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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

From Southern California to Southern Africa: Translocal Black Internationalism in Los Angeles and San Diego from Civil Rights to Apartheid, 1960 to 1994

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Mychal Matsemela-Ali Odom

Committee in Charge:

Professor Luis Alvarez, Co-Chair
Professor Daniel Widener, Co-Chair
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Professor Jessica L. Graham
Professor Jeremy Prestholdt

2017

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The Dissertation of Mychal Matsemela-Ali Odom is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my ancestors, family, and elders who made this study possible. This is dedicated to my ancestors beginning with Manch Kesse, the rebel enslaved African whose spirit lives in all his descendants. To Daphne Belgrave Kersee, Manch H. Kersee, Sr., Felton Andrew Odom, and Nadine Odom. It is dedicated to my parents Michael Andrew Odom and Maria Odell Kersee-Odom. This is for my wife Michelle Rowe-Odom and our children: Mayasa-Aliyah Estina Odom and Malika-Akilah Maria Odom. It is in honor of my siblings, Mosi Tamara Rashida Odom and Matthieu Renell Clayton Jackson; as well as your children, Jeremiah Harris, Makhia Jackson, and Josiah Harris. It is also dedicated to all members of the Odom, Kersee, Belgrave, Joseph, and Rowe families.

As well, this is dedicated to the lives lost from state murder during the composition of this study: Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Alfred Olango and the many others. Your deaths have not been in vain. They instead underscore the urgency of the work that has filled the succeeding pages as well as streets of the United States and beyond.

EPIGRAPH

Black Consciousness is an attitude of the mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time. Its essence is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression - the blackness of their skin - and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.

Steve Biko

Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. And once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight.

Malcolm X

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

African Activists Association (AAA2)
African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC)
African National Congress (ANC)
Afro-American Association (AAA1)
Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP)
Citizens Patrol Against Police Brutality (CPAPB)
Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA)
Committee for Chicano Rights (CCR)
Congress of African People (CAP)
Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
Friends of the ANC and the Frontline States (FANC)
International Committee Against Racism (InCAR)
Nation of Islam (NOI)
National Coalition to Support African Liberation (NCSAL)
National Involvement Association/Nia Cultural Organization (NIA)
Pan-African Congress (PAC)
Patrice Lumumba Coalition (PLC)
Southern African Support Committee (SASC)
Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC)
South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)
Student Nonviolent/Nationalist Coordination Committee (SNCC)
United Democratic Filipinos (KDP)
United Domestic Workers (UDW)
United Farm Workers (UFW)
Unity in Action (UIA)
Working Committee on Southern Africa (WCSA)
Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)

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“Youth’s Role in a City Becoming,” a chapter in *Sunshine/Noir II* by City Works Press (2015).

Hip-Hop in Houston: The Origin and the Legacy by Maceo L. Faniel, book review in *Words, Beats, and Life: The Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture*

Bounce: Rap Music and Local Identity in New Orleans by Matt Miller, book review in the *Journal of African American History* Vol. 99.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Research Fields

- African Diaspora
- Black Liberation Movements
- Cultural Materialism
- Comparative Race and Ethnicity
Professors Daniel Widener and Luis Alvarez

Minor Research Fields

- Pan-Africanism/Black Internationalism
Professor Jeremey Prestholdt
- Afro-Latino History (History of Blacks in Latin America)
Professor Jessica L. Graham

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

From Southern California to Southern Africa: Translocal Black Internationalism in Los Angeles and San Diego from Civil Rights to Antiapartheid, 1960 to 1994

by

Mychal Matsemela-Ali Odom

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Luis Alvarez, Co-Chair
Professor Daniel Widener, Co-Chair

A translocal study, “From Southern California to Southern Africa” examines the significance of local African American events to the global study of African liberation. Analyzing what I have termed the Black global spatial imaginary and solidarity-plus, this project examines the impact of major moments in the history of African liberation on African American activism and consciousness. Examining the rise solidarity-plus the first chapter, “Why Not the Same Concern?” is a case study of San Diego’s Congress of Racial Equality branch and the Afro-American Association cadres in San Diego and Los

Angeles. Through direct action, revolutionary study, education, and expressive culture, African Americans and others in Southern California abandoned Cold War liberal ideologies and embraced Black Internationalism in theory and practice.

The growth of Black global spatial imaginary is dependent on African American identification with Africa but also African recognition of Black American struggles. In the second chapter, “Crisis of the African Intellectual: The Racial Encounters of African Students in the Cold War University,” higher education and migration became other ways in which solidarity-plus was practiced and the Black global spatial imaginary was expanded. I argue that the same conditions that brought African Americans into solidarity with African struggles influenced the embrace of African American liberation movements by African migrants to Southern California.

In my third chapter, “Towards the Black International,” I argue that the events following the Watts Rebellion of August 1965 was paradigm shifting moment for African American politics as well as international African liberation. Following the Watts Rebellion, youth and development becomes another practice of solidarity-plus. In Southern California, radicals of color battled the state for the minds and loyalty of Black youth in Southern California. War on Poverty programming was one place this struggle took place. Another place this struggle took place was in the Peace Corps.

Chapter four, titled “Ufahamu na Kuumba,” examines the work of two different types of radical collectives, the African Activists Association (AAA2), a radical African Studies group at UCLA, and the Nia Cultural Organization, a cadre of the Congress of African People in San Diego. For Nia and the AAA2, the study and practice of African revolutionary theory served as forms of solidarity-plus. With the African Activist

Association's journal Ufahamu and the grassroots activism of Nia's community agency the Kuumba Foundation, these organizations continued the work of the Black Power movement and strengthened the antiapartheid movement in Southern California.

Chapter five, "Free South Africa, You Dumb SOB" I argue that the antiapartheid movement in Southern California was the accumulation of three decades of solidarity-plus. As the racial liberal era of American foreign and domestic policy receded it gave way to the rise in neoliberal economic policy and neoconservative social policy. As antiapartheid activists struggled against economic inequality, mass incarceration, police abuse, the neoliberal American university, and the cultural industry throughout Southern California, the movement accelerated. Reviving many of the campaigns of the 1960s, students and community organizations identified the links between the erosion of educational equity with the financing of apartheid and white-rule in Southern Africa by American colleges, cities, and corporations.

I end the dissertation with an examination of the black global spatial imaginary and solidarity-plus in the post-apartheid years in Southern California.

INTRODUCTION

The Black Global Spatial Imaginary from Central Avenue to Sophiatown

In 1987, California State University Los Angeles (CSULA) Associate Professor in Pan-African Studies Cynthia Hamilton published “Apartheid in an American City: The Case of the Black Community in Los Angeles” in the popular periodical *LA Weekly*. Following the Rodney King Rebellion, Hamilton’s article was republished as “The Making of an American Bantustan” in *Inside the LA Riots: What really happened and why it will happen again*. In this essay, Hamilton argued for a shared process of underdevelopment from Black Los Angeles to the Southern African internal colonies. South Central Los Angeles was “another defoliated community, manipulated and robbed of its vitality by the ever-present growth pressures of the local economy.”¹ This process of “South Africanization” was the result of a deliberate economic agenda that had scheduled Black Los Angeles “to be replaced without a trace: cleared land ready for development for a more prosperous—and probably whiter—class of people,” Hamilton notes.² Unevenly structured housing policy, limited employment opportunities, poor health outcomes, and biased policing were all key to this process.³ Hamilton’s essay represented a popular trend in American academic and activist circles in the late 1980s where apartheid became shorthand for a *Herrenvolk democracy*.⁴

¹ Cynthia Hamilton, “The Making of An American Bantustan,” in *Inside the LA Riots: What really happened and why it will happen again* edited by Don Hazen (New York: Institute for Alternative Journalism, 1992), 19.

² Ibid, 20. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990/1992), 227.

³ Hamilton, 20.

⁴ A Herrenvolk democracy has been described by the sociologist Pierre L. van der Berghe as “regimes like those in the United States or South Africa that are democratic for the master race but tyrannical for the subordinate groups.” David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), 59.

Beyond metaphor, “Apartheid in an American City” was produced amidst a local protest tradition that understood its struggles to be genuinely connected to Southern Africa through a *racial capitalist* world system. Historian Robin DG Kelley has recently reminded readers that the late radical intellectual and Black Studies scholar Cedric J. Robinson “encountered intellectuals who used the phrase ‘racial capitalism’ to refer to South Africa’s economy under apartheid. He developed it from a description of a *specific* system to a way of understanding the *general* history of modern capitalism.”⁵ In a challenge to orthodox Marxist ideology, Robinson argued that capitalism emerged out of feudalism and not against it, and racism began as a European system of subjugating and exploiting the labor of other indigenous European populations such as Slavic and Irish people.⁶ Like Hamilton, Robinson’s intervention is instructive. As a student activist at UC Berkeley, Robinson was a member of the Afro-American Association and later the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). His work displayed how praxis became theory for activists of his generation.

African American identification with liberation struggles in Southern Africa specifically, and Africa more generally, was not biologically determined nor historically preordained. Instead, grassroots mobilization and consciousness raising gave meaning to mutual identification between African Americans and Southern Africans. In fact, as cultural anthropologist James O’Toole notes, the Southern African group that African Americans held the most commonalities with were the South African Coloured

⁵ Robin DG Kelley, “What did Cedric Robinson mean by Racial Capitalism,” *Boston Review*, 1/12/17, (<http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism>) accessed 6/8/17. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

populations.⁷ Both African Americans and Coloureds, descended from enslaved populations, had indigenous African ancestry but often were racially mixed, suffered cultural alienation, and were highly urbanized, by the late 20th century. Adversely, in the United States, the historical condition of the Native Americans would be an appropriate analogy for the South African Native population, as historian James O. Gump displayed in his seminal transnational history of settler colonialism, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux* (1994).⁸ Nevertheless, comparative studies of Black-white relations in the United States and South Africa has retained the largest franchise in South African and American studies.

From Southern California to Southern Africa respects the differences between racial domination in the United States and South Africa. Apartheid was a legal and social reality for millions of people in South Africa. However, it was also a compendium of ideas about racial formation, culture, and economics. The purpose of this study is to elucidate the way that racial division in Southern Africa became a popular point of reference in Southern California that brought meaning to liberation struggles and became a useful lens for comparative racial studies. In *Cultures of Violence: Lynching and Racial Killing in South Africa and the United States*, sociologist Ivan Evans examines the comparative and contrasting nature of racial violence in the United States and South Africa. In the United States, white Southerners' religious ideology, cultural similarity, and distrust for the federal government generated a tradition of extrajudicial killings.

⁷ James O'Toole, *Watts and Woodstock: Identity and Culture in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973).

⁸ James O. Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

Adversely, in South Africa, the most severe violence was enacted by a bureaucratic state that responded to competing white interests.⁹ Despite practical differences, historian Tiffany Willoughby-Herard argues that a shared racial ideology existed between the United States and Southern Africa, which she identifies as *global whiteness*. This global whiteness “is sustained and mobilized” by common “enduring commitments to white nationalism as well as attempts to deny those commitments.”¹⁰ As both Evans and Willoughby-Herard cite, regardless of their differences, these systems also produced shared cultures of resistance.

Solidarity-Plus: Local Action and International Liberation

Charting the progress from Civil Rights activism to the Antiapartheid movement, *From Southern California to Southern Africa* is a local history of African American social movements in the age of African liberation. From “The Year of Africa” in 1960 to the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, this study applies an international timeline to the study of African American life. Beginning with the coinciding Sharpeville Massacre and African American Civil Rights student movement and ending with the fall of Apartheid, the South African activist and Noble Laureate in Literature Nadine Gordimer has labeled this the Interregnum Period. During the Interregnum Period, South African intellectuals, activists, and cultural workers had gone into exile; and in South Africa, the Black Consciousness Movement arose in the wake of the New African Movement and

⁹ Ivan Evans, *Cultures of Violence: Lynching and Racial Killing in South Africa and the United States* (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Tiffany Willoughby-Herard, *Waste of a White Skin: The Carnegie Corporation and the Racial Logic of White Vulnerability* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 3.

Sophiatown Renaissance.¹¹ In the United States generally, and Southern California particularly, this period also covers the peak of the modern pan-Africanist tradition as African American crusades for civil rights eventually propelled the creation of a steady and protracted campaign for African liberation. Culturally and socially, these were very similar moments for Black life in the United States and South Africa. Yet, despite the cultural rhizomes that linked African Americans and Southern Africans, similar struggles alone did not yet produce the African liberation movement in Southern California.¹² Notwithstanding the advocacy and activism of fundamental groups like the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), African liberation support in the United States was, first and foremost, the result of local grassroots engagement. I identify this process as *solidarity-plus*: the local protest traditions which prepared the cultural and political foundation for successful international solidarity movements.

Solidarity-plus disrupts the dichotomization of the global and local that has emerged from the pages of conservative and radical scholars alike in the past twenty years. With the post-Soviet Union rise of the unipolar global power of the United States and the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994, global thinking has

¹¹ Ntongela Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* Vol. 1 (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2014), 8. Dike Okoro, *New Perspectives on Mazisi Kunene* (Cissus World Press, 2015), 46-47. Nadine Gordimer, "Living in the Interregnum," *New York Review of Books*, 1/20/83.

¹² My use of the term rhizomes is drawn from the prominent writing of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as well as the recent work of Jacob Dorman. Countering the biologically determined readings of cultural origins. What I like about the rhizomatic understating is that it does not dismiss biology but it expands these concepts to understand bonds between people of the African diaspora and beyond who are in cultural and political proximity of each other but are not directly related. Rhizomes as opposed to roots best outline African American cultural nationalism. African Americans drew heavily on Kiswahili and Southern African cultures as they recreated their own identity despite being closely descended from West and Central West African people. For this reason, the simple notion of cultural roots does not suffice in describing the Black global spatial imaginary. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 21 and 8. Jacob S. Dorman, *Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.

been equated with neoliberal policy. In their 1998 study *Grassroots Post-Modernism*, Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash uphold the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Southern Mexico as the example of a revolutionary project which has dismissed “the frame of reference of the nation-state, without falling into the myth of globalization. By rooting themselves in their local spaces and weaving webs of solidarity with others like them, they are effectively applying the necessary antidote for the ‘Global Project:’ local autonomy.”¹³ Despite their proposition of the impossibility of global consciousness and argument for the local as the remedy to neoliberal globalization, Esteva and Prakash in fact contradict their own thesis as they cite the Zapatista “webs of solidarity.” Challenging the grassroots postmodernism thesis of Esteva and Prakash, solidarity-plus draws from the writings of Michel-Rolph Trouillot, J. Lorand Matory, and Jeremy Prestholdt and others as it conceptualizes globalization and modernity as neither new nor monolithic processes.¹⁴ Nineteen-ninety-four did not mark the rise of globalization but it instead represents a new phase in the process. Nor did 1994 denote the emergence localism as an organizing tool. At every moment of the Black Radical Tradition, internationalism has been produced by the conjoining of local struggles. In this study, solidarity-plus is practiced through direct action, revolutionary self-study and

¹³ Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash, *Grassroots Post-modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 41.

¹⁴ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “The Perspectives of the World: Globalization Then and Now,” in *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities, Cultures, and the Challenge of Globalization*, edited by E. Mudimbe-Boyi (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002). J. Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 1.

political education, cultural production, migration and travel, labor organizing, and youth politics.

Solidarity-plus joins a long conversation on the “Question of Power,” solidarity, and local politics in the Black radical tradition. The martyred African revolutionary Amilcar Cabral once noted: “Experience of the struggle shows how utopian and absurd it is to profess to apply [revolutionary theory] without considering local reality (and especially cultural reality) plans of action developed by other peoples during their liberation struggles and to apply solutions which they found to the problems with which they were or are confronted.”¹⁵ At the height of the Black Power movement, African Americans had begun to migrate to Africa in attempt to contribute to national liberation movements. Cabral, and others such as the Mozambican leader Eduardo Mondlane, suggested that African Americans could best contribute to African liberation through local activism in the United States.¹⁶ Adding to this line of thought, the radical intellectual CLR James, in his many writings, argued that revolutionary movements could only obtain power by engaging the masses on the terms and conditions set by the masses. It was then, and only then, that revolution can be enacted and power can be obtained.¹⁷

All evidence suggests, in 1960, African Americans and other antiracists understood the similarities between the Sharpeville Massacre and the student protests in

¹⁵ Amilcar Cabral, “National Liberation and Culture” (1970), <http://www.blackpast.org/1970-amilcar-cabral-national-liberation-and-culture#sthash.DQmCNTvw.dpuf> (accessed on 6/10/17).

¹⁶ Nigel C. Gibson, “No Easy Victories: Some Reflections on Amilcar Cabral’s Legacy,” in *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral* edited by Firoze Manji and Bill Fletcher, Jr. (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2013), 20.

¹⁷ CLR James, “Walter Rodney and the Question of Power” (London: Race Today Publications, 1981), *Marxist Internet Archives*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1981/01/rodney.htm> (accessed on 6/10/17).

the American South. Comparisons filled newspapers, comic strips, and airwaves. Flashpoints of solidarity and mutual recognition such as the spring of 1960 represent crucial “interventions” but do not rise to the level of “participation and involvement.” Participation and involvement, Historian Alan Gomez has noted, is a “more complicated element of solidarity.”¹⁸ “International solidarity was about the local, even as the imaginary crossed borders, sojourning with new ideas, possibilities, and inspirations. It was enacted locally—in domestic spaces, political organizations, community centers, street corners, restaurants, and localized politics that were the consequence of national and international political decisions,” Sanchez writes.¹⁹ Crucially, this suggests that we need to reconsider the events between the Sharpeville Massacre and the uptick in antiapartheid activism following the Soweto Uprising of 1976. As African American radicals engaged in campaigns for fair housing, employment rights, antipolice brutality, anti-prison activism, and educational justice, they generated the issues and the necessary intergenerational groundswell of everyday activists that international African liberation support movement depended on.

In the past two decades, the body of literature on African Americans and African liberation politics has burgeoned. However, these crucial studies have generally elided the role of local movements, in the United States, as theaters of African revolution. One exception has been, of course, the role of African Liberation Day festivals. As I have noted, without a deep commitment to the understanding the local, events like the African Liberation Day festivals and other flashpoints and interventions of solidarity can

¹⁸ Alan Eladio Gomez, *The Revolutionary Imagination of Greater Mexico: Chicana/o Radicalism, Solidarity Politics, and Latin American Social Movements* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

“replicate notions of charity, infantilization, and relations of colonial violence and domination” that revolutionary movements aim to eradicate.²⁰ For these reasons, this study is best described as *translocal* or *interlocal*.²¹ Academically and politically, an interlocal or translocal perspective seeks to overcome the contradictions of *transnational* perspectives that have centered the modern nation-state as the determinant factor in international relationships. Translocalism is instead, a Black Internationalist political project. Anthropologist J. Lorand Matory writes:

The five-hundred-year-old, black Atlantic is five hundred years older in its translocalism and more than two hundred years older in its disruption of nation-state boundaries than the epoch now fashionably described as ‘transnationalism,’ giving rise to the suspicion that the chief exponents of this term have chosen to disregard Africa or to disregard the past generally. Yet my aim is not to nominate a new date for the beginnings of transnationalism so that it encompasses African history but, instead, to embrace the truths that this term actually highlights about both the African diaspora and the entire course of human cultural history: the isolation of local cultural units has long been the exception rather than the rule, and territoriality bounded social groups have never monopolized the loyalties of their members.²²

I identify these translocal expressions of Black internationalism as the *Black global spatial imaginary*.

Mapping the Global Spatial Imaginary

Borrowing directly from George Lipsitz’s notion of the *black spatial imaginary* and the *white spatial imaginary*. While Lipsitz does not omit the importance of the international, in this study, I make the global much more prominent and central to African American identity formation. As well, I challenged the periodization of

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹Matory, 2-3. Duncan McLaren, “From Seattle to Johannesburg: ‘anti-globalisation’ or ‘inter-localism?’” *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* Vol. 6, No. 4, (2001), 389-391.

²² Matory, 2.

neoliberalism and globalization. I argue that the political economy of postwar Southern California produced two competing international worldviews, or global spatial imaginaries, one white and one Black.²³ Expressed through cultural production and government policy, white Southern Californians produced literature, visual culture, and public performance that expressed unity with white settlers in Africa. As a result, Southern California drew the second largest number of white immigrants from Southern Africa after Australia. Conversely, these conditions produced a Black global vision that caused activists, scholars, entertainers, politicians, and others to imagine Southern California and Southern Africa in the same cultural and political economic sphere. Union between Black Southern Californians and Southern Africans was expressed through myriad forms of cultural representation and political struggles that challenged the global white spatial imaginary's depictions of Africa as uncivilized and backwards. African Americans adopted African names, dance, clothing, language, music, films, religion, gender politics, and political ideology. As well, Southern Californian Black culture and politics, at times, influenced African consciousness and liberation movements.

The black global spatial imaginary is not contained to Southern California and Southern Africa. There are undoubtedly elements of Black life in Southern California which makes *From Southern California to Southern Africa* regionally specific: Black and Brown relational politics, the Watts Rebellion, California's pioneering public higher education system, and previously discussed migration of Africans, Black and white, all make Southern California a crucial place to study. Still, the universal story in *From*

²³ George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), 12-13.

Southern California to Southern Africa is not peculiar; it is instead representational of the popular trends in the postwar African World. A similar study could surely be written on Newark, New Jersey, Manchester, England, Lagos, Nigeria, or hundreds of other places that have been overlooked in the growing canon of literature on Black Internationalism.

Nevertheless, understanding global spatial imaginaries complicates dominant narratives of American and Southern African postwar dissimilarity. In the United States, the decades immediately following World War II have been defined by sequential judicial and legislative Civil Rights victories. Comparatively, those years were defined by the implementation of a brutal legislative agenda by the South African National Party. In 1948, for example, the National Party won the South African general election and enacted a legislative agenda reflective of the one American Civil Rights organizations had begun to overturn. The South African government banned interracial marriage, limited Black mobility, outlawed interracial cohabitation, and placed restrictions on Black education and labor. Also in 1948, Harry Truman and parts of the Democratic Party had embraced the racial liberal platform of the mainstream civil rights organizations and leaders such as A. Philip Randolph with the issuance of Executive Order 9066, ordering the desegregation of military service.²⁴ Earlier that year, civil rights activists experienced seeming vindication when the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in *Shelley V. Kraemer*, effectively overturning racial restrictive housing covenants. However, case studies of California history have revealed the paradoxes of *Shelley*. From Oakland to San Diego, residential segregation in the

²⁴ Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*, 3rd Edition (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 23.

immediate postwar years expanded. Political Scientist Daniel Martinez HoSang has identified this circumstance as exemplary of postwar racial liberalism.²⁵

Notwithstanding HoSang's thesis, a study of racialization in postwar Southern California exposes this period to be more than a crisis in American liberal consciousness. In fact, racial segregation in Southern California, just like in South Africa, was sustained, first and foremost, by a history of racial violence. In a July 1958 article, Civil Rights activist and *Los Angeles Tribune* editor Almena Lomax highlighted the concurrent rise in officer-involved killings of Black people compared to police inactivity in challenging white vigilantes. In Long Beach, African American veteran Air Force flight surgeon Dr. Charles Terry and his family had their home firebombed by white supremacists as he and his family attempted to move into the predominantly white Bixby Knolls area. Similar incidents took place throughout Southern California in the 1950s.²⁶ For the people not victimized by the police or arsonists, roving gangs of proto-fascist "spook hunters"—mobile gangs of white youths—patrolled predominantly white areas and physically attacked Black people who crossed Southern California's racial barriers.²⁷ Regardless of racial liberal ideologies and legislative victories, African Americans in Southern California experienced a constriction of their civil liberties and human rights in the years following World War II, not an expansion. Yet, despite the similarities, this study

²⁵ Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 53-90.

²⁶ Almena Lomax, "Police set record for killing Negroes, not finding racists vandalizing LA," *Los Angeles Tribune*, p. 2.

²⁷ Alex Alonso, "Out of the Void: Street Gangs in Black Los Angeles," *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 141.

confronts the question of the limited grassroots solidarity between African Americans and Southern Africans in the immediate postwar years.

Even when Southern California and Southern Africa were not directly linked, a rhizomatic network of policy and culture had united both places. In fact, just as Robert Trent Vinson has displayed, the bonds between the United States and Southern Africa have not always been direct but they were still politically substantial. In *The Americans Are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa*, cultural products, religious ideology, print media, and a far more mobile West Indian working class and intelligentsia had defined the rhizomatic network of communication.²⁸ Similarly, *From Southern California to Southern Africa* travels through West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, Latin America, and varying parts of the United States as it explains the shifts in Black consciousness, diasporic relations, and political advancements. The earliest elements of the global spatial imaginaries that brought Southern California and Southern Africa into the same sphere were the political, religious, musical, literary, and cinematic traditions generated in South Africa and Southern California from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Being two regions of what could be termed a “Global Harlem Renaissance,” Southern Africa and Southern California were always in proximity of each other. The Ethiopianism of Black Christianity undoubtedly linked the revivalism of Black Los Angeles’s Azusa Street Mission and the notions of Providential Design in Southern

²⁸ Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

African congregations.²⁹ The street preaching, musical traditions, and antiracist theology challenged the dominant ideologies of settler colonialism and white supremacy that linked the white global spatial imaginary of Southern California and Southern Africa. It is no coincidence that when San Diego Civil Rights and Black Power activist Hal Brown staged his rebellion against South African Apartheid and the American Peace Corps in 1968 that his controversial actions took place in an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Maseru, Lesotho. Southern California's Gaslamp District in San Diego and Central Avenue cultural scene in Los Angeles shared much in common with Cape Town's District Six and Johannesburg's Sophiatown.³⁰ The musical scenes of these places were deeply indebted to the New Orleanian sonic traditions that circulated the African Diaspora. Louisianan migrants such as Jelly Roll Morton helped to establish the Los Angeles Jazz scene as a site of multiracial exchanges that challenged the mores of Southern California's de facto segregation. In South Africa, the direct influence of New Orleans Jazz bands and Second Line parades, funeral processions, and weddings can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century. Its evidence can be seen in South African

²⁹ James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 114-116. Robert Trent Vinson, "Providential Design: American Negroes and Garveyism in South Africa," in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). KE Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

³⁰ Bette Yarbrough Cox, "The Evolution of Black Music in Los Angeles, 1890-1955," *Seeking El Dorado* edited by Lawrence B. De Graaf, Kevin Mulroy and Quintard Taylor (Los Angeles, CA: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2001). Clora Bryant, Buddy Collette, William Green, Steve Isoardi, Jack Kelson, Horace Tapscott, and Marl Young editors, *Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Robin DG Kelley, *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Township music, modern Jazz, gospel music, and what has been interestingly termed “traditional Zulu weddings.”³¹

The literary traditions of Southern California and Southern Africa were also brought into vicinity of each other by the shared intellectual and political influences. Consider the work of the contemporary writers Chester Himes, Ezekiel Mphahlele, and Alex La Guma. Inspired by the social realist literature of Richard Wright, the novels *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945), *Down Second Avenue* (1959), and *A Walk in the Night* (1962) respectively written by Himes, Mphahlele, and La Guma were all coming of age stories that chronicle the social alienation, labor struggles, interracial class conflict between Black and white people, and class contradictions between Africans and other people of color. Clearly following Wrights’ “blueprint,” these novels identified structural racism as the source of Black social problems, even crime while displaying elements of interracial working class solidarity.³² The political impetus behind the social realist literary tradition of the Black global spatial imaginary were the revolutionary socialist traditions of the interwar and wartime period which directly linked these writers. In Southern California, the American Communist Party (CPUSA), National Negro Congress, and the Civil Rights Congress struggled against mass incarceration, battled for labor rights, and challenged de jure and de facto segregation. The South African

³¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88-89 and 199. Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!*, 14, 32, and 135. David B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!: South African’s Black Music and Theater* (New York and London: Longman Group, 1985).

³² Mike Davis, 43. Ntongela Masilela, “Ezekiel Mphahlele: The Last Intellectual of the New African Movement,” *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* Vol. 1, 292-300. Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 23 and 40-41. Richard Wright, “Blueprint for Negro Writing,” (1937).

Communist Party (SACP) demanded equal rights for Blacks, organized multiracial coalitions of miners and industrial laborers, and influenced a multiracial intellectual tradition.

These writers were directly influenced by Marxist intellectuals and labor organizers like James La Guma (father of Alex), Harry Haywood, and Cyril Briggs (a Los Angeles resident in his later years). By the early 1950s, the SACP and the Southern California communists had either been completely dissolved or severely limited by government repression. Despite the anticommunist crusades, the socialist traditions were retained in the writings of many of these authors. The Great Depression had effectively ended the Harlem Renaissance but the South African New African Movement and Sophiatown Renaissance persisted through the 1950s. New African intellectuals distinguished themselves from Old African intellectuals, Ntongela Masilela argues, by “creating knowledge of modernity (new ideas, new perspectives, new objectives, new formulations) rather than finding consolation in the old ways of traditional societies.”³³ The circumstances of postwar repression in South African and Southern California fractured the domestic cultural and social movements but permitted the expansion of black global spatial imaginary. It also expanded the white spatial imaginary.

Just as Hamilton chronicled, in the immediate postwar years, the multiracial political and cultural places in Southern California and Southern Africa were forcefully banned by oppressive state policies and law enforcement. In South Africa, the Group Areas Act (1950) added to previously stated Urban Areas Act (1923) and removed South

³³ Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* Vol. 1, 1.

African Natives and South African Coloureds from Sophiatown, District 6, and other urban areas. In Cape Town, Coloureds were relocated to the sprawling ghetto the Cape Town Flats. As a result, Johannesburg witnessed an expansion its South West Townships (SoWeTo/Soweto). In South Africa, the urbanity and modernity of New African Movement and Sophiatown Renaissance leaders challenged the policies of segregationist and apartheid South Africa.³⁴ These forced relocations had three effects on South African society. First, disrupted the revolutionary multiracial political movement that had emerged from these spaces. Second, the forced relocations suppressed the internationalist cultural movement that had emerged in the local dancehalls, shebeens, homes, and concert arenas. Upon restricting Bantu education, suffrage, and land ownership, interracial marriage, interracial eating, and interracial consumption of alcohol was prohibited. Lastly, the Group Areas act expanded settler colonialism practices in urban South Africa. Bernard Magubane writes, “When the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie came to power in 1948, one way it could make its interests prevail over those of other classes was to ensure that it could not be challenged politically. The very nature of its dominance made it introduce new structures of oppression; and to facilitate the process of capital accumulation by this class, the border industries were encouraged and the Group Areas Act was passed to destroy the thriving Indian merchant class and preplace it with Afrikaners.”³⁵

As Southern California historians have shown in their respective studies of the rise and fall of the live music scenes in Los Angeles and San Diego, the cultural centers

³⁴ Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!*, 98-104.

³⁵ Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979/1990), 100.

of Black Southern California were suppressed in a similar pattern as South Africa. On Central Avenue, LAPD officers targeted multiracial groups of entertainers and patrons. Police repression, housing discrimination, popular surf movies, and developments in music production, aided in the relocation of Southern California's culture industry from the multiracial and Black centers to racial segregated areas.³⁶ This postwar restructuring of urban space in Southern California and Southern Africa occurred amidst global economic shifts that did not only forcefully remove Black people and other people of color, they also enticed white working class and white middle class settlement of these newly opened areas. As Thomas Sugrue, Robert O. Self, and Mike Davis, again, have shown, white relocation to these newly opened settlements from Lakewood, California to Cape Town's District Six was permitted by a broadening of what I have called the white global spatial imaginary.³⁷

Notions of Black incivility and white economic aspirations created a globally mobile white horde as European-descended people from around the world poured into both places in the postwar years, in search of property, leisure, and economic opportunity. White Americans and Western European families migrated to Southern Africa to enjoy material benefits unavailable to them in the urban cities of the American northeast and Western Europe. In Southern Africa, while white settlers earned income

³⁶ Micheal Austin, "Harlem of the West: The Douglas Hotel and Creole Palace Nite Club" (master's thesis, University of San Diego, 1994). Daniel Widener, "The Negro as Human Being? Desegregation and the Black Arts imperative" in *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

³⁷ Thomas J. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis; Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003). For more information on Southern California, examine Mike Davis's writings on "The Lakewood Plan": Davis, *City of Quartz*, 168-169. Martinez HoSang, 58.

commensurate to their American counterparts, white settlers earned wages ten-times those of Blacks in Southern Africa.³⁸ White Rhodesians and South Africans migrated to Southern California as athletes, students, and business people as they sought to retain the racialized class benefits they had accrued in Southern Africa. While not as extreme as Southern Africa, White families in Southern California earned about twice the income of Black families and triple the income of a single-parented Black household. The shifting variables in the United States Census complicate the data retrieval process but of the 800,000 emigrants from South African since 1994, at least one-tenth of them have come to the United States and at least 20,000 to San Diego; as many as half of the South Africans in the United States live in Southern California.³⁹

The expansion of the white global spatial imaginary is represented in postwar cinema. Consider the blockbuster films *Hatari!* (1962) starring John Wayne or the surfing travelogue *The Endless Summer* (1966). From Southern Africa to West Africa to East Africa, the vastly different genres commonly represent Africa as underpopulated and primitive places of white opportunity and even American-Anglo reunification. Filmed at the height of anticolonial, *The Endless Summer* best represents this tradition. Historian Scott Laderman notes that *The Endless Summer* was an ideological weapon in the Cold War as it highlighted the freedom of American citizens and paternalism of American

³⁸ Black Community Protests Against Ian Smith's Regime and for the Patriotic Front. Baca Papers Box 17 Folder 5

³⁹ "Chickens on the Run," *Newsweek*, 3/6/94. Sheila Roberts. "An Incomplete Replacing: The White South African Expatriate," in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, edited by Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 172-181. Judson Knight and Lorna Mabunda, "South African Americans," in *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America*, 3rd ed., edited by Thomas Riggs, 255-269. Vol. 4. (Detroit: Gale, 2014), U.S. History in Context (accessed June 16, 2017). <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3273300168/UHIC?u=ahsmedia&xid=acc94578>.

society.⁴⁰ *The Endless Summer* chronicled the lives of Orange County surfers Robert August and Mike Hynson as they tour Third World in search of prime surfing locations. Amongst the South Pacific, they also visited the African nations of Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa. Despite the ancient seafaring traditions and history of watersports in these places, *The Endless Summer* depicts August and Hynson as bringing surfing to the West Africa. Despite purveying state-violence in South Africa, August and Hynson are shown moving freely and unhindered throughout the nation where Black people are only seen performing menial labor and only the slightest of reference to apartheid is made. Without directly mirroring Southern California's racial geography, this nevertheless resembles the pattern of racialization in Southern California. From the western shores of Los Angeles to Orange County of San Diego, residential segregation, police brutality, and popularized surf culture created transformed the beach cities into racially restrictive zones.⁴¹

While many of the white migrants sought expanding privileges, Black South African intellectuals and entertainers sought survival. With the intensification of the living conditions in Southern Africa, the rise of Ian Smith's regime in Rhodesia, and the increased brutality of the South African government, the New African Movement and Sophiatown Renaissance were brought to abrupt ends.⁴² This began the shift in the relationship between Black Southern Californians and Southern Africans specifically but African natives generally. In their own attempts at "re-Africanization," African

⁴⁰ Scott Laderman, *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 52.

⁴¹ Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*, (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 189-91 and 210-15. Widener, 53 and 57.

⁴² Masilela, *The Historical Figures of the New African Movement* Vol. 1, 8.

Americans exchanged culture and ideas with Black African migrants to Southern California. Forced into exile, from the 1960s through the 1990s, Southern California became the home of former New African intellectuals and Sophiatown culture workers, such as, Daniel Kunene, Mazisi Kunene, Bernard Magubane, Hugh Masilela, Miriam Makeba, Anthony Ngubo, Letta Mbulu, and Caiphus Semenya. Home of the West Coast's leading African Studies Center, UCLA became the hub for African students in California but not the only place. African students populated many of the colleges and universities in Southern California from San Diego to Los Angeles. As well, Southern California's culture industry attracted a wealth of entertainers. As the narratives of Magubane and Masilela have noted, life in Southern California radicalized the consciousness of African migrants here just as African American radicalism expanded in these mutual encounters. One such cultural product is an account of life in Sophiatown amidst the demolition and forced removals, *Come Back Africa* (1959). Popularly accredited as the work of the American filmmaker Lionel Rogosin, *Come Back, Africa* is equally the product of Sophiatown Renaissance writers Lewis Nkosi and William Modisane. As the film raised consciousness about the South African struggle, in Southern California, *Come Back, Africa* was viewed with a level of intimate familiarity by Southern California's Black and antiracist community, bridging the gap between both communities and aiding in the local organizing efforts.

Come Back, Africa challenged a conservative white global spatial imaginary and a liberal imaginary. In the 1950s, several motion pictures chronicling East African, West African, and Southern African liberation movements made it to the silver screen. Three films, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1952), *Simba: Mark of Mau Mau!* (1955), and *The Mark*

of the Hawk (1957) represent this trend. These films condemned the extreme brutalities of apartheid and European colonial rule in Africa. Adversely, they also reinforced notions of Black respectability, condemned armed resistance, and vilified Black underclass while praising passive and nonviolent leadership. Consider *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1952). Radical documentarian Peter Davis notes: “In *Cry, the Beloved Country* there is no scene where a black man is shown being demeaned by a white man.” Meanwhile the main plot is of about Absalom Kumalo, a South African Native migrant to Johannesburg and son of minister Stephen Kumalo, who is on trial for killing a liberal white man named Arthur Jarvis. Though *Cry, the Beloved Country* attempted to deride apartheid policy, it reinforced dominant notions of Black South Africans as premodern and unfit for citizenship.⁴³ The serenity of the countryside versus the urban crises in Johannesburg presented a liberal culture of poverty narrative that was surely legible to American reformers. Most significantly, despite its sharp criticism and international exposure, *Cry, the Beloved Country* was not perceived as a threat by the South African ruling class.⁴⁴

Comparatively, *Come Back, Africa* examined the rural to urban migration of Zachariah Mgabi, from a Zulu Bantustan to Johannesburg. Unable to maintain stable employment, Zachariah labored in the mines, as a domestic servant, in an automotive garage, and at a quarry as he evaded curfews and pass laws. Unlike *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the violence Zachariah, his wife, and his compatriots experience in the film is visualized. In *Come Back, Africa*, Black South Africans suffer chronic unemployment,

⁴³ Peter Davis, *In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema's South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press/Ravan Press, 1996), 38-47.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

homelessness, police brutality, imprisonment, and the basic degradation of everyday life in South Africa. *Come Back, Africa* exposed the contradictions of white liberal ideology and conservatism. These paradoxes were displayed in the exchange between Zachariah's second employers, a middle class white couple. Following a mistake Zachariah made, the wife, an overt racist, dismissed Zachariah as a savage. The husband did not fully negate his wife but instead paternalistically suggested Zachariah required the close direction of whites if he was to ever become accustomed to modern Western cultural norms. In fact, apart from police brutality and incarceration due to a pass violation, most abuses Zachariah experienced in the film was from liberal and moderate whites. In one scene at a local Sophiatown speakeasy, known as a shebeen, Nkosi, Morris Hugh, and Can Themba discuss the various solutions political perspectives and solutions to apartheid. Directly referencing the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Nkosi "argues that the liberal does not want a real-life African as much as someone to 'pat on the head.'"⁴⁵

Still, *Come Back, Africa* makes it clear that the structures of white supremacy overdetermined all parts of Black misery in Southern Africa, even the Black-on-Black violence Zachariah, his wife, and his son experienced at the hands of local Sophiatown gangsters known as tsotsis. Without adequate primary education, young children were forced to run the streets. As well, during a conversation between Zachariah, Themba, Nkosi, and others inside the shebeen, blamed racial capitalism for the creation of the leading Sophiatown tsotsi Marumu. Throughout the film, the rich cultural products of

⁴⁵ *Come Back, Africa* press kit edited by Sarah Szulecki (Milestone Films: 2012), 4.

Black urban life in South Africa were revealed. For the first time, many Americans viewed soulful township songs of Miriam Makeba, the penny whistling of children on downtown street corners, the chants and gospel songs of missionary societies, the tunes of second lining brass bands, and the gumboot dancing of furloughed miners. The streets, homes, and shebeens became *alterable terrains* of Black resistance and community building. With Sophiatown literally being bulldozed in the background of the film, this culture work was also an alternative economy that the unemployed and underemployed utilized to counter their labor exploitation. In the final scene of *Come Back, Africa*, Zachariah returns home to find his wife murdered by Marumu. Despite Zachariah's accommodationist approach to apartheid throughout much of the film, *Come Back, Africa* ended with the most overt act of Black resistance when, seemingly in a fit of rage, Zachariah destroys his shanty home. In a final display of surrealism, *Come Back, Africa* ends with a ghostly mass of Black workers moving through the Johannesburg night, with only the lights on their helmets visible. Produced in 1959, the epilogue is undoubtedly a call to arms and clairvoyantly channeled the transition towards armed rebellion and urban resistance in Southern Africa.

Despite the uptick in international coverage on South African freedom struggles in the 1950s and 1960s, the reporting was limited to print media and visual images. Devoid of sound, the newsreels left South African natives voiceless. “*Come Back, Africa* added access to a political forum. And this experience was not only liberating to the Africans who participated in the film, but it was also a revelation to those who saw it.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Davis, 55.

Rogosin originally intended *Come Back, Africa* to be the first installment in a trilogy of films on Third World liberation with the second film being about African American liberation struggles and the final film being about life in an emerging independent nation of color. In fact, Rogosin followed *Come Back, Africa* with three films on African American political and cultural struggles. *Come Back, Africa* shrank the distance between Black life in South Africa and Southern California. Once *Come Back, Africa* finally made its Southern California debut in 1963, it aired at film festivals and political education sessions by white progressive and Black radical organizations.

In Southern California, *Come Back, Africa* became a site of political struggle against white supremacy and was a source of rupture within the Civil Rights movement. In an editorial review of the film, the famed musician and *Los Angeles Sentinel* columnist Johnny Otis noted that NAACP officials throughout the Southland dismissed the film, condemning the portrayal of impoverished and uneducated Black people.⁴⁷ Long concerned with the promotion of “positive” images of Black people in cinema, the NAACP had recently launched a national campaign against the television sitcoms *The Beulah Show* and *Amos ‘n Andy* that resulted in the removal of the shows but brought a decade-long void of Black lead roles in television.⁴⁸ Others dismissed the film as a communist plot. Otis nonetheless argues, “It seems to me however that the all too many ill-educated, uneducated, oppressed and ‘low class’ Negroes is exactly the negative fact of life that the NAACP should be concerned with...and any honest depiction of this ugly

⁴⁷ Johnny Otis, “Come Back Africa’ Called Mild Story,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9/5/1963, A12.

⁴⁸ Jenny Woodley, *Art for Equality: The NAACP's Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2014). Widener, 75-76.

reality...either in Africa or America should be part of the campaign to illuminate evils.”⁴⁹

As Otis displayed, *Come Back, Africa* represented the promise of the black global spatial imaginary. *Come Back, Africa* was banned in South Africa, and many of its actors fled into exile and did not return until full independence was achieved—others died in exile. Though it would be decades until the film was publicly aired in South Africa, *Come Back, Africa* remained a political education tool throughout the Civil Rights, Black Power, and antiapartheid eras in the United States and abroad.

Composed at the height of nonviolent and interracial activism in South Africa and the United States, the international release of *Come Back, Africa* was succeeded by the reprisal of Black Nationalism in the United States and South Africa. African and African American Marxists such as Ntongela Masilela and Gerald Horne have often regarded this shift as a retreat from the previous struggles. Yet, when we understand the development of the black global spatial imaginary—the Black International—as a process versus an event, the American Black Power Movement to the Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa cease to be diversions from previous socialist and multiracial formations but instead revivals of older Black radical traditions and resolutions of class and racial contradictions of the 1950s.⁵⁰ Influenced by leaders, writers, and thinkers, like Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyerere, and surely Malcolm X, that mandated what I have called solidarity-plus, the black global spatial imaginary delegated white radicals to engage in the heavy lifting of grassroots mobilization within white communities as a

⁴⁹ Otis.

⁵⁰ Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 14.

prerequisite to true interracial solidarity.⁵¹ While there was a departure from Black-white alliances during this moment, the relational and *polycultural* politics of the black global spatial imaginary expanded during the Interregnum Period. In their political work and cultural work, activists recalibrated the definition of Blackness. In South Africa, for example, Steve Biko and the South African Student's Organization (SASO) included "all oppressed peoples defined as 'non-white' by the apartheid state."⁵² In many ways, for Southern Californians, this included Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Arabs, and Asian Americans and generated the critical mass of students and community members who were later active in the divestment campaigns of Southern California.

