wir vertreten alle Unterdrückten und Ausgebeuteten unseres Landes. Wir vertreten jene, die für Frieden und für Gerechtigkeit kämpfen, und alle jene, die sehr bald für sozialistische Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika kämpfen werden, und so war es kein Zufall, dass wir zu euch aus dem Lande Le-

nins kommen, aus dem Land der ersten siegreichen sozialistischen Revolution, der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken.

Wir sehen hier in eurem Land das lebendige Ergebnis der Taten der Völker der Sowjetunion, die euer Land und die Welt vom Hitler-Faschismus befreiten. Während wir hier die Erbschaft von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, den ersten Theoretikern und Aktivisten des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus, sehen, sehen wir auch die großen Taten der deutschen antifaschistischen Kämpfer!

Während wir durch die Sowjetunion reisten und seitdem wir hier in eurem Land sind -etwas mehr als vierundzwanzig Stunden -, haben wir uns gefühlt, als wenn wir in einer neuen Dimension sind, in einer neuen Dimension von Raum und Zeit. Wir befinden uns tatsächlich in einer neuen historischen Ära, vergleichen wir das Leben in den sozialistischen Ländern mit dem in den Vereinigten Staaten. Wir sehen, was es bedeutet, wenn die Arbeiterklasse die Macht in Händen hält, und wir hatten manchmal eigenartige, manchmal sogar amüsante Erlebnisse. Es ist nicht sehr lange her, da waren wir Gast der Stadt der Kosmonauten außerhalb Moskaus, und wir konnten es kaum glauben, dass wir mit Generälen anstießen! Wir waren heute Gäste des Genossen Honecker und des Genossen Ulbricht, und für uns ist das ein wunderbares, aber eigenartiges Gefühl, Gäste der Führer eines ganzen Landes zu sein, weil wir eigentlich gewohnt sind, gegen die Führung in unserem Land zu kämpfen. Deshalb erleben wir etwas, was nicht unähnlich einem Traum ist, weil wir uns immer daran erinnern und vor Augen führen, dass in unserem Land unsere Regierung und die Armee fähig sind, furchtbarste barbarische Verbrechen gegen die Menschheit zu begehen. Und ich muss mich daran erinnern – obwohl ich frei bin, und meine Ketten gebrochen wurden durch eine so großartige weltweite Bewegung, an der ihr einen bedeutsamen Anteil habt –, dass es immer noch Tausende politische Gefangene in unserem Land gibt, die sich in Ketten befinden.

Vielleicht erinnert ihr euch noch an einige Namen, zum Beispiel an die Soledad-Brüder und an Fleeta Drumgo. Obwohl er als einer der Soledad-Brüder befreit wurde, steht er vor neuen hinterhältigen Anschuldigungen. Er und fünf andere Häftlinge des Gefängnisses in San Quentin stehen vor einer neuen Mordanklage im Zusammenhang mit den Vorgängen um die Ermordung George Jacksons.

Diese Anschuldigungen sind gegen sie nur deshalb erhoben worden, weil man sie als aufrechte Kämpfer für die Gerechtigkeit und für Frieden kennt. Und dann ist der Fall von William Dean Smith, einem schwarzen Soldaten, der be-

schuldigt wird, zwei Offiziere in Vietnam getötet zu haben. Aber sein eigentliches Verbrechen ist: Er weigerte sich, seine Waffen gegen seine vietnamesischen Brüder, die für ihre Freiheit kämpfen, zu erheben. Das sind nur zwei Beispiele von einem ganzen Apparat, einem ganzen System politischer Unterdrückung in unserem Land heute.

Aber der Imperialismus hat auch andere Ausdrucksweisen. Es gibt auch eine ideologische Kampagne, eine ideologische Diversion, die darauf gerichtet ist, eine sich entwickelnde Bewegung zu zerstören, eine Bewegung der Werktätigen, Schwarzer und Weißer, die für Gerechtigkeit kämpfen, für das Ende des Krieges in Vietnam, und die bald auch für den Sozialismus eintreten werden. Es gibt also verschiedene Methoden, das revolutionäre Potential besonders junger Menschen zu zerstören. Es gibt Versuche, die jungen Menschen in die Jesusbewegung zu bringen. Es gibt Versuche, die jungen Menschen zu bewegen, Rauschgift zu nehmen. In unseren Gemeinden, wo Schwarze wohnen, sieht man die entsetzlichen Folgen des Rauschgiftes jeden Tag, weil die Vertreter der herrschenden Klasse gerade dieses Rauschgift in unsere schwarzen Gemeinschaften senden, um unseren Kampfgeist zu lähmen und zu töten. Es ist sehr traurig zu beobachten, dass es auch acht- und neunjährige Kinder gibt, die rauschgiftsüchtig geworden sind.