Thematic Interventions

Amongst its topics, this study uses four historiographic themes in its intervention the literature on Black radicalism: locality; the relationship between the campus and the community; solidarity; and Southern California history. As previously noted, most transnational studies of Black radicalism have missed local specificity. Similarly, the wealth of local studies have also overlooked the international particularities of Black radical movements in the United States. Two recent exceptions to this historiographic paradox are Minkah Makalani's *In the Cause of Freedom* and Robert Trent Vinson's *The Americans Are Coming!* However, these studies are both situated in the early twentieth century and largely chronicle the lives and mobility of Caribbean and African revolutionaries. *From Southern California to Southern Africa* takes a similar methodological approach as Vinson and Makalani but is set in postwar Southern

⁵¹ Michael O. West and William G. Martin, "Introduction: Contours of the Black International: From Toussaint to Tupac," *From Toussaint to Tupac*, 24-32.

⁵² *Ibid*, 28.

California. For this reason, despite being academically and politically indebted to the crucial studies of Civil Rights and Black Power made by authors such as Timothy Tyson, Matthew Countryman, Gaye Theresa Johnson, Donna Murch, Akinyele Umoja, Daniel Widener, Scot Brown, Michael Simanga, and Komozi Woodard, this study is a local study of transnational Black internationalism.⁵³ Fifty years since the publication of Harold Cruse's canonical *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, this study wrestles with many of the same challenges that Cruse made to activists and intellectuals in the late 1960s.⁵⁴ First and foremost, there is an importance and particularity to African American political struggle and leadership at the local level. Cruse's controversial stance was in fact subsequently articulated by African revolutionaries such as Amilcar Cabral and Eduardo Mondlane. Black struggle in the United States cannot merely be facsimiles of international movements and indigenous leadership. Second, I believe that we must indeed reconsider the radicalism in Civil Rights praxis and its precedence to Black Power and antiapartheid campaigns without reproducing reductive notions of a "long civil rights" struggle. Instead, these local traditions are built on intergenerational dialogue and activism while being defined by important ruptures and paradigm shifts. The relationship

⁵³ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Gaye Theresa Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). Donna Murch, *Living for the City*. Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West*. Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). Michael Simanga, *Amiri Baraka and the Congress of African People: History and Memory* (New York and London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015). Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

⁵⁴ Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1967).

between the campus and community is one place where that intergenerational bridge building happens.

This study joins a growing body of literature on the struggle for Black Studies and Ethnic Studies as well as the literature on Black student activism. As I display, struggles over the administration of education is crucial for various reasons. First, campaigns for the community control of primary and secondary education initially, and later higher education, were important places for youth politics. As Donna Murch and Martha Biondi have shown, it was often in the fights over representation, administration, and curriculum in higher education that the future political goals of Black youth were realized.⁵⁵ Second, education brought together a sundry collective of students and educators throughout the African diaspora. Third, education, most particularly higher education, offers critical support for Black radicalism. When students and community members seized control of academic programs and resource centers, they gained access to funds, equipment, and space, and individuals that helped nurture their local struggles and expand their international connections. Yet, in doing so, it was also on the campus where those activists came in direct contact with prevailing problems and contradictions of postwar American political and economic power. Nevertheless, higher education allows for intergenerational bonds that made eventually made many of the divestment victories possible.

As previously noted, the translocal nature of this study intervenes into literature on solidarity movements. Translocalism also emerges in my mapping of what I have

⁵⁵ Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 17.

termed Black Southern California. Much of this has already been implicitly done in the literature on Black Los Angeles. Black Los Angeles has generally been mapped as not only Los Angeles' city limits but instead Los Angeles County, Orange County, and the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.) These cultural and social geographies have charted processes of suburbanization, the movement of industry, and the expansion of cultural production. In this study, I pay extended emphasis to San Diego as a part of Black Southern California. Organizationally, San Diego and Los Angeles are tied to each other. In this study, the inclusion of San Diego does not only expand the general history of Los Angeles' activist tradition but it also complicates that narrative. Black San Diego broadens our studies of Black cultural nationalism beyond studies of the charismatic leadership of Maulana Karenga but instead from the organic struggles of Black radicals in San Diego. In return, this also allows us to reevaluate the rise of cultural nationalism in Los Angeles outside of the teleological analysis of the conflicts between the Us Organization and the Black Panthers. Lastly, expands our understanding of the role of transborder issues and Black and Brown relationality in the development of solidarity-plus and the Black global spatial imaginary.

Methodology, Periodization, and Layout

From Southern California to Southern Africa is a relational study of African American history. This study began as a study of postwar Black consciousness in Southern California. However, as I continued my research, the project moved beyond its ethnic and national borders. Inspired by the theorization of relationality that has emerged in the field of Chicana/o Studies, I began my study expanded as I began to consider the writings of historian Natalia Molina and reconsider the relationship between my research

subject and research questions the more I consulted the various archives. Molina writes: “While the records did not include as many materials on my research subject as some of the well-known archives in Chicana/o history, they did contain a lot on my research question,” she writes.⁵⁶ This study relies on university archives, congressional records and census data, oral history, newspapers, biography, film, poetry, photography, ephemeral materials such as flyers and posters, personal archival material, conference proceedings, and personal correspondence. As well, I reconsider the way academic journals, novels, and academic monographs double as primary source data. In my analysis of this data, I employ a combination of social, cultural, political, and intellectual historical methods as I chart the development of solidarity-plus and the Black global spatial imaginary in Southern California. The first archives I consulted at the beginning of this study were the Harold K. Brown Papers and Leon William Papers housed at the San Diego State University (SDSU) Special collections and University Archives. The Brown Papers and Williams Papers are promoted as chronicling the history of the San Diego Civil Rights Movement. Yet, in the personal collections of materials Williams and Brown had donated to SDSU, there were newspaper clippings, oral histories, and official correspondence on the Afro-American Association, the Africa House Cultural Center, Lesotho and the Peace Corps, private African art collections, and antipoverty programming. These sources helped me to reconsider the international and the interracial components of this study by considering the role of African liberation, Black and Latino relationality, American foreign and domestic policy, and cultural production.

⁵⁶ Natalia Molina, “Examining Chicana/o History through a Relational Lens,” *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 82, No. 4 (November 2013), 535.

A translocal study, *From Southern California to Southern Africa* examines the significance of local African American events to the global study of African liberation. As well, this project examines the impact of major moments in the history of African liberation on African American activism and consciousness. As previously noted, I begin in 1960 and end in 1994. Known as the Interregnum Period of South African history, these years chronicle the three decades between the Sharpeville Massacre and the subsequent formal end of Apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela. In the United States, these years chronicle the uptick of Civil Rights activism and its transition to Black Power. It also monitors shifts in American political economy. Between 1960 and 1994, the Watts Rebellion, the death of Martin Luther King, the creation of African Liberation Day in 1972, the death of Amilcar Cabral, the Sixth Pan-African Congress in 1974, the Soweto Uprising, death of Steve Biko, and Mass Democratic movements in South Africa between 1976 and 1983, and finally the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 all serve as important benchmarks for political development and international communication between African Americans and African freedom fighters. The material conditions of the postwar American economy brought Southern California and Southern Africa into proximity with each other but it was indeed the cultural and political struggle that generated the intimate bonds. As Robin Kelley has reminded readers and activists in recent years, shared pain might be generative in the short-term but love is the “long-term motivation” for political struggle.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Robin DG Kelley, “Thug Nation: On State Violence and Disposability,” in *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter* edited by Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton (New York: Verso Books, 2016).

Examining the rise of solidarity-plus the first chapter, “Why Not the Same Concern?” is a case study of San Diego’s Congress of Racial Equality branch and the Afro-American Association cadres in San Diego and Los Angeles. Through direct action, revolutionary study, education, and expressive culture, African Americans and others in Southern California abandoned Cold War liberal ideologies and embraced Black Internationalism in theory and practice. This shift in consciousness was driven by international events as well as the increased conflict with the dominant ideology of racial liberalism. Once useful, had begun to undercut the political demands of African American activists created wedges between civil rights organizations and the Black masses. Much of the scholarship on postwar pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism has argued that the rejection and acceptance of African solidarity was driven by international events. From the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 to the Congo Crisis in 1964, these international crises were important points of reference for the most politically advanced Civil Rights activists. However, solidarity-plus was generated as these activists engaged the struggles of everyday Black life in Southern California. As African Americans struggled for community control of housing, employment, and education, they produced organic notions of Black Power. As Civil Rights activists rejected mainstream Civil Rights agendas, they embraced the revolutionary and internationalist Black Nationalist and Black socialist alternatives. The rise of proto-Black Power organizations like the Afro-American Association begin concurrent to the Civil Rights activism and their membership overlapped with mainstream organizations like CORE.

Accelerated by Johnson administration’s hypocritical domestic and foreign policy, grassroots identification with African liberation had become common place in

Southern California before the Watts Rebellion. However, most importantly, the local events in Southern California in these years established the sites on which Black liberation and African solidarity would be struggled for the next three decades. Consider CORE's campaign against the Bank of America in 1964. This campaign ushered the Black radical break with racial liberal policy, generated mass appeal, inspired the solidarity of African students with African American struggles, and marked the beginning of the South African divestment campaign in Southern California. It is not coincidence that, a decade later, a new generation of activists challenged the Bank of America by linking its divestment from urban communities of color to its investment in segregationist and colonial regimes in Southern Africa.

The growth of Black global spatial imaginary is dependent on African American identification with Africa but also African recognition of Black American struggles. In the second chapter, "Crisis of the African Intellectual: The Racial Encounters of African Students in the Cold War University," higher education and migration became other ways in which solidarity-plus was practiced and the Black global spatial imaginary was expanded. I argue that the same conditions that brought African Americans into solidarity with African struggles influenced the embrace of African American liberation movements by African migrants to Southern California. One of the largest portions of Black African migrants to the United States in the 1960s were students who were recruited as a part of educational programs intended to create an African bourgeoisie loyal to American liberal democracy. Another prominent group were entertainers. As African students, and entertainers, experienced residential segregation, employment discrimination, police brutality, and other things Black Americans experience, they

became active participants in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. African student activists, such as Bernard Magubane and Tony Ngubo, as well as entertainers, such as Hugh Masekela and Fela Kuti, have noted that it was their encounters in Southern California which radicalized their politics and their life's work. African migrants, notably but not exclusively Southern Africans, lived, worked, socialized, and performed with African Americans. With the African migrant population being predominantly male, these pan-African bonds were masculine. Nevertheless, many of these African migrants married African American women, became American residents and played active roles in the production of Black Internationalism in the United States. African migrants became active participants in Civil Rights and Black Power activism. This strengthened African consciousness in African American movements and formed the beginnings of the antiapartheid movement in Southern California.

In my third chapter, "Towards the Black International," I argue that the events following the Watts Rebellion of August 1965 was paradigm shifting moment for African American politics as well as international African liberation. Following the Watts Rebellion, youth and development becomes another practice of solidarity-plus. In Southern California, radicals of color battled the state for the minds and loyalty of Black youth in Southern California. War on Poverty programming was one place this struggle took place. For liberals, War on Poverty programming became not only a solution to the urban crisis. Also, antipoverty programming was an attempt to contain Black liberation within the confines of the American nation-state and Cold War liberalism. Conversely, Black Power organizations countered the intentions of government officials as they used local community action agencies to recruit new members, promoted Black International

consciousness, and expand the black global spatial imaginary. War on Poverty programming provided funding and resources that aimed to alter the material conditions of African Americans. As historian Alyosha Goldstein has noted, common notions of underdevelopment bound American communities of color to Third World nations in the minds of liberal reforms, as well as in minds of radical thinkers.⁵⁸ The War on Poverty was, in many ways, a domestication of the Peace Corps. Programmatically and through its staffing, the War on Poverty and the Peace Corps brought African Americans and Southern Africans into contact with each other. In Africa, youthfulness and development was represented in newly independent nations such as Lesotho in Southern Africa. In both instances, the Johnson Administration implemented policy to aid and direct the development of these very different budding Black nations. At the end of this chapter, I chronicle the experience of San Diegan activist and antipoverty worker Harold Brown in his role as a Peace Corps worker in Lesotho. Reversing the path of Magubane, Ngubo, and others, Brown's experience in Southern Africa brought the Black Power movement and African liberation struggles into direct contact with each other, challenged Cold War liberal policy, and laid another foundation for the African liberation support movement that emerged in the United States.

Chapter four, titled "Ufahamu na Kuumba," examines the work of two different types of radical collectives, the African Activists Association (AAA2), a radical African Studies group at UCLA, and the Nia Cultural Organization, a cadre of the Congress of African People in San Diego. Both Nia and the AAA2 were formed in the wake of the

⁵⁸ Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action During the American Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

COINTELPRO-instigated war between the Us Organization and Black Panther Party. For Nia and the AAA2, the study and practice of African revolutionary theory served as forms of solidarity-plus. With the African Activist Association's journal *Ufahamu* and the grassroots activism of Nia's community agency the Kuumba Foundation, these organizations continued the work of the Black Power movement and strengthened the antiapartheid movement in Southern California. Nia and the AAA2 promoted the local application of African liberation ideologies. Sustaining the previous struggles, these organizations recruited and trained many of the activists that led the antiapartheid struggles over the next two decades. Nia and the AAA2 did so by linking African liberation to immediate concerns over mass incarceration, employment, education, and jobs with their print media, cultural production, public festivals, and organization of international conferences.

My final chapter "Free South Africa, You Dumb SOB" argues that the antiapartheid movement in Southern California was the accumulation of three decades of solidarity-plus. As the racial liberal era of American foreign and domestic policy receded it gave way to the rise in neoliberal economic policy and neoconservative social policy. As antiapartheid activists struggled against economic inequality, mass incarceration, police abuse, the neoliberal American university, and the cultural industry throughout Southern California, the movement accelerated. Reviving many of the campaigns of the 1960s, students and community organizations identified the links between the erosion of educational equity with the financing of apartheid and white-rule in Southern Africa by American colleges, cities, and corporations. As students called for divestment, they also demanded a truly open and public university. The rise in militarism by Southern African

states and the imprisonment of political prisoner abroad was directly linked to the local campaigns against mass incarceration and state violence. Antiapartheid organizations mobilized against police brutality and local antipolice brutality organizations campaigned against apartheid. While the first two campaigns chronicled in the final chapter are explicit responses to rightward turn in American politics. The cultural boycott and campus divestment campaigns of the latter half of the chapter challenged the nominally liberal University of California system and entertainment industry.

For liberal and moderate antiapartheid activists, the fall of apartheid election of Nelson Mandela completed four decades of international political struggle. For radical activists, the post-apartheid years signaled a new shift in the black global spatial imaginary. Bound by shared issues such as health care, unemployment, mass incarceration, fratricidal violence, police brutality, and the limits of Black electoral politics, myriad issues remain linking Southern California and Southern Africa. My conclusion proposes a post-apartheid platform for a regenerated black global spatial imaginary between Southern California and Southern Africa.

Statement on Terminology

From Southern California to Southern Africa examines the progression of African consciousness in postwar Los Angeles and Southern California. In doing so, this study uses the overlapping terms: *Black Nationalism*, *Black Power*, *Black Internationalism*, and *pan-Africanism*. These four terms have come to mean different things to activists and academics. Organizationally, sectarian definitions of these terms have, often, been the source of conflict. Academically, if these terms are misrepresented, they can only further sectarianism or confusion amongst the public. The late Sociologist Roderick D. Bush

underscores this paradox in his seminal study of Black Nationalism, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (1998). Black Nationalism has often been defined by its contradictions. This has been true of many conservative, Black Marxist, and white socialist authors. “Black nationalism is routinely vilified in the media, is seldom taken seriously by white scholars, and is the butt of sarcasm in the popular discourse. The corporate media’s coverage of leaders and activists who are sympathetic to Black nationalism is reflexively skeptical, of not oppositional and generously indulges those political forces antagonistic to Black nationalism,” Bush writes.⁵⁹ This study fundamentally understands Black Nationalism as an ideology which recognizes the universal subjugation of Black people and people of African descent.

Black Nationalist ideologies seek unification and liberation of Black people and people of African descent. Black Nationalist ideologies have *always* sought freedom for Black people outside of the realm of European control. Black Nationalist thought has always advocated for the correlation of self-definition and self-determination. As a necessary precursor to independence, calls for self-definition has spurred religious and cultural movements. The two major branches of Black Nationalism that appear in this study are cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism. Cultural nationalism is generally understood as centering ideological and representational transformation as their arena of struggle while revolutionary nationalists have focused on political and economic change. Despite Black Nationalism’s centrality to African liberation projects for at least

⁵⁹ Roderick D. Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 2.

two hundred years, many authors have criticized Black Nationalism the way it has other nationalisms. Even more problematic, Paul Gilroy and Mark Christian Thompson have famously identified Marcus Garvey's Black Nationalist project, pejoratively, as "black fascism."⁶⁰ In leveling their criticism of Garvey, scholars and activists have focused on Garvey's supposed "anticommunism." However, Bush intervenes into this logic calling it an "oversimplification" and reminding readers that Garvey "urged Blacks to do the same thing for Africa that Lenin and Trotsky had done for Russia in overthrowing czarist despotism."⁶¹ As it was with Garvey, it eventually became in the 1960s. Black radicals rejected orthodox African thought and even Black-white cooperation but they did not reject anticapitalism. It is a fact that, while Black Internationalism has trended in recent decade, it was a novel term in the 1960s, having been created by the Revolutionary Action Movement. In fact, while I use the term Black Internationalism to identify the global vision of many activists in the 1960s, in the moment, the activists, in large, referred to themselves as Black Nationalists.

The other term that activists used was *Pan-Africanism*. Pan-Africanism, with a capital P, has often been associated with formal movements and organizations that worked for the unification and liberation of Africa. However, following the interpretation of Historian Sylvia Frey, this study uses the term, pan-Africanism, emphasizing a lowercase P. Far less monolithic, pan-Africanism instead are much more

⁶⁰ Paul Gilroy, "Black Fascism," *Transition* Vol. 81/82 (2000): 70-91. Mark Christian Thompson, *Black Fascisms: African American Literature and Culture between the Wars* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

⁶¹ Bush, 100.

loosely knit of movements in which “cultural elements often predominate.”⁶² In Frey’s reading, this movement dates to, at least, the 18th century. For the late Cedric Robinson and J. Lorand Matory, this project dates back even further to possibly pre-Columbian times. By the 1960s, however, the domination reading of pan-Africanism was from the writings of people like George Padmore, CLR James, Malcolm X, and others. This reading of pan-Africanism has, since at least the 1950s, folded the Garvey Movement, Black millenarian campaigns, labor unionism, cultural associations, and other variant formations within the compass of pan-Africanism. Though there are nuances between pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism, here I use both terms interchangeably.

Black Internationalism, as a term, emerged with the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), a vanguard organization in the 1960s. Instead of mass mobilization, RAM had instead influenced the ideology and actions of a national network of organizations. Originally known as Bandung Humanism, Bandung Internationalism, Revolutionary Black Internationalism, and then simply Black Internationalism, this ideology proposed the true revolution would begin with the colonized people of the world, and not by European leadership. Taking their cues from the Bandung Third World Conference in Indonesia, Black Internationalism rejected capitalism as well as all forms of European colonialism, including Soviet intervention. RAM argued that what activists called Black Nationalism “is really internationalism.”⁶³ A synthesis of RAM’s Black Internationalism and the pan-Africanism outlined by CLR James has been most clearly

⁶² Sylvia Frey, “The American Revolution and the Creation of a Global African World,” in *From Toussaint to Tupac*, 48.

⁶³ Robin DG Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution,” in *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 115.

theorized by Chairman Omali Yeshitela and the African People's Socialist Party (APSP) as *African Internationalism*. I do not use this term in the dissertation but Chairman Omali's reading of the Black Radical Tradition has undoubtedly influenced my study.⁶⁴ Scholars such as Michelle Ann Stephens, Dayo F. Gore, Erik S. McDuffie, and Cheryl Higashida have recently made critical gendered interventions into the study of Black Internationalism by the histories of Black masculinist, feminist, and queer worldviews.⁶⁵ This study attempts to account for this.

Unlike the universality of Black Nationalism, pan-Africanism, and Black Internationalism, in this study, Black Power is a temporal concept. While traces of Black Power can be found in the writings of Richard Wright, James Boggs, and Grace Lee Boggs and many scholars have suggested the present of a "Long Black Power Movement," this study acknowledges that the rise of Black Power was a conscious paradigm shift amongst Black radical activists in the 1960s. Building on the work of Black Nationalists, pan-Africanists, and Black socialists, Black Power broke with the reformist demands of Civil Rights organizations. They demanded structural change and mandated Black leadership. However, just like the other categories, Black Power ideology was varied. As Black Power ideologies had promoted the centrality of united front politics, at least in the early years, mainstream Civil Rights organizations such as

⁶⁴ Chairman Omali Yeshitela, *An Uneasy Equilibrium: The African Revolution versus Parasitic Capitalism* (St. Petersburg, FL: Burning Spear Publications, 2014).

⁶⁵ Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011). Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

the National Urban League had been a part of Black Power organizations. However, Black Power mandated community control, mass mobilization, consciousness raising, and self-defense. As my later chapters note, Black Power activism was not limited to the 1960s or the early 1970s, and it was not completely eradicated by covert government programs. The spirit of Black Power propelled the antiapartheid movement and continues to guide community movements, international organizations, and cultural work.

CHAPTER ONE
**Why Not the Same Concern?: Civil Rights, Black Nationalism, and the
Development of African Consciousness in Southern California**

Commonly referred to as the Year of Africa, 1960 was a pivotal moment for the local, national, and global struggle against white supremacy. As historian James Meriwether notes, in this year seventeen nations attained their independence from European colonial powers and over a dozen African states were admitted as members of the United Nations. Alongside independence, 1960 marked a pivotal year for African resistance. “The single most striking event of the year,” Meriwether writes, “was not the independence of any one country, but the massacre of sixty-nine unarmed protestors at Sharpeville by South African police” on March 21st.¹ As members of South Africa’s Pan-Africanist Congress and African National Congress took an aggressive stance against the Pass Laws, on the other side of the Atlantic in the American South, African Americans began their own militant nonviolent confrontations with white supremacy as well. On February 1st, students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, North Carolina, reignited the American Civil Rights Movement with their protest against Woolworth’s and eventually Kress department stores.² Journalists and activists did not miss the correlation between these two struggles.

On 24 March 1960, the *Los Angeles Sentinel* Columnist Hazel La Marre published her front-page story on the Sharpeville Massacre. Author of the weekly column “Africa and the World” for the *Sentinel*, La Marre outlined the South African resistance to the Pass Laws in a language highly legible to African Americans. “For

¹ James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 181.

² *Ibid*, 193.

weeks,” La Marre writes, “African workers...have attempted peaceful demonstrations against...apartheid, a strong policy of discrimination which has been enforced in South Africa against the Negroes for many years.”³ La Marre notes that the laws require Blacks to retain cards noting their race and status, barring them from using public and private facilities and contained to limited employment options. Despite the violent response by the South African police, La Marre reported on the commitment of some South African organizations to nonviolent civil disobedience while other “militant workers say they will fight fire with fire.”⁴

In April 1960, Ron Everett, an eighteen-year-old Black freshman at Los Angeles City College, participated in a series of protests at local Kress and Woolworth stores in Downtown Los Angeles, near 7th Street and Broadway, in solidarity with the sit-in protests of students in the American South. For at least a month, Everett and a multiracial cast of fifteen other students expressed their support for activists in the South, attempted to raise the consciousness of African Americans consumers and solicit their support, and directly confronted local political and economic powers. These protests represented the upsurge in direct action amongst African American youth and their allies in the spring of 1960, as students challenged local power structures in solidarity with the activists down South. On April 2nd, there was a confrontation between Los Angeles police and Everett and the others. While talking to a woman attempting to patronize Woolworth’s, Everett was approached by a Los Angeles police officer who subsequently had Everett and white protester Howard Minkin detained as a half dozen police cars were

³ Hazel La Marre, “Violence Grips South Africa: 67 Killed, Hundreds Wounded in Rioting,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 24 March 1960, A1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

called to the scene. Everett had not violated any laws. Instead the officer took offense with Everett's vocal tone and multiracial acquaintances. "You're not talking to one of your friends," the officer told Everett.⁵ The detention of Everett and Minkin garnered the attention of the local public and became front page news in the African American media. Everett's punishment for violating Southern California's de facto racial codes garnered obvious comparisons between California's racial structure and the regulations in the American South. However, more interestingly, the local journalists compared Los Angeles to South Africa. In both the front page spread of images and Everett's editorial article, the "thousands of Africans who have been slaughtered in the last month" was invoked. In "A case of arrest," Everett drew a continuum between the Los Angeles, the South, and South Africa as an international line of struggle.

⁵ "Johannesburg, USA," *Los Angeles Tribune*, 4/8/60, p. 1.

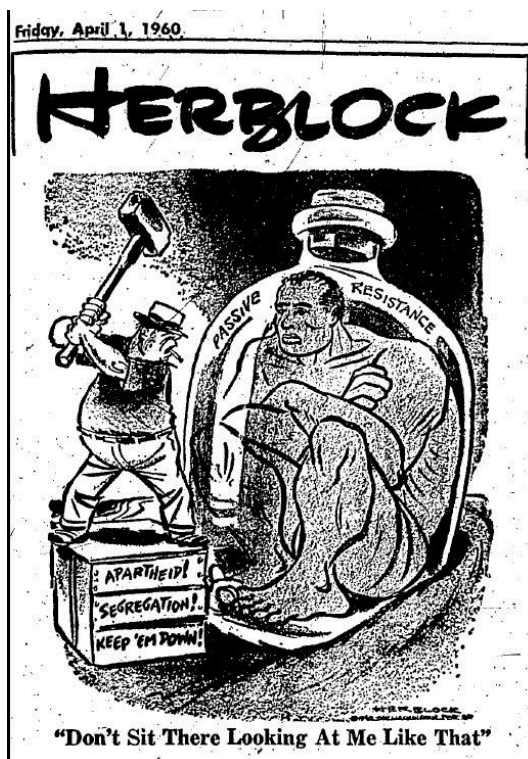


Figure 1 Printed in the SDSU *Daily Aztec*, Herbert “Herblock” Lock’s political cartoon shows how Americans began to see clear similarities in African American and South African liberation movements in the spring of 1960. (*Daily Aztec*, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives)

Together La Marre’s column and Everett’s protest appear to confirm Meriwether’s thesis. However, while these pieces underscore a shift in consciousness, they do not denote a shift in local action. A brief examination of the other lead stories on the front cover of the *Sentinel* display the import placed on local and national struggles for equality. The periphery of La Marre’s article is riddled with stories of immediate concern for Black Southern Californians. The headlining story was of Edgar Joe Fuller, a former Fremont High School track star who was shot and killed by the Los Angeles Police Department following a brief chase, despite being unarmed. Another story detailed the battle in the United States Senate for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of

1960. Directly to the right of La Marre's article there was another piece urging Black churches nationwide to join in the Southern boycott against Woolworth and Kress stores.

In the Year of Africa, the wave of liberation struggles that swept Africa forever changed Black discourse but did not yet pull African Americans into a deep commitment of solidarity—what I have called *solidarity-plus*. In this chapter, solidarity-plus is exhibited through direct action, revolutionary study and education politics, and expressive culture. In Southern California, the succeeding years of local Civil Rights struggles against California's "genteel apartheid" forged the strong bond of Black Southern California to African liberation.⁶ In Southern California, the militant Civil Rights struggles between 1960 and 1964 brought a new generation of leaders into increased conflict with the ideologies and strategies of the older activists. Solidarity-plus was forged through a long commitment to direct action and consciousness raising which unfolded throughout the 1960s. Far from an apology for the Cold War Civil Rights strategies which appealed to federal and state governments for redress, this study argues for the importance of locality in the formation of internationalist politics. Just as with the detention of Everett and Minkin, global struggles against colonialism and white supremacy increasingly informed the way African Americans understood their own subjugation and possibilities for resistance.

The local and regional gaze of this study departs from the dominant historiography on postwar pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism which have generally been national, transnational, and Northeastern in scope and geography. There

⁶ Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 1-12.

is little to no evidence that African Americans in Southern California directly protested the events in South Africa. The following year, there were, nonetheless, a much larger protest of the assassination of Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Taking cues from historian Minkah Makalani this study understands the formation of black radical traditions as “a process rather than an event.”⁷ Southern California’s Civil Rights movement was defined by struggles over housing and employment discrimination. These local battles brought activists into conflict with the Black middle class leadership as well as political and economic powers. As the Civil Rights strategy shifted, pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism grew.⁸ Penny Von Eschen, Mary Dudziak, Gerald Horne, and other Cold War Civil Rights scholars, rightfully interrogate the way that government repression and Black goals for access and inclusion suppressed the radical internationalist groups such as the Council on African Affairs, National Negro Congress, and the Civil Rights Congress. Other scholars such as Michael Angelo Gomez, Sohail Daulatzai, and James Meriwether disrupt the Cold War Civil Rights thesis by identifying a long tradition of Black Internationalism in African American history.⁹

Respecting both canons, I recognize the seriousness of McCarthy-era suppression while recognizing that repression was is never complete. In the 1960s, many red-baited

⁷ Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 14.

⁸ In this chapter, I generally use the term *Black Nationalism* to describe this ideology because that is how contemporary activists referred to it.

⁹ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Boston: De Capo Press, 1997). Michael Angelo Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*.

individuals reemerged as advisors and mentors of younger activists. However, just like previous generations praxis often produced the radical theories activists embraced. Yet, the defining difference between this study and what could be termed a “long tradition” is the role of mass mobilization. It was not until the mid-1960s that Black Internationalist ideologies reemerged as the defining features of mass mobilization of the Black public as Black Southern Californians critiqued American political economic power through struggle. The reemergence of Black Internationalist politics depended on the African American embrace of African liberation struggles but also the African immigrant embrace of local movements for Civil Rights and subsequently Black Power; the latter will be addressed in greater lengths in subsequent chapters.

This chapter, however, begins with a case study of the battles against residential segregation and employment discrimination waged by San Diego’s chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). San Diego’s Black population is much smaller and, arguably, newer than Black Los Angeles. Yet, the acute residential segregation and economic struggles of Black San Diegans predetermined the vibrant antiracist activity of San Diego CORE and their allies. From 1960 to 1964, San Diego’s CORE was among the most active chapters in the nation. Growing out of a local effort to desegregate housing in San Diego’s East County, they eventually led the state’s most successful campaign against the Bank of America’s employment discrimination in 1964. While not explicitly pan-Africanist or about African solidarity, the CORE campaigns formed a material criticism of postwar political economy in California and nationally. This analysis and direct action crafted in the first years of the 1960s did not recede with the rise of the Black Power movement. Instead, this fundamental moment developed the

methods that were immediately adopted by antiapartheid activists in protest in the mid-1960s. As well, activists in the divestment campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s returned to the methods and analysis of groups like CORE as they waged international campaigns against the same foes decades later.

The second part of this chapter is far more African-centered than the first case study. In this part, I examine the rise of Afro-American Association (AAA1) and Black Nationalist mobilization in Southern California. In contrast to CORE, the AAA1 focused primarily on knowledge production and consciousness raising. While deeply influenced by Malcolm X and the NOI, the emergence of the AAA1 underscores the development of the radical Black internationalism amongst Civil Rights workers as opposed to a complete rupture. With their focus on knowledge production, education became the terrain in which members of the AAA1 struggled. Aesthetically, the Afro-American Association and other Black Nationalists made a visible departure from Civil Rights groups. However, materially, their goals were consistent with the radical visions of CORE activists as they aimed to spread African consciousness amongst the masses of African Americans while meeting their immediate material demands.

Mississippi of the West

San Diego became an active place for Civil Rights activism in the early 1960s. While not the largest Black community in Southern California, San Diego had the fastest growing Black population in California. This population swell resulted in the increased alienation of African Americans. Employment and housing struggles defined this period for Black San Diego. Outpacing even Los Angeles, San Diego had the fastest growing Black population of a major city in the North or the West between 1940 and 1970. San

Diego's Black population grew almost thirteen-times during this period going from 4,143 to 52,961 versus Los Angeles which grew eleven-times.¹⁰ With the population came an increase in residential and employment discrimination. For African American residents like Carroll Waymon, former head of San Diego's Citizen's Interracial Committee, this made San Diego's racial climate similar to the South. Geographer Leroy Harris found that San Diego was the most segregated city on the West Coast. In 1960, 82 percent of Black people were limited to only ten of the city's 123 census tracts. Astoundingly, three-quarters of Black San Diego lived in the Logan Heights area.¹¹ Residential segregation directly impacted the employment opportunities of San Diego's Black community.

In 1959, Civil Rights activist Harold Brown graduated from San Diego State College with a degree in physical education. Despite being an Army veteran, honor student, fraternity president, and standout athlete, Brown struggled finding a job. An education major, he hoped to teach physical education and become a high school basketball coach. "So, I graduated from college and I realized I got my degree, I got my teaching credential, I can't get a job at a high school coaching anything. I couldn't even get into high school teaching anything," he remembered.¹² Black teachers were limited to schools in Southeast San Diego and even there they could not coach. One district in

¹⁰ Joshua Sides, *LA City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 2. Bureau of the Census, *US Censuses of Population and Housing: 1970, Census Tracts*, Final Report PHC (1)-188 San Diego, California, prepared under the supervision of Herman P. Miller, Chief Population Division and Arthur F. Young Chief, Housing Division (Washington DC, 1970), P-1.

¹¹ Carrol Waymon, *On Being Black in San Diego: Any town USA*, (San Diego: WW Publications, 1994), 22.

¹² Harold Brown Interview with Mychal Odom

Spring Valley, to the east of San Diego, told Brown that the only way he could be hired was if they gained the approval of all the parents in the district.¹³ San Diego's East County was very hostile to African Americans. According to the 1960 census, out of the approximately 68,000 people that lived in La Mesa and El Cajon, the two largest cities in East County, only 16 of the residents were Black, 238 were listed as "other races," and 1,632 were Spanish-surnamed.¹⁴ These factors prompted Brown to join the El Cajon Valley Open Housing Committee (OHC), a multiracial grassroots organization that challenged residential segregation in San Diego's East County. The OHC went door-to-door with a petition surveying the racial mood of East County residents asking whether they would want a "Negro" to live next to them. Brown and the OHC found most the respondents were supportive of their efforts. While he eventually acquired a teaching job at Einstein Junior High School in Clairemont section of north San Diego the Open Housing Committee was Brown's entry into Civil Rights activism.

On 26 February 1960, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited San Diego for the first time in three years.¹⁵ Invited by local ministers, that Friday evening Dr. King spoke to 1,500 listeners at Calvary Baptist Church and predicted that the student led sit-in movement that gained notoriety on the first of the month in Greensboro, North Carolina

¹³Harold Brown Interview with Mychal Odom

¹⁴ Bureau of the Census, *US Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960, Census Tracts*, Final Report PHC (1)-136, prepared under the supervision of Howard G. Brunsmann, Chief Population Division and Wayne F. Daugherty Chief, Housing Division (Washington DC, 1962), 15.

¹⁵ "Integration Stalling Feared by Dr. King," *San Diego Union*, 6/27/1957, A30. In June 1957 Dr. King spoke to a crowd of 850 people at Russ Auditorium. In a remarkable speech, Dr. King compared the fight against racism to the global struggle against colonialism and actually underscored the fact that people of color were the majority in the world. Such internationalist rhetoric is more commonly associated with Malcolm X than it is Dr. King. As I will explore later in the essay, the words of Dr. King preceded an internationalizing of the movement in San Diego. That being said, this visit as did the 1960 visit, helped to further link San Diego to the national movement.

would “sweep across the southern states.”¹⁶ Dr. King urged San Diegan involvement in the movement. Bishop George McKinney of St. Stephen’s Church of God in Christ remembers the dynamic nature of this visit by Dr. King and notes it as the point when “the Civil Rights movement came to San Diego” but also cites that “the community was ripe for that involvement.”¹⁷ El Cajon Valley Open Housing Committee member and San Diego Congress of Racial Equality founder Jim Stone also noted the Dr. King visit was fundamental to his organizing. Stone and Dr. King talked immediately after the event and later during the ride back to the El Cortez Hotel and King gave Stone advice.¹⁸ Much like Civil Rights activists in other Northern and Western states, that March, members of San Diego’s National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter and the Chollas Democratic Club led protests in front of San Diego’s Woolworth’s and Kress stores. These solidarity protests soon withered, nonetheless.

Embodying solidarity-plus, the Open Housing Committee’s local challenges to residential and employment discrimination are what sustained the local movement and bridged struggles for equal access and racial inclusion in Southern California to the national cause. Despite Bishop McKinney’s memory, Dr. King’s visit did not start the Civil Rights movement in San Diego but it did unite the local struggles with the movement in the South. The Open Housing Committee had little success eradicating residential segregation in San Diego’s East County. By 1970, the Black population in El Cajon was 46, in La Mesa it was 99, and in Spring Valley it was 77. African Americans

¹⁶ “Rev. King Says Racial Protests Will Spread,” *San Diego Union*, 2/27/1960, A15. Bishop McKinney Interview by Gloria Rhodes. Bishop McKinney remembered at as many as 1200 to 1500 people packed the church that evening.

¹⁷ Bishop George McKinney oral history with Gloria Rhodes.

¹⁸ Don Williamson, “Jim Stone to be Honored at Rally,” *San Diego Union*, 8/19/1983, B2.

comprised 0.1 percent, 0.3 percent, and 0.3 percent of the respective populations of the East County's largest cities.¹⁹ Despite their limited success desegregating the East County, the Open Housing Committee effectively generated the critical mass necessary for a prolonged Civil Rights struggle in San Diego.

As a member of the Open Housing Committee, Brown's training as an educator made him a successful public speaker. On 24 September 1960, John Neuwirth, president of the La Jolla Lutheran Brotherhood wrote to Harold Brown thanking him for a talk Brown delivered to the group on the problem of desegregation. Acknowledging the Lutheran Church's advocacy for "non-segregation in our churches," Neuwirth noted Brown's "high professional degree" and perseverance. Neuwirth applauded Brown writing, "You win our admiration for the clean cut man that you are and with God willing you are destined to go far in your quest for success."²⁰ On the 20th and 21st of February 1962, Brown and the Open Housing Committee financed a public viewing of the 1961 film *A Raisin in the Sun* starring Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee and written by Lorraine Hansberry at the El Cajon Theater.²¹ Chronicling the efforts of a poor African American family to purchase a home in a predominantly white suburb, the screening of *A Raisin in the Sun* provided useful metaphor for the OHC's local fight.

The early victories of the El Cajon Valley Open Housing Committee were largely discursive. The "highly professional," clean, Christian, and well-educated Brown

¹⁹ Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population and Housing: Census Tracts, San Diego Calif., Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area* PHC (1)-188, prepared under the supervision of Peter G. Peterson, Secretary of the Department of Commerce and George Hay Brown, Director of the Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC: 1972), P-1.

²⁰ "Letter from John C. Neuwirth President of the La Jolla Lutheran Brotherhood," Harold K. Brown Papers, Box 2 Folder 20, San Diego State University Special Collections and University Archives.

²¹ "Housing Committee to Sponsor Movie," *The San Diego Union*, 5 February 1962, A14.

presented African Americans as acceptable and worthy of integration. Reminiscent of the national Civil Rights strategies, the OHC appealed to the integrationist and racial liberal demands for equal access made by groups such as the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Their efforts drew the attention of James Farmer, the national head of CORE. In November 1961, Farmer visited San Diego where he made a public address to the Open Housing Committee and by the following January, San Diego had an official CORE chapter.²² A member of the Open Housing Committee, Jim Stone, a former United States Marine and cousin-in-law of historian Mike Davis, became the San Diego chapter's first chairman. Stone later invited Brown to participate in the organization. Brown eventually became the chapter chair.²³ San Diego CORE's commitment would be to "non-violent but militant pressure to break the cycle of employment discrimination leading to poverty...slum segregation...poor schools...poorly prepared workers and then a repeat of the whole cycle."²⁴ Continuing the efforts the housing committee, one of San Diego CORE's early projects was called "Operation Windowshop" where they guided African Americans where they guided African Americans into the East County and other parts of San Diego outside of Logan Heights to view housing developments.²⁵ Yet without a successful challenge to San Diego's employment discrimination, house-hunting was largely moot.

²² "Racial Equality Leader To Discuss Housing," *San Diego Union*, 11/21/1961, A17. "Hearing Set Today On Human Relations," *San Diego Union*, 1/4/1962, A19. "Obstacles to Racial Ties Cited," *San Diego Union*, 2/5/1962, A14.

²³ Harold Brown Interview with Gloria Rhodes. "Under Our Perfect Sun: Profile of Mike Davis," *San Diego Reader*, 10/17/2003.

²⁴ League of Women Voters, *Dimensions in Discrimination Part II*, (San Diego: League of Women Voters, April 1965) 14.

²⁵ League of Women Voters, *Dimensions in Discrimination Part II*, (San Diego: League of Women Voters, April 1965) 21. The border of Orange County and Los Angeles County is often called the "Orange Curtain." Her I use that idea to describe the area east of San Diego starting with Lemon Grove.

On 17 November 1962, San Diego's City Manager Thomas Fletcher and Joseph Jessop, a local businessman and chairman of San Diegans Incorporated (SDI)—a chamber of commerce spin-off—ventured to Washington, DC to the National Municipal League national conference. Fletcher and Jessop were tasked with promoting San Diego's Centre City redevelopment plan as they lobbied for the league's All-America City Award.²⁶ In the 1960s, San Diego political and economic leaders attempted to transition the city to a shining symbol of postwar modernity. Supported by a boom in aerospace and other forms of defense contracting, private investment firms, and real estate speculation, much like Los Angeles, San Diego's postwar growth became a bellwether for the dominant shifts in American political economy.

As Mike Davis has noted, San Diego is set apart from most other big cities in American history as its economy has been dominated by private investment and real estate firms.²⁷ The lack of large scale manufacturing industry or agricultural labor significantly limited the growth of unionism and the cross-racial solidarity unionism has often brought. Even with the postwar growth of aerospace and defense contracting, the power of San Diego's working class remained limited. Conversely, private industry gained increased influence over local politics. Regardless of political party, San Diego's political elite has emerged directly from the ranks of its corporate structure. In May 1959, fifty San Diego businessmen created SDI "to form better liaison with government."²⁸ Just months later, SDI had already raised \$65,000 to survey Downtown

²⁶ "San Diegans Vie for Title Today," *The San Diego Union*, 11/17/1962, A24.

²⁷ Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* (New York: The New Press, 2003), 14 and 18.

²⁸ "Young Group Gets Results: San Diegans, Inc. Sparks Central Boom," *San Diego Union*, 3/29/1963, A4.

San Diego in preparation for their redevelopment project completed months later by Western Real Estate Research Corporation.

Western Real Estate suggested that the city build 6,000 new apartments and 1,000 hotel and motel units as part of an effort to influence large firms to relocate to San Diego's Center City. Additionally, the plan called for the construction of 500 apartments that would allow employees of these firms to walk to work, a new hotel with at least 400 rooms, and a revitalization of San Diego's harbor. After the publishing of the report, SDI raised \$1.6 million in a two-month period.²⁹ The SDI plan for the revitalization of Downtown San Diego represented the uneven development that had come to symbolize California's bifurcated postwar economic boom. In February 1963, the vision for San Diego's urban redevelopment was nationally endorsed as the lobbying efforts of Fletcher and Jessop proved fruitful and the city was named an All-America City for the first time. San Diego's 1962 All-America City Award provided a critical space for Brown and CORE activists to denounce the hypocrisy embedded in the redevelopment plan and award. Over the next year, CORE began an aggressive direct action that radicalized its members and internationalized the consciousness of Black San Diego. Aided in part by a visit from the author James Baldwin made to San Diego as a part of his national Civil Rights speaking tour in May 1963, CORE came into direct conflict with local, state, and federal government as well as Cold War liberal ideology.

In accord with the national trend, San Diego Civil Rights activists appealed to federal and state power in their struggles with local and private political and economic

²⁹ Ibid.

institutions. In 1963, activists used the All-America City Award as a counterpoint. Brown and CORE informed to the public that it was the activists, not the local political and economic leadership, that best represented the spirit of American patriotism. On June 6th, President John F. Kennedy visited Southern California to deliver San Diego State College's commencement speech on what became a memorable day in San Diego history. Surely, for many President Kennedy's visit would have signified the transition of San Diego's emergence, out of the shadows of Los Angeles, to national prominence. For Brown, this gave CORE the opportunity "to send a message to President Kennedy that conditions in San Diego were just as poor in terms of its racial situation as they were in other places that he may have visited in America" because CORE "knew that information would not get to him any other way."³⁰ Coming on the heels of the Birmingham Campaign which radicalized CORE activists nationwide and regionally in San Diego and San Francisco, the local protests challenged the exceptionalism of Southern racism. As 250,000 San Diegans lined the streets in a show of patriotism, CORE members were stationed at the intersection of Fairmount Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard, waiting for President Kennedy's motorcade to pass by, the CORE members held signs that stated, "Freedom Now" and "No Funds for Segregated Schools."³¹ It is unclear whether Kennedy saw the protestors and the action the very minimum of local news coverage. Nonetheless, protests underscored San Diego CORE's aggressive turn towards direct action.

³⁰ Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See*, (New York: The New Press, 2003), 276.

³¹ "Sign Carriers Get Message Across," *San Diego Union*, 6/7/1963, A. Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See*, (New York: The New Press, 2003), 276.

This programmatic transformation was in sync with the ideological shifts during the period. Activists were increasingly influenced by Black Nationalist thinkers but they were also influenced by an emerging radical epistemology amongst the Civil Rights community. From the Open Housing Committee to the formal CORE chapter, three readings which appear in the archive are Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, E. Franklin Frazier's *Black Bourgeoisie*, and James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*. While other readings were common, together these readings problematized desegregation into the American mainstream. As Frazier argued, Black upward mobility resulted in cultural alienation from the Black masses and African American history. That upward mobility did not result in the complete integration of the Black middle class into American society. Hansberry's play and feature film identified the dissonance between the American Dream and Black lived experiences.³² In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin projects Black youth and working class as the African American vanguard. Reversing the dominant narrative of Civil Rights, integration, Baldwin argued, did not require white acceptance of Blackness but an African American acknowledgement of the dislocation of white America. In "My Dungeon Shook," the first essay in the book, Baldwin penned an open letter to his nephew noting: "There is no reason for you to try to become like white people and there is no basis whatever for their impertinent assumption that *they* must accept *you*. The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that you must accept *them*. And I mean that very seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love. For these innocent people

³² "The Art of Social Criticism: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*." http://www.umich.edu/~eng217/student_projects/araisininthesun/historicalcontext.html (accessed on 4/20/16).

have no other hope. They are, in effect, still trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it.”³³

Baldwin became an important ally to Civil Rights activists locally and nationally. As a part of a tour promoting *The Fire Next Time* and raising funds for Civil Rights efforts, Baldwin told a crowd of at least 1,000 spectators at Russ Auditorium in Balboa Park, San Diego on May 8th. Echoing the argument from his book, Baldwin stated that whites think they are keeping “the nigger” in his place but it is this system that is keeping whites in their place. Criticizing the contradiction between foreign and domestic policy, Baldwin noted, “The white population has some illusion about a real war between it and Cuba” but ignored the situation of 20 million Black people in America.³⁴ Baldwin’s theorization undoubtedly reflected the new ideas circulating locally and impacted CORE’s direct action campaigns.

Following the President Kennedy protests, CORE planned their most controversial event, to date: A protest on one of San Diego’s biggest days of tourism, Independence Day. Hoping for a joint effort, CORE sent correspondence to other organizations calling for a march through Downtown San Diego to express to the community the demand for equal opportunities for all people regardless of color. “The Rev. Martin Luther King, James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins are doing a wonderful job,” the letter reads, “but obviously they can’t go to every city in the United States and correct that city’s racial problem. So we will have to stand together and unite our efforts whenever we can, so that Negroes and other minority group persons may enjoy the privileges of this American

³³ James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook,” *The Fire Next Time*, First Vintage International Edition, (New York: Vintage Books 1963/1993), p, 8.

³⁴ Peter Kaye, “Negro Author Tells Problem of Integration,” *San Diego Union*, 5/10/1963, B1.

citizenship.”³⁵ The call for unity brought new alliances and severed old ones. Two months before the March on Washington, on Saturday, the 22nd of June, Brown convened a conference of local organizations. It was attended by the NAACP and Urban League but also the by the Afro-American Association (AAA1), Nation of Islam (NOI) and Southeast Waiters and Bartenders Association. Opposing to the presence of the AAA1 and NOI, groups that advocated for what Hartwell Ragsdale, local NAACP president, saw as racial supremacy, separation and violence, Ragsdale withdrew his organization from the coalition. As well, Percy Steele of the Urban League reneged. Steele advocated for a strategy that still included electoral politics. Instead of protesting, “He urged Mayor Dail to call a meeting of all groups concerned with racial problems ‘in order that an assessment of the current situation in San Diego be made.’”³⁶ Nevertheless, a week later, underneath a banner that read “Black Unity and Responsibility” Brown accompanied by Joshua Von Wolfolk and Robert Ward, both of the Afro-American Association, urged the crowd of 500 people participate in the Independence Day protests and signal “that the black man is no longer Uncle Tom in Logan Heights.”³⁷ The goal for Brown was to make “the next Fourth of July really meaningful for all Americans regardless of the color of their skin.”³⁸ That sunny Thursday, the racially mixed crowd demanded equality for all San Diegans march six miles west from Logan Heights to Horton Plaza in Downtown San Diego. With their trek from San Diego’s Black enclave

³⁵ Undated correspondence, Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 2.

³⁶ “Two Groups Quit Negro Mass Meeting,” *San Diego Union*, 6/23/1963, A16.

³⁷ Bob Zimmerman, “500 Invited To Join In Race Protest: Negro Meeting Hears Plans for Independence Day,” *San Diego Union*, 6/23/1963, H6.

³⁸ “Racial Equality March To Start In Horton Plaza,” *San Diego Union*, 7/2/1963, A19.

to the gentrifying center city, CORE protestors disrupted the proposed erasure of African Americans represented in the SDI's redevelopment project.

As August Meier and Elliot Rudwick note, for CORE, the post-Birmingham era was defined by challenges to employment discrimination.³⁹ Inseparable from challenges to political power, in San Diego this turn attained a supreme significance. With their challenge to employment discrimination, the San Diego CORE chapter confronted the titans of local, national, and even global postwar economy. The largest of their foes would be the California-based Bank of America whom, with their 29,000 employees was the world's largest privately owned bank.⁴⁰

From Petition to Protest

Between the fall of 1963 and the spring of 1964, CORE moved from Civil Rights politics to what we now know as Black Power politics. Reflecting nationwide shift in CORE strategy, in the fall of 1963, San Diego began to focus on battling employment discrimination, moving away from housing discrimination. This move from housing segregation to employment discrimination brought an increased interest in mobilizing the Black poor and attracted new people to the organization, both Black and white. These new people, Meier and Rudwick argue, were drawn to the increased militancy of the organization and not the long history of nonviolence and interracial politics.⁴¹ Likely the most important change in CORE's twenty-plus years, by its end, the employment campaign radicalized and internationalized CORE ideology. Instead of viewing this

³⁹ August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 232.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 238.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 428.

paradigm switch as a signal of the beginning of CORE's demise in San Diego and nationwide as Meier and Rudwick have, I argue that it demonstrated the CORE leadership's abandonment of the strategic appeals towards American citizenship that defined Cold War Civil Rights strategy. By the end of 1964, the federal government's concurrent reluctance to protect Civil Rights workers in the South while intervening into the Congo Crisis under the guise of humanitarianism exposed the contradictions between domestic policy and foreign policy. Coupled with the collusion between California's corporate leadership and the California Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), these events influenced the most important move towards Black internationalism in postwar Southern California.

Preempting the swelling concern for Black poverty that followed the urban rebellions in Harlem (1964) and Watts (1965), CORE activists initiated their own studies of employment discrimination, organized their own employment agency, and directly challenged local business over their employment discrimination. As a part of their initial findings, CORE uncovered severe examples of Black exclusion. Announcing San Diego CORE's new plan, on 1 October 1963, CORE member Roger Duncan introduced their study to the public. One firm with 400 employees only had six Black workers and another with 800 employees only had eight Black workers.⁴² Distancing themselves from Black San Diego's business and political leadership, on November 14th Hal Brown announced the chapter's withdrawal of support for the San Diego Jobs and Opportunity Committee, founded in the previous July by Logan Heights businessmen and headed by liquor store

⁴² "CORE Aide Outlines S.D. Rights Drive," *San Diego Union*, 10/2/1963, A13.

owner Robert Mullins. Brown viewed the efforts of the committee as limited and self-serving for its members. “CORE will not permit groups or individuals to shout for the credit of finding jobs for Negroes while hoping to find themselves behind the invisible shield,” Brown stated.⁴³

In his regular op-ed article for San Diego’s Black newspaper *The Voice*, Brown noted that his “attitude toward the professional Negro has been one of disgust and one of scorn...because they could do so much and have done so little.”⁴⁴ In an interview Brown would later state that the problem of organizing was that, “We have more Uncle Toms per square mile than in any other major city. By Uncle Tom I mean a person who is not even committed in at least a minimal way, one who will prefer not to declare himself pro-freedom movement and will turn around and face the other way.... The real Uncle Toms are the black complacents.”⁴⁵ Despite this contradiction, in his editorial, Brown noted that things were looking brighter as more middle class and working class African Americans had begun to commit themselves to CORE’s cause. Reversing the chapter’s trend, Brown noted that the regular meetings drew crowds as large as 150 people, seventy percent of which were Black.⁴⁶ Having recently acquired a new permanent office space, San Diego CORE organized its own employment drive and promised their personal support to the unemployed. In a meeting with twenty job seekers, Brown told the group, “When we go to them and say we want them to hire Negroes, we want to have someone

⁴³ “CORE Announces Withdrawal from Job Committee,” *The Voice*, 11/14/1963, A1, Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 5.

⁴⁴ Harold Brown, “Speaking Out,” *The Voice*, 11/14/1963, A2, Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 5.

⁴⁵ Melvin Steinfeld, “Black Power and Black Unity,” *San Diego Magazine*, (January 1967), 88.

⁴⁶ Harold Brown, “Speaking Out,” *The Voice*, 11/14/1963, A2, Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 5.

on hand they can hire... We are not guaranteeing that we will find you a job. But we want you to know that when you go in to apply for a job, CORE will be beside you.”⁴⁷

In sync with other chapters nationwide, San Diego CORE first focused its attention on a large department store and a utilities corporation with their targeting of Montgomery Ward and San Diego Gas and Electric Company. CORE activists discovered, for example, that out of the 1,062 employees they saw at Montgomery Ward, only 24 were Black and only two of the African American employees were in supervisory positions.⁴⁸ A similar investigation of San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDGE) prompted a November 1963 meeting with CORE. Noticing that African Americans were only employed in janitorial positions, Harold Brown, George Stevens and other CORE members submitted a list of four demands to SDGE on November 4th: CORE demanded an increase of Blacks to seven percent of their 3,000-person non-custodial staff; an enhanced recruitment of Black people as well as a list of job openings given to CORE; provision for in-company training for Black employees; and that the jobs be at least clerical positions. SDGE executive simply referred to as Mr. Neer rejected CORE’s demands calling them “improper,” “unrealistic,” and “morally and legally wrong.”⁴⁹ Suggesting that SDGE would either must isolate hiring only to Blacks and neglect other people of color, layoff a significant amount of their workforce, or hire more people than they needed, Neer refused CORE’s demands. For this reason, CORE took to the streets and began a prolonged struggle against the publicly regulated utilities corporation.

⁴⁷ “CORE Starts Job Drive For Negroes Here,” *San Diego Union*, 10/20/63, A26.

⁴⁸ “Handwritten List” 5/6/64, Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 10, SDSU Special Collections.

⁴⁹ “Transcript of Meeting Between CORE and San Diego Gas and Electric Company,” Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 15.

On Monday November 18th, armed with picket signs that said “We Want To Do More Than Sweep The Floor” and “All American City?”, and other slogans, the SDGC campaign began.⁵⁰ By the next day, CORE pickets had created such a disruption that it caused the offices to close down.⁵¹ Brown, Ambrose Broadus, and other CORE members were arrested and given jail sentences ranging from six to 30 days in county jail but that did not deter their action.⁵² In their challenge against SDGE, San Diego CORE members did not only battle for jobs but they also disrupted San Diego’s rebranded image as an “All-America City.” This contestation of San Diego’s public representation proved to be an effective tactic during the holiday season. Staging a chain-in at the Downtown SDGE office on Christmas Eve, CORE garnered significant public attention. In a press release, CORE stated that they had a moral responsibility to the principles of American democracy that were written into the Constitution but not performed in the lives of Americans. “If this nation and city acted in accord with what we say is America,” the press release stated, “there would be no need for CORE.”⁵³ Arguing that Christmas 1963 was not a time for goodwill, CORE reasserted its commitment to direct action.⁵⁴ CORE’s actions invoked strong resistance from SDGE and white supremacists. In one instance, protesters had feces and urine dumped on their heads from the windows above the SDGE office. SDGE corporate leadership also exercised their political muscle by successfully gaining injunctions against the protestors, limiting CORE’s ability to effectively protest.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ “Racial Unit Stages Sit-In At SDGE,” *San Diego Union*, 11/18/1963, A19.

⁵¹ “Sit-In Threat Closes Down Utility Office,” *Los Angeles Times* 11/20/1963, A8.

⁵² “Six Members of CORE Given Jail Sentences,” 12/1/1964, pg. 24.

⁵³ “San Diego CORE Press Release,” 12/24/1963, Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 31..

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ “SDG&E Wins Sit-In Ban,” *San Diego Union*, 1/10/1964, A17.

While the injunctions ended the SDGE protests, their public exposure expanded their public following.⁵⁶



Figure 2 As CORE embraced more militant tactics, their membership grew. As well, they increasingly criticized American racial liberalism and San Diego's constructed image. (San Diego Union)

By the spring of 1963 California's CORE chapters drew large numbers in support for their Montgomery Ward campaign. The Montgomery Ward Campaign seemingly vindicated CORE's SDGE strategy. As a part of their demands to Montgomery Ward, CORE necessitated that the California FEPC guidelines be prominently displayed for applicants and employees to view and follow, that research on minority applicants be maintained, that Montgomery Ward begin to train Black and minority employees for

⁵⁶ Meier and Rudwick, 227.

higher positions, and that Montgomery Ward report directly to CORE about their progress.⁵⁷ Initially the retail chain attempted to defeat the protests and secure an injunction against CORE, like SDGE did, but a sympathetic judge sided with CORE and forced the drafting of court-supervised negotiations.⁵⁸ Both parties agreed on the stipulation that CORE would no longer picket Montgomery Ward stores and in return, the stores would publish ads stating they were an equal opportunity employer, implement an anti-discrimination policy and directly target minority schools and populations in an effort to increase their minority employment. As a part of their commitment to these reforms, Montgomery Ward would also periodically report with CORE about their developments.⁵⁹ On 10 April 1964, San Diego CORE reported that Harold Brown and the employment taskforce successfully secured an agreement with the local stores extending the Alameda County stipulations to the San Diego, National City and Grossmont Center stores.⁶⁰ CORE's Montgomery Ward victory vindicated some of their troubles in the SDGE battle, propelled them towards their epic struggle against Bank of America, and underscored their turn towards autonomy and self-determination. Nevertheless, the residual racial liberalism in CORE's demands that companies comply with FEPC guidelines proved problematic moving forward.

Bank of Genteel Apartheid

⁵⁷ "CORE's Proposal to Montgomery Ward-n- Co. Regarding Improved Employment Practices," Brown Papers, Box 2 Folder 10, SDSU Special Collections.

⁵⁸ Meier and Rudwick, 234.

⁵⁹ "Stipulation Between Montgomery Ward and CORE, Superior Court of Alameda County, 5-28-1963, Brown Papers, Box 2 Folder 10, SDSU Special Collections.

⁶⁰ "News Release—Negotiation Between SD CORE and local Wards Personnel," Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 31, SDSU Special Collections.

Throughout the nation, CORE battled banking institutions over employment discrimination. On one level, as Meier and Rudwick observe, this national struggle against employment discrimination in the banking industry was about a middle-class struggle for white collar employment. Looking at the highly active San Diego protests, however, the campaign was about much more than that. As previously noted, the Bank of America was the world's largest privately owned bank with 29,000 employees, of which close to none were Black. Despite their size, the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 prohibited the interstate expansion banks and stopped banks from owning nonbanking financial institution. For this reason, the Bank of America was domestically limited to California and internationally in places such as South Africa, as discussed in other parts of this study. Within California, the Bank of America found profits in credit lending and the postwar corporate and real estate expansion. The bank's success in postwar California's uneven racialized economy made them a prime target. In Northern California, Los Angeles, and San Diego, CORE members fought against Bank of America. However, the San Francisco activists were weighed down by court injunctions and, to the memory of Brown, who by this time was CORE's West Coast chair, Los Angeles chapters were not as active as they hoped. It was the San Diego struggle that garnered the attention of the California and national press. From Los Angeles to New York, mainstream media and the Black press and radical newspapers reported on the actions of Brown and San Diego CORE as they defied court orders in their very public fight.

CORE demanded that the Bank of America make their racial demographics public and that the bank hire 3,600 nonwhites by the next year but the bank refused to submit to

CORE's demands. In previous negotiations, CORE had demanded corporations submit to the California FEPC guidelines while also meeting directly with CORE. The California FEPC stipulation proved problematic when, in attempt to undercut CORE, Bank of America executives refused to negotiate with CORE directly and gave their employment information directly to the California FEPC. Bank of America Senior Vice President CO Phillips, stated to the *San Diego Union*, "We believe that the continuance of demonstrations after our agreement with the FEPC is clear proof that CORE's sole intent is to set itself up as a policing agency over and above legally constituted government entities."⁶¹ Following the bank's refusal to negotiate, CORE began to picket the Bank of America in May. Likely due to demoralization brought on by court injunctions, many of the statewide actions against the Bank of America remained small. However, defying more court injunctions and challenging the bank's political and economic power, Harold Brown and San Diego CORE led a protracted battle against the bank throughout the spring and summer months.⁶² The collusion between the Bank of America and the California FEPC pushed CORE to embrace much more radical tactics.

The San Diego protests began in Logan Heights but moved to downtown and by the middle of June San Diego CORE was protesting multiple local branches on the same days. With high school and college students out of classes, July became a pivotal month for CORE protests as they drew large amounts of crowds and supporters. As CORE had done the previous year, on Friday July 10th, 100 CORE members and supporters made a 2.5-mile trek to the Centre City. Stopping first at the Bank of America headquarters for

⁶¹ "Logan Heights Bank Picketed By CORE Unit," *San Diego Union*, 6/6/1964, A18.

⁶² Meier and Rudwick, 238.

45 minutes, the protestors then walked to Horton Plaza. Linking San Diego's struggle with national campaigns, CORE's stated goals were to demand more federal protection for activists in Mississippi, to protest employment discrimination, and to criticize the multiple arrests of San Diego CORE leaders.⁶³ In one image of the Bank of America protests, a picket sign behind Brown read "Stop the Killing of American Patriots" while another read "Human Dignity: San Diego and Mississippi."⁶⁴ The recent murder of CORE workers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman near Philadelphia, Mississippi on June 21st aroused the sensibilities of a global audience. Refusing to draw a distinction between violence in Mississippi and San Diego's brand of white supremacy, CORE activists exposed Southern California's racially liberal façade.



Figure 3 Brown leading a Bank of American Protest. (Brown Papers, SDSU)

⁶³ "CORE Group Marches In Downtown SD," *San Diego Union*, 7/11/1964, A24.

⁶⁴ Harold Brown Speaking Into A Megaphone in Front of A Crowd at a Bank Protest, 8/1964, Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 3, SDSU Special Collections.

Throughout Southern California, urban renewal schemes such as the San Diegans, Incorporated plan proposed severe displacements of people of color from the urban cores of the region's largest cities. For three months, the racially mixed crowds Brown and CORE leadership organized challenged the gentrification of Downtown San Diego. Black and white men and women, young and old, clogged San Diego streets, and interrupted the daily functions of San Diego's municipal powers and the Bank of America. San Diego CORE grew large scale support from high school and college students who formed the auxiliary organization Campus CORE. In one joint effort between Campus CORE and San Diego CORE, Brown and the others ignored the injunctions Bank of America secured against them and continued to protest in front of local branches as well as inside their lobbies. They also conducted "coin-in" demonstrations. In one "coin-in," Brown, George Stevens, Marjorie Poe, a Campus CORE member, and seventeen-year-old Roger Barkley approached the tellers; Brown requested a teller evaluate a stack of Mexican pesos he brought while other members went to the counters with bags of pennies and nickels and asked for them to be changed into dollars, all to slow down business. The protestors were placed under citizen's arrest and issued warnings. As noted, the warnings did not deter them from protesting which eventually led to contempt of court warrants being issued for 23 members of CORE— included in them were Brown, Ambrose Broadus and Charles Collins.⁶⁵

Bank of America's response to the CORE protests unveiled the bank's political and economic power in California. With ease, Bank of America used local media and

⁶⁵ "Warrant Names 23 CORE Pickets," *San Diego Union*, 8/13/1964, A13.

court injunctions to challenge the CORE activists. Bank of America even published full-page rebuttals to the claims of the CORE protesters in the *Union* and the *Evening Tribune*. One such broadside suggested CORE was an agitating organization intent on “permanently policing one of California’s major financial institutions” and “usurping powers that belong to the government itself.”⁶⁶ Under Harold Brown’s own admission, San Diego CORE members did not fear bodily injury however; protesters did suffer cultural and structural violence. Brown was referred to as a communist, socialist, Marxist and anarchist—all terms he found absurd in comparison to what he saw as simple demands.⁶⁷ In response to what he saw as uneven press, Brown and CORE protested the offices of the *Union* and *Evening Tribune* parent company Copley Publishing as a part of their protests of the downtown branch of Bank of America.⁶⁸ Despite the months of protesting from May until September 1964, little more than a dozen articles on the protests appeared in Union-Tribune papers. These small articles written on the CORE demonstrations paled in comparison to the huge broadsides taken out by Bank of America. For this reason, the Bank of America broadsides must be understood as what they were: paid advertisements used to promote their corporate agenda and discredit CORE. This power extended to the courts when CORE was eventually served with restraining orders prohibiting Harold Brown, George Stevens, Charles Collins and others from entering Bank of America branches and limiting demonstrations to four signs.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ “Bank of America and the Pickets,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 5/27/64, Brown Papers, Box 4, Folder 13, SDSU Special Collections.

⁶⁷ Harold Brown Interview by Mychal Odom 1/23/2012.

⁶⁸ “Civil Rights Marchers Picket Union-Tribune,” *San Diego Union*, 7/25/64, A24.

⁶⁹ “Report of Direct Action 8/29/1964,” Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 32, SDSU Special Collections.

Defiance of this injunction led to their arrest following the “coin-in.” However, in a remarkable show of defiance, immediately following his release from jail, Brown and others returned to the picket lines. With handwritten messages suggesting that these signs were created spontaneously, the CORE members taunted Bank of America and local government. Brown held a picket stating, “There Are Other Banks” picket sign alongside a comrade whose sign read, “CORE Abides By Just Laws.”⁷⁰ Arrested once again, Brown faced significant jail time. Because of the Bank of America protests, Brown was handed a sixty-day jail sentence. In a proceeding where he was represented by local attorney and Afro-American Association founding member Robert Ward, Jr., Brown issued a statement regarding his actions and the bank protests. In his statement, Brown noted that on the same day two CORE protestors in San Diego were sentenced to thirty days in jail, nine white bomb throwers in the South were released from their courts on probation. Brown argued that his sentencing underscored the structural inequality in American society and a further imbalance in the scales of justice.⁷¹

⁷⁰ *Peoples World*, 8/22/1964, 1, Brown Papers, Box 4, Folder 12, SDSU Special Collections.

⁷¹ Statement Regarding Bank of America, Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, SDSU Special Collections.

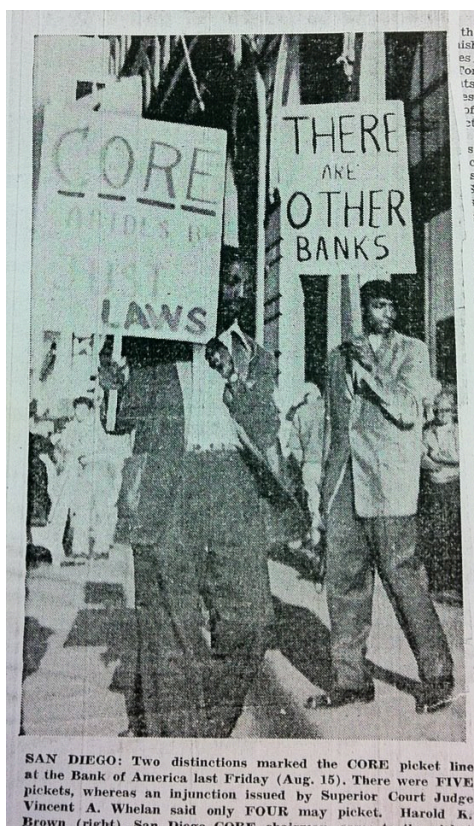


Figure 4 Notice Brown's tatter and wrinkled clothes. Once released from jail, he immediately returned to the picket lines. (*People's World*)

In September 1964, CORE declared a halt to the Bank of America protests proclaiming victory and announced plans to picket the San Diego Zoo.⁷² From May to July alone, the bank hired about 240 African Americans in white collar positions statewide. San Diego recorded the highest increase in numbers.⁷³ While in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento, Blacks amounted to 12.86%, 18.41% and 21.43% respectively, in San Diego Black folk were one-third of the new hires during that period.⁷⁴ As well, while the Bank of America broadsides derided CORE, the broadsides also acknowledged a commitment to increasing minority employment and made public

⁷² "CORE Halts Action at Bank, Lauds Results," *San Diego Union*, 9/2/1964, A17.

⁷³ Meier and Rudwick, 238.

⁷⁴ Bank of America Employment Practices, First Report by California FEPC, September 1964, Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 32, SDSU Special Collections.

Bank of America's employment statistics.⁷⁵ Yet, despite these gains, CORE membership decreased following the Bank of America campaign and racial divisions in the chapter were exacerbated. What is more, San Diego Republicans in the state house introduced a bill to limit demonstrations in California and the California Real Estate Association backed Proposition 14 overturned the Rumford Act.⁷⁶

Meier and Rudwick have described the events of 1964 as a sort of pyrrhic victory. Yet, instead of a loss, the true triumph was ideological as CORE moved closer to a politics defined by self-determination. This notion of self-determination was defined by community control of local resources. This could be seen in CORE's shift in organizational strategy as they increasingly sought autonomous solutions to the problem of Black unemployment and underemployment. Where CORE had once sought remedies in federal and state equal employment policies, the Bank of America campaign proved the limitations in this strategy. CORE challenged dominant notions of liberalism and democracy. In defiance to local and state political and economic power, they created their own employment agencies and demanded the authority to hold private corporations responsible for their lack of equitable hiring practices. Where they had once sought to use federal and state employment law as a remedy, the Bank of America partnership with the California FEPC exposed the limitations of that strategy. While Brown, and CORE leadership nationwide, were always frustrated that they did not gain more support by everyday Black people, they noticed that support grew with CORE's engaged the power

⁷⁵ "Bank of America and the Pickets," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 5/27/64, Brown Papers, Box 4, Folder 13, SDSU Special Collections.

⁷⁶ "San Diegans Plan Bills on Demonstrations," *San Diego Union*, 2/3/1965, A2. Announcement of the bill to limit demonstrations in San Diego was the closest towards the front page, news of protesting ever made it to the front page, ironically.

structure in direct confrontation. Subsequently, locally and nationally, CORE began its move towards what became known as Black Power. CORE officially embraced Black Power in a public statement in 1966 yet the its National Action Council, of which Brown was a member, had begun this move as early as 1964 with its declarations that only Black people be allowed to hold leadership in the organization.⁷⁷ This organizational shift does not mean that integrationist appeals to the racial democratic state were completely abandoned. As well the study does not propose Black Power, Black Nationalism, or Black Internationalism were novel ideas in Southern California or nationally. However, this study earnestly recognizes that between 1963 and 1964, self-determination and community control came to define the dominant strategy for mass mobilization. In this new direction, African Americans drew transnational comparisons to their struggles and those of people in African, Latin America, and Asia. As a part of this turn, the Afro-American Association (AAA1) rose in prominence. Instead of viewing CORE and the AAA1 as competing organizations, they should be understood as contemporaries. Recalling the Fourth of July protest, CORE, the AAA1, and the NOI were allies in the protest as the bond between CORE and traditional Civil Rights organizations was fractured.

Proudly We Can Be Afro-Americans

In Los Angeles, the life and activism of college student Ron Everett helps to complicate the history of this period. In an interesting coincidence, Everett and Brown attended the same high school in York, Pennsylvania though almost ten years apart.

⁷⁷ Rudwick and Meier, 417-419.

After finishing high school, Everett moved to Los Angeles in 1959 with the purpose of attending the University of California Los Angeles. However, Everett first enrolled at Los Angeles City College where he quickly rose to prominence in student government and Civil Rights activism. As with many African Americans nationwide, Everett was heavily impacted by the events of early 1960. As noted earlier, Everett and a multiracial group identifying themselves as the Independent Student Union protested Kress and Woolworth's stores in Los Angeles in solidarity with the sit-ins down South. That April, Everett chronicled his experiences as a guest columnist in the *Los Angeles Tribune*. Though the *Tribune* maintained a relatively short life in comparison to the other Black newspapers in Los Angeles, its owner, Hallie Almerna Lomax, was a Civil Rights activist and used her journal to chronicle the movement.

These four essays penned by Everett revealed his complex ideology that blended Civil Rights and Black Nationalism. As well, Everett's essays exposed some of the prime contradictions his generation would face in the years to come. In his first editorial, the 18-year-old Everett argued for the necessity of racial pride giving praise to Marcus Garvey. Nonetheless he noted that African Americans did "not need an intensive racial pride, but pride that rises from being a member of this unorganized human race. But though he owes a greater allegiance to humanity, he must not forget that in this social struggle, he owes, also, a great allegiance to his race."⁷⁸ Everett's political views were motivated by the mutual struggle he had found with white activists and the shattering affect he felt "by Negroes who without dignity, pride, nor sense of belonging" crossed

⁷⁸ Ron Everett, "Pride Without Prejudice," *Los Angeles Tribune*, 4/1/1960, p. 8.

their picket lines to frequent the Woolworth and Kress Stores.⁷⁹ In his writing, Everett revealed his commitment to American liberal democracy. Still he wrote, “It is not enough that Americans know of democracy; they must practice it. There is not so much a need for moral appeal, but rather a public cultivation of the practice of equality.”⁸⁰ But even over the course of these four articles, the young Everett’s ideology fluctuated. As Everett and his allies had experience police brutality, Everett likened the racial situation in South Los Angeles to the American South and to South Africa. In a front-page spread, pictures of the arrest of him and his comrades was titled, “Johannesburg, USA.” As the years passed, like Brown, Everett had departed from his commitment to liberal reform and interracial cooperation. Instead, Everett became one of the most influential yet controversial political figures in Southern California. Everett eventually changed his name to Karenga, Kiswahili for “keeper of the tradition,” and founded the Us Organization following the Watts Rebellion. However, between 1963 and 1965, Everett had served as a founding member and chair of the Afro-American Association’s Los Angeles chapter.

The Afro-American Association and their close ally, the Nation of Islam are central to the regional shift in Black radical ideology. The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit in 1930 but expanded to Southern California with the wartime migration. While, in the early years, members were known to conduct official duties out of the homes of members, San Diego was the site of the earliest mosque on the West Coast, Muhammad’s Mosque No. 8. Mosque No. 8 was built in the immediate postwar years

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ron Everett, “The Contradictions that Confront the Young,” *Los Angeles Tribune*, 4/15/60, p. 8.

between 1946 and 1948. The Afro-American Association was influenced by the teachings of Malcolm X and by a split within student-led Civil Rights organizations at the University of California. Afro-American Association, was founded at the University of California in 1962 by a group of law students. Among the founders was an outspoken student named Donald Warden and Robert Ward, of San Diego. Despite their many differences, both the NOI and AAA1 understood the centrality of white cultural hegemony to African American political and economic subjugation. It was the Black Muslim leader Malcolm X who had famously asked, “Who taught you to hate yourself?”

For African Americans who came of age between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s, Malcolm was a professor and eventually a saint.⁸¹ Black youth regularly read the Nation of Islam’s national organ *Mr. Muhammad Speaks*, attended Nation of Islam mosques, and purchased recordings of Malcolm X’s speeches as they generated a new political consciousness. Beyond spiritual upliftment, Malcolm’s message drew from the struggles of African, Asian, and Latin American people and motivated people to local action. Malcolm once noted that the reason he taught students of the Carthaginian general Hannibal’s defeat of the Romans or about the Abyssinian Emperor Menelik II and his defeat of the Italians in the 1896 Battle of Adwa, was that he wanted Black youth to know that they too could overturn white colonial powers.⁸² In this accord, struggles over education and knowledge production were essential in the acquiescence of power as it connected the local, national, and international. Structurally, in California, education

⁸¹ William L. Van Deburg, *A New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 6.

⁸² Edward E. Curtis, IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 70.

defined citizenship, electoral representation, economic empowerment, and even housing policy.

Nation of Islam politics were amongst their most militant in Southern California. In 1950, San Diego members were jailed for resisting conscription into the Korean War. Declaring that they would not go to Korea and kill their Asiatic brothers, these members proclaimed, if any place, they owed allegiance to Egypt. Following the LAPD killing of Ronald Stokes, a member of the Los Angeles mosque, in 1962, Los Angeles and San Diego members exchanged gunfire with local police agencies and 200 members fled across the border to Mexico.⁸³ As Manning Marable notes, it was the events in Southern California which arguably led to the heightened radicalization of Malcolm X. Going as far as assembling a squad of Fruit of Islam soldiers to avenge the death of Stokes, Malcolm appealed to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad for immediate action against the LAPD; the Honorable Elijah Muhammad denied Malcolm's plea. Nonetheless, the events surrounding Stokes' death broadened Malcolm's appeal in Southern California as the minister began to urge Black people to put aside their religious differences and unite behind shared political goals.⁸⁴

In San Diego and Los Angeles, the local mosques became more than places of worship, they became places for radical knowledge production, educational centers. In them, African Americans attended to hear the Black internationalist messages of the ministers. *Mr. Muhammad Speaks* became their text. With fifty thousand copies in

⁸³ "FBI Checks Anti-Draft Cult in SD," *San Diego Union*, 8/17/50, B8. "Four Cultists Accused as Draft Foes," *San Diego Union*, 11/8/50, A12. "Muslim Cultist gets 4 Years as Draft Dodger," *San Diego Union*, 1/5/57. Leonard Ash, "200 LA Cultists Vanish into Baja," *San Diego Union*, 5/2/62.

⁸⁴ Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011), 206-217.

monthly circulation by 1962, the *Mr. Muhammad Speaks* became a major source of revenue for local mosques.⁸⁵ With Malcolm X as its national editor, apart from the regular messages from The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the articles were political and cultural in nature and appealed to a broad readership throughout the African diaspora.

Mr. Muhammad Speaks chronicled news from Africa, Latin American, and Asia providing African Americans an international perspective that many of the local Black and white papers withheld. Fruit of Islam members sold the papers throughout the neighborhood but also on college campuses. Though neither were members, Brown, Joshua Von Wolfolk, and Everett all developed close working relationships with the NOI. As previously noted, the NOI was present at the Independence Day protest organized by Brown and CORE. As well, Everett became an important liaison between the Los Angeles mosque and African-descended students at UCLA, where he regularly distributed copies of *Mr. Muhammad Speaks* and brought UCLA student with him to the mosque.⁸⁶

The Afro-American Association grew out of this expansion, with University of California, Berkeley student fight to bring Malcolm X to campus for a public lecture. Departing from the campus NAACP chapter, these students were finally successful in bringing Malcolm X to campus in May 1961.⁸⁷ Law student Donald Warden, a charismatic speaker, emerged during this campaign as the most vibrant of the student

⁸⁵Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word is Given: A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and the Black Muslim World* (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1963), 147.

⁸⁶ Molefi Kete Asante, *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 26. Bernard Magubane, *My Life and Times: An Autobiography* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010), 124.

⁸⁷ Donna Jean Murch, *Living For the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 71-76.

leaders. As the Afro-American Association's newsletter, the *Afro-American Dignity News*, recounts the organization's history: "In March, 1962, the African-American Association was officially established. It is the outgrowth of a weekly book discussion group which met frequently throughout the San Francisco Bay area. This book discussion group was created by a handful of Negro intellectuals, who felt there was a strong need to discover their self-identity." Their motto was "Unity, Self-Help, Education and Dignity."⁸⁸



Figure 5 Logo for the Afro-American Association. (Afro-American Dignity News, Freedom Archives)

Though the Afro-American Association was never a large organization, they were a principal factor in the spread of a new culture of pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism in California. Masterful oratory and extensive knowledge of Black history and

⁸⁸ *Afro-American Dignity News* Vol. 1 No. 3, 11/2/64, p. 10.

historiography became their trademark as they raised consciousness through “street speaking” and private reading groups. Following their initial founding, they spread across the Bay Area to San Francisco State College and Oakland City College and eventually to San Diego and Los Angeles. Historian Donna Murch notes that the organization grew through conflict and consensus. With an extensive reading process, the Afro American Association crafted a political ideology that fused old and new ideas.⁸⁹ Warden notes that they read Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, E. David Cronon’s *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* along with the works of Kwame Nkrumah and Margaret Just Butcher and other works that would become core elements of the Black Studies curriculum in years to come. Moreover, it has been noted that the members of the Afro-American Association found commonalities between competing theorists such as E. Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits. Despite their intellectual differences, Warden and others drew a deep criticism of African American bourgeois principles and understood the importance of the retrieval of a lost African heritage. Warden writes that, “Blacks were inspired to know that we had a viable intellectual peer group that was not predicated upon White approbation.”⁹⁰ It was this character which influenced Southern Californians to join the organization.

As with the CORE’s radicalization, James Baldwin was arguably the most important literary influence on the Afro-American Association. In his activism and writing, Baldwin bridged Civil Rights and Black Nationalism. A gay atheist with a high-

⁸⁹ Murch, 86-88.

⁹⁰ Dr. Khalid Abdullah Tariq Al Mansour (Donald Warden), *Black Americans at the Crossroads: Where Do We Go From Here?* (The First Free African Press, 1981), 73-74.

pitched voice and awkward features, Baldwin was undoubtedly the most unlikely intellectual to represent the new consciousness. Nonetheless, Baldwin perfectly represented the budding ideas of this new movement and his book *The Fire Next Time* was widely read by Afro-American Association members in Los Angeles and San Diego. Much like the members of the Afro-American Association, Baldwin's second and closing essay in *The Fire Next Time*, "Down at the Cross," reveals his admiration for Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad while frankly admitting his reluctance to join the Nation of Islam. In both essays in *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin valorized what Malcolm X called the "bottom of the heap Negroes" and the Black Marxists referred to as the proletariat and the lumpen-proletariat. In "My Dungeon Shook" it was poor Black labor that provided the freedom dreams that sustained Black resistance. In "Down at the Cross," it was the Nation of Islam that had energized and reformed the Black masses. Lastly, *The Fire Next Time* offered a critical perspective of what WEB Du Bois had termed the "global color line."⁹¹ From South Africa, to Germany, to the United States, Baldwin identifies centrality of Christianity to white racial consciousness. The great contradiction of Blackness in the United States, Baldwin identified, is that Black people would either become the cause of America's destruction or revolution.

As previously noted, Baldwin visited Southern California in May 1963 speaking in San Diego on May 8th and in Los Angeles a week later. To one thousand listeners at Russ Auditorium in San Diego's Balboa Park, Baldwin criticized a white America that

⁹¹ Robin DG Kelley, "But a Local Phase of a World Problem": Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *Journal of American History* Vol. 86, No. 3 (Dec. 1999). WEB (William Edward Burghardt) Du Bois, 1868-1963, The color line belts the world, October 20, 1906, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

focused its attention on war with Cuba while it ignored the struggles of 20 million-plus African Americans.⁹² A week later on May 15th, Baldwin told thousands of listeners at the Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles that Black people had spent hundreds of years trying to escape their past, the struggles of their enslaved ancestors, but they would be better off embracing their slave past and the struggles for emancipation.⁹³ James Baldwin and his literature represented the unique transition taking place in African American consciousness.

Two years earlier, in 1961, Baldwin had published *Nobody Knows My Name*, another collection of political essays. In his *Nobody Knows My Name*, Baldwin wrote extensively on the Africa and its effects on African American consciousness including, but not limited to, his essay “Princes and Powers,” an account of his experience at the Conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists held at the Sorbonne in September 1956. In “Princes and Powers,” Baldwin expressed his differences with the Afrocentric perspectives on Black cultural production forwarded by Negritudist writers and activists Leopold Senghor, Aime Cesaire, and others.⁹⁴ In the lieu of an anti-African interpretation, as some have read this essay, Baldwin instead promoted a crucial revisiting of what Du Bois called *double consciousness* and Edward Said termed *contrapuntality*.⁹⁵ The culture of African Americans particularly, and Africans of the diaspora more generally, was not only defined by the essence of an African past but the historical contradictions of slavery and colonialism—a point Cesaire also conceded.

⁹² Peter Kaye, “Negro Author Tells Problem of Integration,” *San Diego Union*, 5/10/1963, B1.

⁹³ “Thousands Applaud Baldwin on LA Tour,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5/16/63, C2.

⁹⁴ James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1961/1963), 46-54.

⁹⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 32.

Young Black Nationalists in California eventually articulated similar readings of African American culture.

Two-and-a-half months after Baldwin's visit to San Diego, the co-chair of Afro-American Association of San Diego, Joshua Von Wolfolk, engaged in public debate with Civil Rights activist Dennis Allen, president of the San Diego Race Relations Society. Von Wolfolk had been a resident of San Diego since the early 1940s. An early Black Nationalist, Von Wolfolk was an adherent to the ideas of Marcus Garvey, had studied the teachings of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, African independence leaders, and the Chinese Revolution. Though Von Wolfolk was never a member of the Nation of Islam, he retained a close friendship Amos X Bradford, the minister of Mosque No. 8. As well, Von Wolfolk's daughter eventually married a member of the NOI and raised her children as Muslims. Ideologically, Von Wolfolk and Allen were polar opposites. A longtime resident of San Diego, a Republican, and a moderate integrationist, Allen very much represented an activist tradition whose time had passed in Black San Diego. Allen had been a founding member of the local NAACP chapter in 1917 and served as its president in the 1920s. In 1924 Allen founded the San Diego Race Relations Society and in the 1930s he had been one of the three San Diegans on the California Race Relations Commission. Allen was once a prominent organizer of Negro History Week events and challenged racial segregation in housing and public accommodations up through the 1940s. Yet as time passed, Allen became increasingly conservative and sided with city

officials in what he believed was the protection of the Civil Rights victories he had previously fought for.⁹⁶

On 23 July 1963, Allen spoke at a city council meeting and expressed doubt that segregation, discrimination, or police brutality existed in San Diego. In fact, the only instance of hate he cited was Black on white reverse racism. “There is no racial discrimination in San Diego,” Allen declared.⁹⁷ “Not a city in America exists where racial harmony is more perfect than in San Diego,” he added.⁹⁸ Despite Baldwin’s admonition, Allen appeared to be one Black person who agreed with white America’s racial sentiments. Allen’s charge that there was no proof of discrimination was so outrageous that it prompted a rebuke from San Diego Mayor Charles Dail. However, it provoked the most direct response from Von Wolfolk who arose from his seat and demanded to speak.⁹⁹ “The white man is going to have to stop talking and start listening or Logan Heights is going to blow up in his face,” Von Wolfolk stated before being made to sit.¹⁰⁰ Von Wolfolk addressed the city council the following week.

Von Wolfolk took the floor on July 30th. Addressing the city council, he stated: “The day of the Uncle Tom is dead, and Mr. Allen is a dead Uncle Tom.”¹⁰¹ Von Wolfolk did not contain his wrath to Allen; he also identified Hartwell Ragsdale, head of

⁹⁶ Rudy P. Guevarra, “Survival and Belonging: Civil Rights, Social Organizations, and Youth Cultures,” in *Becoming Mexipino* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 81-83. Robert Fikes, “Biographical Sketches of the Presidents of the San Diego NAACP.”

⁹⁷ Sherman Skeete, “Spokesman Suggests Solution: Uncle Tom Dead, Debt Unpaid, Says Speaker,” *Independent*, 8/1/1963, A1, Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 2, SDSU Special Collections.

⁹⁸ “Racial Issues are Discussed at Meeting of City Council,” *San Diego Union*, 7/24/1963, A17.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Sherman Skeete, “Race Issue Flares at City Council,” *San Diego Independent* Logan Heights Edition, 7/25/1963, Brown Papers, Box 4, Folder 7, SDSU Special Collections.

¹⁰¹ Sherman Skeete, “Spokesman Suggests Solution: Uncle Tom Dead, Debt Unpaid, Says Speaker,” *Independent*, 8/1/1963, A1, Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 2, SDSU Special Collections. “City Council Hears Negro Demands,” *San Diego Union*, 7/31/1963, A18.

the local NAACP, and Percy Steele, head of the local Urban League, as roadblocks to change in San Diego. There is “a new Negro who is not interested in what the white man thinks. He is only interested in what he thinks of himself. And I may assure you, we are going to act according to what we think and not by the rules you’ve made,” Von Wolfolk stated. Taking issue with Allen’s previous statement, Von Wolfolk noted that there was indeed a severe racial problem in San Diego and demanded change. Quoting Baldwin’s speech, Von Wolfolk stated, “If you know what you want, you know what I want.”¹⁰² In front of the city council and Mayor Dail, Von Wolfolk insisted on four immediate remedies to San Diego’s racial problems: Preferential treatment in hiring and training; a share of the power structure; for the police “start treating black citizens as humans and not like dogs;” and the formation of a human relations commission.¹⁰³ Von Wolfolk was not just pushing for structural changes and incorporation into San Diego’s power structure. The Afro-American Association sought to raise the consciousness of Black San Diego beyond the ideas of Allen and past the integration into the mainstream American society.