Das ist nur eine der Methoden, die die herrschende Klasse anwendet, um unseren Kampf, den gemeinsamen Kampf der Schwarzen und Weißen für Frieden, Sozialismus und für Gerechtigkeit, zu untergraben und zu vernichten.

Und lasst mich ein weiteres Beispiel anführen für diese ideologischen Attacken, weil dieses Beispiel mir sehr nahe geht. Es handelt sich um ein zwölfjähriges schwarzes Mädchen in New York, das einen Aufsatz schrieb über die Bewunderung, die sie für mich empfindet. Und die weiße Lehrerin gab dem Mädchen diesen Aufsatz zurück mit dem Kommentar: „Konntest du nicht ein würdigeres Objekt finden als dieses kommunistische Teufelsweib?“ Das sind Probleme, denen wir in unserem Land gegenüberstehen.

Diese Beispiele sind nur einige wenige, sind nur die Spitze eines Eisberges. Aber ich bin ganz sicher, wenn wir in die Vereinigten Staaten zurückkehren, und wenn wir erzählen über das, was wir erlebt haben während unserer Reise durch die sozialistische Staatengemeinschaft, und wenn wir von der Schönheit und der Wärme der Menschen erzählen, die wir getroffen haben, ob in der Sowjetunion oder hier in Berlin, und wenn wir von den Kindern erzählen werden, die mir auf der Straße zurufen und mir zuwinken, und wenn wir über die Kinder mit ihren

Nicht nur mein Sieg; Angela Davis am 11. September 1972 in Berlin – Friedrichstadt-Palast

wunderbaren offenen Gesichtern berichten werden, und wenn wir berichten werden von ihrem tiefen Gefühl des proletarischen Internationalismus, dann werden wir eine sehr wichtige Waffe gegen den Imperialismus in unserer Hand halten.

Und so danke ich euch noch einmal für eure Unterstützung und Solidarität während der Zeit, in der ich im Gefängnis war, und danke, dass ihr uns gelehrt habt, was der Geist des proletarischen Internationalismus bedeutet.

Es lebe die DDR! Es lebe der proletarische Internationalismus!

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Edited by
Thomas R. Frazier
Bernard M. Baruch College
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The Meaning of Black Power

Toward Black Liberation

Stokely Carmichael

Carmichael undertook to explain the meaning of black power in the fall of 1966. Speaking often and writing much about the subject, he developed a theory that closely resembled the black nationalism enunciated by Malcolm X.

In the article that follows, Carmichael attacks the unjustified sensationalism with which the press approached the notion of black power. He goes on to point out how the press tended to divide the civil rights movement into "responsible" and "irresponsible" groups, thus diminishing the possibility of cooperation among all black people.

In his analysis of powerlessness, which he considered to be the heart of the race problem, Carmichael distinguished between individual and institutional racism and suggested that the same tactics would not work to eliminate both. What was needed was for black people to gain control over their lives, economically, socially, and politically, so that they would no longer have to submit to the institutions of a racist white world. The practical working out of this plan Carmichael left to others.

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One of the most pointed illustrations of the need for Black Power, as a positive and redemptive force in a society degenerating into a form of totalitarianism, is to be made by examining the history of distortion that the concept has received in national media of publicity. In this "debate," as in everything else that affects our lives, Negroes are dependent on, and at the discretion of, forces and institutions within the white society which have little interest in representing us honestly. Our experience with the national press has been that where they have managed to escape a mere frictional special interest in "Git Whitey" sensationalism and race-war mongering, individual reporters and commentators have been conditioned by the enveloping racism of the society to the point where they are incapable even of objective observation and reporting of racial incidents, much less the analysis of ideas. But this limitation of vision and perceptions is an

Stokely Carmichael, "Toward Black Liberation," *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 7 (Autumn 1966), pp. 639-51. Reprinted from *The Massachusetts Review*, © 1966 The Massachusetts Review, Inc.

inevitable consequence of the dictatorship of definition, interpretation, and consciousness, along with the censorship of history that the society has inflicted upon the Negro — and itself.