Education for Liberation

By the fall of 1963, the Afro-American Association was firmly established in San Diego and Los Angeles. The members and affiliates of the Afro-American Association actively sought to alter the consciousness of Black people throughout Southern California through public speaking, organized study groups, creation of Black Studies curricula, and the construction of independent African-centered educational institutions. Members of

¹⁰² Sherman Skeete, “Spokesman Suggests Solution: Uncle Tom Dead, Debt Unpaid, Says Speaker,” *Independent*, 8/1/1963.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

the Afro-American Association were influenced by the rise of African decolonization, the international vision of Robert F. Williams, and the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo. Yet even when they were not explicitly engaging or promoting African politics, the activism of the Afro-American Association and their allies was indeed within the framework of pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism. Members of the Afro-American Association and their allies demanded that Black history be taught from their perspective and they promoted a perspective of solidarity among people of color that went beyond the parameters of American liberalism and even mainstream Civil Rights strategy.

With Everett serving as the organization's chair in Los Angeles and Von Wolfolk in San Diego, the Afro-American Association had different character and missions. Though both chapters maintained contact with Warden and members in the Bay Area, it is unclear how much contact, if any, the members in Los Angeles and San Diego had with each other. The Los Angeles chapter grew out of intercampus contact between Black students at UCLA and Berkeley while the San Diego chapter was the result of Bob Ward's return home. A graduate student in African Studies at UCLA, Everett centered the study and promotion of African culture and history. Whereas in San Diego many of the members were college educated but very few, if any, were college students. Instead, the Afro-Americans in San Diego established themselves solidly in community affairs such as the administration of public education. Despite their differences, both organizations remained relatively small yet important. Their mode of activism reflected what Everett later termed "programmatic influence." With members of the Afro-American Association within a variety of occupations and Civil Rights organizations, and

by tactfully engaging public discourse, the Afro-American Association impacted the change in mobilization strategy and ideology throughout Southern California.

As previously noted, the AAA1 members were famed for their oratory and lectures. Discussion groups and “street speaking,” allowed for the spread of Black history, culture and current events. Reinforcing their pedagogy of revolutionary action, the AAA1 introduced the community “to broader debates about the meanings of black identity.” The study groups and street speaking connected the broader community to the revolutionary, geopolitical and economic developments across the African diaspora.¹⁰⁴ However, in San Diego and Los Angeles, place and space engendered different modes of output than in the Bay Area.¹⁰⁵ Challenging the local racial order and instilling a new consciousness in Black minds, the Afro-American Association of San Diego took advantage of spaces where the community congregated: public parks, civic engagements, and individual homes became their lecture halls. Black Los Angeles had much more space at their disposal. There, the AAA1 held events on college and high school campuses, in the community, and in church annexes.

Despite their limited facilities, Mountain View Park (colloquially known as Ocean View Park due to its location on Ocean View Boulevard), Memorial Park and Recreation Center, and Southcrest Park were the prime locations for African American

¹⁰⁴ Murch, 108.

¹⁰⁵ Murch, 89-90. Far more industrial and urban, Black spaces in the Bay Area were much more conducive to a Harlem-style of public oratory. Large rallies at college campuses and in high traffic areas such as San Francisco’s Fillmore district made perfect sense for Warden and others in the Bay Area. Black San Diegans however had a different relationship with space. San Diego has no visible smoke stacks, few multileveled tenement buildings and demarcating railroad tracks. Moreover, the redevelopment of the Centre City had increasingly made downtown, the Black San Diego’s historic center, out-of-bounds for African Americans. Even San Diego’s ghetto contained cul de sacs and geraniums.

social life in San Diego.¹⁰⁶ Southcrest Park was especially important because it contained a recreation center that activists used for community organizing, conferences, and lectures. On Sundays, when these parks would be packed with thousands of individuals and families, Harold Brown and the Afro-American Association would take their bullhorns and talk about Black history and current events to the scores of listeners.¹⁰⁷ These meetings, which became known as Black Conferences, were also the place where Brown had San Diego adopt the term “Black.”¹⁰⁸ Hal Brown remembered convening a Black conference at the park that was attended by hundreds of people from the community and formally holding a vote for them to stop using the word Negro and official adopt the word Black into their lexicon and public discourse. As journalist John Leo noted, “This [was] not a minor semantic dispute.” The shift in autonyms reflected the movement away from “so-called Negroes,” as Malcolm X referred to them, who were unwilling to fight for their rights, to Afro-Americans and Blacks who embraced their African heritage as they in their thrust for change.¹⁰⁹ Brown received major pushback—some people wanted no part of this new consciousness. “We’d mention the word Black man, I mean these people hated us. [M]an if they would’ve had a gun, they would’ve shot us [laughter] for using the word Black,” he stated.¹¹⁰ Surely not all Black San Diegans disagreed with the teachings of the Afro-American Association.

¹⁰⁶ C. Shuford Swift, “Sunday in the Park, July 13, 1969,” *CURE* Newsletter, Vol 2. No. 1, (July 1969). Citizens United for Racial Equality Papers, Box 6 Folder 12 Newsletters, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Harold Brown Interview by Mychal Odom. Harold Brown Interview by Gloria Rhodes.

¹⁰⁸ Black Conference later became the name of San Diego’s indigenous Black Power organization in 1966.

¹⁰⁹ John Leo, “Young ‘Blacks’ Don’t Want to Be Called ‘Negroes,’” Harold Brown Papers, Box 4 Folder 12, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹¹⁰ Harold Brown Interview with Mychal Odom.

A professional educator by training, Brown would also be contacted by parents to supplement the education African American students did not receive in schools by teaching them about Black history. “We introduced...Black history into San Diego as we introduced the word Black into San Diego,” Brown noted. “I used to go around long before [the creation of Black Studies] back during the Afro-American Association and I used to go around and teach that, teach Black history... in the homes of young people who wanted to—their parents wanted them to know about.”¹¹¹ Accordingly an image by local photographer and member of the Nation of Islam Norman Baynard shows Joshua Von Wolfolk in the living room of a private residence speaking to what are likely two different families. Surrounded by ten other people, Von Wolfolk is showing a document to a man, more while facilitating a dialogue on Black history at an NOI household (identified by the crescent moon and star on the wall). The customary garrison cap worn by many in the Afro-American Association suggests that there is at least one other Association member in the room. There are two other older men in the room and seven other women of mixed ages.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Harold Brown Interview by Mychal Odom

¹¹² Image of Von Wolfolk and others in an NOI home. Image 91: 18476-511. Norman Baynard Collection, San Diego History Center.



Figure 6 Von Wolfolk leading a private lesson on Black Studies. Photograph by Norman Baynard (San Diego History Center)

The “programmatically influence” of the Afro-American Association furthered local demands for relevant education and curriculum changes in San Diego schools.¹¹³ In 1965, close comrade of Harold Brown and associate of Joshua Von Wolfolk, CORE member and local teacher Robert Russell had assembled his own 195-paged curriculum titled *The Role of the Negro in United States History: A Compilation of Information*. While the curriculum was applicable for use at any level, *The Role of the Negro in the United States* was crafted with for direct use with the San Diego City Schools’ *A Guide*

¹¹³ In the 1930s Black Students at San Diego State created a group called the Woodsonians. Named after Carter G. Woodson, they Woodsonians organized Negro History Week events and Negro Health Week events in Logan Heights. The Woodsonians branched out to establish chapters at local secondary schools. What is more, Rebecca Craft, head of the Logan Heights Women’s Civic League, led a campaign to get Black teachers hired at Black serving secondary schools. The first hired was Lorraine Van Lowe, a former Woodsonian, in 1942. Gail Madyun, “In the Midst of Things”: Rebecca Craft and the Women’s Civic League, *Journal of San Diego History* Vol. 34 No. 1 (Winter 1988).

for Teaching United States History 1-2. The six units organized in *The Role of the Negro* were outlined to fit alongside the mandatory five units of American history outlined in the district's guide. "This publication seeks to provide teachers with a balanced account of the Negro as a participant in our nation's history. It attempts to identify the major historical forces which have influenced minority communities and to describe their impact upon broader national and international developments," the guide states.¹¹⁴ The internationalist element of the curriculum reflected the influence of the NOI and the AAA1 as Unit One located the history of African Americans, in Africa; exploring the history of Egypt, Axum, Mali, Songhai and Ghana as well as chronicling the history of slavery in Africa. The first unit took the history of African Americans up to the Revolutionary era. Unit Two examined the early Republican period with a section on slave rebellions. Unit Three spanned from Antebellum to the end of Reconstruction. Unit Four coincided with the Nadir period and Progressive Era through the End of World War I and highlighted the rise of groups like the NAACP, Urban League, and the rise of the Black Press. Unit Five examined the interwar period showcasing the Garvey Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, unionization, and developments in government labor. The fifth unit ended with Black participation in the Second World War. Unit Six focused on postwar activism—the Modern Civil Rights Movement. There was even a section for the study of the Nation of Islam.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Robert Russell, "The Role of the Negro in United States History: A Compilation of Information," Part One (1965), p. iii. Harold K. Brown Papers, Box 5 Folder 2, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

In Los Angeles, the Afro-American Association benefitted from the growing influx of African students and African Studies professors at Los Angeles City College and UCLA. Inspired by the liberation movements in Africa, while on college campuses, Everett often congregated with African students more than he had African Americans. While at City College in the early 1960s, Everett hung around a group of Kenyan students, many of which were brought to the United States as a part of a variety of programs that intended to educate future Africa's leaders.¹¹⁶ One of those students, Paul Sumbi, befriended at Everett and helped him master Kiswahili. Sumbi, who later married an African American librarian Joyce Madkins, declined return to his homeland and became a school teacher and Kiswahili language instructor in Los Angeles. Many years later, he was also one of the first people to review Everett's draft for the holiday Kwanzaa.¹¹⁷ In response to not only the influence of liberation movements in East Africa but his friendship with East Africans in the United States, in 1963, Everett changed his surname to Karenga which translated to "keeper of the tradition" and more loosely was taken by many to mean nationalist.¹¹⁸

Much like in San Diego, the Afro-American Association in Los Angeles held their meetings on Sundays. However, instead of convening at a park, the Los Angeles Afro-Americans met at the Holman Methodist Church at 3320 W. Adams Boulevard. Bridging the community with the campus, the same collective of students that formed the AAA1 also organized what became the Black Student Union at UCLA. This group of

¹¹⁶ Scot Brown, *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, The Us Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 11-12.

¹¹⁷ Joyce Sumbi Interview.

¹¹⁸ Bob Farrell, "Karenga: Racially Proud Erudite," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9/19/63, p. C8.

Afro-Americans organized public talks on Africa and the Caribbean. A crucial influence for the budding Black nationalist ideology being developed by Karenga and the others was the Jamaican professor of African Studies and anthropologist Council “Count” Taylor. The faculty advisor to the campus NAACP chapter, Taylor had a great relationship with all student activists. At social events in his beachfront home, in class, and in his office, Taylor helped radicalize several students. A believer in the cultural nationalist philosophy of Negritude which emanated from Francophone Africa and the French Antilles, the students studied Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, and Sekou Toure. Toure’s *Towards Full Re-Africanization* heavily influenced the ideology of the AAA1 and successive organizations by promoting the retrieval of lost African culture as a foundational step towards overthrowing colonialism and African unity.¹¹⁹ Karenga and the AAA1 “took some of the teachings of Council Taylor to the streets.”¹²⁰ Alongside their curricular activities, these Afro-Americans also played a central role in bringing Malcolm X to speak at UCLA. From here, the young Afro-Americans and other students developed a familiarity and working relationship with the Nation of Islam, visiting NOI Mosque No. 27. In one encounter, Karenga facilitated a meeting between UCLA students and Malcolm X following one of his talks in Los Angeles.¹²¹

Some of the Afro-American Association members, like Karenga, were members of a study group called the Afro-American Vanguard. Unlike the Afro-American Association, the Vanguard had an even smaller membership of radical intellectuals.

¹¹⁹ Karenga Oral History.

¹²⁰ Bob Singleton Oral History, p. 165.

¹²¹ Bernard Magubane, *My Life and Times: An Autobiography* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010), 124.

While they were not a protest group, the Afro-American Vanguard drew members of various Black nationalist and socialist organizations as they read a variety of literature such as Richard Wright, Frazier, and Baldwin. Alongside these American authors, the Afro-American Vanguard read Marxist literature on the Cuban Revolution and the Chinese Revolution and debated the applicability of these ideas to the African American condition. Karenga and these others put their radical education and scholastic training to practice. Like their comrades in San Diego and the Bay Area, the Los Angeles Afro-Americans taught classes on African and African American history. As well, they offered classes on Kiswahili, French, business education and economics.¹²² The teaching of business and economics represented the complicated mixture of Black Capitalism and economic self-reliance that many Afro-American Association chapters promoted. Despite its problematic nature, business education represented the AAAI attempt to confront the immediate employment needs of the Black community. This recognition was eventually recognized in the efforts of San Diegans to create their own African-centered school and cultural center. As the lingua franca of Central, East Africa, and parts of Southern Africa, Kiswahili clearly represented the AAAI's efforts at re-Africanization but their teaching French is a lot more peculiar.

It can be argued that teaching French to the masses was a conscious attempt to open dialogue with the Black Francophone world, where much of the African socialist and Black Marxist theory had originated. Considering the popular writings of Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* had been the only one translated into English in 1963. *A*

¹²² "Afro-American Assn. Forms LA Branch," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8/15/1963, A3.

Dying Colonialism, Black Skin, White Mask, and Toward the African Revolution were not translated until the late 1960s. As well, in the early 1960s, much of the works of Césaire, Senghor, Cheikh Anta Diop, and Sekou Toure remained untranslated. French instruction equipped the Black public with the ability to directly engage the Black Francophone world.¹²³ In this sense, the AAA1's teaching of French calls upon Césaire's own understanding of the utility of the French language. In an interview with René Depestre, Césaire confessed:

I don't deny French influences myself. Whether I want to or not, as a poet I express myself in French, and clearly French literature has influenced me. But I want to emphasize very strongly that - while using as a point of departure the elements that French literature gave me - at the same time I have always strived to create a new language, one capable of communicating the African heritage. In other words, for me French was a tool that I wanted to use in developing a new means of expression. I wanted to create an Antillean French, a black French that, while still being French, had a black character.¹²⁴

Césaire explains that through his usage of surrealism, he could effectively explode the French language and forward the cause for African liberation.¹²⁵ This study of language became a crucial tool for many in Southern California. Expanding beyond the AAA1 meetings, Karenga began to teach his own evening classes at Fremont High School where he instructed young adults, many of them formerly incarcerated, about African culture

¹²³ As Brent Hayes Edwards has argued: “[T]he cultures of black internationalism can be seen only in *translation*. It is not possible to take up the question of ‘diaspora’ without taking account of the fact that the great majority of peoples of African descent do not speak or write in English...it makes sense to situate this question in particular through the dialogues and encounters facilitated in the French metropole between the world wars.... The larger point is that one can approach such a project only by attending to the ways that discourses of internationalism *travel*, the ways they are translated, disseminated, reformulated, and debated in transnational contexts marked by difference,” Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 7.

¹²⁴ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, p. 83.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

and language. For many of these “bottom of the heap negroes” like Tommy Jacquette, these classes became their entry to the struggle for Black liberation.¹²⁶

Why Not the Same Concern?

As with Southern California, 1964 was a national turning point as the African American masses embraced more militant positions and enhanced relationships with African liberation struggles. The consciousness had been changed by local events as well as national and international circumstances. Delivered on 10 November 1963, Malcolm X’s “Message to the Grassroots” speech had made its rounds amongst Civil Rights activists. Malcolm’s increasing radicalism, attempts to form a Black united front, and references to the lessons of African and Asian liberation movements increasingly influenced the youth. For example, activists listened to audio tape recordings of Malcolm’s speeches as they organized workers in the South. Also in 1964, another Black radical formation, the Revolutionary Action Movement was formed in Ohio. Many Afro-American Association chapters eventually aligned with RAM. As well, in the summer of 1964, Harry Belafonte led a Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer, Julian Bond, and a group of SNCC activists which included James Forman and John Lewis on a three-week trip to Guinea where they had been invited as guests of Sekou Toure. Forman noted that the activists had spent their time in Africa resting, reading socialist literature, attending cultural festivals, and meeting with Toure and other government officials. American intelligence officials described the meetings between SNCC activists and Guinean officials as “lessons in revolution.”¹²⁷ Even as young Black Civil Rights activists were embraced as

¹²⁶ Tommy Jacquette Oral History.

¹²⁷ Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 141.

international freedom fighters on the world stage, they were increasingly targeted at home. As noted, Harold Brown had recognized this paradox at his sentencing arguing that he was being jailed while the American government did nothing about the killing of CORE activists in the American South.¹²⁸ In late 1964, the highly-publicized sentencing of Nelson Mandela and other ANC activists as well as the flaring up of the Congo Crisis, drew sympathy from activists and the Black public.

As demonstrated in the public response to the Congo Crisis, the entrance of Black internationalist criticism of American domestic into public discourse highlighted the new direction the movement had taken. On 10 December 1964, the *San Diego Voice* published an editorial cartoon titled, “Why Not The Same Concern?” With two columns, one on the left titled “Massacre Mississippi” and another on the right titled “Massacre Congo,” the cartoon derided the delayed action in the Deep South from the Johnson Administration, symbolized by a white hand stamped “US.” Despite the onslaught of violence against Civil Rights workers, Mississippi only merited more investigation, symbolized by a large magnifying glass focused over the branch of a willow tree, the likely sight of a lynching. Comparatively, in a visually similar setting in the Central African nation, a C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft labeled “Humanitarianism” and “Air Rescue Mission” critiques American intervention into the Congo Crisis. Out of protection of their foreign investments, American and Western forces took immediate action, extracting their personnel from the Congo amidst a violent civil war the West had instigated. Comparatively, federal and local governments disregarded the loss of

¹²⁸ Statement Regarding Bank of America, Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, SDSU Special Collections.

American lives on its own soil. Unlike the reformist appeals for federal intervention that had embodied previous struggles, “Why Not the Same Concern?” is a petition for Black self-reliance. Even the middle class Black press had come to recognize their shared alienation with African people. In both Mississippi and Congo, the Johnson Administration had shown itself willing to act only when white lives were at risk. The only solution would be increased Black mutual assistance. The Afro-American Association, the Nation of Islam, and other Black radical formations had demanded that this self-reliance involve an international vision that linked the African American with historical and contemporary Africa.



Figure 7 “Why Not the Same Concern?” *San Diego Voice*, 12/10/64 (Brown Papers, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives).

Since the concurrent civil disobedience campaigns of South Africans in Sharpeville and African Americans in North Carolina in spring 1960, the *Los Angeles*

Sentinel had provided regular coverage of African events. In March 1960, the *Sentinel* began to run the weekly column “Africa and the World” by Hazel La Marre, a local poet, graduate of UC Berkeley, and in-law of a Haitian diplomatic family. As historian James Meriwether has noted, the increased coverage of African current events in the African American press displayed the shift in Black consciousness. Yet, the transformation in the depth of reporting between 1960 and 1964 reveals the rich application of these events to the lived experiences of African Americans in Southern California. In 1960, the cosmopolitan La Marre offered an important international perspective. Prior to her “Africa and the World” assignment, La Marre had served in France and England as a member of the Women’s Army Corps during World War II, studied at the University of Kansas and UC Berkeley, and traveled the Caribbean. La Marre’s global vision influenced the publication of her 1955 book of literature *Breath of the Whirlwind* and informed her previous assignment covering popular culture and theater.¹²⁹ La Marre’s coverage of Africa included extended entries on the Sharpeville Massacre, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, and antiapartheid events in South Africa. Nonetheless, by 1964, *The Sentinel* had made a significant change in its coverage of Africa as UCLA African Studies graduate student George Goodman. Beginning on 18 June 1964, Goodman departed from La Marre’s coverage of recent events as his training at UCLA allowed for him to not only report on the happenings across the Atlantic but to place them into deep historical context. In his first entry, Goodman aptly explained the neocolonial Congo crises in the comparative context of the “paper freedom” African

¹²⁹ Ruby Berkeley Goodwin, “Current Reviews,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7/7/55, A9.

Americans had received following their emancipation from slavery.¹³⁰ Subsequent articles identified the origins of the Congo Crisis in the genocidal Belgian colonial project and the long history of European enslavement of Central Africans. Goodman praised the leadership and pan-Africanism of the Organization of African Unity and placed the contest between Black nationalism and integrationism in African American political strategy in relationship with the differences between the African National Congress and Pan-Africanist Congress in South Africa.¹³¹

In the winter of 1964 Goodman relinquished his column space to his UCLA colleague Karenga. Karenga's two "Africa and the World" entries are important as they represent the increased public reception to Black Internationalist ideas. Published on November 26th and December 31st, both articles contained the call for an African American liberation politics grounded in African consciousness that the Afro-American Association had popularized. In the latter article published on New Year's Eve, chronicled the development of African consciousness amongst Black Americans.¹³² The earlier article argued for the creation of a Black Nationalist tradition in the United States built upon the model of African nationalism.¹³³ In the New Year's Eve article, Karenga noted that education produced a contradiction for him and other African Americans. Despite the social differences between Black and white, Karenga explained that science had taught them all humans were equal. That biological equality did not comport to social conditions. Undoubtedly channeling Fanon, Karenga argued that for some this

¹³⁰ George Goodman, "Africa and the World," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6/18/64, A6.

¹³¹ Goodman, "Africa and the World," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7/2/64, A6. "Africa and the World," 7/30/64, A.6. "Africa and the World," 8/27/64, A6.

¹³² Ron Karenga with George Goodman, "Africa and the World," 12/31/64, A6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

produced “moments of madness. The use of bleaches on our skin and eye on our hair is ample evidence.”¹³⁴ Yet, as they continued to study, these contradictions, Karenga argues, this eventually led them to challenge the miseducated history they had been taught about slavery and Africa. “With the rise of Africa in the modern world we tended to take a new look at the image of ourselves and our brothers in color. New African states were set up. Some of our women began to wear their hair natural. Locally, a Swahili class at Fremont became an overwhelming success” and African Americans had even begun to travel quite frequently to African nations such as Ghana, Guinea, and Tanganyika, Karenga notes.¹³⁵

With the recent identification with Africa came a new sense of dignity and humanity for African Americans. For this reason, Karenga notes in his first article that Black Nationalism must be grounded in Africanness for it to be fully effective in challenging white cultural hegemony. Arguing that African Americans experienced what was later called *internal colonization* by many, Karenga noted that Black people on both sides of the Atlantic have had to develop cultural nationalities which unite Black people beyond tribalism in Africa and what he called “groupism” in the United States. The solution was to create Black forms of knowledge production which were not afraid to embrace elements of both Western and African knowledge that was useful but discard that which was harmful. In both African and African American nationalism, self-definition, he argues, is crucial. “Emphasis,” he writes, “is placed on populism. The masses are idealized and made the real carriers of the culture, not the educated

¹³⁴ Karenga and Goodman, “Africa and the World,” 12/31/64, A6.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

bourgeoisie.” In Africa, he argues, this philosophy “is called ‘negritude,’ and in America it is called ‘soul.’ This is an important concept for it makes all blacks alike and at the same time distinguishes them from other people.”¹³⁶ Reflecting the Afro-American Association doctrine, these articles informed the public that challenges of dominant culture and ideology were indispensable from demands for structural change. In fact, they were central to it.

In San Diego, the Africa House, an early experiment at African-centered cultural and technical education, displayed the reach of the Afro-American Association’s programmatic influence and the direct action of the Congress of Racial Equality. On 14 November 1964, the Africa House Cultural Center, a Black-operated collective in Logan Heights held the inaugural open house at its location on 438 South 37th Street. The Africa House was organized by the Black Nationalist and military veteran Eugene Peters, the head of the Africa House Fine Arts and Cultural Guild. Peters moved through multiple Black Nationalist spaces. While there are no records to that note Peters was a member of the Afro-American Association, Von Wolfolk’s presence at the open house displayed the firm connections between the AAA1 and the Africa House. As well, Norma Baynard attended the open house. Peters was however a member of the Freedom Theater Arts Guild, an urban theater company of which another local Black Nationalist and CORE member Ambrose Broadus was also affiliated. The Freedom Theater utilized public spaces—community centers, parks and schools—for their productions.¹³⁷ Yet, the

¹³⁶ Karenga and Goodman, “Africa and the World,” 11/26/64, A6.

¹³⁷ Broadus later started his own local Black Power group called Soul Brothers and was a member of the San Diego Black Federation. It was later discovered that Broadus was also the minister of information for the local Black Panther cadre. In later years, Peters would eventually organize a short-lived chapter of Malcolm X’s Organization of Afro-American Unity in San Diego.

African House was the most ambitious venture as it embodied the struggles over access and self-determination in Southern California. The Africa House sustained the Afro-American Association efforts at educating Black families, particularly children.¹³⁸

“When a child is born...we would like it to be here at the Africa House. In its work or play, as the child grows to adulthood, we want that work or play a part of this project and when that man or woman passes, let it be here—at the Africa House,” Peters noted in his opening address.¹³⁹

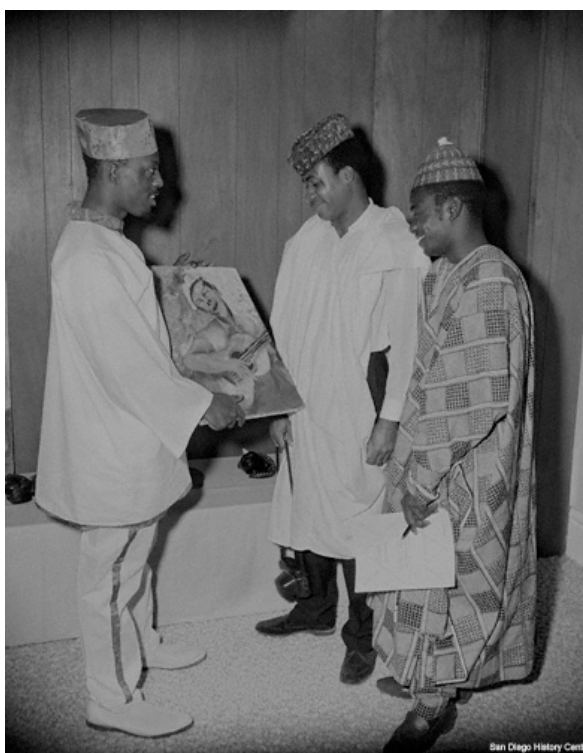


Figure 8 Young men at the Africa House. While African clothing became largely associated with the cultural nationalist organizations of the late 1960s, this photo displays that such style politics were already being embraced. (San Diego History Center).

¹³⁸ Karenga and Goodman, “Africa and the World,” 11/26/64, A6

¹³⁹ “Sneak Preview Staged: Africa House Goal Told By Director,” *Independent* Logan Heights Edition, 11/19/1964, A1, Harold K. Brown Papers, Box 7 Item 10, SDSU Special Collections and University Archive. “Freedom Theater to Debut Play,” *San Diego Union* 5/16/1965, E3. “Freedom Theater Presents Variety Show Today,” *San Diego Union*, 8/22/1965, A13.



Figure 9 An assorted variety of visual art was displayed at the Africa House. (San Diego History Center)

Located in a converted eight room home in a residential part of Logan Heights near the intersection of Ocean View Boulevard and 37th Street, the Africa House presented what historian Natalia has termed a *counterscript* to the processes of racialization San Diego.¹⁴⁰ The cultural center challenged the residential segregation of Blacks, Latinos and Asians in San Diego. The Africa House also confronted the interracial conflict amongst people of color that residential segregation produced. Much like the activism of the Afro-American Association, the Africa House allowed for the recovery of a radical tradition that postwar racial liberalism had suppressed.¹⁴¹ The social meaning of the Africa House promised a diasporic and internationalist framework which even extended beyond the original imagination of its organizing committee. Reflecting a

¹⁴⁰ Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014), p. 10.

¹⁴¹ "Sneak Preview Staged: Africa House Goal Told By Director," *Independent* Logan Heights Edition, 11/19/1964, A1, Harold K. Brown Papers, Box 7 Item 10, SDSU Special Collections and University Archive.

Third World Internationalism, the Africa House sought to provide housing to visiting African students, link African American, Afro-Latino, and continental Africans with other communities of color, and lastly, the Africa House promised to prepare African Americans for realities of life in the borderlands. The open house was attended by San Diego residents and students from Africa, Saudi Arabia, the West Indies, Panama, Mexico and other nations.

The Africa House held cultural programming such as art displays which showcased visual art of from around the African diaspora and the Americas. The structure contained a lecture room titled Exodus Hall and Paul L. Dunbar Fine Arts Gallery. While the archival evidence remains inconclusive, many of the items on display were very possibly on loan from artists Paul Ford and Eddie Edwards as well as Dr. Jack Kimbrough, a longtime Civil Rights activist, Logan Heights resident, and collector of Black art and literature. The cultural products on display at the Africa House extended from the visual art to the sartorial politics of the visitors. The photographs of Norman Baynard provide a valuable record of the Africa House. In one image three young men are shown wearing a mixture of clothing and headdresses from West Africa and East Africa. In another, a party of men and women view various forms of African and African American art.¹⁴² In an exhibit which opened 31 January 1965, the cultural guild displayed sculptures, oil paintings, watercolors, penciled drawings, and pastel images.¹⁴³ The collage of art assembled by the exhibit's curator Albert Mitchell, the director of the cultural guild, represented the complex body of San Diego artists. Alongside Mitchell's

¹⁴² Africa House Images. Image 91: 18476-127 and Image 91: 18476-127. Norman Baynard Collection, San Diego History Center.

¹⁴³ "Art Exhibit Opens Jan. 31 In Africa House," *The Voice*, Vol 4, No. 17, 1/21/65, p. A6.

personal work, the exhibit featured work by Don Seltzer, a working-class white professional sign painter by trade, John Barton, a member of member of the US Navy, barbecue restaurant owner Beverly Major, and the Peruvian-born brothers Guillermo Acevedo and Luis Acevedo.

San Diego artist and Chicano activists Mario Torero, son of Guillermo Acevedo, remembers that other local artists such as Paul Ford and the muralist Eddie Edwards were associated with the Africa House. It is very possible that the Africa House's gallery grew out of the labor of Ford, the organizer of Black art festivals in San Diego during the subsequent years. Moreover, while the Africa House was centered on the Black experience, not all the works were of Black subjects. Much of Acevedo's works were on Native Americans and Baynard's photographs display a variety of abstract expressionist pieces on display at the Africa House. Most importantly, the Africa House connected the global vision of Black Nationalism with the local struggles of the Civil Rights movement as it provided a place for a variety of cultural workers who were often excluded from other galleries and museums to present their art. As Torero remembered, regardless of the form or subject, artists of color in Logan Heights supported each other's galleries and shows. Acevedo's gallery in Old Town San Diego became an important place where African American artists gained exposure.¹⁴⁴

The Africa House was a physical representation of the ideas Karenga, Donald Warden, Von Wolfolk, and others promoted which demanded the connection of cultural production and structural change. The programming engaged a long debate throughout

¹⁴⁴ Telephone Conversation with Torero 4/13/16.

Black history which discussed the primary role of Black Art. While some intellectuals and artists have accepted that Black cultural representation did not need to address political and economic needs, another tradition has demanded the production of art that brought material change. The Africa House organized lectures that emphasized “the history of the Black Man in both America and Africa.”¹⁴⁵ Organizers scheduled a creative writing workshop for Monday and Tuesday evenings as well as theatrical performances to be organized by Katherine Bolden, the chair of the drama committee and a member of the Fine Arts Guild. Accompanying the courses, a lecture series featuring Lee Major, Beverly Major’s husband and co-owner of the barbecue restaurant, was scheduled. In both the cultural and educational affairs, the Africa House empowered its staff and its participants beyond the limits of their daily occupations to make community change. On the weekends, the Africa House was open from breakfast until the early morning for social and musical events, as a library, and as a television lounge. Even the social events were a place for organization. Activists used these social events to raise funds for the day-time operations and promote Black consciousness. In fact, Vernon Sukumu remembers attending an after-hours event at the Africa House, while he was still involved in the street life and encountering Walter Kimble (Kudumu)—Kimble was a young member of the AAAI.¹⁴⁶ Interrupting the music and dancing, Kimble took to the microphone and addressed the crowd for about an hour on a variety of issues pertaining to African and African American politics and history.

¹⁴⁵ “Formal Dedication,” *The Voice*, 12/17/64, p. A1. “Africa House Makes Gains, Sets Functions” and “Art Exhibit Opens, Jan. 31 in Africa House,” *The Voice*, 1/21/65, p. A6.

¹⁴⁶ Jangchup Phelgyal, “Their Hair was Huge”: Where are the Black Activists Now?, *San Diego Reader*, 1/13/92, p. 38.

The cultural programming of the Africa House linked the professional training with the immediate concerns for Black youth employment in Logan Heights and Southeast San Diego. A local electronic technician, Calvin Holt, conducted electronics classes. Much like the Afro-American Association in Los Angeles, the Africa House also planned to train students in French and various African languages. Other manual arts, sewing, and philosophy classes were offered. Yet, a significant course was the 20-part series in conversational Spanish taught by Mexican American activist Julia Usquiano, an associate director of the Africa House. A longtime resident and activist in Logan Heights, Usquiano had taught at the Pan American Workshop, a private bilingual academy in Mexico City. Combined with the vocational classes, writing courses, and other language classes, Usquiano further prepared students with the necessary skills to compete in the ever-changing labor market. Yet remarkably, the Spanish course, as the French and Kiswahili done, sought to equip young African Americans with the languages of the African diaspora. The Spanish classes promised to reinvigorate the cross-racial bonds between African Americans and Mexican Americans in San Diego and Southern California. The Black Nationalist tradition African Americans established in Southern California was defined by its turn towards African liberation politics but even in that it embraced a tradition of African liberation which sought union with other colonized people. Yet, the collection of activists in the Africa House suggests that this Third Worldism of the 1960s was not a new convention but a return to previous struggles.



Figure 10 Usquiano and Bolden were slated to be instructors at the Africa House (San Diego Voice)



Figure 11 Mitchell was the director of the art guild at the Africa House (San Diego Voice)

In the 1940s, Usquiano and her husband Phillip as well as Lee and Beverly Major were investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) for their ties to the Communist Party of the United States. The Usquianos were leaders in the San Diego branch of El Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Espanola, the Congress of Spanish Speaking People. Logan Heights had also been home to a short-lived National Negro Congress, it is unsure whether the Majors were NNC members, however, in the 1940s NNC and El Congreso members challenged the Ku Klux Klan and boycotted segregation.¹⁴⁷ As with 1960s politics, the activists from the 1940s and 1950s moved through a variety of organizations, often maintaining overlapping membership. In the late 1940s, NNC chapter had faded yet a HUAC informant reported that the local NAACP chapter identified a large communist presence.¹⁴⁸ This coincided with the emergence of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) chapter in San Diego.¹⁴⁹ A Communist-front organization, the CRC was at the forefront of Civil Rights and Black Internationalist issues in the 1940s and 1950s. The CRC campaigned against lynching, the prison system, challenged the segregation of public accommodations, and fought for labor rights. Internationalist and interracial, the CRC also challenged Western imperialism and apartheid in South Africa.

¹⁴⁷ Carlos M. Larralde, "El Congreso in San Diego: An Endeavor for Civil Right," *Journal of San Diego History* Vol. 50, No. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 2004).

¹⁴⁸ Richard K. Gottschall, "SD Reds Force Firms to Hire Negro Employees: Theater Picketed After Stores Sign Racial Agreement," *San Diego Union*, 3/11/46, p. 1. "Injunction Hit By Communists: Legality of Move Questioned by Party," *San Diego Union*, 3/17/46, p. 1. Albert S. Broussard, "Percy H. Steele, Jr., and the Urban League: Race Relations and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Post-World War II San Diego," *California History*, Vol. 83, No. 4, (2006), p. 14. For more information on the history of the CRC in Southern California, read: Josh Sides, "You Understand My Condition": The Civil Rights Congress in the Los Angeles African-American Community, 1946-1952," *Pacific Historical Review* 67, no. 2 (1998): 233-57.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Fikes, Jr., "The Struggle for Equality in 'America's Finest City': A History of the San Diego NAACP," (San Diego, 2012), p. 5.

Historian Gerald Horne argues that the dissolution of the CRC and other communist organizations by HUAC and McCarthyism created a power vacuum in Southern California. This void, Horne argues, enabled the rise of Black Nationalism, particularly ethnocentric cultural nationalism, which urged race-based mobilization. According to Horne, the prominence of the NOI, Afro-American Association, and eventually the Us Organization, were only made possible in the stead of the CRC.¹⁵⁰ However, the participation of the Majors and Usquiano at the Africa House, as well as the influence of Marxist thinkers in a variety of reading groups such as the Afro-American Vanguard, suggests that the collapse of the CRC and similar fronts in Southern California did not foreclose on possibility of cross-racial alliances for Black liberation. In many ways, the Southern California of the 1940s was drastically different than the 1960s as new migrants moved to the region. These activists responded in Civil Rights and Black Power activism that challenged Cold War Civil Rights agendas. This included embracing Black Internationalist and Third Worldist agendas that McCarthyism sought to crush.

Conclusion

In the spring of 1960, the simultaneity of civil disobedience campaigns amongst African Americans and South Africans gained international sympathy and direct comparison. The African American press, particularly, expressed sincere concern for the events in South Africa and saw it as directly linked to the struggles of African Americans. Conjoined with major events in South Africa and the Congo in subsequent years, the

¹⁵⁰ Erik S. McDuffie, "BLACK AND RED: BLACK LIBERATION, THE COLD WAR, AND THE HORNE THESIS," *The Journal of African American History* 96, no. 2 (2011): 236-47.

Black press and African American public recovered an internationalist critique of global white supremacy that the American Cold War agenda attempted to exterminate. The new decade also marked the increased exposure of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam which taught urged African Americans to turn towards Africa ideologically and argued for the interconnectedness of people of color around the world. A new era of African American activists emerged in this period. Identified as the Black Power generation by historian Donna Murch and the grassroots intelligentsia by historian Komozi Woodard, these young African Americans developed more aggressive Civil Rights strategies and were inspired by the rise in African consciousness to reject integration and embrace their histories they had lost—histories of slavery and the African past. This new shift in consciousness was reflected in the creation of Black organizations such as the Afro-American Association. Nonetheless, this new wave African consciousness and solidarity did not immediately transport to immediate action in support of African liberation.

I have argued that direct action campaigns had taken primary concern. However, avoiding an apologetic explanation for the departure from the internationalism of previous generations, the San Diego case study reveals that campaigns for housing and jobs made the internationalist vision of Black Nationalist organizations much more legible. As activists such as Hal Brown came into direct conflict with local, state, and federal government, they also questioned racial liberalism. This reveals the resurgence of Black internationalism as a process which unfolded over the first five years of the 1960s. In San Diego and Los Angeles, members of CORE and the AAAI turned towards Africa revealing the global hypocrisy of American democracy and offering important philosophical and cultural frameworks for the restructuring of African American society.

Lastly, the Afro-American Association and the Africa House reveals Africa to be a revival of a lost African American political tradition. Black Internationalist projects in Southern California involved a multiracial cast of activists out of which. In San Diego, the multiracial alliance of Blacks and Latinos defied the workings of residential segregation and structural racism that sought to divide and disenfranchise people of color. The Africa House engaged an older generation of red-baited activists who sought to mobilize the Black youth, developing their African consciousness while instilling them with the practical skills to navigate the structures of racial exclusion. In both Los Angeles and San Diego, this new process also involved increased relations between continental Africans and people of the African diaspora. The Watts Rebellion of August 1965 offered the opportunity to mobilize the Black masses behind the political ideas forwarded by the AAAI and other groups.

The Black Power movement in Southern California, brought even more African Americans in contact with African politics but also African people. As displayed in Karenga's educational experiences and the guests of the Africa House, the rise in African solidarity was dependent first on the Black American rejection of mainstream American society but also the African migrant embrace of the local struggles of African Americans. Just as American domestic policy sought to nurture consent amongst African Americans, foreign policy aimed to recruit and train a next generation of African leadership that would be loyal to American influence. As the next chapter will display, many of these students defied academic and political notions of African exceptionalism by casting their lot with African Americans and borrowing African American tactics as they challenged engaged their freedom struggles from afar.

Portions of Chapter One appear in “Youth's Role in a City Becoming: Education, Black Power, and the Struggles for a Different San Diego” by Mychal Odom in *Sunshine/Noir II: Writing from San Diego and Tijuana* edited by Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller (San Diego: City Works Press, 2015). The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

CHAPTER TWO
Crisis of the African Intellectual: The Racial Encounters of African Students in the Cold War University

In November 1964, the South Africans Bernard Magubane, Martin Legassick, and Anthony Ngubo led a group of UCLA students that formed the South African Freedom Action Committee (SAFAC). The formation of the SAFAC was a part of an international revitalization of antiapartheid work that followed the trial and conviction of Nelson Mandela and nine other defendants in the Rivonia, South Africa. With connections to the South Africa Action Committee (SAAC) headed by Mazisi Kunene and the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) headed by George Houser, the SAFAC led a series of the first sustained antiapartheid protests in Southern California history. That holiday season the SAFAC began to protest banks that traded in South African currency, they called for tourism boycotts of South Africa, and staged a 90-hour hunger strike following the conviction of the Rivonia defendants.¹ Remarkably similar to the civil rights protests that had engulfed Southern California for the previous years, the SAFAC protests revealed the rhizomes of political struggle that linked Southern California Africans with African Americans and Southern California with Southern Africa. While motivated by global antiapartheid efforts, these young activists drew from the strategies and ideologies of local civil rights and black nationalist organizations and created what I call a *black global spatial imaginary*.

In the 1960s, Southern African migrants imagined mutual subjugation and struggles between themselves and African Americans. Both the United States and South

¹ South Africa Freedom Action Committee, "What We Have Done: A Program of Action," (3/22/65), Private collection of Martin Legassick.

Africa were white supremacist settler colonial nations. Despite, the popular discourse identifying a divergence between American and South African racial capitalism, in practice, Black Americans and Black South Africans both experienced the strengthening of white supremacy and Black alienation. Yet, these similarities alone were not enough to ensure the deep bonds between Africans and African Americans. Therefore, the new generation of African Americans had come to increasingly identify with Africa by the early- to mid-1960s, the regional focus of this study reveals the critical bonds between Africans and African Americans was also central in prompting this new era of Black internationalism. In Los Angeles and San Diego, Southern Africans lived amongst African Americans, attended African American cultural events, and experienced the brunt of California's *genteel apartheid*.² As they participated in African American political struggles, experienced American racism, and felt the anxiety of being exiled, Africans in America conjoined African and African American liberation struggles and even prompted the beginnings of the antiapartheid movement in Southern California.

In this chapter, solidarity-plus is enacted in a much different fashion than the others. Here, migration and education becomes a way for Africans to enact their solidarity with the struggle of African Americans. As they engaged African American politics and culture, Africans subsequently protested apartheid and racial segregation in Southern Africa. In embracing the local struggles of African Americans, African migrants to Southern California challenged what I call *African exceptionalism*. Beyond recognizing the particularities of the histories of African American slavery and Jim Crow

² Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 1-12.

from African colonialism, African exceptionalism proposes the difference between Black Americans and continental Africans as insurmountable. This is not a novel convention as slavery studies scholars have written on the rift between “salt water” slaves and those born into slavery.³ In the 1960s, scholars and government officials chronicled the tensions between Africans and African Americans on college campuses. In his dissertation, Magubane cites a 1965 study that suggested two-thirds of African students reported either tension or “coolness” between them and African Americans while reporting better relationships with white Americans.⁴ In recent years, scholars such as Noliwe Rooks and Roderick Ferguson have argued that the increased flow of African and Caribbean migrants to urban spaces and campuses present a challenge to Black studies.⁵

Overemphasizing the differences between Africans and African Americans privileges the natal alienation of enslavement, ignores the multiple and overlapping diasporas which have produced global African identities, and in its place presented African identity formation as static. As I have done in the previous chapter, most scholars have proposed the solution to the problem is African American abandonment of their commitments to American nationalism. Yet, with few exceptions, scholarship has largely ignored the role of African migrants in forging that bond. Eschewing the

³ In her seminal text, Stephanie Smallwood elaborates on the alienation and fissures in the slave community. Saltwater slaves, those who endured the middle passage, and the Afro-Creoles born in slavery were also categorized differently. This is all to note that these peculiarities are not new. Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁴ Magubane, “The American Negro’s Conception of Africa: A Study in the Ideology of Pride and Prejudice,” (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1967), 354.

⁵ For more on this argument view: Roderick A. Ferguson, “Lateral Moves of African American Studies in a Period of Migration,” in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* edited by Grace Kyungwon Hong and Ferguson, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011) and Noliwe M. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006).

paternalistic literature on African American views of Africa, African migrants to Southern California acknowledged that the African American embrace of Africa required an African embrace of Black America and an abandonment of the legacies of colonialism. As the pages that follow display, this bond laid the foundations for Southern California's antiapartheid and African solidarity movements.

The Cold War Campus

With the space race between the Soviet Union and the United States and decolonization in Africa and Asia, the structure and composition of the American university changed. In 1958, the United States Congress approved the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) following the successful launch of the satellite Sputnik by the Soviet Union the previous year. Among the rollout out of over \$400 million in federal funding to academic institutions over two years, Title VI of the act provided funding for area studies programs and language centers at American higher education institutions.⁶ NDEA funding impacted education at all levels. The NDEA and the Space Race had an ensuing impact on California's higher education system resulting in the completion of what became known as the California Master Plan for Higher Education (Master Plan) in 1960. The Master Plan embodied postwar embedded liberal policies, understanding that economic growth was reliant on a well-trained and expanding workforce. To meet these goals, the Master Plan created California's three-tiered college system (Associates-granting community colleges, bachelors- and masters-granting state colleges, and state university which granted bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees). Increased federal and

⁶ William G. Martin and Michael O. West, "The Ascent, Triumph, and Disintegration of the Africanist Enterprise, USA" in *Out of One, Many Africas: Reconstructing the Study and Meaning of Africa* edited by Martin and West, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 90.

state funding to California colleges and universities resulted in a near 500 percent enrollment increase between 1960 and 1975 from 227, 000 students to 1 million. With education at these three levels being either free or extremely inexpensive, historian Donna Murch notes that this redistribution of funds “had far-reaching effects on local black youth. Increased enrollment meant not only better economic opportunities, but also participation in the increasingly militant campus culture of the early sixties.”⁷

In what represents an important contradiction of the postwar America, Cold War policies are largely responsible for bringing a new generation of African Americans in contact with a growing number of African migrants. In 1960, the population of African-born migrants in the United States remained very low at only 80,000. Despite federal restrictions on African immigration prior to the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, the NDEA played a role in increasing the African-born population by permitting federal funding to schools and private foundations to recruit African students to American institutions. Organizations such as the African-American Institute (AAI), African-American Students Foundation (AASF), and the African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU) provided funding for the relocation and funding of these students. California, and specifically Southern California, became a prominent location for these students. A flagship example for the education of foreign students, in 1960, California was second only to New York hosting 6,618 students from foreign countries. The University of California system was home to more than 1,000 students from foreign countries and 131

⁷ Donna Jean Murch, *Living for The City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 97-98.

faculty members.⁸ To be sure, Africans did not make up a majority of these foreign students but nevertheless these institutions were reciprocals of the near 3,000 African students studying in the United States by 1960. Of the at least twelve California institutions that participated in the ASPAU, at least eight of them were from Southern California.⁹ Not including the community colleges, Cal Tech, the Claremont Colleges, the University of Southern California, and UCLA were some of the Southern California institutions that received African students. Director of the UCLA African Studies Center James Smoot Coleman reported that the UCLA's enrollment of African students had increased from 15 to 167 by 1965.¹⁰

In his 1965 testimony to the Congressional Subcommittee on Africa, Coleman lauded the increasing and diverse student population on his campus. The diverse student population was understood to be an advantage to the administration of Peace Corps volunteer training programs, which at that time were conducted on college campuses and not in host countries, and to the acculturation of Africa's future leadership. African students were expected to serve as, what has been termed, "native informants" for American members of the student body.¹¹ "Outside of these contributions in language instructions and, secondly, in these more specialized programs like the Peace Corps," Coleman stated, "the mere presence of advanced graduate students in seminars, engaged

⁸ *National Defense Education Act: Hearings before the Select Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 87th Congress, First Session on HR 6762, HR 4930, HR 4361 to Extend and Improve the National Defense Education Act, and for other Purposes, Part 4, (June 1961), p. 907 and 936.*

⁹ *Ibid*, 964.

¹⁰ *African Students and Study Programs in the United States: Reports and Hearings of the Subcommittee on Africa, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives pursuant to H. Res. 84, 89th Congress, (AUGUST 18, 1965), "Coleman Testimony," p. 52.*

¹¹ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 43-44.

[in conversation with their American peers] has subtle payoffs.... It gives a sense of reality to the study of Africa.” Coleman added that the UCLA administration also believed “that the universities having formal African study programs can make a unique contribution to the education of African students.”¹² Despite this increase, this was not the first-time American institutions had attracted African students. During the early 20th century, historically black colleges served as the hosts of African students who were recruited often by African American political and religious societies. During the interwar years, Alfred Xuma, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, and other future African revolutionaries had been educated predominantly Black institutions such as Tuskegee, Lincoln University, and Howard University, alongside the future generations of African American and Caribbean radicals.¹³ They had joined African American political and social organizations, gained first-hand experiences with American racism, and maintained those bonds with African Americans even as they returned to Africa. As Gordon P. Hagberg, Director of the African-American Institute stated, “One must recognize that Negro colleges are often in a position to furnish training that in a practical sense will most closely approximate the needs of African students. On the other hand, many educators feel that a *well-rounded*, balanced experience can best be obtained by an

¹² *African Students and Study Programs in the United States: Reports and Hearings of the Subcommittee on Africa* (1965), p. 51

¹³ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, *African Students in the United States: A Guide for Sponsors of Student Exchange Programs with Africa* (December 1960), 12. Kenneth J. King, “African Students in Negro American Colleges: Notes on the Good African,” *Phylon* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1st Qtr., 1970), pp. 16-30.

African student attending a nonsegregated institution, so that he may be exposed to American life in its broadest aspect.”¹⁴

It is evident that by “well-rounded,” government and academic officials intended to simultaneously mitigate African exposure to American racism as well as an increasingly radical African American public—on-campus and off-campus. Nonetheless, placement of African students at predominantly white institutions outside of the American South often had the adverse effect of broadening African knowledge of American racial hypocrisy. Even when African students were shielded from maltreatment because of their foreign citizenship, Prof. Darrell Randall, Chair of African Studies at American University exclaimed:

A warning needs to be given. If American individuals and institutions seem to give special treatment for Africans that is not also given to people of African descent—American Negroes—Africans are quick to recognize this as a form of inconsistency and disguised racial discrimination... Our concern in this matter should not be just to be interested in better race relations for Negroes here so we can influence African students. That is not a good enough reason. We should do it for the dignity of mankind and not for a manipulative reason that can be recognized by both the African students and American Negroes.¹⁵

American universities were not just competing with the Soviet Union for the minds and hearts of Africa’s future leadership it was also competing with other nations in the Western Bloc like France which had begun to attract great numbers of Africans. A vital part to the American Cold War efforts, African student labor was recruited in high demand to expand the body of knowledge on Africa in the American university and

¹⁴ *National Defense Education Act: Hearings before the Select Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives*, p. 881.

¹⁵ *African Students and Study Programs in the United States: Reports and Hearings of the Subcommittee on Africa* (1965), (Darrell Randall Statement), p. 92

hopefully produce a leadership loyal to the American models of capitalism and democracy. This intended indoctrination was not always complete as many of these students became increasingly politicized upon their arrival. In Southern California, African students formed African Student Associations, continued to join African American social and political organizations, and found union with Americans and African entertainers as they continued to lobby for African independence.

Africa or La Mesa, Game's the Same

On Sunday 13 December 1964, *The San Diego Union* ran the article "Africa or La Mesa, Game's The Same," in which they lauded the accomplishments of Paul Bremner, the general manager at Drew Ford in the San Diego suburb of La Mesa. English-born, Bremner had recently moved to San Diego from Southern Africa where he had managed dealerships of Ford's African affiliate Duly Motors in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Bremner and his family had found great success in Southern Africa's automotive industry and social life but had decided to resettle after reading the political writing on the wall. Bremner notes that himself, his wife Marion, and their young daughter Lindsay decided to leave Northern Rhodesia because they "felt that the political upheavals taking place in Africa were likely to lead to changes in the previous way of life which [they] were not prepared to accept."¹⁶

Northern Rhodesia attained its independence from Great Britain in October 1964 and was subsequently guided by the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party, a socialist-leaning ally of the African National Congress. In the San

¹⁶ "Africa or La Mesa, Game's The Same," *The San Diego Union*, 13 December 1964.

Diego area, the Bremners found continued economic, political, and social fortunes in their support of Republican Party politics.

Rhodesian students Frank Muchenje and John Kumbula experienced a vastly different side to San Diego than the Bremners had. Muchenje and Kumbula enrolled at San Diego State in 1965 and quickly recognized the ever-presence of white supremacy in San Diego's housing market.¹⁷ In 1965 and 1966, the two Rhodesian students were repeatedly informed of the availability of residential space over the phone, only to be turned away once meeting with rental agents face-to-face. On 10 September 1966, Muchenje and Kumbula contacted the Belleview Apartments on 58th Street and University Avenue in San Diego's College Area—a place they had previously experienced problems with the year before. After a telephone conversation, the two students were invited to come and view the apartment. Upon arrival, the rental agent informed the two that there were no vacancies. In another incident that week, the two students visited the College West Apartments near 55th Street and Montezuma Road. Once again, in an over-the-phone conversation, the duo was informed of apartment vacancies only to be rejected once they arrived. Still, this experience was different.¹⁸

At the College West Apartments, Muchenje and Kumbula were met by the property manager, a white American World War II veteran who inquired about their nationality. After informing the manager that they were Southern Rhodesian, the military veteran asked them their opinion on the recent assassination of Hendrik Verwoerd, South African Prime Minister and architect of apartheid. The two students truthfully informed

¹⁷ Jerry Mohr, "College to Probe Student Claim of Discrimination," *The Daily Aztec*, 30 September 1966, 1.

¹⁸ "Foreign Students Give Account of Discrimination," *The Daily Aztec*, 30 September 1966, p. 1.

the manager that they “completely disagreed with Verwoerd’s policies and that to us he was symbol of all our suffering and as such we could in no way sympathize with somebody whose only memory was as the epitome of apartheid and African oppression.”¹⁹ The manager informed the two that they were ignorant and argued that the struggles of Southern African people were nothing compared to those suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Upset with their political views, the rental fee range was raised from the \$155 to \$175 that they were initially told a minimum of \$200 per month. Following this encounter, Muchenje and Kumbula visited another apartment complex where, upon meeting them, the manager raised the rental fee \$100. After searching for housing for a year, the two were only able to find an apartment when San Diego State Professor Robert Hanson, a white male, joined the two in their search. San Diego State foreign student director David Neptune noted that housing discrimination against students of color was nothing new in the area. “We’ve had difficulty securing apartments for dark-skinned students for some time. This has just been the longest period of time it’s take us to find a place.”²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 3.

²⁰ Mohr, 3.



STILL LOOKING for housing are Rhodesian students John Kumbula (l.) and Frank Muchenje. The two, in America on a scholarship to study democracy, have been searching since August. The Housing Office is studying several apartments which tentatively accepted the two over the phone, then denied them housing when they discovered that they were Negro. (photo by Carole Bonner)

Figure 12 The Case of Kumbula and Muchenje became a front-page story for the student newspaper. (SDSU Special Collections)

Very reminiscent of African American experiences amidst the multiple waves of the Great Migration out of the South, the struggles of Muchenje and Kumbula underscores the myriad ways in which Black spatial mobility often underscores the impossibility of social mobility. Only separated by a few miles, the racialized experiences of Kumbula and Muchenje were a world away from the economic success and social mobility of the Bremners. As they moved from Southern Africa to Southern California, Bremner, Muchenje, and Kumbula were met with social and racial conditions that were not only analogous but, as the World War II veteran property manager reminds us, it was also discursive. The Bremners sought resettlement in Southern California because it was here that the Bremners perceived a continuation of the life they enjoyed in colonial

Africa. While American Cold War efforts had drawn Muchenje and Kumbula and thousands of other African students to American universities, they were not alleviated from the constraints of global white supremacy. Yet, like many other African students, particularly Southern Africans, Muchenje and Kumbula immersed themselves into the ongoing Black liberation struggles and student movements underway in Southern California—organizing with antiracist organizations, protesting American foreign policy, and publishing articles in student-run and radical newspapers in San Diego. Hailing from nations where Black majorities had long struggled alongside antiracist whites, many of like Magubane and Ngubo in Los Angeles, Muchenje and Kumbula in San Diego moved between Black-only spaces and multiracial political spaces. As well, Muchenje, Kumbula, and other African students would play an important role in infusing socialist worldviews with emerging ideas of Black Power.

The experiences of Muchenje and Kumbula reflected a common experience amongst African students and migrants in Southern California. As with Muchenje and Kumbula in San Diego, UCLA's student newspaper the *Daily Bruin* chronicles very similar stories of residential segregation, employment discrimination, and even police brutality endured by African students. In one such article, CORE member and student activist Russ Ellis detailed chronicles of two South African students. Very possibly Bernard Magubane and Anthony Ngubo, very much like Muchenje and Kumbula, these South African students compiled lists of potential apartment complexes in West Los Angeles contracted to rent to UCLA students by University Housing, only to be "given every lame excuse" as to why these landlords could not house the men. Ellis notes, "Year after year, hundreds of UCLA Negro students have had the exact same experience

and have, likewise, failed to formally register a complaint” with University Housing.²¹ While Magubane and Ngubo eventually found housing in a low-income apartment complex events such as these brought them and other African students further into the civil rights activism at UCLA, then at its climax.

These racial encounters were not limited to African students. African cultural workers experienced similar experiences to the student migrants. Like higher education, entertainment offered Southern Africans much global mobility, despite the multiple travel bans that were in place in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In the 1960s and 1970s, Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Letta Mbulu, and Caiphus Semenya either lived in Southern California or frequented it as a part of their musical circuits. They used their entertainment performances to raise money for African student organizations in the United States and in Africa. They also united with African American political organizations. Beyond the glitz and glamour, Southern African musicians were also not freed from the grips of world white supremacy, especially as they increasingly bonded with African American organizations or lobbied for the liberation of Southern Africa.

“We were rolling in money,” Masekela remembered, “and nobody detested us more than the Los Angeles Police Department.” One evening, without a warrant, the LAPD raided his home off the Sunset Strip as a part of an internationally coordinated drug sting. Denied legal representation, Masekela notes, “for the next eighteen hours we were handcuffed in the living room. Finally taken to the Malibu sheriff’s station, Masekela and his colleagues were further detained for another day until they were finally

²¹ Russ Ellis, “Some Thought and Action,” *Daily Bruin*, 10/8/63, p. 3.

received counsel.²² As expected, the South African media seized upon Masekela's case—white South African wire service reporters were present at all of his hearings, relaying the information back to his mother country. Yet, much like the students, Masekela's confrontations with America's racial order contributed to his further politicization. Masekela developed increasing bonds with Black nationalists and the American Left. "Because of my drug bust, I had developed a very deep anger toward America's collaboration with the South African government and their concerted methods to punish everyone who criticized their anticommunist and racist campaigns." The songs on Masekela's self-titled 1969 album confronted the "evil partnership [of the US and South Africa] and condemned it because I felt that the apartheid administration was painstakingly working with the US intelligence agencies to make my life a living hell."²³

The racial encounters of Africans migrants to Southern California makes a critical intervention into the historiography on African immigration to the United States in the postwar years. It is very possible that the, isolation, foreignness, popularity, or friendship with white Americans shielded many African students and entertainers experiencing racism in the United States, this was not true in Southern California.²⁴ In Southern California, African students and migrants endured the precise forms of racism that African American organizations struggled to abolish. Africans suffered housing and

²² Hugh Masekela with D. Michael Cheers, *Still Grazing: The Musical Journey of Hugh Masekela* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), 220-222.

²³ Ibid, 225.

²⁴ Wangari Maathi, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 83. Robert F. Stephens, *Kenyan Student Airlifts to America 1959-1961: An Educational Odyssey* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 2013), 38.

employment discrimination and police abuse. Africans lived, socialized, and worked alongside African Americans as they traded in political ideas and cultural practices.

Still, beyond the sensationalized events, it was in fact the African migrant intrepid into African American existentiality which strengthened their bond with African Americans. Not only Southern Africans, the larger community of African students included, resided in Southern California's Black communities. Africans engaged African American political philosophies, supported African American protest movements, consumed African American literature, and embraced African American expressive culture. Overwhelmingly male, women only accounted for 355 of the 2831 African students in the US in 1960, many of these African students and entertainers married into African American families, as was the case for Joyce and Paul Sumbi.²⁵ Equally important, Africans labored under the same conditions as African Americans. As CLR James noted of the African rebels in Saint-Domingue remains true of all pan-Africanist formations, "living and working together" serves as a necessary prerequisite for the formation of universalist consciousness.²⁶ This important revolutionary particle has eluded many scholars of pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism. As noted, in the previous chapter, the bond between Africans and African Americans in Southern California played a formidable role in the establishment of multiple Black Nationalist formations such as the Africa House and the Afro-American Association. In fact, Miriam Makeba is slated as having lifetime membership in the Afro-American Association.²⁷

²⁵ *National Defense Education Act: Hearings before the Select Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor*, pp. 161 and 940. "Interview of Joyce Sumbi."

²⁶ CLR James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, 40.

²⁷ "Women's World," *Afro-American Dignity News*, 11/2/64, p. 2.

Beyond interpersonal exposés, the mutual connections between Africans and African Americans complicates the very notion of national identity. In the 1960s, African Americans became increasingly Africanized and as Robert Trent Vinson showed in his seminal study of early 20th century activism in Southern African politics, many of these African migrants to the US became African Americanized.²⁸

The South African's Consciousness of African America

For UCLA graduate students Bernard (Ben) Magubane and Anthony (Tony) Ngubo, the engagement with Black liberation struggles began 10,000 miles away in their native KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. Magubane recounts his life story in his autobiography *Bernard Magubane: My Life and Times*. The Zulu Magubane was born near Colenso, Natal in 1930. His parents and grandparents had been long supporters of African and African American liberation causes. Living through the fall of the Zulu Kingdom, Magubane's grandparents regularly told him stories of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. As well, he learned of the 1906 Bambatha rebellion. "My grandmother," he writes, "spoke in glowing terms about the bravery of Bambatha kaManciza."²⁹ While his grandparents spoke of the glory, his parents remembered the violent suppression of the rebellion with deep sorrow following the subsequent essential ceding of control of South Africa from British control to Boer control in 1909 as a part of the South Africa Act. Yet, "this act of usurpation did not go unchallenged by the dispossessed Africans," Magubane writes. The Magubane family were heavy supporters of the South African

²⁸ Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

²⁹ Bernard Magubane, *My Life and Times: An Autobiography* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010), 2.

Native National Congress since its inception in 1912 and Magubane's "father and friends often recited the aims of the organization, which they knew by heart."³⁰ The two movements that most affected the political ideology of the elder Magubanes was the formation of Clements Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Despite neither Kadalie nor Garvey being South African, Kadalie was from Nyasaland (now Malawi) and Garvey was Jamaican-born and a longtime American resident, both movements deeply influenced Magubane. The impact of Kadalie's trade unionism and Garvey's pan-Africanism would eventually resurface in Magubane's academic work.³¹ As young adult, Magubane's political consciousness was shaken with the electoral victory of South Africa's National Party in 1948. The 1948 Afrikaner victory ushered in an institutionalization of South African Apartheid policies.

In striking similarity to American activists like Harold Brown, Magubane directly confronted white supremacy through education, first as a student and then as a teacher. Magubane remembers how as a child, South African natives were lied to about their own history and told that leaders such as Shaka and Dingane were savages. However, as a child, this miseducation was met with resistance from Magubane's Black teachers. Magubane's teacher, Mr. Manyeli from Lesotho telling him to disregard what the white textbooks wrote. It is very likely that this Manyeli was Gabriel Manyeli, a former Catholic school teacher and founding member of the Basotho National Party.³² In his

³⁰ Ibid, 3.

³¹ Ibid.

³² B. Makalo Khaketla, *Lesotho, 1970: An African Coup Under the Microscope* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 21.

lectures, Manyeli would instead compare Shaka to Napoleon. Black teachers also introduced Magubane to the poetry of African writers. Still, the overabundance of white literature had a devastating impact on the minds of African students. Magubane's opposition to Bantu Education in South Africa eventually influenced his study of African American history, eventually coming to view "white hegemony over blacks" as "a single worldwide system."³³

In 1949, Magubane obtained his T3 teaching certificate, and eventually his National Senior Certificate, which qualified him to teach high school at his alma mater Mazenod catholic school. As a teacher, Magubane's struggle against South African educational inequality metastasized with the passage of the 1953 Bantu education law.³⁴ Though Magubane reminds his readers that Mazenod was far from a utopia, the liberal policies lessened the effects of white supremacist legislation. A private Catholic school, Mazenod instructors retained more autonomy over their curriculum. However, that autonomy was dealt a serious blow in 1955 when the government cut the stipend to Mazenod by 25 percent.³⁵ The goal of this legislation was to coerce the Catholic school to join the public school system, exchanging regular funding for the harsh guidelines of the Bantu Education policy designed by Apartheid's architect Hendrik Verwoerd. Magubane found himself in a conundrum. Due to pass law restrictions, if Magubane resigned, he would likely find himself unable to attain another teaching position. As well, for Black people, education represented one of the only avenues to success. Magubane's experience with Native Education and Bantu Education radicalized him and

³³ Magubane, "The American Negro's Conception of Africa," p. x.

³⁴ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 30-31.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 56-57.

his support for the ANC campaigns grew. This teaching experience also eventually influenced the way he and his friend Tony Ngubo analyzed white supremacy.³⁶

For Magubane, continued higher education provided a potential path out of the bind Bantu Education and the Pass Laws had placed Africans. From 1954 to 1957, Magubane attended the University of Natal in pursuit of his Bachelor of Arts degree. Following a class with the prominent South African sociologist Leo Kuper, Magubane chose sociology as his major. Having recently finished his field research for his book *Passive Resistance in South Africa*, a study of the Defiance Campaign, Kuper had Magubane and his fellow classmates, Ngubo, Peggy Mabandla, Dorcas Mzamane, and Edna Miller read some of the sources and chapters from his manuscript. “When I read Kuper,” Magubane remembered, “I began to appreciate the importance of cultivating a historical consciousness that enabled you to realize that the present itself must be studied and comprehended as history.”³⁷ Having received his degree in 1957, Magubane enrolled into Master’s courses the following year. His success as an undergraduate sociology major also gave him some release from the degradation of Bantu Education as he and Ngubo were subsequently hired as full-time research assistants for Kuper in preparation for Kuper’s 1965 book *An African Bourgeoisie*. Influenced by African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier’s 1955 publication, *Black Bourgeoisie*, their field research became a unique expression of Black Internationalism.

Frazier’s study of the Black American middle class influenced their study of the South African Native middle class. In *Black Bourgeoisie*, Frazier found African

³⁶ Ibid, 79.

³⁷ Ibid, 77.

American alienation to exist at the precise point of assimilation. To challenge their own subjugation in American society, Frazier argued that the Black middle class had embraced white cultural values. Yet this embrace of white cultural values enhanced their alienation as opposed to alleviating it. Highlighting African American educational experiences, the Black press, and Black businessmen, Frazier notes that the Black middle class attempted to separate itself from the Black masses. This attempt at insulation left the Black middle class disorganized and with an inferiority complex. Kuper's study of the African bourgeoisie directly reflects the influence of Frazier's study but is not a facsimile of the American study. In South Africa, Kuper argued, there was not a distinct class structure for Black people. Instead of connoting status and wealth, the term African bourgeoisie is defined by occupation.³⁸

While this definition is not completely different than the formation of African American class identity, Kuper notes an important difference between the two studies. Kuper writes that “the open class society offers [the radical rejection of social inequality] since its ideology is composed of two strands—the equality in principle of the members of a society, reflected in adult suffrage, and the validity of personal achievement as a measure of worth.”³⁹ The African American bourgeoisie, opted for “the latter course of inflating its achievements” while South Africans chose the radical rejection of inequality.⁴⁰ For the study, Magubane and Ngubo interviewed teachers, clerks, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and business officials. While *An African Bourgeoisie* is cataloged

³⁸ Leo Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class, and Politics in South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), ix.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

under Kuper's name, its contents are not only deeply indebted to the fieldwork of Ngubo and Magubane, the narrative closely follows their lives. Chapter 13 "Teachers," closely resembles Magubane's lived experience.

Black South Africans, especially women, became teachers for two reasons: they loved the profession and wanted to make a difference but also because their other occupational opportunities were limited. Still, the teachers Magubane and Ngubo interviewed expressed their discontent with Bantu Education. In his biography of the jazz artist Sathima Bea Benjamin, historian Robin Kelley has shown that school teachers comprised the radical intelligentsia in South Africa. Benjamin "immersed herself in African American history and literature, devouring works by noted authors such as Richard Wright, WEB Du Bois, and Langston Hughes."⁴¹ Likewise, the respondents interviewed by Magubane and Ngubo saw Bantu Education as the primary tool for oppression. What most angered teachers was the mandated teaching of Afrikaans.⁴² African teachers mobilized forming teachers' unions such as the Natal African Teachers' Union but such organizations were harshly punished by the government.⁴³ As a result, teachers had to find more discreet forms of resisting Bantu Education as a part of their instruction. One teacher stated how he overcame Bantu education by coding antiapartheid messages into his lectures on religion. Reminiscent of the Black liberation theological tradition of Ethiopianism, this teacher told his students "that the Jews suffered in Egypt for many years, but they had hope for a deliverer who will come one day to free

⁴¹ Robin DG Kelley, "The Making of Sathima Bea Benjamin," in *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 132.

⁴² Kuper, 183.

⁴³ Ibid, 187.

them from slavery.”⁴⁴ Just as Mr. Manyeli had done years earlier, South African teachers made education an *alterable terrain*. They found resistance at the same place they were being alienated. As apartheid constricted them to the same space as the Black poor but needed an educated class of Africans to govern, especially in the native reserves, both Kuper and Ngubo conclude “that educated Africans form a potential educated political elite: scholarship will be a future development.” Political developments of postwar South Africa, Kuper, Magubane, and Ngubo found, pushed the educated Africans “back to the masses.”⁴⁵ Perceptively, Kuper concluded the chapter noting that the government had “transformed many African teachers into politicians. Since they cannot express themselves directly, their political role is somewhat incalculable, as is that of the new generation of African students whom they educate.”⁴⁶

The hopeful interpretation of Black responses to white supremacy by Magubane, Ngubo, and Kuper underscores their intervention into the Black radical tradition. A world away from home and thrust into the African American liberation movement, as Magubane, Ngubo, and Kuper furthered their studies in the United States. The three applied the methodologies they developed in the Natal Province to African American struggles in Southern California. This perspective approached African American oppression, identity formation, and resistance, with a level of empathy that was lacking in scholarship by many African American and African scholars. As graduate students, Magubane and Ngubo developed affinities for African American issues. Their own direct actions as student-activists reflected the influence of the African American protest

⁴⁴ Ibid, 190.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 163-164.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 190.

tradition. In 1965, Magubane and Ngubo compiled a study of racial segregation in Pasadena that reflected their study of life in South Africa. Lastly, prevented from returning to South Africa, Magubane conducted a dissertation project which examined the pan-African consciousness in African Americans while undoubtedly attaining an infusion of African political questions. In both practice and theory, Magubane and Ngubo expressed the mutual bond between Africans and African Americans.

South Africans and the Genteel Apartheid

In 1961, Magubane and Ngubo received scholarships from the Institute of International Education (IIE) to continue their graduate work in the United States. Magubane's funding sent him to UCLA's recently founded African Studies Center, one of the leading centers in the nation and the flagship of the UC system. In Los Angeles, Magubane was reunited with Kuper and his wife Hilda Kuper who was a faculty member in Anthropology. Ngubo however, was originally sent to the University of Indiana, Bloomington but was eventually reunited with Magubane and Kuper at UCLA. Ngubo was frustrated and lonely in Indiana so Magubane had solicited James Smoot Coleman, the director of the African Studies Center, to give Ngubo a fellowship.⁴⁷ With an interdisciplinary faculty of specialists in all of the regions of Africa and all of its major languages, UCLA housed one of the most diverse African Studies centers in the nation.

As noted earlier in this chapter, UCLA's African Studies program complicates the traditional narrative of Cold War African Studies. As Michael West and William Martin note, the Cold War produced "a new Orientalist-style branch of knowledge, area studies,

⁴⁷ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, p. 121.

of which African studies was a component part.” Cold War African Studies departed from the early tradition of African studies by disjoining the study of the African continent from the study of Black life in the Americas erecting an “iron curtain...over the study of African peoples.” As Black Studies curricula began to emerge at American and British universities in the 1960s and 1970s, the study of Black ethnic minorities, they argue, was often confined to national foci. “Taking the nation-state as the unit of analysis, and utilizing a comparative method that required isolated cases, the Cold War academy effectively ruled out the notion of a black international that cohered the freedom struggles of African peoples globally,” West and Martin write. As they note, “no condition...is permanent.” West and Martin argue that it was the ebbing of the Cold War and the protests by Afrocentrists in the 1980s that brought the reemergence of an internationalist tradition in African Studies. Yet, the studies and practices of Africanists at UCLA challenges their periodization. Academics sought to, at the least, mitigate national security’s determining influence on African studies.⁴⁸ In the 1960s and 1970s, many UCLA students and professors spearheaded what became known as Radical African Studies. Ngubo and Magubane were at the forefront of this tradition.

Now in California, Magubane, Ngubo, and Kuper applied their studies of South African Apartheid to American Jim Crow. On 7 December 1963, Kuper participated in a UCLA conference on the Rumford Fair Housing Act that was recently passed by the California State Legislature. While California Real Estate Association officials argued that the act the constitutional rights of property owners, professors argued that human

⁴⁸ Michael O. West and William G. Martin, “Contours of the Black International: From Toussaint to Tupac” in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* edited by West, Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 2-3.

rights superseded property rights. In his remarks Kuper suggested that segregation in South Africa “was not really higher than in some cities in the United States” adding that the presence of de facto segregation in California precipitated the Rumford Act.⁴⁹ The following spring, Magubane and Ngubo gave a lecture titled “Segregation and Apartheid—A Comparison” at the Westdale Savings and Loan building on 19 March 1964 to the Beverly Hills-Westwood Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.⁵⁰ Magubane remembered, “Wherever a South African went [as a student in the 1960s] you were a novelty. Because they had never seen an educated South African.... It was so bad, at least in the eyes of the American, that they were so surprised to see someone with a BA and a Master’s. And they listened to you attentively so you developed a lot of friendships as the result of simply being a Black South African with some degree.”⁵¹

Magubane and Ngubo attained a greater appreciation of African American life as their financial limitations and familial obligations took them off-campus in search of work and employment. Private funding such as the IIE drew African students to the United States but as the Committee on Educational Interchange Policy (CEIP) observed in 1960, this funding was not always sufficient as it did not cover students for vacation and extra expenses. Fueled likely by their own ambition to not offend donors as well as their paternalistic view of African students, the CEIP placed the blame for the financial shortcomings on the students stating, “In their eagerness to study, many Africans do not investigate scholarship conditions thoroughly before accepting them” assuming that the

⁴⁹ Paul Weeks, “Speakers Class on Housing Act: Initiative to Repeal ‘Should Die,’ Says Law Professor,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12/8/1963, p. 11.

⁵⁰ “Africans Will Discuss Civil Rights,” *Los Angeles Times*, 3/19/1964, p. J8.

⁵¹ Magubane Interview, *South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid* (<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/video.php?id=65-24F-2>).

benefits of American awards are similar to their home countries. Undoubtedly, funding agencies were the culprits. Many foreign students not only received limited funding, the CEIP admitted that racial discrimination made finding supplemental employment difficult for African students.⁵² While studying at UCLA, Magubane and Ngubo took jobs working at Kaiser Permanente from 3:30 to 11:30 in the evening. Ngubo's wife, Peggy Mabandla, and their son lived in Los Angeles with him and Magubane needed to raise airfare to bring his family to Los Angeles. At Kaiser, the two worked in the basement pulling "dead files" and charts there were extremely dusty—so much that they would sneeze all night long and had to cover their noses with hospital gauze. "Most of the employees working those ungodly hours were African-Americans from Watts, whose highest attainment was a high school education," Magubane writes.⁵³ On the weekends, when he was not working at Kaiser, Magubane worked at a carwash from sunrise to sunset. To add to his savings, he would keep the change that wealthy white customers would drop on their car floors.⁵⁴

Like Muchenje and Kumbula, South Africans drew clear parallels between the struggles of African Americans and those in Southern Africa. African students observed and supported civil rights and Black Nationalist efforts on campus and in the community. Magubane notes that many Black and white UCLA students, such as graduate student and Freedom Rider Bob Singleton, who had gone down South to assist in voter registration efforts came back and shared "hair-raising stories about the viciousness of the Ku Klux

⁵² Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, 6.

⁵³ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 130-131.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 131.

Klan.”⁵⁵ Magubane came to view the Civil Rights struggles “in many respects like the 1950s Defiance Campaign.”⁵⁶ While at UCLA, Magubane attended antiwar and Civil Rights rallies in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. On at least two instances from late 1963 to mid-1964, Magubane and Ngubo held public discussions on the apartheid and civil rights in Los Angeles.⁵⁷

Magubane and other African students befriended fellow African Studies student Ron Karenga. In Magubane’s recollection, it was a Kenyan student John Okumo who taught Karenga Swahili and on the weekends Karenga would come to Magubane’s home on the weekends with a Zulu book and dictionary until he mastered that language.⁵⁸ In response, Karenga introduced them to Black Los Angeles. Every Monday Karenga would bring copies of *Mr. Muhammad Speaks* of which Magubane consumed regularly.⁵⁹ Magubane and the others once met Martin Luther King in a visit King made to UCLA but Magubane’s fondest memory was when Karenga took the African students to meet Malcolm X. Magubane remembered, “Malcolm X, the links that he made was another thing that was a highlight for me, when I was a student at UCLA, I went to hear Malcolm X speak at a church in Watts. It was just absolutely wonderful. And then Ron Karenga took us to the back of the church to meet him where we actually [met Malcolm X.] And then [on 27 April 1965 in front of a crowd of 4,500 students] Martin Luther King came to

⁵⁵ Ibid, 123.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Africans Will Discuss Civil Rights,” *Los Angeles Times*, 3/19/64, p. J8. “Africans to Speak,” *Los Angeles Times*, 7/5/64, p. WS12.

⁵⁸ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 119-120.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 124.

address a rally at UCLA and we were introduced, formally introduced to him.”⁶⁰ Greatly inspirational, Malcolm and the NOI influenced Magubane’s theoretical approach. What Magubane found most interesting was the appeal to “the poorest of the poor.” Magubane found their ability to turn around the lives of drug addicts, pimps, prostitutes, and criminals to be profoundly Marxian as it challenged the alienation of the Black poor.⁶¹

The impact of this period of Civil Rights and Black Nationalism on the consciousness of Africans living abroad is discernable. Following the trial and incarceration of ANC leadership, Magubane remembered that 1964 specifically was a very emotional period for South African students in the US noting: “We decided we had to do something.”⁶² After learning that a bank on Wilshire Boulevard in West Los Angeles, not far from the UCLA campus, was selling Krugerrands through a local newspaper, organized what is likely the first antiapartheid protest in Southern California. The bank, Magubane remembered, took a larger meaning as “it provided a place where they could actually demonstrate.”⁶³ In front of the bank, the UCLA students built a prison cell which Legassick, the white South African occupied as a part of a 90-hour hunger strike.⁶⁴ Magubane notes that Martin courageously offered to endure the hunger strike and added that “it had to be a white person living in a shack. It would not have had the same impact if it were me or anybody else.”⁶⁵ Their holiday protest was organized

⁶⁰ Magubane Interview, *South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid*. Perry Van Hook, “Dr. King Outlines Fight for Rights,” *UCLA Daily Bruin*, 4/28/65, p. 1.

⁶¹ Magubane, 125-128.

⁶² “Bernard Magubane Interview” for *No Easy Victories* by William Minter, in Pretoria, South Africa, 3/15/2004.

⁶³ Bernard Magubane Interview by Sean Fields in Durban, South Africa, 10/11/2004 accessed at <http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/video.php?id=65-24F-2> on 11/29/15.

⁶⁴ “Student Fasts to Protest Apartheid,” *Los Angeles Times*, p. 19, 12/16/1964.

⁶⁵ Magubane interview by Sean Fields.

during the week of 16 December 1964 to coincide with Human Rights Week in the United States and in opposition to the South African Boer commemoration of their defeat of the Zulu on that day on that day in 1838.

The protest on Wilshire Boulevard simultaneously challenged apartheid and the popular image of South African in the American mind. In practice, the protest merged the fight taking place in South Africa and the civil rights struggles, Magubane and the others witnessed in Southern California. A spokesperson for the tourism office remarked to the press that “he would not dignify the demonstration by commenting on it” only to add that “things in South Africa are not as these people picture it.”⁶⁶ Just as Brown and the CORE activists aimed to do, the South African Freedom Action Committee opposed South African policy using public spectacle. The bank protest underscored the challenge to apartheid financial base and the tourism office demonstration underscored the challenge to the white global spatial imaginary. As well, the occupation of Wilshire Boulevard in the middle of the holiday season was highly reminiscent of the CORE protests in San Diego and other parts of the United States the previous Christmas season. Drawing over 100 people to the picket line, SAFAC attracted the support of CORE, SNCC, the African Students Association of Southern California, and Catholics United for Racial Equality. In solidarity, members of CORE distributed 2,500 leaflets drafted by the SAFAC as well as ACOA information. The SAFAC protest grew in notoriety as James Baldwin, who was in town to speak on civil rights for an event sponsored by the group called Negro Actors for Action on December 14, announced his public support for the

⁶⁶ “Student Fasts to Protest Apartheid,” *Los Angeles Times*, p. 19, 12/16/1964.

action at his engagement.⁶⁷ Alongside their protests, the SAFAC organized a performance of Athol Fugard's antiapartheid production *The Blood Knot* and used the opportunity to gather funds and raise consciousness about the South Africa. SAFAC students as well as Kuper and other professors also held multiple series on local college and independent radio stations. In commemoration of the of Sharpeville Massacre, the SAFAC picketed Rexall Drug stores headquarters in Beverly Hills, sold buttons stating "SAFAC Mourns Sharpeville," and broadcasted a panel discussion on KPFC Pacifica Radio station.⁶⁸



Figure 13 The SAFAC Wilshire Boulevard Protest ca. 1964 linked Anti-Apartheid to Civil Rights protests in practice. (African Activist Archive)

⁶⁷ SAFAC, "What We Have Done," 3/22/1965, Martin Legassick Private Collection. "James Baldwin to Speak Monday," *Los Angeles Times*, 12/8/64, p. A2.

⁶⁸ South African Freedom Action Committee, "What We Have Done," Private Collection of Martin Legassick.

Run by graduate students, the SAFAC existed through the 1960s, eventually changing its name to the Southern African Freedom Action Committee but tapered off by the early 1970s. Despite that, the SAFAC left an organizational legacy for radical formations that succeeded them. In the years that followed, increasing numbers of African and African American students attended UCLA accompanied by increasingly radical professors such as Daniel Kunene, Mazisi Kunene, and Mxlosi Gladstone Ntlabati. Following in their path, UCLA graduate students organized the African Activists Association as well as the student-run radical African Studies journal *Ufahamu* in 1968.

As they confronted the lived experiences of Blackness in Southern California, African immigrants became politically activated. Africans experienced residential segregation, police harassment, and employment discrimination. They lived with Black Americans and labored under the same conditions which nurtured pan-African bonds. Organizing in solidarity with American-born students of African descent, African students consumed African American literature, attended political rallies, exchanged culture practices, language, and traditions. In some instances, transnational bond even involved intermarriage. This political activism complicated American Cold War policy. As well, it established Southern California as an arena in the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa. This practice of diaspora produced action but it also generated theory. As graduate students, Tony Ngubo and Ben Magubane produced reports that challenged the popular notions about African American culture as pathological and culturally backwards. As Magubane and Ngubo studied segregation in California and Magubane selected African consciousness of Black Americans as his dissertation topic, the UCLA

graduate students approached their topics with informed empathy and mutual identification. For young students in exile from their nations under the grips of white supremacy, their study of African American life served as a surrogate for their studies of Southern African liberation struggles.

Dignity for Black Laborers: South African Studies of African American Life

As they moved to the United States, by the mid-1960s, African students were not only met with militant nonviolent civil rights activism, they increasingly experienced the wave of urban rebellions that engulfed American cities from 1964 to 1969. The most vibrant of these uprisings, the Watts Rebellion of August 1965 directly impacted the engagement Magubane and Ngubo had with African American history and African history. In the wake of the Harlem Rebellion in 1964 and Watts in the succeeding year, scholars and government officials sought to explain the causes for these violent insurrections. From the report *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action* published by Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan (known colloquially as the Moynihan Report) and the McCone Commission's study on the Watts Rebellion, federal, state, and local government officials identified Black cultural pathology as the source of urban decay and rebellions. As historian Luis Alvarez notes about Black life in Los Angeles from another period, "the dilapidated living conditions in black neighborhoods" might have surely posed social and health risks but government officials, nonetheless, blamed these conditions on the cultural practices of African Americans.⁶⁹ The result of postwar racial liberal ideologies, it should be noted, that both the McCone Commission

⁶⁹ Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 50.

and the Moynihan Report identified slavery and segregation were at the root of Black problems. As well, they also proposed as increased government expenditures for antipoverty programming and heightened access to employment and education as solutions to the urban crisis. Yet, as a whole, they dismissed the immediate role of structural racism and deindustrialization in the American North and West and produced culture of poverty narratives that blamed the victims of slavery and racism for their conditions.

Much like the dominant civil rights organizational strategy, the Cold War and McCarthyism determined the rise of liberal ideologies in postwar academia. From the United States to South Africa, academics sought explanations for racism and social problems without engaging Marxist questions of class and political economy. South Africanists political scientists at UCLA, pluralist theories seemingly solved their problems. Pulling from the ideas of Max Weber, sociologists and political scientists sought “to look for a multiplicity of causes to explain political behavior rather than just class. Pluralism was said to explain the importance of competing groups and diverse values in sustaining a stable democracy like that of the United States,” Magubane notes.⁷⁰ In its support of notions of modernization and American democracy, Magubane found pluralism to be insufficient in explaining the conditions of African Americans—and eventually South Africans. “The problem with pluralism...was that African Americans and their enslavement ceases to become an issue. The rise of the civil rights movement and the Watts and other ghetto uprisings, and indeed the Black Power movement could

⁷⁰ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 107. For a precise critique of pluralism, read Magubane’s essay “Pluralism and Conflict Situations,” in *African Sociology—Towards a Critical Perspective: The Selected Essays of Bernard Makhosetwe Magubane* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000).

not be accounted for in pluralist theory” nor could the Ku Klux Klan, McCarthyism, and other white reactionary movements, Magubane remembered.⁷¹ Magubane’s Marxist-informed understanding of difference fits into what Robin Kelley and Vijay Prashad have termed *polyculturalism*.⁷² In his analysis of African American culture and African consciousness, Magubane does not presume biologically determined sources or essentialist African American identity formation. Nor did Magubane neglect the contradictions in African and African American life.

In its apparent embrace of a Marxist perspective, the Pepper Area Research Project is an early challenge to the dominant trend in American Studies and African Studies. Once in California, and away from the repressive and anticommunist apartheid state, Magubane had begun to challenge not only white supremacy but also the liberal ideas of his professors as he deeply engaged the works of Marx for the very first time. Reading *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*. Magubane writes:

Unlike Max Weber’s book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism*, the *Manifesto* shows the cruel origins and development of capitalism, and exposes its intrinsic contradictions and the growing, deepening class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It also exposed the true nature of capitalist society, its brutal exploitation of the workers, its inhuman morality, and the unrestrained rule of greed which turns human relations into objects to be bought and sold, and regards human personal dignity, knowledge, and skills for their exchange value. It dealt with how it turned the exploitation and plunder of the weak by the strong into principal determining relations between nations, and between colonisers and the colonised. Indeed, the rise of capitalism had plunged whole nations into colonial bondage and inflicted on them its bloody wars of destruction. This was powerful stuff that Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism* was trying to hide.

⁷¹ Ibid, 108.

⁷² Vijay Prashad, *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 56-69).