Our concern for black power addresses itself directly to this problem, the necessity to reclaim our history and our identity from the cultural terrorism and depredation of self-justifying white guilt.

To do this we shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to the society, and to have these terms recognized. This is the first necessity of a free people, and the first right that any oppressor must suspend. The white fathers of American racism knew this — instinctively it seems — as is indicated by the continuous record of the distortion and omission in their dealings with the red and black men. In the same way that southern apologists for the "jim Crow" society have so obscured, muddled and misrepresented the record of the reconstruction period, until it is almost impossible to tell what really happened, their contemporary counterparts are busy doing the same thing with the recent history of the civil rights movement.

In 1964, for example, the National Democratic Party, led by L. B. Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey, cynically undermined the efforts of Mississippi's Black population to achieve some degree of political representation. Yet, whenever the events of that convention are recalled by the press, one sees only that version fabricated by the press agents of the Democratic Party. A year later the House of Representatives in an even more vulgar display of political racism made a mockery of the political rights of Mississippi's Negroes when it failed to unseat the Mississippi Delegation to the House which had been elected through a process which methodically and systematically excluded over 450,000 voting-age Negroes, almost one half of the total electorate of the state. Whenever this event is mentioned in print it is in terms which leaves one with the rather curious impression that somehow the oppressed Negro people of Mississippi are at fault for confronting the Congress with a situation in which they had no alternative but to endorse Mississippi's racist political practices.

I mention these two examples because, having been directly involved in them, I can see very clearly the discrepancies between what happened and the versions that are finding their way into general acceptance as a kind of popular mythology. Thus the victimization of the Negro takes place in two phases — first it occurs in fact and deed, then, and this is equally sinister, in the official recording of those facts.

The "Black Power" program and concept which is being articulated by SNCC, CORE, and a host of community organizations in the ghettos of the North and South has not escaped that process. The white press has been busy articulating their own analyses, their own interpretations, and criticisms of their own creations. For example, while the press had given wide and sensational dissemination to attacks made by figures in the Civil

Rights movement — foremost among which are Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and Whitney Young of the Urban League — and to the hysterical ranting about black racism made by the political chameleon that now serves as Vice-President, it has generally failed to give accounts of the reasonable and productive dialogue which is taking place in the Negro community, and in certain important areas in the white religious and intellectual community. A national committee of influential Negro Churchmen affiliated with the National Council of Churches, despite their obvious respectability and responsibility, had to resort to a paid advertisement to articulate their position, while anyone shouting the hysterical yappings of "Black Racism" got ample space. Thus the American people have gotten at best a superficial and misleading account of the very terms and tenor of this debate. I wish to quote briefly from the statement by the national committee of Churchmen which I suspect that the majority of Americans will not have seen. This statement appeared in the *New York Times* of July 31, 1966.

We an informal group of Negro Churchmen in America are deeply disturbed about the crisis brought upon our country by historic distortions of important human realities in the controversy about "black power." What we see shining through the variety of rhetoric is not anything new but the same old problem of power and race which has faced our beloved country since 1619.

... The conscience of black men is corrupted because, having no power to implement the demands of conscience, the concern for justice in the absence of justice becomes a chaotic self-surrender. Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars. We are faced now with a situation where powerless conscience meets conscience-less power, threatening the very foundations of our Nation.

... We deplore the overt violence of riots, but we feel it is more important to focus on the real sources of these eruptions. These sources may be abetted inside the Ghetto, but their basic cause lies in the silent and covert violence which white middleclass America inflicts upon the victims of the inner city.

... In short, the failure of American leaders to use American power to create equal opportunity in life as well as law, this is the real problem and not the anguished cry for black power.

... Without the capacity to participate with power, i.e., to have some organized political and economic strength to really influence people with whom one interacts — integration is not meaningful.

... America has asked its Negro citizens to fight for opportunity as individuals, whereas at certain points in our history what we have needed most has been opportunity for the whole group, not just for selected and approved Negroes.

... We must not apologize for the existence of this form of group power, for we have been oppressed as a group and not as individuals. We will not find our way out of that oppression until both we and America accept the need for Negro Americans, as well as for Jews,

Italians, Poles, and white Anglosaxon Protestants, among others, to have and to wield group power.¹

Traditionally, for each new ethnic group, the route to social and political integration into America's pluralistic society, has been through the organization of their own institutions with which to represent their communal needs within the larger society. This is simply stating what the advocates of black power are saying. The strident outcry, *particularly* from the liberal community, that has been evoked by this proposal can only be understood by examining the historic relationship between Negro and White power in this country.