The part of *Capital* which stuck with Magubane was Marx's discussion of the formative role that European extractive and settler colonialism in the Americas and India, the enslavement of indigenous populations, and "the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins" were to "the dawn of capitalist production."⁷³ Magubane read these works in commune with other student radicals such as Ngubo, of course, as well as fellow student Tony Asika, the Nigerian pan-Africanist and head of the African Students Association of Southern California. Yet, despite Magubane's admitted Marxist turn at UCLA, it would be shortsighted to classify his transition as orthodox. Alongside Marx, Magubane and the other students concurrently engaged the Black radical tradition. These students read Henry Sylvester Williams, Harry Haywood, George Padmore, Carter G. Woodson, Richard Wright, and most certainly, WEB Du Bois. After meeting the antiapartheid activist Mary-Louise Hooper in San Francisco, Hooper gave Magubane a signed copy of Du Bois' doctoral thesis, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* (1896). While Magubane had already been introduced to the works of Du Bois in South Africa, following the Hooper meeting Magubane began to read Du Bois' work "ferociously."⁷⁴ With this radical perspective, Magubane and Ngubo examined African American life in Pasadena with a level of dignity for Black laborers. The materialist interrogation of American segregation allowed Magubane and Ngubo to reconsider the meaning of race and class in the United States in a study which linked African American life to those of South African natives.

⁷³ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 109. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, (1977), 915.

⁷⁴ Bernard Magubane Interview with William Minter.

Beginning in the summer of 1965, Magubane and Ngubo conducted a six-week-long study on employment and residential segregation in a predominantly Black area in northwest Pasadena called the Pepper Area entitled “The Pepper Area Research Project,” sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. Interestingly the home of Jackie Robinson, the Pepper Area was a longtime Black enclave in the city but the area had become targeted for urban redevelopment, reminiscent of the San Diegans, Incorporated initiative in San Diego. In 1961, \$11,000 of community funds was devoted to the study of the Pepper Redevelopment Project.⁷⁵ Despite immediate complaints by African American civil rights and political leadership that the project would drive away Black businesses and force African Americans out of the city, the plan progressed. Yet, amidst a statewide battle over Proposition 14 and the Rumford Housing Act, and national concerns over Black poverty following the Harlem rebellion of 1964 and the Watts Rebellion of 1965, the Pepper Area Research Project extremely significant.

Magubane and Ngubo found results consistent with other socioeconomic trends in Southern California. Black Pasadena experienced vast population growth brought on by Black migration from the American South; and that the population increase was met with increased residential segregation. From 1950 to 1960, Black Pasadena increased 84 percent from 9,800 to 18,000 comparatively, the white population only increased by 3.8 percent. Likely because of shifts in the housing trends of domestic laborers and rising housing rates, the Black population in the predominantly white suburbs in Pasadena’s periphery decreased from 539 to 382 out of a total population of 454,147 residents. The

⁷⁵ “Renewal Study Authorized,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1231/1961, p. SG9.

predominantly Black Pepper Area was defined by lowest real estate value, the lowest median income, and the highest rate of overcrowding.⁷⁶ Focusing on “apparently able-bodied men” who populated the streets and social areas on North Fair Oaks Avenue, Magubane and Ngubo began their study by engaging this sample population. In preparation for their study, Magubane and Ngubo developed several working theses: the young men hung around because they had nothing to do; facilities existed for these young men that they simply did not know about; the community had natural leadership that could be located to assist in this problem; the AFSC was one possible source for assistance; and lastly “that ‘hanging’ about in the street” would eventually hurt the self-esteem of these young Black men.⁷⁷

Released in September 1965, Pepper Area Research Project departs from popular studies departed from the culture of poverty thesis popularized in government studies of African Americans and the Urban Crisis. Forgoing cultural analyses, Magubane and Ngubo found structural white supremacy and structural inequality squarely culpable for Black living conditions. In fact, Magubane and Ngubo found that Black Pasadenans maintained high self-image despite their lived experiences. Interviewees regularly remembered a 1937 campaign to legalize racial segregation in Pasadena as well as the more recent struggles to desegregate city pools and local dining facilities. Black Pasadenans saw the Pepper Area urban renewal project as an attempt to dislocate Black people. Respondents to the study challenged the popular projections of the Pepper Area

⁷⁶ Bernard Magubane and Anthony Ngubo, “Report of the Pepper Area Research Project,” p. 1, prepared for the American Friends Service Committee, September 1965. Pasadena Public Library Local History Collection.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

as decayed and dilapidated. Instead, the residents solidly believed this to be a discursive tactic intended to expedite the gentrification process. One interviewee remarked: “This is not a slum. They have alleged it is in order to take our property. This is piracy and an abuse of eminent domain.”⁷⁸ Black unemployment, in Pasadena and throughout Southern California, was a complicated subject. As Magubane and Ngubo dispelled common myths of the Black poor and addressed the very real concerns for the Pasadena’s high levels of Black unemployment and underemployment.

The employment numbers for Black Californians in the 1960s was often misrepresented by government officials and social scientists. For Black Americans, underemployment was far more a problem than unemployment. While the employment rate for white Californians in the mid-1960s hovered around six percent, the numbers for nonwhites was around 10 percent overall. However, things were the worst for young men and women of color. With unemployment rates nearing 20 percent, nonwhite Californians unemployment was as much as twice the rates of whites.⁷⁹ Still, when African Americans found work, it was it was often infrequent and underpaid. In cities like Pasadena, a large number of Black women worked in the service fields for domestic, private, and public employers. Black men worked largely in the skilled and semiskilled fields of construction and manufacturing. Black workers dominated fields that were either highly underpaid or seasonal. Throughout California, the median income of white men surpassed the total income of Black men and Black women. Wealth disparity had residual effects on Black homeownership and access to education. Whereas 57.5 percent

⁷⁸ Magubane and Ngubo, 2.

⁷⁹ *Negro Californians*, 27.

of whites in the Los Angeles area were homeowners, over 59 percent of nonwhite people rented homes.⁸⁰ High renter to owner ratios undoubtedly contributed to the devaluation of Black real estate value.

The dominant theory in social science was, and still is, high rates of Black men unemployment fueled gang participation and other notions of Black pathology. Yet, Magubane and Ngubo found, “Very early in our field experience we realized that the men seen on the streets were not exactly unemployed.”⁸¹ Undoubtedly recalling their studies of Black life and labor in South Africa, the Pepper Area study by Magubane and Ngubo forwards an alternative view of the Black middle class, working class, and underclass. Magubane and Ngubo note that the reason Black men hung out at the local pool hall or bar “was due to irregular working hours, temporary employment, or part-time employment.” Some of the men interviewed at these places were in fact union members and construction workers who reported every morning to the union halls for work. “If there is no work that day, they ‘hang’ around” these places joined by older and retired people. Far from content with their social position, these underemployed Black men expressed regular dissatisfaction with economic opportunities in Pasadena arguing that the city was unprepared “to employ Negroes except in menial jobs.”⁸² Employment discrimination and alienation did not produce political inactivity. Magubane and Ngubo attended three community meetings where young adults expressed three interlocking concerns over biased policing unemployment, and inaccessibility to recreational facilities.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 31.

⁸¹ Magubane and Ngubo, 4.

⁸² Ibid.

Police harassment complicated Black attempts to search for employment beyond the Pepper Area, Magubane and Ngubo found. Interviewees complained that officers regularly drew their pistols on routine traffic stops. Black people stopped in nonwhite areas were always subjected to intense scrutiny and background checks before being released. Magubane and Ngubo observed that biased policing and incarceration of Black youth presented a “double threat” as it prevented young Black men with police records from gaining employment. This exclusion overdetermined the likelihood that they would in turn commit criminal acts against the poor to survive.⁸³ A local Boys Club did provide refuge for Black youth but only for those between the ages of 7 and 18. Young adult men between 18 and 21, Magubane and Ngubo found, were “the most neglected section of the population.”⁸⁴ While Magubane and Ngubo suggested that a sense of hopelessness had fallen upon these young men, it is not referenced as a psychological pathos but instead an admission of the material conditions facing Black youth. “Their helplessness is confounded by the awareness that forces beyond their control, such as what they call the ‘white power structure’ and race prejudice, rule their lives.”⁸⁵

Despite their political engagement, these social conditions did indeed leave a void of significant Black political leadership. If existent, the Black leaders were described as “nice Negroes” tasked by white political economic powers with keeping the community in line. If an indigenous leadership was going to emerge, Magubane and Ngubo argued, it would be amongst the Black business owners. The redevelopment project had negatively affected the Black business owners just as it had the residents. Owners of

⁸³ Ibid, 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 5.

barbershops and beauty parlors, a mortuary, a bar, liquor stores, restaurants, and an electronic repair shops the Black businesses depended on the sustained wealth of the community. As Black residents faced increased unemployment and underemployment or moved outside of the area, Magubane and Ngubo found that Black businesses suffered and faced eminent replacement with white owned industrial firms. There were no guarantees that Black business owners would be allowed in the proposed shopping centers. White businesses benefited from the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce who lobbied government on their behalf. The African American businesses had no such representation and thus, just like other residents, suffered from the lack of sufficient political organization.⁸⁶ While the white-run Chamber of Commerce had opened its doors to Black membership, Magubane and Ngubo concluded that this was not a sufficient remedy. They found that Blacks needed autonomous political and economic power to collectively overcome the problems that the Black poor and Black business owners faced.

To solve the problems of the Pepper Area and Black Pasadena, the alienated youth and the business leaders needed external support from the government and groups like the AFSC and to work together to improve the conditions of their area. The suggestion by Magubane and Ngubo that Black business owners organize and provide the political leadership could very easily be read as Black capitalist, but that would be an incomplete reading. Considering their fieldwork with the South African middle class and their increasing engagement with Marxist and Black radical literature, the Pepper Area

⁸⁶ Ibid, 2-4.

Research Project makes a discerning observation about Black life in Pasadena. To use the late Stuart Hall's well-known but often misused quote, race for Black Pasadenans was surely "the modality in which class is lived." Though it often alludes academics, Hall's specific reference was about racial formation in South Africa's apartheid state.

Accordingly, it was the great Marxist intellectual CLR James who defined "black workers as all who labor or whom colonial powers" aimed to exploit.⁸⁷ Still, the same is true of Southern California. Like the lives of African natives in Durban, middle class position had not altered the social or physical geography of the African American bourgeoisie in Pasadena. Due to residential segregation, Black business owners lived in the same community as the Black poor and experienced similar forms of alienation as the Black working class. Therefore, it reasons that the Black middle class and Black working class needed to organize together to overcome their oppressed condition. As Magubane and Ngubo clearly drew on their field research in Durban as they attempted to locate grassroots leadership that was best prepared to take immediate action in Pasadena.

Magubane and Ngubo had been influenced Frazier's study of the African American middle class but departed from it. Frazier argued that the Black middle class separated themselves from the working class and identified with white culture of which the Black middle was also alienated from. Here the Pepper Area Research Project abandons Frazier's thesis with Magubane and Ngubo failing to identify class conflict between the Black middle class and the dispossessed Black youth. The problem, Magubane found himself returning to, was always political economy and white cultural

⁸⁷ Robin Kelley, "Introduction" in *A History of Pan-African Revolt* 2012 Edition by CLR James (Chicago: PM Press, 2012), 2-3.

hegemony as the determining force in African American and African lives. The only solution to overcoming the problems of American genteel apartheid would be found in mass mobilization. In his dissertation project, Magubane confronts the question of mass mobilization and African consciousness amongst African Americans. In doing so, Magubane continued to challenge dominant historiography on African Americans, this time coming from African scholarship. In 1962, Nigerian professor Essien Udossen Essien-Udom published his influential study *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America*. Essien-Udom argued that African Americans had rejected their African heritage, “This ‘dilemma’ is fundamental; it severely limits his ability to evolve a new identity of meaningful synthesis, capable of endowing his life with meaning and purpose.”⁸⁸ Disagreeing with this Magubane notes that he came to find much more commonalities between African Americans and Africans than others had found. Finding Essien-Udom’s thesis paternalistic, Magubane wondered how anyone could suggest Africans torn from their Motherland could be described as rejecting their heritage.⁸⁹ In his dissertation, Magubane argued that African American consciousness of Africa was mutually contingent on African political activity, the rejection of Western representations of Africa, and the mass mobilization of the African American working class.

The research projects of both Magubane and Ngubo embraced Black protest traditions. Ngubo left to teach at the University of Washington in 1966 but eventually completed his dissertation on a sociohistorical examination of the origins of South

⁸⁸ It is clear that this “dilemma” is a reference to Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma* (1944). EU Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for Identity in America* 4th Edition (New York: Dell Publishing, 1968), p. 11.

⁸⁹ Magubane Interview, *South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid*.

Africa's liberation at the turn of the Twentieth Century in 1973. Magubane completed his study before he left to teach at the University of Zambia in 1967. In a story that foreshadows that of future UCLA African Studies student Robin DG Kelley, Magubane's dissertation project reflected his intellectual commitment as well an existential crisis brought on by his de facto exile from South Africa. Magubane had almost not even made it to the United States initially. Having received his passport just days before the formation of the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's armed wing, the weeks before Magubane departed for the United States in December 1961 were rocked by MK's first wave of targeted bombing of South African government installations. By mere chance, the authorities permitted Magubane to emigrate to the United States following a long interrogation by the South African state police and the confiscation of his books. Some of his associates were not as fortunate as he had learned they had been imprisoned.⁹⁰ Following his advancement to candidacy, "The question I now faced was what to do for my dissertation. Most foreign students went back to their countries, but I couldn't go back to South Africa." Having developed an interest in African American radical literature as well as Carter G. Woodson, whose *The Miseducation of the Negro* surely struck a chord with Magubane's criticism of Bantu education, Magubane approached his advisors Kuper and John Horton with a proposition: "There's no way I can go back to South Africa, and I don't have the means to conduct an empirical study. I have read African-American scholars and want to interrogate their literature."⁹¹ Horton and Kuper approved Magubane's proposal and after taking extensive electoral credit in African

⁹⁰ Magubane, *My Life and Times*, 99-100.

⁹¹ Ibid.

American history, Magubane began his project “The American Negro’s Conception of Africa.”

“The American Negro’s Conception of Africa” countered what he called the “identity alienation school” of African American history, proposed the mutual reliance of African independence on African American liberation movements, and challenged the Cold War imagination of African Studies in American universities. With the rise of the Nation of Islam and other Black Nationalist organizations to national prominence and the wave of African independence, a body of scholarship examining Africa’s importance to African American consciousness. Along with Essien-Udom, psychoanalysts Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey, political scientist Harold Isaacs, and journalist Charles E. Silberman built on the Frazier thesis that slavery had ruptured African American cultural bonds to Africa by suggesting that it resulted an African American pathological rejection of Blackness. Not unlike the Moynihan Report, this “identity-alienation” school of thought overemphasized the psychocultural impact of slavery in a way that overemphasized psychological effects of slavery and ignored the materiality of white cultural hegemony in which African Americans responded to in fluctuating relationship with Africa. “It was the historical plight of the black man when he came into contact and was conquered and enslaved by the white world. Society, unlike biochemical processes, does not escape human influences,” Magubane writes.⁹² He continues later in his dissertation, “What the ‘identity-alienation’ school failed to do is to determine the historical character of what they were trying to understand. Under white hegemony, the

⁹² Magubane, “The American Negro’s Conception of Africa,” 16.

Negro could not develop a coherent world view, but it had to be disjointed to the point of being bizarre. Self-hatred among Negroes was partly due to the fact that they had not yet developed their own world view.”⁹³

Magubane argues, importantly, that when African Americans rejected Africanness in previous generations, they were in fact rejecting the fiction of Africa promoted by white cultural production and colonialism. Malcolm X famously asked, “Who taught you to hate yourself?” For Magubane, the answer was clear: white and European civilization. Preempting what Cedric Robinson described as “creation of the negro” the project of distorting Africa’s image was undertaken by canonical Western philosophers, popular media, and government policy. Citing modern philosophers such as Georg Hegel, who had famously situated Black people outside of modern civilization and the development of modern history, Magubane shows that Africa’s negative image was central to processes of knowledge production. Magubane writes:

I have quoted Hegel at such length because he seems to have anticipated most of the arguments that were to be used later by racist and imperialist intellectuals...His influence on European thought is still felt today, regardless of the validity of his writings. His description of Africa and the sources of his data do not merit extensive scrutiny to reveal that they violate even the method of philosophy. He made no attempt to describe Africa as it was, but simply drew sweeping conclusions from the writings of travelers and missionaries.⁹⁴

⁹³ Ibid, 335-336.

⁹⁴ Very often conservatives charge antiracist historians with presentism when the antiracists criticize the white supremacist writings of historical figures. However, for activists in the 1960s, the writings of popular missionaries like John Wesley and Anthony Benezet were widely referenced enlightenment era writers whom Black Studies scholars and activists have used to reject the misinformed perceptions of Hegel, David Hume, Thomas Jefferson and other white supremacist enlightenment thinkers. Magubane, “American Negro’s Consciousness of Africa,” 45-46.

By the middle- and late-19th century, Hegelian notions of African primitiveness were seen manifested in popular writings on Africa. Among other authors, Magubane takes issue with Joseph Conrad's promotion of "Dark Africa" as uncivilized, barbaric, and not cultivated.⁹⁵ "The Negro child from his cradle to his grave had to be inflicted with the knowledge that all non-whites, and in particular Africans, his fore-bearers, were in varying stages of 'savagery' and 'barbarism' due to one or all of the following: geography, environment, race, and even providence."⁹⁶ The "transmutation" of Africa's image into a "grotesque parody" of itself impacted white and Black minds alike.⁹⁷ As Magubane shows, these notions of Black monstrosity justified colonialism and imperialism in Africa, enslavement, and subsequently the disenfranchisement of African American freedmen. For African Americans, it produced an accommodationist political culture in which Magubane called "Uncle Tomism."⁹⁸

Remarkably, African Americans were still able to develop some positive views of Africa and themselves. Far from a survey, Magubane nonetheless examined the long history of Black nationalist movements from the early 19th century through the 1960s. In both the postbellum and antebellum periods, African Americans engineered complicated emigration projects to West Africa. Without a clear distinction between African American abolitionist and white American colonialism, these schemes still contained problematic Christian views and for some, Black emigration to West Africa was a civilizing mission. Nonetheless, Magubane shows that prominent African Americans

⁹⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 69.

⁹⁷ Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 3-4 and 81.

⁹⁸ Magubane, "Negro American's Consciousness of Africa," 22.

from Martin Delany and Sojourner Truth to African American ministers like Henry Highland Garnett in the post-Civil War years believed the fortunes of African Americans would be found in repatriation. In the late 19th century, Ethiopianism arose as a Black liberation theology which imagined Christianity as an African religion, established links between the Ancient Ethiopia referenced in the Bible and contemporary Abyssinia. Garvey expanded on this ideology, politicizing this religious tradition. Despite its many limitations, Magubane notes that Garvey, importantly, mobilized the Black masses as no one had done before him. While the Pan-African Congress movement of Du Bois and others instituted a necessary internationalist perspective, its limitations, Magubane found, were in its intellectualism and often paternalistic vision for Black emancipation. “One can hardly over-estimate the disastrous effects this had on the masses of the Negro. It also explains why the masses flocked to the Garvey movement, whilst they remained completely unaffected by the Pan-African Congress,” Magubane notes.⁹⁹ Whereas Garveyism mobilized the Black masses, “the Italo-Ethiopian War gave them their own handle to world affairs, and it opened the door on the world to many who had hitherto hardly known it was there.”¹⁰⁰ African Americans in these early years battled the transmutation of Africa on multiple fronts. It was not perfect but it was a sustained process. Magubane writes:

The distortion and devaluation of pre-colonial Negro history has taken a dialectical significance today, because it reacts and is reacted upon by the independence movement in Africa. It is therefore not the existence of Negro nationalist movements in America that is illusory. Their programs might be a Utopian dream, but the fact of their existence challenges most of the analyses which have been proffered to explain the Negro situation

⁹⁹ Ibid, 246.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 305.

in America. The central theme of most studies on the Negro regrets the fact that the American creed of democracy and freedom vis-à-vis the treatment of the Negro is negated. The Negro problem for most social scientists is basically a moral dilemma which should not exist at all in American society.¹⁰¹

In the recent few decades a growing body of literature on Black internationalism has risen. In fact, James Meriwether's *Proudly We Can Be Africans* clearly expands on Magubane's thesis, though Magubane is not cited in his book.¹⁰² However, in the 1960s, such literature was still extremely rare in academia; Magubane devoured the *Freedom Ways* radical peer-reviewed journal as his bank of resources. This likely explains the

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 180.

¹⁰² Surely not all but some of those books are: Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* (New York, NY and London, UK: Verso, 1998); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Gerald Horne, *Mau Mau in Harlem?: The US and the Liberation of Kenya* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*; Alvin B. Tillery, Jr., *Between Homeland and Motherland: Africa, US Foreign Policy, and Black Leadership in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey: How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (New York, NY and Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!*; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins editors, *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); and Shana Redmond, *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

delayed publication of Magubane's dissertation until the 1980s, and even then, by the independent African World Press.¹⁰³

Magubane lauds the rise of African independence movements and Malcolm X as pivotal elements of the significant rise in African consciousness in the United States. However, in multiple parts of his dissertation, Magubane reminds his readers, "When Africa was in chains, the American Negroes pleaded her cause to the world and produced her major ideology—Pan-Africanism. Among those who introduced the idea or existence of ancient Africa are American Negro historians."¹⁰⁴ Magubane praised the work of Carter G. Woodson, Arturo Schomburg, and JA Rogers. Still, African Americans could not get true and contemporary notions of Africa without the uprising of African liberation movements and the establishment of autonomous nation-states. As scholars would build on, the contemporaneous African independence movements and American Civil Rights movements not only gave African Americans a positive image of Africa but also allowed for them to further their criticism of American liberal democracy. As I noted in the first chapter of this dissertation, Magubane writes, "When America helped in the Congo airlift these conflicts and contradictions became obvious."¹⁰⁵ The most important force driving the rise in African consciousness in the postwar years, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, interpolated the multiple versions of these previous Black Nationalist projects and formations.

¹⁰³ Bernard Magubane, *Ties that Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1987/1989).

¹⁰⁴ Magubane, "American Negro's Conceptions of Africa," 323.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.

While studying the African American experience, Magubane's dissertation is also a charge to Africans and Africanists. In the recent years, much of the scholarship on African and African American relations has blamed the ebbing of internationalist sentiment on limitations in African American politics. Rightfully, Carol Anderson, Penny Von Eschen, Mary Dudziak, and others identified postwar anticommunism and Cold War Civil Rights strategy as the source of African American disinterest in African politics. Other scholarship has identified neoliberal ideology as the source of African American disassociation with Africa. Political scientist Alvin Tillery has argued that African American leadership has engaged in a "two level game" only associating with African issues at the point that it is beneficial for African American political advancement and distancing themselves when it is a detriment.¹⁰⁶ African American investment and divestment in American citizenship has been identified as the primary source of fluctuating African consciousness in the United States. While Magubane did not excuse African American integrationism, he nonetheless writes: "Consciousness always strives to adapt itself to the existential reality. It is therefore nonsensical to say that the Negro rejected Africa and rejected himself during the era of enslavement, colonialism, and imperialism. A proper identification with Africa could not be realized without Africa freeing itself from imperial rule and degradation."¹⁰⁷ Confronting African paternalistic views of African Americans, Magubane makes Africans accountable in nourishing that mutual bond. Magubane states:

It may be predicted that despite many problems and difficulties that Africans will continue to show interest in the fate of their kith and kin

¹⁰⁶ Alvin B. Tillery, Jr, *Between Homeland and Motherland: Africa, US Foreign Policy, and Black Leadership in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 6.

¹⁰⁷ Magubane, "The American Negro's Conception of Africa," 343.

whether in the United States or in South Africa. In the case of the American Negro this interest will be fully realized, when Africans come to know more and more about the efforts of their descendants across the seas for their own emancipation, and when they realize that there is no rational or logical conflict between their vital interests and the liberation of Negro people....We can understand that with the independence of Africa, the Africans who are gaining in dignity and respect and power might look down upon the Negro who despite his better material condition is worse off socially. But as Negroes realized that freedom and dignity are indivisible, Africans will realize their kinship with American Negroes and that the infringement of their rights is a negation of their newly acquired pride and they will insist rights be respected.¹⁰⁸

Here Magubane displays the true diasporic vision of his project, challenging Cold War African Studies.

More than a synthesis of African American social movements, Magubane's dissertation also indicted white hegemonic control over Africa. It is more than coincidence that Magubane produced his study of African American consciousness just as students in South Africa were generating their own Black Consciousness Movement that was heavily inspired by the radical thought of American and Caribbean radicals. "The American Negro's Conceptions of Africa" asks the universal question of how African people mobilize in non-revolutionary times. African Americans were a contingent part in combatting Western domination of Africa. Yet, Magubane also values the fortunes of the independent African state in its investment in pan-Africanism. Newly independent African should therefore involve themselves in the African American liberation movements. By Magubane's own words, it must also commit itself to liberation of South Africans from the grips of white supremacy. Not only does Magubane reject African exceptionalism, he also opposes what Mahmood Mamdani calls

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 357-358.

South African exceptionalism.¹⁰⁹ Black American nor South African struggles against white supremacy are pitted outside the African experience. Just as with his study of the South African middle class or segregation in Pasadena, not the relative privileged status of African Americans nor the particularities of South African situates both places outside of immediate conversation with struggles against African colonialism. In this, Magubane's dissertation departed from the Cold War African Studies nationalist scope. After being conferred with his degree, Magubane departed Southern California for Zambia where he taught at the University of Zambia. At that time, Zambia and the neighboring Tanzania were receptacles for antiapartheid activists and other Black revolutionaries. Kenneth Kaunda, the premier of Zambia, and Julius Nyerere welcomed these exiles and committed themselves to pan-Africanism. Magubane taught there for two years, developed a close relationship with Oliver Tambo and was eventually directed to return to the United States to help grow the antiapartheid movement there. In 1969, Magubane returned to the United States where he initially taught at UCLA. At UCLA, he became a visiting professor and assisted in the organization of the African Activists Association, publishing in their student-run journal *Ufahamu*. The scholarship and activism of Magubane and his peers played a crucial role in establishing a pan-Africanist and antiapartheid tradition in Southern California.

Conclusion

In Black Studies, the canon of literature on the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power has largely focused on the lives of African Americans. In doing so, it has missed

¹⁰⁹ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 26.

the experiences of African migrants to the United States. As this chapter has shown, the lives of African migrants to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s displays a profound parity with the African American experience. As African students migrated to American campuses during the Civil Rights and Black Power era, they challenged popular and academic proposals of dissonance between them and their African American contemporaries. Certainly, not all African migrants and students in the United States had the same experiences of the Africans in this case study. Countless African students moved to the United States, retained their distance from African Americans, received their degrees and returned home. Yet, the students in this shows us that American Cold War hegemony was not complete. Government programs, private foundations, and college African Studies centers attracted African students to the United States with the explicit intention of determining the future of independent African states. However, the American racial hierarchy complicated their efforts.

In a miscalculation of American racial formation, government and education officials largely placed these students outside of the American South and HBCUs in a comprehensive attempt to thwart any impact the Civil Rights struggles would have on them. However, even in the West and the South, Africans experienced police harassment, residential segregation, and employment discrimination. Foregoing the sensational racial encounters, the general lived experience of Blackness in the United States brought African Americans and Africans together. While this chapter focuses, largely on the experiences of Southern African migrants, the story is not limited to Southern Africans. An expanded study would reveal that a wide variety of African descended people having the similar experiences. Consider the Caribbean and Latina/o

Civil Rights and Black Power activists or the student activists from a variety of African nations—most notably Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, and Uganda. This is not merely a case of South Africans reacting to similar racial conditions, as African American and South African racial formation, while similar, are not clear analogs—the most notably differences are indigeneity and settler colonialism. There were also conscious decisions to forge these diasporic bonds. Africans and African Americans traded protest culture, language and ethnic traditions, and intellectual production. These processes trouble the easy bifurcation of African American Studies and African Studies.

Southern California's local tradition of Black internationalism and pan-Africanism emerged as African Americans turned towards Africa and as African migrants embraced their local struggles. The African American protest culture crafted in Southern California was informed by African customs and politics but it was not a facsimile of Africa. Just as James Baldwin had argued, Magubane and Karenga alike understood African Americans to be a distinct group of African people and their African consciousness was not simply a “usable past” as some have come to imagine it. Magubane wrote, “A group cannot shop around for a more amiable national identity. Like it or not, the Negro is an American, not an African. There is no African nationality.” He later adds that African consciousness in the United States therefor, “reflects the experience of a group, their aims and their goals as they continued to live in hostile climes. The American Negro's interest in Africa was not nostalgia. It was produced from the deep layers of their tormented lives in the New World.”¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Magubane, “The American Negro's Conception of Africa,” 324 and 362.

What separates the postwar pan-Africanism from many of the previous projects—particularly the emigrationism and Garveyism—it was not heavily biologically determined. African Americans made links with Southern African and East Africa. Concern with Central and West African nations was not defined by ethnic origins or concerns over repatriation. It was about shared liberation projects. African Americans made international appeals to African nations and leaders, read their literature, and adopted their political platforms. In the succeeding chapters, I will chronicle how, concerns over poverty and redevelopment brought African Americans in continued contact with African politics and culture in the wake of the Watts Rebellion. African Americans developed multiple and competing forms of Black Power platforms that aimed to mobilize poor through internationalist and pan-Africanist principles. The most notable of these organizations were the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party but the history is not limited to them. Beyond the sensational and violent clashes between Black Power organizations, Southern Californians in San Diego and Los Angeles mobilized the masses around African Marxist and African Socialist principles that came out of Africa. Just as in the early to mid-1960s, this knowledge production and activism involved the intricate relationship between campus and community. As with earlier moments, this meaning of the pan-Africanist and Black internationalist endeavors was determined by local concerns. Education, policing, and employment all maintained continued relevance. As an explicit antiapartheid movement grew nationally, local concerns governed the entry of local activists into the global struggle.

CHAPTER THREE

Towards a Black International: The War on Poverty, the Peace Corps, and Black Power's Counterpoint to Cold War Liberalism

Following the assault on South Los Angeles resident Marquette Frye, his brother Ronald, and his mother Rena Price, community members arose in defense of the three. Though the rebellion began in the Avalon Gardens community, the neighborhood adjacent to Watts, Willowbrook, and other adjacent areas by the evening. Spreading well-beyond its epicenter near Central Avenue, there were skirmishes in Long Beach, Pasadena, and San Diego. Over 4,000 people were arrested, 34 people died, and there as an estimated \$40 million in property damage.¹ Much like South Central Los Angeles became a catchall for Black Los Angeles in the 1990s, “Watts” had come to represent more than physical location. As Eldridge Cleaver explained in *Soul on Ice*, Watts represented the extremely alienated conditions of Black Los Angeles. “Watts was a place of shame. We used to use Watts as an epithet in much the same way as city boys used ‘country’ as term of derision. To deride one as a ‘lame,’ who did not know what was happening (a rustic bumpkin),” Cleaver wrote while in Folsom State Prison. Despite its actual origins in the community adjacent to Watts, the Watts Rebellion became a moment of catharsis for African Americans and expanded the Black global spatial imaginary.² Explaining a conversation he and some Watts “low riders” had on the Folsom basketball court after hearing of the rebellion, Cleaver wrote: “It was a cleansing, revolutionary laugh we all shared, something we have not had occasion for...now , blacks are seen in

¹ Della Ross, *Why Watts Exploded: How the Ghetto Fought Back* (Los Angeles: Socialist Workers Party, 1966), p. 2.

² Eldridge Cleaver, “On Watts,” in *Soul on Ice* (New York: Delta Books/Random House, 1968/1991), pp. 45-47

Watts saying, ‘I’m from Watts, Baby!’—whether true or no, but I think their meaning is clear.”³ The Watts Rebellion changed the way the public understood resistance, poverty, and community leadership by bringing youth culture and development to the forefront of political struggle in Cold War America.

Youth mobilization, antipoverty, and development became was one way in which solidarity-plus was practiced in the late-1960s. Following the Watts Rebellion, African Americans and other radical activists competed with the local, state, and federal officials for the hearts and minds of African American youth. In this chapter, I argue that the Watts Rebellion strengthened the liberal claims for a “War on Poverty” and prompted the largest expansion of antipoverty programming since the great depression. The recently-formed federal Office of Economic Opportunity doled out funds for the creation of a multitude of antipoverty initiatives which included the Community Action Program (CAP). CAP directly distributed finances to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) which did the local work of antipoverty mobilization. Much like its foreign policy sibling, the Peace Corps, community action programming was intended to bring the Black masses into the fold of American liberalism, and thus preventing the increased radicalization of the youth. Many African American activists attempted to tactfully negotiate the War on Poverty, and particularly the Community Action Program, in pursuit of self-determination and community control.

From the McCone Commission’s report on the Watts Rebellion to Black radical organizations, it was understood that the solution to the problems plaguing Black

³ Ibid.

America was in the development of an indigenous community leadership. Embodied in the concept of *maximum feasible participation* as stated in Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act and described by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, many academics, activists, and government officials saw the War on Poverty-funded Community Action Programs as a possible solution. According to Johnson, a community action plan involving “maximum feasible participation would be ‘based on the fact that local citizens best understand their own problems, and know best how to deal with those problems.’”⁴ However, government officials and community activists differed in their interpretation of participation and their intended outcomes of participation and leadership training; as historian Alyosha Goldstein notes, participation became “a site of conflict.”⁵ In Los Angeles and San Diego, African American used the Teen Post, Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership, and other CAAs “to win the minds of Black people.” In many ways, programming intended on making loyal, respectable citizens of the Black poor helped to expand Black radicalism, Black internationalism, and African consciousness in Black America.

Demystifying the popular conception of the Black Power movement and antipoverty programming, it was never an either-or process amongst revolutionary organizations. For example, while the Black Panther Party of Oakland, California has been remembered for their autonomous survival programs, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale first drafted their plans for the Panthers at the North Oakland Antipoverty Service

⁴ Tara J. Melish, “Maximum Feasible Participation of the Poor: New Governance, New Accountability, and ad 21st Century War on the Sources of Poverty,” *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal* Vol 13 Issue 1 (2010), 4-5.

⁵ Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action during the American Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 113.

Center, their place of employment. As they drafted the initial Black Panther Party of Self-Defense platform, Newton and Seale relied on the library, meeting space, staff, and visitors to grow the Black Panthers—the Panthers had recruited some of its early members such as Little Bobby Hutton from the Center. The Panther program moved beyond the liberal intentions of the North Oakland Antipoverty Service Center. “We were doing what the poverty program claimed to be doing but never had—giving help and counsel to poor people about the things that crucially affected their lives,” Newton wrote.⁶ Far from completely discrediting antipoverty agencies, Newton’s autobiography has prefaced a growing body of literature on Black Power and antipoverty work. Black Internationalism is not an event, it is instead a process. In the unfolding process of Black Internationalism, pan-Africanism, and African solidarity in Southern California, antipoverty agencies played a crucial role.

Youth and development were not isolated to American domestic policy. In fact, it is one way in which the growing African American radical polity came into proximity with newly independent African nations. As Goldstein notes, the Johnson Administration imagined commonality between domestic communities of color and Third World development. As African American activists such as Harold Brown were recruited into foreign service positions, they bridged liberation struggles in Southern California and Southern Africa. In a brief chronicling of Brown’s stint as the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps project in Lesotho, I show how liberation movements in Southern Africa move from a point of comparison and inspiration to a direct place of mutual influence.

⁶ Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973/2009), p. 121.

By the end of the 1960s, Black radical organizations and antipoverty agencies became the target of government repression. This repression turned former allies against each other and began the demise of the Black Panther Party and the Us Organization. Nevertheless, the commitment to African liberation did not die but instead shifted. The young activists mobilized following the Watts Rebellion became what Sekou Franklin calls “bridge builders” and linked the struggles of the 1960s to the campaigns of the succeeding decades.⁷

But a Local Phase of a World Revolution

While uprisings do not always begin as politics, they often end with them. Amidst the rebellion, a debate over terminology emerged: Was the uprising in Watts a riot or an insurrection? As historian Gerald Horne has noted, riot remains an elusive term used to describe several uprisings. Instead a surprising “consensus emerged that this was no riot,” Horne notes.⁸ Participants, journalists, and the international community identified the uprising as an insurrection, a rebellion. One CBS radio journalist noted, “This was not a riot. It was an insurrection against all authority.... If it had gone much further; it would have become a civil war.”⁹ Most importantly, the Watts Rebellion garnered international significance as press in Africa, China, the Soviet Union, and Cuba recognized Watts as a theater of international revolution. Beijing radio compared the rebellion to the uprisings in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and the Congo. On 16 August 1965, Beijing radio remarked: “The struggle of the Negro people in Los Angeles

⁷ Sekou M. Franklin, *After the Rebellion: Black Youth, Social Movement Activism, and the Post-Civil Rights Generation* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 2.

⁸ Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville, VA: De Capo Press, 1997), 36.

⁹ *Ibid.*

and other places in the United States is a veritable revolutionary movement, and like the revolutionary movement of the other peoples, the struggle of the American Negroes will be crowned with victory.”¹⁰ Following his view of the aftermath of the Watts Rebellion, the words of South African Communist Isaac B. Tabata were published in an SWP document *Why Watts Exploded: How the Ghetto Fought Back*. “When I was driven through Watts and I saw the gaping holes and I saw the results of the fires that went up for seven days, it reminded me of my own country, and I saw that we are indeed the same people,” Tabata wrote. And just as South Africans rose up in arms, he applauded African American for taking the necessary steps to attain “his rightful place among other men and the restoration of his...human dignity.”¹¹

The Watts Rebellion was the defining moment for youth mobilization and activism in Southern California, and arguably nationally. The Black Power generation had lived through the deaths of Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, and Emmett Till. They had witnessed the Sharpeville Massacre, the student sit-ins, and the Civil Rights campaigns in streets of Southern California. Yet it was the Watts Rebellion that allowed these youth, regardless of their political orientation, to organize their power. As Eldridge Cleaver noted, he had witnessed an instantaneous change amongst the incarcerated youth from Watts. South Los Angeles native and founding member of the Us Organization Ken Seaton-Msemaji has noted on multiple occasions that what he witnessed was democracy in action. While participants did raid stores, he notes that they would then return and

¹⁰ *Subversive Influences in Riots, Looting, and Burning Part 1: Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives*, 90th Congress, 1 (1967), 871.

¹¹ IB Tabata, “An African Revolutionist Comments on Watts,” *Why Watts Exploded: How The Ghetto Fought Back* by Della Rossa (Los Angeles Local Socialist Workers Party, May 1966), 1.

place their findings in large piles and subsequently distribute the goods to people as needed. As he noted, the weapons used were primarily for self-defense. Msemaji notes that at the beginning of the rebellion, young men would fire shots into the air for the sole purpose of keeping police out of the community—until the National Guard arrived. The rebellion escalated upon arrival of the National Guard. Us Organization founding member and Watts Summer Festival organizer Tommy Jacquette remembered precisely the day he became politically awakened: “August 11th, 1965. Prior to that—we had had a few friends who was active in the Civil Rights Movement, but we were not active...at all, at least the crew that I hung with.”¹² Yet, with increased conflict with the police and military, their consciousness was raised.

In some instances, the violence led to political organization amongst the youths involved in the rebellion. One teenaged participant interviewed by UCLA economist Paul Bullock noted that on one night he and some friends had discovered a group of guardsmen and police officers were camping out at a local community center. These youths proceeded to get some gasoline and light an old truck near the encampment on fire with the hope that the guardsmen and officers housed inside the place would burn to death.¹³ While the truck burned, no officers or guardsmen died in the assault. Jacquette remembers that “hit-and-run” missions such as the one described by Bullock’s interviewee brought different cliques of teens together for the first time. Though they were often defined as gangs, Jacquette argues that their structure was too “shaky” to be considered as such. “There was no gangs then or now that had leadership, in terms of

¹² Tommy Jacquette Oral History

¹³ Bullock, *Watts: The Aftermath* (Grove Press, 1969), p. 47.

disciplined soldiers, or this is the one recognized leader; there was more a bunch of individuals that hung out from with common interests from time to time,” Jacquette remembered.¹⁴ Yet as the rebellion progressed, the youths moved from throwing bottles and bricks to planning organized attacks with other crews that they had not hung out with before. Even with the effective squashing of the rebellion following the deployment of the National Guard, “a whole new consciousness had been developed, and a broad base of support had been developed.” A broad sweep of the Black community had begun to voice similar concerns. Of this new political voice, “we were the army” Jacquette states. The youth were at the head of this new movement for change.¹⁵

Hastily published less than four months after the uprising in December 1965, Governor Edmund Brown’s Commission on the Los Angeles Riots headed by former CIA director John McCone, known as the McCone Commission, published their report *Violence in the City—An End or A Beginning?* While acknowledging that structural inequalities in education and employment existed, the McCone Commission dismissed the most relevant concerns of police brutality and biased policing. Reflecting moderate-liberal beliefs of the time, the report noted lack of opportunity, understanding, and leadership as the problem—effectively blaming the victims. The lure of federal poverty programs and the desirable living conditions in California enticed African Americans. Yet, the inequalities in employment and education, the report argued, brought on “a special measure of frustration and disillusionment” amongst Black people; the rebellion

¹⁴ Jacquette Oral History.

¹⁵ Ibid.

was a result of Black pathology, not overt white supremacy.¹⁶ Largely overlooking the effects of an economy in which a white man could make more than a Black man and woman combined, a “spiral of failure” that led to frustration and disillusion amongst Black youths was listed as a concern.¹⁷ While the report dismissed any ideas that the rebellion was the result of a mass conspiracy, it did note the high levels of gang activity in the region exacerbated the resistance.¹⁸ To remedy the problems, the commission suggested increased employment training programs, heightened educational opportunities, increased dialogue and understanding between Blacks and the police, and the nurturing of new forms of political and economic leadership within the Black community, as well as broader society.¹⁹

For African Americans, the call for community leadership and opportunity was not a condemnation of actions in the rebellion. Unlike the McCone Commission, African Americans clearly identified structural inequalities as the cause of the rebellion noting that the reasons stores in South Los Angeles were targeted and not white areas was because it was the local markets that “would charge you \$20 for a pair of shoes” that one “can go to Huntington Park or anywhere else and get for \$8.01 or so.”²⁰ It was evident that the alienation Black South Los Angeles communities endured these harsh conditions because it was Black and poor. To bring about structural change, African Americans sought to develop a political program that built on the revolutionary impulse revealed in

¹⁶ McCone Report, 2-5. For good analyses of the McCone Commission Report, look at Gerald Horne’s *The Fire This Time* and Daniel Widener, “Writing Watts: The Rise and Fall of Cultural Liberalism,” *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 99-100.

¹⁷ McCone Report, 5-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 85-86.

²⁰ Bullock, *Watts: The Aftermath*, 48.

the rebellion. A wide variety of African Americans agreed with the initial rebellion, yet many nevertheless still lamented the return of future conflict. One person noted: “I hope there will never be another riot. A lot of people think there is going to be another riot, but I don’t think there will be another riot in Watts, because if there will be another riot, I feel there will be a nuclear war between Caucasians and Colored people.”²¹

As a remedy, the Black youth and activists demanded increased community control of antipoverty programming and policing as the South Los Angeles-based Community Alert Patrol (CAP) had begun to do.²² Formed after the rebellion, CAP established patrols to monitor law enforcement and prevent police brutality. With “To Protect and Observe” stenciled on the side paneling of their cars, CAP represented an important phase in the development of the local Black radical tradition. Promoting the coupling of self-determination and self-defense, CAP was an important example for subsequent organizations such as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland and the understudied San Diego Citizens Patrol Against Police Brutality. In fact, in August 1966, following the inspiration of SNCC and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, CAP painted a Black Panther on the side of their patrol cars and it was this image which inspired the Oakland-based party.²³ As an immediate response, to the rebellion, activists understood the need for further political education.

²¹ Ibid, 48.

²² Ibid, 152.

²³ Terence Cannon, “A Night With the Community Alert Patrol,” *The Movement* Vol 2. No. 7 (August 1966), p. 1. Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 39-40, 140-141. Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 196-197.

In the years following the rebellion a variety of political formations emerged throughout Southern California: cultural nationalists, religious nationalists, revolutionary nationalists, and organized communists. Despite their variation, consensus of Black people, in South Los Angeles and throughout Southern California, supported the growth of Black Nationalist ideology and the spread of African consciousness. The way forward was in antipoverty programming, racial upliftment, and youth mobilization. Despite their divergent goals, many African American activists and government officials found the expansion of the War on Poverty's Community Action Programs useful. Two specific programs, the Teen Post and Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership (SHTNL), highlight the way the War on Poverty programs became a site of contestation. Through what became known as *programmatically influence*, Teen Post and SHTNL became important conduits of solidarity-plus in Southern California. A direct extension of the efforts of groups like CORE and the Afro-American Association, Black Power activists understood that the material conditions as a prerequisite to revolutionary action. As the common adage goes: "You can't free the people if you can't feed the people."²⁴ By seizing leadership of a variety of community programs, Black Power activists gained jobs for themselves and others. They created critical educational and cultural programming which educated the masses of youth on African liberation ideology and theorized ways these ideologies could be applied to local circumstances. Even before these ideas were discussed on college campuses, youth read Black revolutionary literature, studied African languages, and generated forms of expression that acculturated African American and

²⁴ El Grito, "Feed the People to Free the People," *De Nuevo Mexico*, 1/27/16, <http://www.elgritonm.org/2016/01/27/feed-the-people-to-free-the-people/> (accessed on 7/29/17).