Negroes are defined by two forces, their blackness and their powerlessness. There have been traditionally two communities in America. The White community, which controlled and defined the forms that all institutions within the society would take, and the Negro community which has been excluded from participation in the power decisions that shaped the society, and has traditionally been dependent upon, and subservient to the White community.

This has not been accidental. The history of every institution of this society indicates that a major concern in the ordering and structuring of the society has been the maintaining of the Negro community in its condition of dependence and oppression. This has not been on the level of individual acts of discrimination between individual whites against individual Negroes, but as total acts by the White community against the Negro community. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized — that racist assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply ingrained in the structure of the society that it infuses its entire functioning, and is so much a part of the national subconscious that it is taken for granted and is frequently not even recognized.

Let me give an example of the difference between individual racism and institutionalized racism, and the society's response to both. When unidentified white terrorists bomb a Negro Church and kill five children, that is an act of individual racism, widely deplored by most segments of the society. But when in that same city, Birmingham, Alabama, not five but 500 Negro babies die each year because of a lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities, and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of conditions of poverty and deprivation in the ghetto, that is a function of institutionalized racism. But the society either pretends it doesn't know of this situation, or is incapable of doing anything meaningful about it. And this resistance to doing anything meaningful about conditions in that ghetto comes from the fact that the ghetto is itself a product of a combination of forces and special interests in the white community, and the groups that have access to the resources

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and power to change that situation benefit, politically and economically, from the existence of that ghetto.

It is more than a figure of speech to say that the Negro community in America is the victim of white imperialism and colonial exploitation. This is in practical economic and political terms true. There are over 20 million black people comprising ten percent of this nation. They for the most part live in well-defined areas of the country — in the shanty-towns and rural black belt areas of the South, and increasingly in the slums of northern and western industrial cities. If one goes into any Negro community, whether it be in Jackson, Miss., Cambridge, Md., or Harlem, N.Y., one will find that the same combination of political, economic, and social forces are at work. The people in the Negro community do not control the resources of that community, its political decisions, its law enforcement, its housing standards; and even the physical ownership of the land, houses, and stores *lie outside that community*.

It is white power that makes the laws, and it is violent white power in the form of armed white cops that enforces those laws with guns and nightsticks. The vast majority of Negroes in this country live in these captive communities and must endure these conditions of oppression because, and only because, *they are black and powerless*. I do not suppose that at any point the men who control the power and resources of this country ever sat down and designed these black enclaves, and formally articulated the terms of their colonial and dependent status, as was done, for example, by the Apartheid government of South Africa. Yet, one can not distinguish between one ghetto and another. As one moves from city to city it is as though some malignant racist planning-unit had done precisely this — designed each one from the same master blueprint. And indeed, if the ghetto had been formally and deliberately planned, instead of growing spontaneously and inevitably from the racist functioning of the various institutions that combine to make the society, it would be somehow less frightening. The situation would be less frightening because, if these ghettoes were the result of design and conspiracy, one could understand their similarity as being artificial and consciously imposed, rather than the result of identical patterns of white racism which repeat themselves in cities as distant as Boston and Birmingham. Without bothering to list the historic factors which contribute to this pattern — economic exploitation, political impotence, discrimination in employment and education — one can see that to correct this pattern will require far-reaching changes in the basic power-relationships and the ingrained social patterns within the society. The question is, of course, what kinds of changes are necessary, and how is it possible to bring them about?

In recent years the answer to these questions which has been given by most articulate groups of Negroes and their white allies, the "liberals" of all stripes, has been in terms of something called "integration." According to the advocates of integration, social justice will be accomplished by "in-

tegrating the Negro into the mainstream institutions of the society from which he has been traditionally excluded." It is very significant that each time I have heard this formulation it has been in terms of "the Negro," the individual Negro, rather than in terms of the community.

This concept of integration had to be based on the assumption that there was nothing of value in the Negro community and that little of value could be created among Negroes, so the thing to do was to siphon off the "acceptable" Negroes into the surrounding middle-class white community. Thus the goal of the movement for integration was simply to loosen up the restrictions barring the entry of Negroes into the white community. Goals around which the struggle took place, such as public accommodation, open housing, job opportunity on the executive level (which is easier to deal with than the problem of semi-skilled and blue collar jobs which involve more far-reaching economic adjustments), are quite simply middle-class goals, articulated by a tiny group of Negroes who had middle-class aspirations. It is true that the student demonstrations in the South during the early sixties, out of which SNCC came, had a similar orientation. But while it is hardly a concern of a black sharecropper, dishwasher, or welfare recipient whether a certain fifteen-dollar-a-day motel offers accommodations to Negroes, the overt symbols of white superiority and the imposed limitations on the Negro community had to be destroyed. Now, black people must look beyond these goals, to the issue of collective power.

Such a limited class orientation was reflected not only in the program and goals of the civil rights movement, but in its tactics and organization. It is very significant that the two oldest and most "respectable" civil rights organizations have constitutions which *specifically* prohibit partisan political activity. CORE once did, but changed that clause when it changed its orientation toward black power. But this is perfectly understandable in terms of the strategy and goals of the older organizations. The civil rights movement saw its role as a kind of liaison between the powerful white community and the dependent Negro one. The dependent status of the black community apparently was unimportant since — if the movement were successful — it was going to blend into the white community anyway. We made no pretense of organizing and developing institutions of community power in the Negro community, but appealed to the conscience of white institutions of power. The posture of the civil rights movement was that of the dependent, the suppliant. The theory was that without attempting to create any organized base of political strength itself, the civil rights movement could, by forming coalitions with various "liberal" pressure organizations in the white community — liberal reform clubs, labor unions, church groups, progressive civic groups — and at times one or other of the major political parties — influence national legislation and national social patterns.

I think we all have seen the limitations of this approach. We have repeatedly seen that political alliances based on appeals to conscience and decency are chancy things, simply because institutions and political organizations have no consciences outside their own special interests. The political and social rights of Negroes have been and always will be negotiable and expendable the moment they conflict with the interests of our "allies." If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it, and that is precisely the lesson of the Reconstruction. Black people were allowed to register, vote and participate in politics because it was to the advantage of powerful white allies to promote this. But this was the result of white decision, and it was ended by other white men's decision before any political base powerful enough to challenge that decision could be established in the southern Negro community. (Thus at this point in the struggle Negroes have no assurance — save a kind of idiot optimism and faith in a society whose history is one of racism — that if it were to become necessary, even the painfully limited gains thrown to the civil rights movement by the Congress will not be revoked as soon as a shift in political sentiments should occur.)

The major limitation of this approach was that it tended to maintain the traditional dependence of Negroes, and of the movement. We depended upon the good-will and support of various groups within the white community whose interests were not always compatible with ours. To the extent that we depended on the financial support of other groups, we were vulnerable to their influence and domination.

Also the program that evolved out of this coalition was really limited and inadequate in the long term and one which affected only a small select group of Negroes. Its goal was to make the white community accessible to "qualified" Negroes and presumably each year a few more Negroes armed with their passport — a couple of university degrees — would escape into middle-class America and adopt the attitudes and life styles of that group; and one day the Harlems and the Watts would stand empty, a tribute to the success of integration. This is simply neither realistic nor particularly desirable. You can integrate communities, but you assimilate individuals. Even if such a program were possible its result would be, not to develop the black community as a functional and honorable segment of the total society, with its own cultural identity, life patterns, and institutions, but to abolish it — the final solution to the Negro problem. Marx said that the working class is the first class in history that ever wanted to abolish itself. If one listens to some of our "moderate" Negro leaders it appears that the American Negro is the first race that ever wished to abolish itself. The fact is that what must be abolished is not the black community, but the dependent colonial status that has been inflicted upon it. The racial and cultural personality of the black community must be preserved and the community must win its freedom while preserving its cultural integrity. This is the

essential difference between integration as it is currently practiced and the concept of black power.

What has the movement for integration accomplished to date? The Negro graduating from M.I.T. with a doctorate will have better job opportunities available to him than to Lynda Bird Johnson. But the rate of unemployment in the Negro community is steadily increasing, while that in the white community decreases. More educated Negroes hold executive jobs in major corporations and federal agencies than ever before, but the gap between white income and Negro income has almost doubled in the last twenty years. More suburban housing is available to Negroes, but housing conditions in the ghetto are steadily declining. While the infant mortality rate of New York City is at its lowest rate ever in the city's history, the infant mortality rate of Harlem is steadily climbing. There has been an organized national resistance to the Supreme Court's order to integrate the schools, and the federal government has not acted to enforce that order. Less than 15 percent of black children in the South attend integrated schools; and Negro schools, which the vast majority of black children still attend, are increasingly decrepit, over-crowded, under-staffed, inadequately equipped and funded.