African culture and ideas, space, and other youth which allowed them to spread pan-Africanist and Black Internationalist ideologies and recruit new members.

“An Antidote for Racial Antagonism”: The Infrapolitics of the War on Poverty from Los Angeles to San Diego

As a part of his January 1964 State of the Union address, then President Lyndon Baines Johnson laid out his plan to combat the rising rate of poverty in the United States.²⁵ Johnson’s proposed legislation manifested in the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) which was passed by the United States Congress in the summer of 1964 and signed into law August 20th of that year. The stated goals of the EOA was to eliminate poverty which neared 20%, increase educational opportunities, provide increased relief for the poor and unemployed, and to take better care of the health and financial security of older and retired Americans.²⁶ To achieve these aims, the EOA created the Office for Economic Opportunity (OEO). The flagship initiative of the OEO was the Community Action Program (CAP). CAP provided funds and resources to local antipoverty agencies. A government answer to the Watts Rebellion, one of those programs was the Teen Post.

The Teen Post, a youth-run community center, was first created in spring of 1965, before the Watts Rebellion. However, financial debates between Los Angeles city and county officials delayed program’s wide-scale implementation until August of 1965. It was then that the Office of Economic Opportunity circumvented the city and county by funding the Teen Post as a crash program through the Federation of Settlements and

²⁵ This new initiative by the Johnson Administration became known as the War on Poverty. A part of Johnson’s larger Great Society programs which saw the largest expansion of federal support for social welfare programs since the Great Depression, the War on Poverty was at once an extension of New Deal liberalism and a matter of Johnson’s domestic and geopolitical expediency.

²⁶ *Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union January 8, 1964. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.*

Centers, a private social welfare agency.²⁷ The Teen Post offered youth a place of recreation. Participants could play board games, billiards, basketball, and other extracurricular activities. Teen Posts also offered job training programs and summer employment. The Teen Posts held social events with other Teen Posts and lastly took youth on field trips. Young adults, normally in their 20s, were often hired to manage the facilities but the day-to-day activities were controlled by governing bodies of teens elected by their peers. Teen Posts attempted to facilitate regional comradeships as they coordinated joint social events and eventually organized summer educational institutes at local colleges and universities. Much like the Peace Corps, Teen Post programming was not supposed to be explicitly political but politics generally worked its way into the daily exercises. Many people were drawn to the Teen Post for the everyday interactions and community building that resulted from these exchanges; anthropologist James C. Scott has termed this *infrapolitics*.²⁸ Accordingly, former Black Panther Wayne Pharr notes, “Each Teen Post became a hangout spot, but a lot of consciousness-raising occurred there too. The most passionate political conversations I’d ever had in my young life took place at the Teen Post—conversations about why blacks suffered as we did and why we seemed to have so little compared to whites.”²⁹

Despite being severely understudied, the Teen Post program holds a special place in the memory of Black and Latino Southern Californians. Panamanian American sisters Maria Odom (nee Kersee) and Debra Anderson (nee Kersee) have long noted the

²⁷ George Garrigues and Lee Austin, “Busy Youths Free of Tensions,” *Los Angeles Times*, 9/5/65, p. SF A1.

²⁸ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 183-201.

²⁹ Pharr, 48.

centrality of the Teen Post to their identity formation during the Black Power years. They developed bonds with other Black youth throughout South Los Angeles and the Harbor Area, experimented with self-government, and developed a deep pride in their community. Beyond the Odom-Kersee family history, a diverse swath of Southern California remembers the importance of the Teen Post program in providing structure and economic support for youth from South Los Angeles to Southeast San Diego. Founding member of the Brims, a faction of the Bloods gang, in an oral history, General Robert Lee also observed the importance of the Teen Post to the life of Black youth in Southern California. Together with the memories of the Kersee sisters, Lee noted that the Teen Posts organized African American youths through sports, recreation, cultural work, and summer employment. Lee believed that the proliferation of gangs in Southern California during the 1960s was caused by the closure of the Teen Post.³⁰

In the months following the Watts Rebellion, the Teen Post gained the praise of the local media and government for organizing Black youth. It was then that \$801,000 was allocated for a pilot Teen Post program. Just weeks into the pilot program, *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Eric Malnic published the first article on Teen Post on August 29th in which he identified the program as an “antidote for racial antagonism.”³¹ While like other centers such as the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA, the Teen Post departed from the format of similarly structured programs because of its educational and vocational training. Teen Posts also regularly employed young adults in their 20s as facilities staff members. Malnic noted that the Teen Posts sought to organize the youths

³⁰ Yusuf Jah and Sister Shah’Keyah, *Uprising: Crips and Bloods Tell the Story of America’s Youth in the Crossfire* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 128.

³¹ Eric Malnic, “Teen Posts: an Antidote for Racial Antagonism,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/29/65, G1.

that these much older programs had forgotten. By the end of August, over 100 Teen Posts organized 10,300 youths from ages 13 to 19.³²

The Teen Post addressed the immediate material concerns for post-Watts Black Southern California by confronting youth unemployment. For example, the Ebony Showcase Theater on located at 4720 Washington Boulevard in Los Angeles organized its unique Teen Post program providing vocational training for youth in the performance arts. These feelings are captured in the remarks of Teen Post students and alumni in interviews transcribed by Paul Bullock a research economist at UCLA's Institute of Industrial Relations. An unnamed Teen Post member noted the attraction of Black youth to the Teen Post stating: "Nowadays kids want a job because they don't have no shoes, they don't have no clothes, you know, and therefore their pride. Yeah, hurting their pride 'cuz they can't get the things they want, so they stay at home and close themselves out."³³ Teen Post members were paid to tutor younger members, perform clerical duties, and teach other types of life skills to younger members. As many participants expressed, Teen Post was the only place that a young unskilled African American could find support.³⁴

To Win the Minds of Black People

While the origins of Black Power in Southern California began with the activism of the Afro-American Association and the National of Islam in San Diego and Los Angeles, the Watts Rebellion spurred the growth of many new Black radical formations.

³² Ibid.

³³ Paul Bullock, Youth in the Labor Market: Employment Patterns and Career Aspirations in Watts and East Los Angeles a report compiled for the Manpower Research Center at the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations, Interview Transcript of Tape 7 "Watts: Jobs and Community Programs," (1972), 21-22.

³⁴ Ibid.

With the diverse but not yet competing ideologies of cultural revolution, political nationalism, electoral politics, and economic development, from Los Angeles to San Diego, new organizations like the Us Organization, Community Alert Patrol and Self-Leadership for All Nationalities Today (SLANT), the Black Panther Political Party of Watts, and older organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality struggled for the minds of Black people. Influenced by the teachings of Malcolm X, who had attempted to establish a Black united front, these new groups formed umbrella organizations as they understood the necessity for cooperation as they moved forward. Two such organizations were the Los Angeles Black Congress and the San Diego Black Conference, both formed in 1966.

Youth were central to this process. As historian Anita Casavantes Bradford has argued in her study of childhood, diaspora, and the Cuban Revolution, youth politics brought competing notions of nation and futurity in contact with each other.³⁵ As noted, the Johnson administration as well as local governments sought to redirect the spirit of the Watts Rebellion into support for liberal democratic governance. As well, Black radical organizations developed increasingly convergent goals. One unit that gained significant notoriety for organizing youth of color following the rebellion was the antipoverty program Teen Post and the other was the Us Organization, a Black Nationalist successor to the Afro-American Association in Southern California. Even before the Us Organization and their youth cadre the Simba Wachanga (Young Lions) donned the cover of the 15 July 1966 edition of *Life* magazine, the knowledge, discipline,

³⁵ Anita Casavantes Bradford, *The Revolution Is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 8-14.

and militancy of the Us Organization had attracted the attention of many Black youth and adults, as well as politicians and the media.

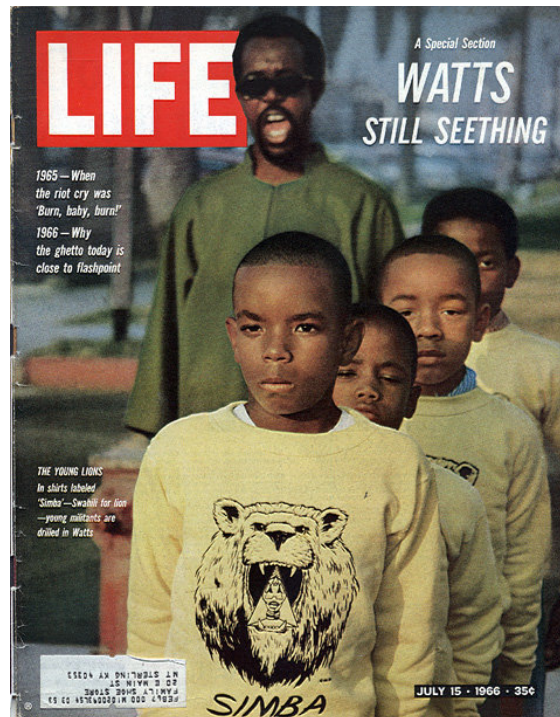


Figure 14 Samuel Carr-Damu and members of the Simba Wachanga (Young Lions) ca. 1966.

While the Oakland-based Black Panther Party for Self Defense is the organization that has most filled the imagination of the Black public and beyond—for good reason—they were not created until October 1966 and remained a Northern California organization until the establishing of its Southern California chapter in 1968. Nonetheless, studies of Black Power in Southern California have often centered on the conflict between the Us Organization and the Panthers that was mostly contained to 1969. Without dismissing the importance of that conflict to the study of Black social movements, the four years of Black radical organizing were dominated by attempts at fortifying a Black United Front. Students of Malcolm X, Black Power organizers

understood that Black politics did not need to be a monolithic to achieve shared goals of liberation. In his 1964 speech, “The Ballot or the Bullet,” Malcolm stated, “I am not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it’s time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to see that we have the same problem, a common problem, a problem that will make you catch hell whether you’re a Baptist, or a Methodist, or a Muslim, or a nationalist.”³⁶ This philosophy manifested in the concept of *operational unity* created by Ron Karenga, founder of the Us Organization. Despite their different approaches, it was believed that operational unity was an important first step for Black people to overcome oppression and achieve power. As Karenga noted, operational unity was a central tactic in the strategy of eventually achieving total unity.³⁷ The Los Angeles Black Congress and San Diego Black Conference were outgrowths of this ideology.

As Jacquette noted, the rebellion had promoted the importance of ideological development. As they forwarded their political programs, African Americans borrowed from a *mélange* of African, Caribbean, Asian, and even European thought in development of what became known as Black Cultural Nationalism. The focus on knowledge production and consciousness raising underscored Karenga’s belief that the “revolution being fought now is a revolution to win the minds of our people. If we fail to win this, we cannot wage the violent one.” Some people, he noted, were so obsessed with the “myth of revolution that they talk about bring America to her knees and can’t wipe out a police station.”³⁸ Karenga’s view of Black revolution was misogynist and

³⁶ Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet,” <http://genius.com/Malcolm-x-ballot-or-bullet> accessed on 3/6/16.

³⁷ Ron Karenga, *The Quotable Karenga* edited by Clyde Halisi, (1967), 26.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 16.

heteropatriarchal in its portrayal of America as a woman being brought to her knees. Yet, his passages also reflect concern over the limitations of the Watts Rebellion. Karenga's writings revealed his skepticism of local armed struggle as the way forward. Instead, he believed that Black nationalists must first counter the white cultural hegemon.

Though Karenga dismissed Marx and other European thinkers, his philosophy nonetheless reflected a stream of radical thought that connect Black and white writers such as Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, Aime Cesaire, and Leopold Senghor. Despite their differences, these radical intellectuals understood the complex interplay between political economy and ideological formation. Power did not only influence the way people thought and acted, culture and ideology were the engine of political change. Transformation in post-rebellion Watts would require a rejection of dominant culture, the creation of a new African American culture that was informed by pan-African principles, and the strategic promotion of that new culture. Embodied in what Karenga describes as programmatic influence, Us advocates, as they were called, believed that they could promote their knowledge by commanding strategic control of a variety of social and cultural organizations be they government agencies or autonomous institutions. Programmatic influence helped the rapid spread of the Us Organization's Black Power philosophy but it also produced many of the sectarian conflicts of the Black Power-era. Nonetheless, from 1965 to 1968, their ideas influenced much of Southern California's Black Power mobilization.

The Us Organization was founded 7 September 1965 out of a study group called the Circle of Seven that regularly met at the Aquarian Bookstore in South Los Angeles. Meeting at the Aquarian Bookstore until 1967, the Circle of Seven and subsequent Us

Organization would have been exposed to a wealth of literature by African, African American, and Caribbean authors. Karenga's theory of cultural nationalism required rigorous study. "Show me a true Nationalist and I'll show you someone who studies," Karenga stated.³⁹ Very much influenced by the teachings of Malcolm, this education required the promotion of "heroic images" of Black leaders. It involved a vindication of leaders such as Marcus Garvey written off by white historians as a failure. This involved the highlighting of Black knowledge production. "Why is it so difficult for Black people to say I got this from Malcolm, I got that from Frederick Douglass, I got this from [Elijah] Muhammad? Why is this so difficult? You quote Shakespeare, Sartre, and Camus. You quote everybody but Black people."⁴⁰ Popular books at Aquarian Bookstore were the works of the Jamaican-born Joel Augustus Rogers the author of *Africa's Gifts to America*, George James the author of *Stolen Legacy* which forwarded the thesis that Greek philosophy emerged from knowledge appropriated from the Egyptian Mystery System.⁴¹ A student of UCLA's African Studies Center, Karenga was fluent in French, Swahili, and Zulu (which he learned by studying with Bernard Magubane and Anthony Ngubo). Beyond Molefi Asante's praise for individual intellectualism of Karenga, the importance of Karenga's multilingualism is that it allowed activists access to writings of many francophone writers that had yet to be published in English like Cheikh Anta Diop. Many of Diop's writings were not translated from French to English until the 1970s. A Marxist historian and negritude advocate, Diop promoted the notion of the scholar as an activist and even became involved in electoral politics. Diop's writings

³⁹ Ibid, 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Alfred Ligon Oral History.

promoted the centrality of African civilization to the development of human civilization, producing an Afrocentric materialist interpretation for alternate forms of African and European modernity.⁴²

In academia and organizing spaces, cultural nationalist formations have long been interrogated for their shortcomings and many questions about the conflicts between cultural nationalists and revolutionary nationalists in the late 1960s remain unanswered. Nonetheless, scholars must not dismiss the importance of cultural nationalists in the post-Watts period placed on consciousness raising and deep study. Historian Robin Kelley has recently reminded students of social movements of the interconnectedness of deep study and liberation movements.⁴³ Also, Sociologists Michael O. West and William G. Martin note, though the defining characteristic of Black Internationalism is struggle, common struggle “is the product of consciousness, that is, the conscious interconnection and interlocution of black struggles across man-made and natural boundaries.” Novels, poetry, historical texts, periodicals, and religious texts, and other forms of have long played important roles in forming what Kelley has termed *freedom dreams*.⁴⁴ “The most

⁴² Predating the work of popular author Jared Diamond by decades, Diop argued that geography and climate overdetermined the development of human civilization. While his work is indeed filled with many essentialist assumptions of African and European cultures, it nonetheless departs from popular biological determinist thought that has influenced generations of Eurocentric and Afrocentric thought. Though his work is problematic, the vast popularity of Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, which also argues for a geographical determinism, lends credibility of Diop’s thesis. Despite, the problematics of his argument, Diop’s argument undoubtedly influenced the political theory of the late Cedric Robinson. Most notably, Robinson’s notion of “the creation of the negro” bares similarities to Diop. One limitation in contemporary popular Afrocentric theory has been the inability of some to build on the important traditions of Diop, James, Chancellor Williams, and the other great Afrocentrists. Molefi Asante, *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait* (Malden, MA: Polity Books, 2009), 86, 171-174. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983/2000).

⁴³ Robin Kelley, “Black Study, Black Struggle,” *Boston Review*, 3/7/16.

⁴⁴ Michael O. West and William G. Martin, “Contours of the Black International: From Toussaint to Tupac,” *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 2-3.

radical ideas often grow out of a concrete intellectual engagement with the problems of aggrieved populations confronting oppression,” Kelley writes.⁴⁵ Whether by Karenga’s many critics or his defenders, like Professor Molefi Asante, this movement that emerged out of South Los Angeles cannot be singularly attributed to Karenga but instead grew out of a collective desire for increased engagement with Black history and radical literature. The deep study of African revolutionary ideologies influenced the local programming of Black Power activists and generated a bond between Southern California and African liberation movements.

Karenga and cultural nationalists embraced the teachings of African socialists such as Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, and Jomo Kenyatta. As Molefi Asante has argued: “Karenga saw socialism’s strength at the level of a coherent ideological structure for the national struggle just as African revolutionaries and progressives had seen socialism as their vehicle for liberation.”⁴⁶ An extension of Karenga’s time as the head of the Afro-American Association in Los Angeles and a Swahili language instructor, Us advocates adopted a blend of West African, South African, and East African languages, names, and clothing. Karenga’s philosophy for Black cultural revolution became known as *Kawaida*, a Kiswahili term for custom. Kawaida is admittedly an African American philosophy influenced by a variety of African religious and cultural principles. Kawaida thought was represented through the *Nguzo Saba* (Seven Principles): Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics or African Socialism), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and

⁴⁵ Robin Kelley, “When History Sleeps,” *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 8.

⁴⁶ Asante, 47.

Imani (Faith).⁴⁷ As Scot Brown shows, some of the more established activists that were members of the Circle of Seven rejected the need to adopt African culture and thought but the younger members of the study group such as Tommy Jacquette and Ken Msemaji enthusiastically embraced the ideology. Still, not all the youth in post-Watts Southern California embraced Karenga's Afrocentrism.

Former Los Angeles Black Panther Party member Wayne Pharr remembers jokingly telling a friend: "I just can't understand why they spend so much time trying to get people to learn an African language, when most black people haven't even learned basic English because the education system is so fucked up....Plus them Us niggas want us to wear a dashiki every day, wear a ten-foot Afro, and put five earrings in our ears and a bone through our noses."⁴⁸ Surely problematic, Pharr's argument regarding educational inequalities displays that not all Black Southern Californians linked cultural transformation to structural change. Paul Bullock's interviews with Watts residents confirms Pharr's memory. Still, many others found the Us platform attractive and the Afrocentricism of many Black Panther cadres highlights the inevitability of some degree of cultural nationalism amongst all Black radical formations.

Sundays at the Park: The Rise of Black Power in San Diego

By 1966, the Congress of Racial Equality had formally embraced Black Power and Hal Brown was a part of the national contingency in CORE that demanded the organization maintain Black leadership.⁴⁹ In the spring of 1966, Brown organized the

⁴⁷ Ibid, 108-113.

⁴⁸ Wayne Pharr, *Nine Lives of a Black Panther: A Story of Survival*, (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books, 2014), 69.

⁴⁹ SD CORE Press Release: CORE Gives Position on "Black Power" 7/10/1966, Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 2, SDSU Special Collections.

San Diego Black Conference. Much like the Los Angeles Black Congress, the Black Conference bridged Black grassroots organizations and established relationships with elected officials such as Congressman Mervyn Dymally of Los Angeles. As with the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party, the Black Conference was also an offspring of the Afro-American Association. The Black Conference continued the AAA1 tradition of holding public meetings on Sundays at Mountain View Park in San Diego and represented an effort to organize the community across class, gender, and age. Through this united front, the Black Conference brought together and trained the next generation of activists. The Black Conference's most renowned young affiliate, Angela Davis, aligned with the group during her graduate studies at University of California San Diego from 1967 to 1969. During this time, Davis was known to many by the Swahili name Tamu (meaning sweet); which she was given by another Black Conference member Vernon Sukumu.⁵⁰ However, in 1966, the Black Conference brought together, Sukumu (then known as Vernon Fontenette), Albert Heisser (Kazi), Joseph Vinson (Chochezi) and Walter Kimble (Kudumu)—Kimble had previously been a member of the AAA1.⁵¹

In April 1966, the Black Conference organized the first “Unity and Leadership Conference”; a three-day event held from the June 14th through June 16th at Southcrest Park. The organizing committee consisted of veterans Harold Brown, John Johnson of the Urban League, and Tom Johnson of the NAACP. Still predominantly male, the Black Conference saw more women's participation than earlier efforts. Jacqueline Meshack, a

⁵⁰ Vernon Sukumu Interview. “Interview with Angela Davis,” The Eyes on the Prize Interviews. http://digital.wustl.edu/e/eii/eiiweb/dav5427.0115.036marc_record_interviewer_process.html (accessed 3/1/2013).

⁵¹ Community Patrol Newspaper Clipping from Vernon Sukumu's Private Collection.

long-time organizer and La Verne Webb were two of the five women on the organizing committee. Sukumu and Vinson were the younger members on the committee. The convention was held at Southcrest Park because of the space it provided. The basketball court was used as an auditorium and the smaller rooms were used for the breakout sessions.⁵² Later named the Black Unity Conference, the meetings became an annual event. The 1967 conference hosted speeches from State Senator Mervyn Dymally, State Assemblyman William Greene, and Ron Karenga of the Us Organization. The three-day event was attended by 1000 people.⁵³ In his talk, Dymally urged the need for quality employment, affordable housing and better education.



Figure 15 Unity and Leadership Conference Organizing Committee ca. 1966 (Sukumu Private Collection)

⁵² Sukumu Interview.

⁵³ "1000 to Attend—3 to Talk at Negro Parley," *San Diego Union*, 4/15/1967, B3.



Figure 16 Harold Brown at the Unity and Leadership Conference ca. 1966 (Brown Papers, SDSU)



Figure 17 Mervyn Dymally at the Unity and Leadership Conference (Brown Papers, SDSU Special Collections)

The younger members of the Black Conference—Chochezi, Sukumu, Kudumu, and Kazi—formed the Community Patrol Against Police Brutality, the de facto militant wing of the Black Conference. That same year, these members merged with the Us

Organization; Karenga had been a frequent speaker at the Black Conference meetings on Sundays at the Mountain View Park in Southeast San Diego (located a half-mile north of Southcrest Park).⁵⁴ When the members of the Black Conference joined the Us Organization, they generally received new names. Many of the early Us advocates received their names directly from Karenga and others received their names from more senior members in the organization, except for babies, there was no specific naming ceremony. As Scot Brown has noted, when people asked for a name, they were then given a name generally based on their character, their trade, and some people like George Stevens chose their own names; he became known as Chaka Zulu. Ken Msemaji received his name because of his public speaking abilities, *msemaji* means orator or speaker in Kiswahili. Vernon Sukumu received his name Sukumu received his name from Charles Sigidi at Mountain View Park a week after Kudumu had been given a name. *Sukumu* means to push, *kudumu* means permanence or to persevere, and *kazi* means work. The tradition of name changing was not new, the Nation of Islam and other Muslim sects had already popularized the practice. However, many everyday people and family members still found it unusual.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ “Community Patrol Against Police Brutality Clipping,” *The Voice*, 6/22/1967. CPAPB Union Tribune Protest Clipping. Vernon Sukumu Private Collection. “Black Power Talk Given,” *San Diego Union*, 8/7/1967, B3. Scot Brown, *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the Us Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 44.

⁵⁵ Brown, 58-60. William L. Van Deburg, *A New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 6 & 171.



Figure 18 San Diego Community Patrol Against Police Brutality ca. 1967 (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)

The practice of adopting African names remains to be ridiculed by some activists and intellectuals but it nevertheless remains important to the generation of solidarity-plus. African American literary critic Saidiya Hartman described her collegiate choice to change her name as “a fiction of someone I would never be—a girl unsullied by the strain of slavery and inherited disappointment.”⁵⁶ However, for people in the Us Organization, and others, the name changes were connected to a deep study and a very positive interest in African languages even as most Americans exhibit decreased interests in learning foreign languages. Surely, African American Kiswahili names do not always reflect the naming patterns of the ethnically Waswahili people of the East African coast, Zanzibar and Comoros Islands. It indeed matches the patterns of non-Muslim Kiswahili speakers

⁵⁶ Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2007), 8-9.

in those societies as well as the patterns of nicknaming. As ML Nambu Temu has noted, Kiswahili has provided positive self-image and academic achievement amongst African Americans; it also directly increased the bonds between African Americans and the nation of Tanzania.⁵⁷ African Americans consumed literature coming from East Africa and projected their images abroad. In San Diego and Los Angeles, the adoption of Kiswahili, and other West African and Bantu names, has remained popular.

Chochezi was the founding chair of Us in San Diego but was succeeded by Sukumu when Chochezi left the organization by 1969. As Us advocates, they continued to hold Sunday sessions at Mountain View Park, just as the Afro-American Association and the Black Conference had. They also administered their own learning center, the School of Afro-American Culture, from the Neighborhood House located at 44th and Market Street. On Saturday mornings, they taught fifty boys and girls between ages 3 and 13 Swahili, Black history and literature, African songs and African dances. Youth were trained as members of the *Simba Wachanga* (Young Lions) and the *Umoja* (Unity) and *Taifa* (Nation) dance troupes. Gender bias was prevalent in the Us Organization and as Angela Davis notes, when she helped organize with Black Conference in San Diego she was criticized by Us members as “doing a man’s job.”⁵⁸ As Scot Brown has noted, despite Karenga’s writings that equated the women’s role as submissive and complimentary, as opposed to equal, to Black men, women in the Us Organization nevertheless made their own place and even challenged the misogynist ideologies of the male leaders. For females, known as the *muminina*, like Patricia Salimu, vice-president

⁵⁷ ML Nambuo Temu, “African American Students’ Self-Awareness Through Kiswahili Language,” *Journal of Black Studies* Vol. 22, No. 4 (June 1992).

⁵⁸ Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1974/1988), 161.

of San Diego State's Black Students' Council, and Maisha Kudumu, "the School of Afroamerican Culture became one of the larger outlets for women activism."⁵⁹

Much has been written on Black Power style politics however this scholarship has been largely national in scope but fashion was also another way that solidarity-plus was generated and the black global spatial imaginary was expanded.⁶⁰ Men of Us Organization members wore drab-colored shirts known as bubas, African and Polynesian-inspired amulets, and many shaved their heads bald just as Maasai warriors had been known to do. The women of the Us Organization and other Kawaida formations dawned African-influenced head wraps, dresses, shawls, and earrings. They styled their hair in naturals and elaborate braids that could be adorned with beads, shells, and other traditional enhancements.⁶¹ Despite the multiple pejorative insults given towards members of the Us Organization, Karenga famously quipped, "If you can wear a French beret, a Russian hat, and Italian shoes and not feel funny, you should be able to wear an Afro-American buba."⁶²

Far from being folly or mimicry, cultural nationalist style politics reflected a form of transnational discourse. Alongside their intense study of African history, language,

⁵⁹ Jamie Bryson, "Negro Group Us Adopts Africa," *San Diego Union*, 3/4/1968, B1. "New School Stimulates Black Pupils," *San Diego Union*, 8/29/1974, B3. Scot Brown, *Fighting For Us*, 56-57.

⁶⁰ The international meaning of Black Power style politics has been largely forgotten. As it has been shown, every Black Power formation had its own distinctive clothing style associated with it. These clothes simultaneously reflected organizational philosophy and were meant to appeal to the masses. The multiple uniforms of the Nation of Islam reflected their racial uplift politics as they presented the clean-cut images of reformed Black men and women. At the same time, the uniforms of their military wing, the Fruit of Islam, resembled the high culture yet regimentation of the French Foreign Legion. The famed Black Panther uniform of black leather jackets and black berets combined the coolness of African American urban culture with the prominent symbol of Francophone and Anglophone special forces.

⁶¹ Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992/2015), p. 142. Brown, 60-62. Widener, 193-205.

⁶² *Quotable Karenga*, 13.

and dance, the style politics incorporated African images and practices, acculturated them and exported the image abroad throughout the African diaspora. The style politics of the Us Organization cannot be accused of Orientalizing or objectifying African identities as it did not attempt to create facsimiles of African garb from a distant past. In fact, the African American embracing of African styles existed concurrent to cultural movements throughout many African nations in which political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere encouraged the masses to embrace African-centered traditions including, but not limited to, clothing. As early as 1960, mainstream African American publications such as *Ebony* displayed images of African men and women wearing kente cloth, bubas, and dashikis as a part of their official business, social, and political attire.⁶³ Such forms of Africanization were not limited to violent American-backed dictators such as Joseph Mobutu. Cultural nationalist style politics nurtured material bonds between African American radical organizations and African culture workers in the United States and political leaders abroad. In Southern California, the Us Organization formed a close relationship with South African performers Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba, Caiphus Semanya, and Letta Mbulu.⁶⁴

New “Afro-American” cultural practices were apparent and introduced new political practices to Black youth following the Watts Rebellion. The influences of the revolutionary socialist Simba Rebellion from Congo on the Us Organization were apparent. Reminiscent of the Kenyan Land and Freedom Party Mau Mau rebellion, Simba rebels fused African spirituality with anticapitalism in their opposition to the

⁶³ In the spring of 1960, *Ebony* magazine followed Ahmed Sekou Toure and his wife as they toured the United States.

⁶⁴ Brown, *Fighting for Us*, 132-135.

neocolonial government of Joseph Kasa-Vubu and Joseph Mobutu in Kinshasa. The Us Organization's Simba Wachanga (Young Lions) were a paramilitary organization. The young men were led by Samuel Carr-Damu, a former Army sergeant. The Simba Wachanga learned performance arts, literature, and language. They were also extensively trained in martial arts. In San Diego, trailblazer Jim Kelly was one of the many instructors who trained young advocates in self-defense. As well, San Diego advocate Robert Tambuzi remembered that upon initiation, Simbas were required to get arrested so that they had already experienced incarceration. Simbas were informed that they were not supposed to, under any circumstances, speak to the police, and, as Scot Brown notes, they often carried out covert "hit and run" operations.⁶⁵ The Simba Wachanga understood all of this as preparation for national and global revolution.

In the wake of the Watts Rebellion and in the context of the War on Poverty, cultural nationalists attempted to negotiate a space where they could continue to influence the minds of the youth towards Black Nationalism and pan-African thought while participating, to some extent, with local and federal government. In Southern California and beyond, Black Nationalist groups partnered with antipoverty agencies as activists sought to tactically engage the War on Poverty. Amidst the undeniable fervor of Black Power, many government officials, and even police agencies, initially encouraged this union. Similarly, cultural nationalism became very popular amongst social workers; in fact, at that time, Karenga worked as a social worker himself.⁶⁶ From the government's

⁶⁵ Brown, *Fighting for Us*, 43-55 and 90.

⁶⁶ For an in-depth study of Black Power and social work consider reading Patricia Reid-Merritt, *Righteous Self-Determination: The Black Social Work Movement in America* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2010) and Joyce M. Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

view, antipoverty partnership with Black Nationalist groups was a way to contain Black radicalism. However, this bond increasingly turned to conflict.

“Youth’s Role in a Nation Becoming”: Radical Mobilization and War on Poverty Programs

By June 1966 there were 127 Teen Posts operating in Los Angeles County and by the next summer the program had expanded to San Diego County.⁶⁷ With the Los Angeles County program now under the supervision of the Economic and Youth Opportunities Agency of Greater Los Angeles (EYOA), by 1967, the Teen Post became one of the largest employers of young people in California. In its regular functions, the Teen Posts of Los Angeles County employed 156 workers and serviced an approximate 17,500 youths.⁶⁸ During the summer programs the Teen Posts employed directly employed 427 youths while also coordinating with other programs such as Neighborhood Youth Corps and Job Corps to get members employed in job training programs.⁶⁹ Located at 3040 Imperial Avenue, the Teen Post One in San Diego was headed by Albert (Heisser) Kazi and began as a project of another War on Poverty program, Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership.

Teen Post One served 350 youth from Logan Heights and Southeast San Diego. Teen Post One had pool tables, weightlifting, events and an 80-by-50-foot dance floor. It offered classes in painting and sculpting. Students established their own peer-to-peer tutoring programs at the Teen Post in San Diego. For students like Otis Crockett, Teen

⁶⁷ “Watts Teen Post Has Open House,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6/30/66, C9. “Imperial Ave. Teen Center Opens Today,” *San Diego Union*, 7/14/67, E3.

⁶⁸ *Office of Economic Opportunity: Hearing before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Education; Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives*, 90th Congress, 1 (October 27, 1967), EYOA results p. 8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, EYOA results pg. 12.

Post was also where they began careers in political activism.⁷⁰ Students of the Teen Post were taught about Black Power and trained around a plethora of progressive issues. At Teen Post One, local youth attended talks from Ron Karenga, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), and all the other Black Power figures who came through San Diego in the late-1960s. During her time at UCSD, Angela Davis spent plenty of hours assisting in the programming at Teen Post One. Sukumu remembered that they would keep the Teen Post open for as many hours a day as the youth needed.⁷¹

Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership was a community action agency formed by members of San Diego's Congress of Racial Equality chapter and the San Diego Black Conference.⁷² As a community action agency, SHTNL epitomized the governmental and grassroots goals for such organizations. In 1966, a committee comprised largely of San Diego CORE members applied for \$153,906 in federal funds for an initial 12 months of organizing.⁷³ SHTNL proposed to organize 35 primarily Black and Brown young San Diegans promising to develop them to become San Diego's future leaders through 208 hours of formal instruction and 40 hours of weekly internship hours. In their proposal, the committee writes that the trainees "will become the action

⁷⁰ Jamie Bryson, "Teen Post 1—Center Means Many Things to Youths," *San Diego Union*, 10/1/1967, H1. Harold Keen, "It's Sock It To 'Em Time," *San Diego Magazine*, (April 1968), 52. Crockett went on to establish an anti-drug campaign in Southeast San Diego. However, his activism also made him and others associated with Teen Post frequent targets of police repression.

⁷¹ "Black Power Talk Given," *San Diego Union*, 8/7/1967, B3.

⁷² Much like the Los Angeles Black Congress, the San Diego Black Conference was operated under what was known as operational unity. The Black Conference was at once its own group and an umbrella organization of the San Diego CORE, Urban League, NAACP and other formations. The Black Conference eventually organized its own militant wing known as the Citizens Patrol Against Police Brutality. Through their relationship with the Black Congress, San Diego Black Conference members developed a close relationship with Ron Karenga's Us Organization as well as the Black Panther Political Party of Watts, an autonomous group from the Oakland Formation.

⁷³ Community Action Program Grant Information on page titled CAP 7 Project Component. Harold K. Brown Papers, SDSU Special Collections and University Archive. Box 5 Folder 6.

arm for the five Community Action Councils planned for the Southeast Area and will work for the controlled, orderly but rapid change needed if violent outbursts are to be prevented.” Clearly referencing the Watts Rebellion, the SHTNL proposal states that the students will be “trained to harness the power that comes with unity and to use this power to generate jobs, to attack the causes of poverty, to disperse minority families throughout all areas of San Diego, to solidify family structure, to seek remedy for the present inferior slum schools” and to integrate Southeast San Diego “into what President Lyndon Johnson described as the Great Society.”⁷⁴

As the Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership application displays, War on Poverty organizers engaged and reproduced the dominant logic of delinquency, urban crisis, community development, and masculinity that the Johnson Administration disseminated. Such language drew the support of not only governmental agencies but also law enforcement. In San Diego, the newly appointed police Chief OJ Roed credited programs such as Teen Post for successfully allowing San Diego to get “through the hot summer months last year (1967) without any major outbreak.”⁷⁵ Accompanying this opinion, the San Diego Police Department created a community relations division headed by then Lieutenant William Kolender which worked to open networks of communication between the SDPD and civil rights and Black Power organizations. Kolender’s community relations division supported the creation of San Diego’s Teen Post One as well as other community anti-poverty agencies.⁷⁶ This paradox was not missed by civil rights and Black Power leader Harold Brown, the appointed head of SHTNL. In a public

⁷⁴ Community Action Grant Information. “Objectives of the Project”

⁷⁵ “New Police Chief Says Disorders Less Likely,” *San Diego Union*, 2/18/68, B1.

⁷⁶ “Police Unit Lauded,” *San Diego Union*, 11/5/67, B3.

debate with anti-War on Poverty activist and conservative author Patty Newman, Brown remarked, “You can criticize, ridicule, mock the program, but you cannot offer a constructive alternative.” Brown noted that the “number one fear of the reactionary right” was that the War on Poverty programs would enfranchise the disadvantaged.⁷⁷ For Brown and other organizers, they pragmatically engaged the Community Action Program but they did not waiver on their principles. Activists professed to support the mainstream goals of the Johnson Administration and American postwar liberalism in their block grant application but attempted to achieve more radical goals.

Like Brown, the contradictions of participation in the War on Poverty was recalled by members of the Black Panther Party. Remarking on the aftermath to the Watts Rebellion, Pharr notes that there had been two approaches to understanding the cause of the rebellion—one local and one national. Locally, the response was increased police militarization whereas the federal government responded with creating more leaders. “In the end,” Pharr writes, “the studies stated that people were angry about police brutality and the lack of jobs. Unbelievable! They spent all that money to tell us what we already knew.”⁷⁸ Local government and police agencies offered support for community action agencies out of the belief that the programs would help prevent further rebellions. Pharr recognized that the Teen Post had emerged as a government strategy to contain the self-activity of Black youth. “The program was not without its issues,” Pharr writes. “One of the problems with government programs like Teen Post was that they were based on an assumption that all black youth were involved in criminal activity or

⁷⁷ “War on Poverty Program Attacked; Social Equality Termed Impossible,” *Daily Aztec*, 5/24/67, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Pharr, 48.

gang violence, not that we needed more industry and business opportunities. That couldn't have been further from the truth.”⁷⁹ Eldridge Cleaver was not as kind in his assessment of the Teen Posts and the War on Poverty overall as he described them as “a flood of bullshit programs.” Yet underscoring the maneuverability some found in the War on Poverty programs, Cleaver notes that other than putting some “dirty dollars in the pockets of various political cliques” the programs actually served to “aggravate every grievance niggers ever had. Mostly because when niggers looked at the measly crumbs tossed to them by the pigs, it was a simple process of multiplication to imagine what something whole would be like for a change.”⁸⁰ The real promise in the Teen Post was not the actual programming but instead the political possibilities that the space provided because of the everyday interactions of participants and the programmatic influence of the workers.

Robin Kelley reminds us that “the War on Poverty might have failed to reverse the deteriorating conditions for the black poor, it ultimately played an important role in mobilizing an already politicized segment of them, as well as in strengthening ties between white liberals and mainstream black leadership and in providing poor residents a greater voice in the affairs of certain social agencies.”⁸¹ The radical motives of War on Poverty workers and Black Power affiliates eventually led to direct conflict between African Americans and government officials. As elected officials and appointed

⁷⁹ Ibid, 49.

⁸⁰ Eldridge Cleaver, *Target Zero: A Life in Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2007), 124.

⁸¹ Robin DG Kelley, “Birmingham's Untouchables: The Black Poor in the Age of Civil Rights” in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994 and 1996), 95.

antipoverty directors noticed the failure of these programs to contain Black youth, they began to defund the programs and surveil the community leaders.

Despite their differing ideologies, the Us Organization and the Black Panthers both did much of their mobilization from official War on Poverty programs. Once the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party was established in January 1968, the Panthers took a different perspective on the War on Poverty and “the explosive potential of the Watts rebellion and developed a program to organize black folks on the street” than the Us Organization had.⁸² Based in Los Angeles with satellites throughout the area including Long Beach and San Diego, the Southern California Chapter was the Panthers’ first chapter outside of the Bay Area and arguably their most active. The chapter was organized by Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter, a formerly incarcerated leader of the Slausons gang. Bunchy Carter had been radicalized while in Soledad prison. First influenced by Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, he had first become a Muslim. Yet after meeting Cleaver, Carter renounced Islam, dedicated himself to the Black liberation struggle and joined the Black Panther Party in 1967. Carter was subsequently charged by Cleaver with further developing the Southern California chapter. Having been raised in Southern California himself and having written about Watts extensively in his bestseller *Soul on Ice*, the Los Angeles chapter was clearly influenced by Cleaver’s Revolutionary Marxism.⁸³ Resistant to government institutions, the Panthers’ interpretation of self-

⁸² Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 143.

⁸³ Cleaver was a deeply problematic individual. However, in *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver had written highly of Watts and African American young men he had interacted with from Watts, then referred to as low riders. Watts and those young men, had transitioned from the laughing stock to the revolutionary vanguard, as Cleaver had explained. Eldridge Cleaver, “On Watts,” in *Soul on Ice* (New York: Delta Books/Random House, 1968/1991), pp. 45-47.

determination politics, in Los Angeles, technically did not extend towards direct participation in these programs. Then Black Panther Party's survival programs often reflected their organizational insistence on autonomist political organization.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in practice, the Black Panthers had both direct and indirect ties to antipoverty programming. Once out of prison, Bunchy became employed by a South Los Angeles Teen Post.

In Los Angeles, Wayne Pharr's aunt Caffie Greene, "a longtime activist" and Teen Post director served as a crucial conduit between Black Power and community action programming.⁸⁵ In their separate accounts, Cleaver and Pharr both note that the turning point for the Watts Teen Post was when Greene hired Bunchy Carter. Greene had been having difficulties directing the young Black men but after Bunchy arrived, Pharr notes, "Bunchy immediately began to organize [the young men] as soldiers in the army for Black liberation."⁸⁶ Throughout South Los Angeles, Carter began to require young Black males enroll in Teen Post so that they could learn Black Panther Party ideology and gain combat skills. "He trained them in self-defense tactics, and he taught them how to properly shoot guns," Pharr writes.⁸⁷

Upon visiting Carter at the Teen Post, Cleaver was pleasantly surprised to find about a dozen armed young Black men. The "young brothers had on black shoes, black

⁸⁴ A Bloom and Martin have shown in their crucial synthesis of the Black Panther Party, Black Panther Party founders both worked for a War on Poverty program, the North Oakland Neighborhood Anti-Poverty Center. This became one of the first headquarters of the Oakland-based Panther Party. Bloom and Martin, pp. 36 and 48.

⁸⁵ Black women's labor underwrote antipoverty organizing both in independent organizations such as Johnnie Tilmon's National Welfare Rights Organization or with Elaine Brown's work at the Watts Happening Coffeehouse. Pharr, 48.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 68.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

pants, and black turtleneck sweaters, where just over the heart was the slashing yellow sign of the radical.” The mathematical square root symbol had been used by Carter, Cleaver, and others as an emblem of Black radicalism in prison.⁸⁸ Upon initiation, Los Angeles members recited the purported Kenyan Mau Mau oath as they pledged their allegiance to the Black Panther Party. Once organized and trained, the Black Panthers followed the legacy of Community Alert Patrol of engaging in more direct confrontation with law enforcement and, at least formally, promoting a revolutionary Marxist agenda. Despite their many differences, the Us Organization and the Black Panthers pledged support for each other. Philosophically they had many similarities as they promoted community control of educational, political, and economic structures. As well they also promoted a Black Nationalist politics that supported solidarity amongst all people of color. Scholars have defined this ideology as Third Worldism. In Southern California, Black Nationalist groups answered calls for the unity of Black and Brown people that contrasted with the racial hostility that the EYOA and other mainstream antipoverty agencies had nurtured.

Funding uncertainties and bureaucratic bickering in antipoverty agencies pitted African Americans and Mexican Americans against each other. In 1966, the direction of the Teen Post program was transferred to the EYOA headed by the Mexican American Joe Maldonado. With this transition, the community increasingly lost control over its programming and resources as the Teen Posts were placed in direct competition with other antipoverty programs. This scramble for cash aggravated interracial conflict

⁸⁸ Cleaver, *Target Zero*, 124.

between African American and Mexican American community leaders and youths. Historian Robert Bauman displayed this conflict in his study of the Neighborhood Adult Participation Project (NAPP). Headed by civil rights activist and social worker, Opal Jones, NAPP was an employment and on-site job training program aimed to maximize citizen participation in South Los Angeles. Amongst their employment program, NAPP mobilized the people for voter registration, childcare, food banks, better street lights, and regular garbage collection. A friend of the popular LA City Councilman and former police officer Tom Bradley and congressman Augustus Hawkins, Jones was a political threat to Mayor Sam Yorty and Maldonado. After Jones sent a letter to Maldonado accusing him of attempting to limit the community control of NAPP and publicly protesting his leadership, Jones was fired. Though Jones was eventually rehired, her dismissal underscored a trend in which the bureaucratic Maldonado, supported by Yorty, clashed with Black female antipoverty leadership.⁸⁹

This conflict was revisited a year later when in June 1967, Joe Maldonado, executive director of the EYOA, accused Teen Post worker Fifi Boger, a well-known Black activist and social worker, of mishandling funds by making \$200,000 in cancelled checks appear as if Boger had stolen the funds.⁹⁰ The real concern, voiced by Boger, was the battle over the administration of antipoverty programs and the irregular funding. “The community feels that control of the Teen Post program by EYOA and City Hall appears to be the motivating factor for all the recent publicity,” Boger stated. Considering the “sporadic funding, complete demoralization of the staff plus being told

⁸⁹ Robert Baumann, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East LA* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 55-58.