This explains why the rate of school dropouts is increasing among Negro teenagers, who then express their bitterness, hopelessness, and alienation by the only means they have — rebellion. As long as people in the ghettos of our large cities feel that they are victims of the misuse of white power without any way to have their needs represented — and these are frequently simple needs: to get the welfare inspectors to stop kicking down your doors in the middle of the night, the cops from beating your children, the landlord to exterminate the vermin in your home, the city to collect your garbage — we will continue to have riots. These are not the products of "black power," but of the absence of any organization capable of giving the community the power, the black power, to deal with its problems.

SNCC proposes that it is now time for the black freedom movement to stop pandering to the fears and anxieties of the white middle class in the attempt to earn its "good-will," and to return to the ghetto to organize these communities to control themselves. This organization must be attempted in northern and southern urban areas as well as in the rural black belt counties of the South. The chief antagonist to this organization is, in the South, the overtly racist Democratic party, and in the North the equally corrupt big city machines.

The standard argument presented against independent political organization is "But you are only 10 percent." I cannot see the relevance of this observation, since no one is talking about taking over the country, but taking control over our own communities.

The fact is that the Negro population, 10 percent or not, is very strategically placed because — ironically — of segregation. What is also true is that Negroes have never been able to utilize the full voting potential of our

numbers. Where we could vote, the case has always been that the white political machine stacks and gerrymanders the political subdivisions in Negro neighborhoods so the true voting strength is never reflected in Negro strength. Would anyone looking at the distribution of political power in Manhattan, ever think that Negroes represented 60 percent of the population there?

Just as often the effective political organization in Negro communities is absorbed by tokenism and patronage — the time honored practice of "giving" certain offices to selected Negroes. The machine thus creates a "little machine," which is subordinate and responsive to it, in the Negro community. These Negro political "leaders" are really vote deliverers, more responsible to the white machine and the white power structure, more to substitute patronage control for audacious black power in the Negro community. This is precisely what Johnson tried to do even before the Voting Rights Act of 1966 was passed. The National Democrats made it very clear that the measure was intended to register Democrats, not Negroes. The President and top officials of the Democratic Party called in almost 100 selected Negro "leaders" from the Deep South. Nothing was said about changing the policies of the racist state parties, nothing was said about repudiating such leadership figures as Eastland and Ross Barnett in Mississippi or George Wallace in Alabama. What was said was simply "Go home and organize your people into the local Democratic Party — then we'll see about poverty money and appointments." (Incidentally, for the most part the War on Poverty in the South is controlled by local Democratic ward heelers — and outspoken racists who have used the program to change the form of the Negroes' dependence. People who were afraid to register for fear of being thrown off the farm are now afraid to register for fear of losing their Head-Start jobs.)

We must organize black community power to end these abuses, and to give the Negro community a chance to have its needs expressed. A leadership which is truly "responsible" — not to the white press and power structure, but to the community — must be developed. Such leadership will recognize that its power lies in the unified and collective strength of that community. This will make it difficult for the white leadership group to conduct its dialogue with individuals in terms of patronage and prestige, and will force them to talk to the community's representatives in terms of real power.

The single aspect of the black power program that has encountered most criticism is this concept of independent organization. This is presented as third-partyism which has never worked, or a withdrawal into black nationalism and isolationism. If such a program is developed it will not have the effect of isolating the Negro community but the reverse. When the Negro community is able to control local office, and negotiate with other groups from a position of organized strength, the possibility of meaningful politi-

cal alliances on specific issues will be increased. That is a rule of politics and there is no reason why it should not operate here. The only difference is that we will have the power to define the terms of these alliances.

The next question usually is, "So — can it work, can the ghettos in fact be organized?" The answer is that this organization must be successful, because there are no viable alternatives — not the War on Poverty, which was at its inception limited to dealing with effects rather than causes, and has become simply another source of machine patronage. And "Integration" is meaningful only to a small chosen class within the community.

The revolution in agricultural technology in the South is displacing the rural Negro community into northern urban areas. Both Washington, D.C. and Newark, N.J. have Negro majorities. One third of Philadelphia's population of two million people is black. "Inner city" in most major urban areas is already predominantly Negro, and with the white rush to suburbia, Negroes will in the next three decades control the heart of our great cities. These areas can become either concentration camps with a bitter and volatile population whose only power is the power to destroy, or organized and powerful communities able to make constructive contributions to the total society. Without the power to control their lives and their communities, without effective political institutions through which to relate to the total society, these communities will exist in a constant state of insurrection. This is a choice that the country will have to make.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Benjamin Muse, *The American Negro Revolution: From Nonviolence to Black Power, 1963-1967* (1968), though highly opinionated, is useful because it contains a wealth of detail. The increasing militancy of blacks was perceptively treated in Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (1968). Harold Issacs, in *The New World of Negro Americans* (1963), describes the growing international perspective of American blacks in the early 1960s.

The conditions of life in the ghetto are compellingly revealed in two autobiographies, Claude Brown's *Mammoth in the Promised Land** (1965) and Firi Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets** (1967). Kenneth Clark, in *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power** (1965), analyzes the destructive elements of black ghetto existence.

The Kerner Riot Commission Report, officially titled *Report of the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968), is a good starting place for a study of urban racial violence. Two books dealing with specific outbreaks are Robert Conot's excellent *Rivers of Blood: Years of Darkness* (1967), the story of the Watts uprising of 1965, and John Hersey's *The Algiers Motel Incident* [Detroit] (1968). Books providing an overview of urban violence include Joseph Boskin, *Urban Racial Violence in the Twentieth Century** (1976); James W. Button, *Black Violence: Political Impact of the 1960s Riots* (1976); Peter Rossi (ed.), *Ghetto Revolts** (1970); and David Boesel and Peter Rossi (eds.), *Cities under Siege: An Anatomy of the Ghetto Riots, 1964-1968* (1971).

On the revival of black nationalism, see E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: The Search for an Identity in America* (1962) and Alfonso Pinkney, *Red, Black, and Green: Black Nationalism in the United States* (1976). The beginnings of the Nation of Islam are described in C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (1961). The life of Malcolm X is described in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X** (1964) and Peter Goldman, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X** (1973). See also E. Victor Wolfenstein, *The Victims of Democracy: Malcolm X and the Black Revolution* (1981).

*Books marked by an asterisk are available in paperback.

Not Only My Victory

Speech by Angela Davis on September 11, 1972
Berlin – Friedrichstadt-Palast

(translated from German by Lenore Bartko)

Friendship! Dear comrades, dear Comrade Honecker, dear comrade members of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party! Dear comrade members of the Free German Youth, dear comrade pioneers! So far during my trip I have had many wonderful experiences, and this is a very joyous moment in my life. This rally makes me remember the time when I was still in prison and my sister, Fania, came here and spoke to you and urged you to continue to fight for my release. She brought me tidings of you to the jail in California. I am not only happy to be here in the German Democratic Republic, in socialist Germany, but especially to be here in Berlin, the city, in which the 10th World Festival of Youth will take place.

On behalf of myself and my comrades Kendra Alexander and Franklin Alexander, I would like to thank the Central Committee of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), the cabinet and the Free German Youth very much for the invitation to visit the GDR. I also come bearing hearty greetings from my party, the Communist Party of the USA, and from our youth organization, the Young Workers' Liberation League. On behalf of us all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the excellent campaign that you led for my release. Above all, I would like the Young Pioneers to know that the thousands upon thousands of cards that reached me in my prison cell were a great source of courage for me.

There is a large garage at the house of a friend of mine in San Jose filled with millions of letters and cards from the youth of the socialist countries and especially from the youth of the GDR. We will take the many, many letters, which are here on the stage, with us to the United States and find a way to show them to many people, so that they may see what proletarian internationalism really means.

The people of the German Democratic Republic have made a lasting impression on the government of my country through the many, many letters and cards that were written to me, and through the letter of protest which was written to the government of the United States by the youth, by workers and students and by scholars. The Soviet Union, the peoples of the Soviet Union, the people of the German Democratic Republic and the peoples of the socialist countries forged ahead in the great movement of the advanced powers of the world, which led to my release.

The victory, which was achieved with my release, is not only my victory, and it was not about freeing just one prisoner from the clutches of political repression in the USA. This victory is a lesson for all the people in the world: If the repressed throughout the world band together, then we have the power that will enable us one day soon to defeat imperialism.

First and foremost, it teaches us that we are capable of ending the genocide in Indochina.

Comrades! We come from a country, whose government and ruling class throw napalm bombs and other bombs on little children in Vietnam. We come from a country, where racism

constantly oppresses little black children every day. We come from a country, where the working class must give up the fruits of its labors, so that the rich can obtain their profits and so that the frenzied addiction to capitalistic profit can be satisfied. But as you comrades here have already said: That is not the America, that we represent. We represent the other America, the America of the working class, the America of the Blacks, the Puerto Ricans, the Mexican Americans, the Asians, and the Native Americans. We represent all the oppressed and exploited of our country. We represent those who are fighting for freedom and justice, and all of those, who will soon fight for the Socialist United States of America, and so it is no coincidence, that we come to you from the country of Lenin, from the country of the first victorious socialist revolution, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

We see here in your country the living result of the deeds of the peoples of the Soviet Union, who freed your country and the world from Hitler's fascism. While we can see the legacy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the first theoreticians and activists of scientific socialism, we can also see the major feats of the German antifascist fighters!

Since we have been traveling through the Soviet Union and since we have been here in your country – for just over 24 hours –, we have felt as if we were in a new dimension, a new dimension of time and space. And indeed, we find ourselves in a new historical era, if we compare life in the socialist countries with life in the United States. We see what it means, when the working class holds the power in their hands, and we have had unique, sometimes even amusing experiences. It was not very long ago, that we were guests in the city of the cosmonauts outside of Moscow, and we could hardly believe that we were toasting our glasses with generals! Today we were the guests of Comrade Honecker and Comrade Ulbricht, and for us it is a wonderful, but strange feeling, to be the guests of leaders of an entire country, since usually we are used to fighting against the leaders in our own country. Therefore, here we are experiencing something that seems like a dream, because we must continually remind ourselves and always keep in mind, that in our country our government and army are capable of committing the most reprehensible barbarian crimes against humanity. And I must remember – although I am free, and my chains were broken by a great worldwide movement, in which you played a major part –, that thousands of political prisoners are still in chains in our country.

Maybe you still remember a few names, like, for example, the Soledad brothers and Fleeta Drumgo. Although he was acquitted of being one of the Soledad brothers, now he is being charged with new underhanded accusations. He and five other prisoners of the San Quentin Prison are now being charged with a new accusation of murder in connection with the events surrounding the murder of George Jackson.

These charges have been raised against them only because they are known as upstanding fighters for freedom and justice. And then there is the case of William Dean Smith, a black soldier, who has been accused of killing two officers in Vietnam. But his actual crime is this: He refused to raise his gun against his Vietnamese brothers, who are fighting for freedom. Those are just two examples out of a whole contrivance, a whole system of political repression in our country today.

But imperialism also manifests itself in other ways. There is also an ideological campaign, an ideological diversion, which is designed to destroy a developing movement of workers, black and white, who are fighting for justice, for the end of the Vietnam War, and who will soon also join socialism. There are various methods to destroy the revolutionary potential,

especially of young people. There are attempts to bring people into the Jesus movement. There are attempts to entice young people to take drugs. In our communities, where Blacks live, you see the appalling effects of drugs every day, because the representatives of the ruling class send this drug into our black communities with the exact intention of crippling and killing our fighting spirit. It is very sad to see that there are even eight- or nine-year-old children, who have become addicted to drugs.

That is only one method, that the ruling class uses to undermine and destroy our fight, the joint fight of the blacks and whites for freedom, socialism, and justice.

And let me bring forth another example of these ideological attacks, because this example hits close to home for me. It has to do with a 12-year-old black girl in New York, who wrote an essay about the admiration that she feels for me. And the white teacher gave the girl the essay back with the remark: "Could you not find a worthier subject than that communist she-devil?" These are the kinds of problems that we are up against in our country.

These are just a few examples, just the tip of the iceberg. But I am very sure, that when we return to the United States, and when we tell them about all that we have experienced during our trip through the socialist community of states, and when we tell them about the beauty and warmth of the people that we met, be it in the Soviet Union or here in Berlin, and when we tell them about the children, who called to me on the street and waved, and when we tell them about the children with their wonderful smiling faces, and when we tell them about their deep feeling of proletarian internationalism, then we will be holding a very important weapon against imperialism in our hands.

And so I thank you all again for your support and solidarity during the time I was in prison, and thank you for teaching us what the spirit of proletarian internationalism really means.

Long live the GDR! Long live proletarian internationalism!