⁹⁰ “Teen Post Program Row Still Boiling,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6-22-67, A6.

every month that we are a low-priority program to be terminated by August 31,” Boger noted that they did a phenomenal job achieving their objectives.⁹¹ Compounding this conflict were the increasing complaints from Mexican American organizers that the antipoverty programs such as NAPP unfairly favored Black which culminated with more high-profiled feuds between Jones and other Black leaders with Mexican American leaders.⁹² While scholars like Baumann have largely focused on the bureaucratic spouts, a large melee that erupted at the 1966 Teen Post Junior Olympic Games points to a more problematic result of these racial conflicts and underscores the importance of Black Power’s global spatial imaginary.

Promoted as “a new kind of positive community action program,” the Teen Post Olympics were held at the Los Angeles Coliseum, just a little over a year after the Watts Rebellion, on Tuesday August 30th and featured 1,500 participants and 10,000 spectators from around Southern California. The contestants competed in gymnastics, jumping rope, track and field events, wrestling, swimming, and weightlifting among other events.⁹³ Yet, the most controversial events were the boxing matches. With the young athletes competing for their respective Teen Posts, Black participants complained that the fights became racial contests as Black fighters were paired against white and Mexican American boxers. These racial bouts caused tensions to rise. Reports suggest that in the early afternoon, rumors of a fist fight between a Mexican American Teen Poster and a Black Teen Poster began to spread. Subsequently, about a half an hour following the

⁹¹ “Teen Post Director Hits Criticism by EYOA,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6/16/67, A8.

⁹² Baumann, 52-68.

⁹³ “Teen Posts’ Olympics Set for Tuesday,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/28/1966, F6.

initially altercation, a melee erupted involving a few hundred Blacks, whites, and Latinos and lasted for about 30 minutes until police arrived.⁹⁴

The *Los Angeles Times* and even the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, a Black-owned newspaper, blamed the outburst on a “Black Nationalist plot” by citing that a group of young Black teens wore black sweatshirts donning the slogan “Black Power” instead of the designated Teen Post uniforms. As well, journalists suggested that the fights started “on signal.” In a front-page story, Brad Pye of the *Sentinel* publicly admonished the Black teens as “hoodlums” and “coward bullies.”⁹⁵ Despite the bureaucratic constraints they personally placed on antipoverty programs, Maldonado and Yorty publicly defended the Teen Post program and dismissed the melee as the result of a few agitators. African American youths were the only ones to point towards a structural cause for the brawl though they had aided the climate of racial hostility and competition.

Giving the Movement a Shot in the Arm: Third Worldism of Black and Latino Youth

Despite the strategic use of government-funded antipoverty programs by activists, this brawl unearths the limitations in War on Poverty programming. Severely under-resourced and irregularly funded, the War on Poverty created a reactionary culture of competition amongst activists who were forced to scramble for a few “dirty dollars,” as Cleaver called antipoverty money. Far from the culprit, it was Black Power groups who increasingly looked beyond government funding and American nationalism in their efforts to nurture a new Black leadership in Southern California. Using cultural work, the

⁹⁴ Jack Jones, “Black Nationalist Plot Blamed for Teen Post Melee,” *Los Angeles Times*, 9/1/66, p. 1. Art Berman and Roy Haynes, “Racial Row Mars Teen Games: 17 Injured as Negro Youth Attack Whites,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/31/66, p. 1

⁹⁵ Brad Pye, “Olympics Erupt in Teenage Brawl,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9/1/66, A1.

tradition of freedom schools, and youth conferences, the Us Organization, Black Panther Party, Black Congress, and Black Conference promoted the Third World solidarity amongst Black youth. This Third Worldism became an important component of solidarity-plus in Southern California as it called for unity amongst American racial minorities, not just international solidarity with African diasporic communities. This multiracial alliance was essential to future campaigns. Even as the feud between the Panthers and the Us Organization metastasized, both organizations partnered with Chicano groups and promoted interracial solidarity amongst the youth. Eschewing the “oppression Olympics” that OEO funding fostered, this Third Worldism motivated teens to agitate for increased local change in unique ways that defied sectarian ideologies of older activists.⁹⁶

While examining the Third Worldist activism in Southern California, this study moves beyond Geographer Laura Pulido’s important study *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Focusing on the Black Panther Party, the Asian American group East Wind, and the Chicano El Centro de Accion Social y Autonomo/Center for Autonomous Social Action, Pulido largely isolates Third Worldism to explicitly Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary nationalist organizations. However, Third Worldism was not limited to revolutionary Marxist formations and nor did it

⁹⁶ Longtime activist Elizabeth Martinez is credited with creating this term. Many have noted her 1993 essay “Beyond Black/White” as the source of this term. Though the essay was an appeal for activists to move beyond racial binaries and competition, the term Oppression Olympics is not used in that essay. However, Martinez did use the term a decade later in a 2003 article for the *Black Scholar* entitled “Open Letter to Our African American Brothers and Sisters.” Martinez was an active member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and in the late 1960s joined Reies Lopes Tijerina’s Alianza Federal de Mercedes in New Mexico. The Alianza played an important role in fostering solidarity between Black and Brown people.

originate there. In fact, one limiting factor of Pulido's study is the surprising limited relational work amongst the groups in her text—especially between Black Panthers and the Chicano Left. Evidence suggests the need to move beyond the ideological boundaries of organized Marxism—Jorge Mariscal, Gaye Theresa Johnson, and Cynthia Young have done precisely this in their work.⁹⁷

For Third Worldism in Southern California, there was no more important an event than the national conference organized Reies Lopes Tijerina's Alianza Federal de Pueblos Libres (formerly the Alianza Federal de Mercedes) in late October 1967. At that conference, members of the Us Organization, Black Panther Party, Black Congress, Tijerina's Alianza, Corky Gonzales' Crusade for Justice, the Mexican American Youth Organization, SNCC and CORE pledged commitment to this alliance of Black and Brown. Among the attendees were the heads of the Brown Berets, David Sanchez, Bert Corona, Maria Varela, Ralph Featherstone of SNCC, Karenga, James Dennis of CORE, Anthony Akku Babu, and Walter Bremond of the Black Congress. Attendees were given the directives to return to their homes and build solidarity between Black and Brown people. Mariscal shows that the plans for creating Black and Brown coalitions began on the busses as activists returned to Southern California.⁹⁸

From Los Angeles to San Diego, African American and Mexican American youth expanded a local radical tradition by organizing cross-racial alliances grounded in

⁹⁷ See: Gorge Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), Gaye Theresa Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), and Cynthia A. Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a US Third World Left* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁹⁸ Mariscal, 193-195.

immediate political and economic struggles. Creating a *counterscript* to the racial logic of mainstream War on Poverty administrators, expressive culture—poetry, music, dance, and public celebrations—was a major conduit through which these solidarity politics were imagined and actualized.⁹⁹ While much of the scholarship on Black and Brown relational politics has focused on Los Angeles, San Diego offers a crucial intervention into that historiography. As I have shown, Black and Brown people lived in closest proximity to each other in San Diego. While the accelerating postwar separation of Black and white in Southern California had fueled the growth in antiracist activism, in San Diego, Black and Brown people cohabited the multiracial areas of Logan Heights and Southeast San Diego, Linda Vista, and National City. This meant that education, labor, and housing campaigns had created the grounds for mutual identification.

In the spring of 1968, founding member of the SDSU Black Student Council Arthur Graham edited the local poetry anthology *Voices from the Ghetto*. Graham was joined by Lonnie Briscoe, also of the BSC, and Isa Infante, an Afro-Latina activist of Dominican and Puerto Rican descent of the Peace and Freedom Party. *Voices from the Ghetto* represented the culture of Third Worldism generated in San Diego by nationalists and the radical left, complicating the racial, class, and ideological divisions in the 1960s. Featuring entries from the editors, *Voices from the Ghetto* also contained entries from US Organization member Katibu, BSC member Ron McElroy, and Joe Chochezi who also wrote the preface to the volume. Accompanying Infante, *Voices from the Ghetto* contained the poetry of Alberto “Alurista” Urista, the head of San Diego State’s Mexican

⁹⁹ Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*, (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 201), 10.

American Youth Association chapter. Though Chochezi's preface to the anthology suggests that the volume was from the Black perspective and for Black people, it is possible that Chochezi's reading of Blackness included the Latina/o experience. The polyculturalism displayed in *Voices from the Ghetto* uncovers the inseparability of Black Internationalist politics and Third World liberation. The Black and Brown solidarity politics of *Voices from the Ghetto* was also the result of sustained organizing efforts following the Alianza conference.

While the Los Angeles Black Youth Conference in the fall of 1967 had generated conflict between the Us Organization and the Black United Front, as Angela Davis has noted.¹⁰⁰ In spring 1968, the very first San Diego Black Youth Conference was organized at Southcrest Park. Albert Kazi, the head of the Teen Post, was a co-chair of the conference and theme was the "Youth's Role in a Nation Becoming." Noticeably influenced by the local Black Unity Conferences and national Black Power conferences, the Black Youth Conference was planned to provide a forum to address youth issues in specificity. As with the Black Unity Conferences, the Black Youth Conference was a weekend event, with registration held on March 1st and the workshops on March 2nd and 3rd. A large event, San Diego's Black Youth Conference attracted 1,000 attendees. Some of the workshop titles were: "How to Build and Control the Black Community;" "Black Consciousness;" "Black Is Beautiful;" "Police Brutality;" and "Education as a Means." There was also a workshop solely on Black History.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Davis, 158-159.

¹⁰¹ "Black Confer," *Good Morning Teaspoon*, 2/28/1968, 4. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives Digital Collection. Brian Behnken, "Introduction," in *The Struggle in Black and Brown: African American and Mexican American Relations during the Civil Rights Era* edited by Brian Behnken, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 1-3.

Karenga, San Francisco State Black Student Union president Jimmy Garrett, John Floyd of Los Angeles' Black Panther Political Party and Joseph Chochezi all spoke at the Black Youth Conference. Floyd offered an international perspective by comparing American racism to South Africa and Garrett advised the attendees to not waste time destroying each other but instead destroy civilization and be prepared to build a new one.¹⁰² Just months after the Alianza conference, in his remarks, Karenga urged that the Black youth to give their movement “a shot in the arm” by uniting with Chicanos to fight against “the real enemy...the white races.”¹⁰³ Kawaida formations had developed an ideology which taught of the cultural and political economic conditions of African American and Latino people. The bond between African American and Latino activists became crucial to the antiapartheid campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s but in the late 1960s, this Third Worldist spirit manifested the short-lived coalition Black, Oriental, Mexican Brothers (BOMB).

BOMB was formed in early 1968 and its membership contained representatives of the Us Organization, Mexican American Political Association (MAPA), the Asiatic American Conference, the NAACP, and the GI Forum. BOMB traced their origins to call for the alliance of nonwhite people that came out of the Alianza conference in October 1967. As was noted in an article for the radical student newspaper the *Good Morning Teaspoon*, “The treaty is seen as a big step in mutual understanding between the groups which in the past have been antagonistic to each other although they have similar aims and problems.”¹⁰⁴ The Co-Chairmen of BOMB were Joe Vinson-Chochezi (the

¹⁰² “Don’t Destroy Each Other, Parley Told,” *San Diego Union*, 3/4/1968, B3.

¹⁰³ Ken Hudson, “Negro-Mexican Alliance Pushed,” *San Diego Union*, 3/3/1968, B6.

¹⁰⁴ “Brothers Unite,” *Good Morning Teaspoon*, 3/6/68.

former head of the Us San Diego Chapter), Frank Saiz, and Vincent Eloquin. A united front group that extended the notion of operational unity to all people of color, BOMB was but one group to foster third world solidarity in San Diego as they fought against San Diego's Mayor Curran for community control of the appointment of city officials, as at that time Southeast's district councilman attained their seat through mayoral appointment. Their efforts resulted in Leon Williams, a former antipoverty worker, being elected the first Black City Councilman in San Diego history.¹⁰⁵

Voices from the Ghetto represented the political culture being generated by youth of color following the Watts Rebellion. The contributors to the anthology took control of the post-Watts narrative of urban life for the poor of color as it proposed to raise the consciousness of the readers. Chochezi's "Wake Up Nigger" asked Blacks to take pride in their features and culture. In "Lesson #1" and "I Will Die Free," Chochezi advocated for revolution. Yet in his writings, the revolution consisted of both armed rebellion and spiritual struggle. In his poem "Revolt," which immediately followed Chochezi's collection of essays, McElroy expanded Chochezi's message. McElroy's poem elevated the lumpen proletariat to the level of armed revolutionary while admonishing "honky capitalist swine." McElroy writes, "Revolt, Revolt, Oh, Revolt/Take up the fallen gun of the Viet Cong/Take up the fallen bottle of wine/The fallen burning spear of the wino and the Simba warriors/Both heroes of this our revolution/of this great Black making of the house, nigga stile."¹⁰⁶ Intended to be an inspirational piece, Chochezi's poem "To A Woman" celebrates Black beauty but also equates it with submissiveness, a common

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ron McElroy, "Revolt," *Voices from the Ghetto*, 15-16.

trope amongst radical men of color in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁷ Conversely, the Afro-Latina Infante also praised the beauty of the Black woman, in her entries, the Black woman is not submissive. In her poem “Ninette,” the Black woman’s “eyes search to the land” for “new adventures.” In her poetry, Infante places the Black woman at the forefront of revolutionary struggle and not as a helpmate.¹⁰⁸ Writing his poems in both Spanish and English, Alurista invites a multiracial readership and crossracial dialogue about mutual concerns.

Voices from the Ghetto was the result of a Third Worldism that called for the global unification of people of color. Domestically, this cry for unity was seen in the solidarity of Black Power and the emerging Chicano Power and Asian American movements. In the globalized context of the War on Poverty and Peace Corps, *Voices from the Ghetto* challenged policies that pitted people of color against each other and sought to develop an international community of people of color devoted to American political agendas. Born in Jamaica, Graham had originally majored in accounting at San Diego State. However, Graham’s extensive understanding of Caribbean literature, Garveyism, and political analysis allowed for him to continue his career in writing. From the late 1960s to the 1970s, Graham composed at least five plays and much more volumes of literature. A year after editing *Voices from the Ghetto*, Graham produced *The Last Shine*, the story of an African American shoeshine man who eventually challenges his own labor and social alienation through revolutionary consciousness and armed rebellion.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Voices*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ *Voices*, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Arthur J. Graham, *The Last Shine* (San Diego: Black Book Productions, 1969).

Along with literature and political education, public celebrations also generated Third Worldism and Black Internationalism amongst youth of color in Southern California and became an important form of solidarity-plus. The public celebrations and holidays administered by the Us Organization advocates and their affiliates connected Black calls for community control of public resources and unity to the revolutionary movements of the Third World, just as the conferences and literature had done.¹¹⁰ While Kwanzaa is the most recognizable Kawaïda celebration, in the late 1960s, Kwanzaa had yet to capture the imaginations of the Black public, school administrators, or corporate America. Arguably, festivals honoring the life and work of Malcolm X had garnered widespread support by the African American community. On 21 February 1968, the San Diego Us Organization had coordinated a Dhabihu (sacrifice) in remembrance of Malcolm's slaying. Over 200 people met at Mountain View Park where they heard messages from members of the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party and were entertained by the "Afro-American" drum group as well as spoken word poetry.¹¹¹ In a much larger observance, 1,500 people, including 1,000 youth from local junior high schools and high schools attended the first Kuzaliwa (birthday) celebration in honor of Malcolm X on Friday May 17th at Mountain View Park. Organized by Sukumu, the San Diego Us Organization, and the Black Conference, the inaugural Kuzaliwa hosted a medley of political speakers and cultural performances.

For students from elementary through college, these holidays had the largest resonance, these cultural events became a way for students to defy the most basic but

¹¹⁰ Brown, 75.

¹¹¹ "Dabikhu [sic]," *Good Morning Teaspoon*, 2/28/17, p. 2.

fundamental of public school policies—attendance.¹¹² The public administration of education had remained an active front for local struggles and the Kuzaliwa in 1968 had raised the alarms of local authorities who expressed public objection to the mass exodus of students that Friday.¹¹³ San Diego became known for hosting the largest Kuzaliwa celebrations through the late 1970s. This eventually forced the district to close the Southeast schools for Malcolm X celebrations.¹¹⁴ From the cultural holidays to public festivals, these events agitated local powerbrokers, initiated the public disapproval of Governor Ronald Reagan, and were routine subject of police surveillance. This suggests that despite the multiple paradoxes of cultural nationalism, these events retained a significant level of counterhegemonic importance.

¹¹² As Jeanne Theoharis' study of Black student activism in South Los Angeles reminds readers. Scholars must never discount the autonomy and agency of student activists in the Black Power era. "Their actions demonstrate the ways that these young people were conscious political actors," Theoharis notes, as they bridged civil rights and Black Power activism in their demands for structural change in the communities and at schools. Nevertheless, though the media and government officials sought to blame youth activism on the outside agitation of Black and Brown radicals in an effort to discredit the claims of youths of color, we must not discount the conscious efforts of radical organizations to inspire youth activism. These were not top-down vanguardist efforts but the result of multigenerational discourse and dialogue. The youth of the late-1960s engaged the activists of the previous generations and by the 1970s, those young adults had grown and continued to build with the younger activists—eventually bridging civil rights and Black Power to the antiapartheid movement. Jeanne Theoharis, "'W-A-L-K-O-U-T!': High School Students and the Development of Black Power in L.A.," in *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level*, by Peniel Joseph (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 109 and 123.

¹¹³ "Negro Students Mark Birthday," *SD Union*, 5/18/1968, B3.

¹¹⁴ It is my contention that the cultural events and official student walkouts acted as general strikes that both removed the most valuable labor from the school system while calling for further democratization of public education.



Figure 19 1968 Kuzaliwa at Mountain View Park (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)

From the community to the campus, the cultural practices of Black and Brown youth became political action. In 1967, Black and Brown students at Manual Arts and Fremont High School in Los Angeles used public celebrations and walkouts to challenging segregation and police brutality on local campuses.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Black and Brown youths arose in opposition to the similar conditions at San Diego's Abraham Lincoln High School on Friday 11 April 1969. Throughout the 1960s, San Diego's Lincoln High School had been ground zero for Civil Rights and Black Power struggles over the education, political representation, and housing discrimination. At the Southeast

¹¹⁵ As Jeanne Theoharis notes, in 1967, Us Organization advocates were identified as the premier agitators of a walkout of 2,100 students and a series of protests over de facto school segregation and police brutality at Los Angeles Manual Arts High School. Theoharis, 114-115.

San Diego Teen Post, the youth-run tutoring and mentoring programs were in direct response to the limited instruction at their local schools. On the morning of Friday April 11th, this discontent turned to action when Lincoln High School senior, Roy Lee Johnson arrived late and was not permitted to enter his classroom but was instead ordered to the principal's office.¹¹⁶ According to Lincoln's regulations, an admittance slip was required for exceptionally late students. While sitting in the principal's office, awaiting disciplinary action, Johnson decided to leave the office. At approximately 8:40AM, Johnson arose, left the main building and dashed across the campus to the campus auto body shop.¹¹⁷ At the auto body shop, he met with fellow students including another senior Frank White. Expressing his anger about the situation, Johnson asked for a tool he could carry with him back towards the administration building—White suggested a pry bar.¹¹⁸ Johnson initially intended to return to his classroom and hit his teacher but instead ran through the halls using the pry bar to break windows and the main display case. While Johnson was ultimately persuaded to cease by fellow students, the commotion caused other students to leave their classes. At around 9AM one of these students pulled the fire alarm, and the remainder of the 1000-plus student body left their classes. For the rest of the day, about 250 students gathered on the campus patio, refusing to return to class.¹¹⁹ This was the beginning of a ten-day protest which also spread to other local high schools.

¹¹⁶ "School Hit By Walkout, Mass Rally," *San Diego Union*, 4/12/1969, B2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Personal Conversation with Frank White, December 2012.

¹¹⁹ "School Hit By Walkout, Mass Rally," *San Diego Union*, 4/12/1969, B2

Just blocks away, Mountain View Park, the site of the 1965 skirmishes, became the gathering point for the students. On the first day, African American and Chicano students drafted a list of 22 demands which they ordered be met before they returned to campus. The core of the list mandated better education including Black Studies and Chicano Studies curricula, decreased policing of student mobility and more equitable administrative policies. They also demanded control of the cultural programming and culinary operations of the school. Students demanded better education. Articulating a Third Worldism generally ascribed to colleges like San Francisco State and UC San Diego or these demands also engaged transnational policy mandating that international students who “opt out” of school be protected from deportation. Black and Brown students also demanded that the student body and the community advisors they select be allowed to share in the governance of Lincoln High School. These students demanded a school that reflected the diversity of their cultures and their histories but also their region. Far from superficial, the seemingly mundane nature of some of the demands were a testament to the systemic problems. These demands displayed the bonds between these students and the revolutionary goals of radical organizations such as MAYA, the Brown Berets, the Us Organization, a and the Black Panthers.¹²⁰

The War on Anti-Poverty

African American and Mexican American youth took the calls for alliance and mutual struggle seriously (just as BOMB had off-campus).¹²¹ Reconfiguring the popular

¹²⁰ “Lincoln Student Walkout,” Leon Williams Papers, Box 107, Folder 13. San Diego State University Special Collections and University Archive.

¹²¹ Leroy E. Harris, “The Other Side of the Freeway: A Study of Settlement Patterns of negroes and Mexican Americans in San Diego, California” (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie-Mellon University, 1974), 106, 137, 139, and 144

stories of Black and Latino liberation, these students challenged the culture of interracial conflict that the scramble for antipoverty funds had generated, even while participating in these programs themselves. Henceforth, government officials sought to break the influence radical groups had on War on Poverty programs. In 1967, local and federal officials had already begun to withdraw their support for Community Action Programs with ties to Black Power organizations. One congressman at the head of that charge was San Diego's Congressional Representative from the 37th District Lionel Van Deerlin, a Democrat. In early 1967, Van Deerlin had spearheaded a House Democratic Caucus effort to unseat Adam Clayton Powell. The highest ranking political supporter of Black Power and the organizer of the 1966 Black Power Conference, Powell was well-respected by many grassroots activists. Nonetheless, Powell was indeed unseated on March 1st of that year.

Members of the Black Congress and Black Conference publicly addressed the issue. At a public talk on antipoverty by Van Deerlin at the Neighborhood House offices in National City, still employed by the OEO, Brown, SHTNL interns, and other Black Conference members interrupted the meeting. Charging that Van Deerlin, whose district covered most of Black San Diego, had failed his constituents, Brown and the crowd shouted down Van Deerlin and forced him out of the building. Once outside, Brown led the group in singing, laughing, whistling, and speech making while Van Deerlin talked. After Van Deerlin finished speaking, Brown then led the crowd back into the conference room where they forced Van Deerlin to answer their questions. When police subsequently guided Van Deerlin out of the building, Brown and the others left as well. Once outside again, the *San Diego Union* reports that the group "kicked and hammered"

the unmarked car that Van Deerlin retreated to.¹²² Blaming this event on Brown's leadership training program, Van Deerlin later called for Brown to be fired a fifty percent reduction in San Diego War on Poverty funding.¹²³ Angrily, Van Deerlin angrily wrote to the head of the OEO Sargent Shriver: "We apparently have called upon taxpayers to underwrite a course of training in riot and insurrection."¹²⁴

Conversely, South Los Angeles' representative, like Powell, Representative Augustus Hawkins, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Education and Labor, was an ally and a proponent of community control of antipoverty efforts. On Friday 27 October 1967 Hawkins held a public hearing on the War on Poverty at John Adams Jr. High School in Los Angeles, California concerning the affective administration of the Community Action Programs. A wide variety of speakers such as LA County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, EYOA Executive Director Joe Maldonado, Ted Watkins of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, and Walter Bremond of the Los Angeles Black Congress spoke. Most of the speakers voiced varied support for the local programs ranging from liberal proposals for more bureaucratic oversight coming from Maldonado to the radical support for community control of the antipoverty programs by speakers like Bremond. The EYOA drew much of the heat from activists who saw it as an arm of city hall. Appearing in defense of his agency, Maldonado did nothing to challenge the program cuts in his statement. "[W]e're living in a fashion that you can start a program with low administrative costs immediately," Maldonado stated—underscoring his support

¹²² "Van Deerlin Jeered Out of Meeting," *San Diego Union*, 3-7-67, B3.

¹²³ Jamie Bryson, "Local EOC Fights Anti-Poverty Cuts," *San Diego Union*, 3-15-67.

¹²⁴ Jamie Bryson, "Self-Help Works Trainees Prove," *San Diego Union*, 1-22-68, B1.

for liberal bureaucracy.¹²⁵ Just nine days earlier on October 18th, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the EYOA had drastically slashed the Teen Post budget request from \$1.6 million to \$500,000 for the reported purpose of supporting other causes.¹²⁶ Observant of the limited funds available, activists argued for a direct channeling of resources to the most aggrieved communities. The EYOA only added another layer of red tape to the process. Voicing his concern with the EYOA, Bremond stated: “I want to go on record as saying that the EYOA Board is illegal, especially since it continues not to have a representation of poor people around that big table each time they meet as cozily down there on 6th street.”¹²⁷

Now the head of the Watts-based Self-Leadership for All Nationalities Today (SLANT) Tommy Halifu Jacquette, keenly articulated the budget cuts as an effort to limit the radical activities that emerged from programs such as Teen Post. In one of the briefest statements at the hearing, Jacquette questioned the sincerity of the federal efforts to combat poverty. Much like others Jacquette demanded that federal officials “cut out the shortstoppers in local government” (such as the EYOA). Like Bremond, Jacquette demanded the money go directly to the people. The only speaker to do so, Jacquette noted juxtaposed the unlimited funds going to the War in Vietnam. “You have programs that are dealing with the community action, and I would venture to say you cut that out,

¹²⁵ *Office of Economic Opportunity: Hearing before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Education; Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1 (October 27, 1967), Maldonado statement, p. 32 and Hahn statement, p. 6.*

¹²⁶ Jack Jones, “Teen Post Program Budget Slashed to Help Other Projects,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10/18/67, B1.

¹²⁷ *Office of Economic Opportunity: Hearing before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Education; Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1 (October 27, 1967), “Statement of Walter Bremond [sic]”, p. 202.*

because you don't want to finance your own revolution...and this is financing your own revolution...and it may come as a shock to you, but you are, and that's why I feel you are cutting out the community action programs, such as the Teen Post."¹²⁸

Nationally, community action agencies came under fire as the funding became a political football between liberal and conservative elements in the Democratic Party and congressional concerns over radicalism grew. In the congressional discussions over federal funding for antipoverty programs, community action agencies in Southern California garnered the most scrutiny and even police surveillance. In a concession to Southern Democrats, the Congressional Representative Edith Green from Oregon proposed a major amendment to the EOA. Known as the Green Amendment, on 15 November 1967, the United States Congress approved revisions to the EOA mandating public officials make up one-third of the community action agencies and that the budgets be controlled by local mayor's offices; further control over antipoverty programming would happen as the Model Cities Program overtook the Community Action Program as the premier government antipoverty commission. The Green Amendment resulted in decreased autonomy for the local agencies and decreased funding.¹²⁹ These changes did not cause a mass exodus of Black radical organizations from participation in antipoverty programming. Sukumu, Kudumu, Chochezi, Kazi, and the rest of the San Diego Us advocates continued to participate in local programs including the Teen Post, Self-Help

¹²⁸ *Office of Economic Opportunity: Hearing before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Education; Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1 (October 27, 1967), "Statement Tommy Jacquette," p. 161.*

¹²⁹ Dale Rogers Marshall, *The Politics of Participation in Poverty: A Case Study of the Board of the Economic Youth Opportunities Agency of Greater Los Angeles* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 11.

Through Neighborhood Leadership, and the Neighborhood House. However, it was during this hostile climate that Harold Brown resigned from his post with the leadership training program and accepted a post as the deputy director of the Peace Corps project in the newly independent Southern African nation of Lesotho.

The younger generation that Brown had sought to nurture with his leadership training program continued to develop radical programming. Yet administrative changes in the California statehouse and the White House, with the rise of the Reagan governorship and the Nixon presidency, brought increased hostilities and violent government repression of Black militant groups as well as government-funded programs associated with them. This shift away from fiscal support for antipoverty agencies was met with increased state violence against antipoverty workers. From local police to congressional hearings, surveillance of antipoverty workers increased with the counterintelligence focus on radical groups. Scholars can reasonably consider the federal retreat from antipoverty funding, and particularly the community action agencies, in accordance with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counterintelligence Programs (COINTELPRO). Historian Alyosha Goldstein, reminds readers that J. Edgar Hoover had set his sights on the BPP's survival programs when he declared them public enemy number one. According to Hoover, the Breakfast for Children Program "represent[ed] the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities...to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for."¹³⁰ The FBI and local police agencies did not only target the Panthers, national

¹³⁰ Goldstein, 217-218. "Hoover Memo on Black Panthers' Breakfast for Children Program", SAC May 15, 1969, *COINTELPRO Documents* at Genius.com (<https://genius.com/Federal-bureau-of-investigation-hoover-memo-on-black-panthers-breakfast-for-children-program-annotated>) accessed on 3/31/17.

police agencies also targeted antipoverty programs with dynamic operations in Chicago and even Memphis, Tennessee. Accompanied with the harassment of antipoverty workers, government financial constraints, and instigation influenced the sectarian conflicts between Black Panthers and Us Organization members. It is more than coincidental that as the EYOA began to tighten the vices on antipoverty programming in South Los Angeles that Panthers and Us advocates began to struggle over control of the Black Congress.

In San Diego, even as police brass professed support for the Teen Posts, their departments regularly surveilled and harassed Teen Post members and leadership. On Monday 27 November 1967, Us member and Teen Post assistant director Charles Henderson was arrested in San Diego along with another man George Roberts and charged with fitting the description of two suspects in an armed robbery from the previous Saturday.¹³¹ In March 1968, Henderson, Kazi, and three others were stopped for what was first claimed to be a minor traffic violation but were later arrested on gun charges, auto theft, robbery, criminal conspiracy, and carrying concealed weapons.¹³² Vernon Sukumu notes that this was a common surveillance and intimidation tactic used against activists. Sukumu remembers that he too was arrested on manufactured gun charges one night as he left Teen Post One. These charges were eventually dismissed in court.¹³³ Nevertheless, government officials continued their remonstrations of Black radical participation in War on Poverty programs.

¹³¹ “Teen Leader Arrested in Store Holdup,” *San Diego Union*, 11/28/67, B3.

¹³² “5 ‘Black Power’ Members, Guns Seized in Car,” *San Diego Union*, 5/8/68, B4.

¹³³ Telephone Conversation with Vernon Sukumu, 12/26/2015. Sukumu Interview.

On 20 January 1970, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee convened a series of hearings following an investigation on American radical organizations following the Communist Party USA's National Conference for New Politics held in Chicago from August 31st to September 1st in 1967. On the first day, the Senate subcommittee tasked on investigating New Left activities heard testimony from Sergeant Robert J. Thoms of the LAPD's intelligence division. In his testimony, Thoms alleged that 94 people with some sort of leadership in federally funded and nonprofit organizations maintained high ranking roles in 49 radical organizations. Of direct interests were the Los Angeles Black Congress, Us Organization, Black Panther Party, Reies Lopez Tijerina's Alianza Federal de Mercedes, Friends of the Black Panthers, and the Brown Berets. These radical organizations, Thoms argued, shared in almost \$5 million of federal money and almost another \$1.3 million from the Ford Foundation and religious organizations.¹³⁴ As a part of his presentation, Thoms also reported on the Teen Post Summer Project leadership conference held at UCLA from July 28th to August 29th in 1969. At the Teen Post Summer Project, students received instruction on Black Power, African Colonization, the Chicano Student Movement, *The Battle of Algiers*, the Free Huey movement, Mao's Red Book, *Black Power* by Stokely Carmichael, and *Essays on Liberation* by UC San Diego professor Herbert Marcuse—Marcuse also lectured at the conference.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ *Extent of Subversion in the "New Left"—Testimony of Robert Thoms: Hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, 91st Congress 2nd Session, Part 1 (January 20, 1970).* Gene Blake, "Five Violent Groups Shared in \$6 Million Gifts, Senators Told," *Los Angeles Times*, 3/20/70, B1.

¹³⁵ *Extent of Subversion in the "New Left"—Testimony of Robert Thoms.*

In Southern California, funding for community action agencies was routinely cut between 1968 and 1970. The first programs on the chopping block were the Teen Posts. In 1968, the EYOA ordered the closure of 60 Teen Posts in the Los Angeles Area. In Watts area, five of the fifteen centers were closed. In the Compton-Willowbrook area, two of the twelve Teen Posts were closed. In LA Harbor region of Wilmington and San Pedro, home of the Odoms and Kersees, six remained from the first round of cuts.¹³⁶ That same year, San Diego cut the funds for SHTNL and Teen Post as they transitioned for partnership in the Model Cities Program. An alternative format of programming, the Model Cities Program offered far more centralized control over antipoverty programming. All studies suggest that the community action agencies had a positive impact on the material conditions of Black life in Southern California. The Teen Posts and SHTNL aided in the educational and economic improvement of Black people from San Diego to Los Angeles and what was needed was more programs and not less. As one former participant told Economist Paul Bullock:

You made a statement... what did I benefit from Teen Post. Well, actually, I just couldn't lay it on the table for you, it would have to take time, it would have to develop something. Okay, let's call this time period, since I was 13 till now. Okay, let's eliminate Teen Post—there was no Teen Post, just say, okay? All right, what would I have done during these times? It would have been worthless, you know.... Well, I'm saying, Teen Post helped us, and I bet you those cats go back to say, 'well man, when I came up there was no Teen Post and believe me it was a bitch.' It was different. It's easier than what it would have been.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Jack Jones, "Funds Cut Back, Teen Posts Stress Education and Jobs," *Los Angeles Times*, 1/21/68, B1.

¹³⁷ Interview Transcripts, *Youth in the Labor Market*, Tape 7 "Watts: Jobs and Community Programs" 21.

The community action agencies were the victims of their own success. Antipoverty programming that was intended to create consent to American liberal democracy spurred calls for self-governance, community control, and international solidarity.

The UCLA Economist Paul Bullock made a similar observation that Mike Davis has made elsewhere. The socioeconomic conditions that African Americans and Latinos faced in postwar America were not unique or peculiar to the Black and Brown people. Jews, Italians, Irish, and other ethnic minorities had experienced similar forms of alienation in the past. At the turn of the century, the popular urban issues of juvenile delinquency, residential segregation, employment discrimination and organized crime were understood as a White ethnic problem. White ethnic groups advanced by organizing in nationalist political units; this process allowed for groups like Italians and Irish to rise from the level of organized crime and juvenile delinquency to form power blocs in major American cities. Structural racism and measured reforms produced the crises in Black and Brown communities of the late 1960s.¹³⁸ This analysis was shared by San Diego Congress of Racial Equality in their initial statement on Black Power. Quoting Floyd McKissick, the statement argued: “Just as the Irish sought a political base, as labor join in unions, so the Afro-American must seek to change his life conditions.... ‘Black power’ is a new expression of an old concept. It speaks directly to black people who have not as yet really been reached by all the efforts and appeals of the civil rights movement.”¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid, 216-219.

¹³⁹ SD CORE Press Release: CORE Gives Position on “Black Power” 7/10/1966, Brown Papers, Box 2, Folder 2, SDSU Special Collections.

Unlike, White ethnics, Black and Brown people were met with the resistance of the American security state. Violent and intense, the shift from a War on Poverty to a War on Crime in the United States, ushered in the rise of what critical race theorist and legal scholar Michelle Alexander has termed “the New Jim Crow”: a system of mass incarceration designed to disenfranchise Black America and nullify the advances of civil rights and Black Power. State violence was intended to foreclose on the radicalization of youth of color. This domination was, however, not complete. For the two decades that followed, African Americans and other non-Black allies continued the multiple projects of civil rights and Black Power as they mobilized against poverty and discrimination locally and for African liberation internationally. Community action agencies did not ebb the flow of the American postwar economy towards neoliberalism. It did, however, further the international consciousness of Black America and create bonds between African Americans and African revolutionaries.

Farwell to Peaceful Suffering: International Black Power from Los Angeles to Lesotho

In an interesting return to turn of the century relationship between African Americans and African politics that historians Robert Trent Vinson and Andrew Zimmerman have chronicled in their divergent yet similar studies, the advancements in post-Watts Rebellion Black Southern California were perceived with admiration from African radicals, liberal reformers, and government officials.¹⁴⁰ For different reasons, the models of Black Power and antipoverty programming generated international

¹⁴⁰ Vinson, *The Americans are Coming!* Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

consciousness amongst African Americans and produced pan-Africanist impulses in Southern Africa. An examination of Harold Brown's brief stint in the Peace Corps offers a glimpse into this transnational encounter. At the end, African Americans and Africans gained stronger affinity for each other and established the necessary bonds for the creation of the global African liberation support movement that emerged in the months to come.

The intriguing study by the young Social Anthropologist James O'Toole, *Watts and Woodstock: Identity and Culture in the United States and South Africa*, underscores this as O'Toole examined the Black American enclave in South Los Angeles and the South African Coloured community in the Cape Town suburb of Woodstock. While African American affinity was largely with the South African Native population, African Americans and South African Coloureds shared a common experience, O'Toole argues. Both African Americans and Coloureds descended from enslaved people imported to the settler nations; in the process both groups suffered cultural alienation. Also, like South African Coloureds, many African Americans are racially mixed (though to varying degrees). Lastly, African Americans and South African Coloureds lived in abject urban poverty in comparison to the white ruling classes.¹⁴¹ The lived conditions in Black America and South Africa created intraracial tension and a petty bourgeois ruling class but, O'Toole argues, that the post-rebellion Black Power movement in South Los Angeles remedied many of these problems. O'Toole admired the development of Black Power amongst African Americans. "The current revitalistic movement in Watts appears

¹⁴¹ James O'Toole, *Watts and Woodstock: Identity and Culture in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1973), 2.

unusual in that it is a conscious effort to create a culture as foundation for the gaining of political power. But it is not a unique occurrence,” O’Toole notes. O’Toole argues that the South African Coloureds would be advised to follow the path that Blacks in Watts took towards change. Instead of pushing towards assimilation into white society, South African Coloureds should embrace their Africanness. Favoring the work of the Us Organization as well as the Black Congress, O’Toole, who had volunteered in South Los Angeles, while at the University of Southern California, cited the usefulness of the War on Poverty programs in spurring Black Power activism African Americans used that culture to create political power.¹⁴²

The late 1960s brought another wave of urban rebellions from 1967 to 1969. Undeniably, the most significant of these uprisings were the eruption of protests that swept the globe following the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr on 4 April 1968. Not only domestic, Dr. King’s assassination epitomized the hypocrisy of American Cold War democracy. Thousands of miles away in the small nation of Lesotho, the only African nation surrounded by another, Ntsu Mokhehle leader of the pan-Africanist and socialist Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), published an address in solidarity with African Americans following Dr. King’s death. The head of the leading opposition to American- and Pretoria-backed Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan and his Basutoland National Party, Mokhehle’s address maintained local, regional, and international significance. Mokhehle’s open-letter contained two images. The front page of *The Range*, the BCP newspaper, the iconic image of Dr. King and Malcolm X clasping

¹⁴² Ibid, 121-141.

hands was displayed prominently. On the back page, where Mokhehle's message was continued, there was another iconic image from the Watts Rebellion where close to a dozen LAPD officers stand over a half dozen Black males laying prostrate on a city street. Mokhehle wrote:

In sending our sorrow to the people of the United States, we must indicate that it is not the manner in which this man was fighting that mattered, it is the evil administration and political philosophy of the white man's government of the United States that have violently sent Dr. King to his grave. Malcolm X had indicated that both of them would be violently destroyed and that it did not matter what differing methods of approach they used in their common struggle. Malcolm X, himself, was supposed to be an extremist, a man of 'violence.' This young non-violent man, Dr. King, was violently murdered in his 40th year, and Malcolm X died at 40; only three years separated their similar and predicted type deaths. We must, therefore, in this country, as in other countries all over the world, strive for systems which will cure the evil that brings about violent deaths both to peaceful, non-violent Freedom Fighters or to the violent strugglers alike.¹⁴³

Expanding, the article derides the hypocrisy of the Johnson Administration that sent Peace Corps workers to Lesotho while America murdered and enslaved African Americans. The caption below the image from the Watts Rebellion reads: "All imperialists and fascists rule by the gun. Unarmed and innocent citizens are shot at random by the armed forces backed by the police. This is called democracy. It happens in America where the Afro-Americans are oppressed and it has been exported to Laos, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Lesotho."¹⁴⁴ While Dr. King opposed such imperialism, Leabua supports it, the article states. Instead of Americans sending officials to Africa, "we need to send black Lesotho Peace Corps to the United States."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ntsu Mokhehle, "Non-Violent Leader Dies Violently," *The Range* Volume, Volume 1 No. 1, 5/1/68, p. 8. Harold Brown Papers, Box 7, Item 13, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Mokhehle's letter was prompted by the public protests and international firestorm Hal Brown had started which reached from Southern African to Washington, DC following his public remarks eulogizing Dr. King. Brown's short tenure as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps in Lesotho, from 1967 to 1968, was filled with racial controversy that eclipsed the one he left in San Diego after vacating his post as the OEO director. An early member of California's first homegrown Black Power organization, the Afro-American Association, and the leader of San Diego's Civil Rights movement, Brown had been dismayed when he was met with great suspicion once he landed in Lesotho in late-1967. In an oral history, Brown candidly admitted that the Basotho assumed he was a CIA agent and were wary of him. Brown knew that his time in Lesotho would be halted if he began to speak out so he told his wife Laverne, "Get prepared because I know this is gonna happen and I'm not gonna stop. I'm going to do this, I mean these people have got to know who I am and what I stand for and that we are not a part of no damn CIA and all that stuff."¹⁴⁶ Yet in his early days in Southern Africa, likely to prevent any raised suspicions amongst in the state department, Brown nevertheless disguised his initial experience when reporting back to Peace Corps leadership. In an official report, Brown noted that the Basotho regard him as a long-lost brother and that he was generally accepted. Brown also honestly stated in his initial report that the Peace Corps had worsened the politics in Lesotho.¹⁴⁷ Meanwhile in his oral history, Brown stated, "I couldn't stand being thought of as someone supporting the

¹⁴⁶ Harold Brown Interview by Mychal Odom.

¹⁴⁷ "An Assessment of the Situation in Lesotho," Brown Papers, Box 3, Folder 15.

CIA and all that bull.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, Brown began to use his position to build rapport with the local radicals.

“So, I began to speak, make speeches at the various schools and university, the university there,” Brown remembered.¹⁴⁹ Brown delivered lectures at the Catholic University in Roma, Lesotho and the University of Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland on the African American struggle for civil rights. A Basotho informant to the Afrikaner press reported, “We know that Brown invites groups of more educated Basothos to his house to explain the position of the Afro-American. These lessons are necessarily intertwined with anti-white propaganda.” The informant added, “His wife, Loverna [sic] supports him in this task and is also anti-white. Upon her arrival in Lesotho, her hair was long and flowing—typical of the fashion-conscious Afro-American woman. After King’s death and her husband’s statements she became blacker and paid less Western-style attention to her hair. She now combs it like ours [Southern Africans].”¹⁵⁰ The most unlikely of places, Brown’s tenure as a federal employee in Lesotho generated one of the most radical transformations of him and his wife, bridging Maseru, Lesotho with San Diego, California.

A small Black enclave surrounded by the most conservative part of South Africa, Lesotho shared much in common with Black San Diego. In fact, Lesotho’s Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan had toured the United States in September 1967 where he spoke at the United Nations General Assembly. After the UN General Assembly,

¹⁴⁸ Harold Brown Interview by Mychal Odom.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Chris Vermaak, “Peace Corps Sowing Venom Against Whites in Lesotho.” Brown Papers, Box 3, Folder 15.

Jonathan visited San Diego where the training of Peace Corps volunteers was being conducted at UCSD. In his opening address to the General Assembly, Jonathan expressed his commitment to anticommunism, appealed for foreign investment in Lesotho, and while he voiced support for African liberation sided, Jonathan sided with the South African government against the consensus of other independent African nations.¹⁵¹ The praise for Jonathan that followed his General Assembly speech harkened back to the initial support for Black antipoverty workers. Jonathan's anticommunism was widely applauded amongst the American media and his governance was hailed as the example for African leadership. The *San Diego Union* drew similarities between San Diego and Lesotho as it greeted Jonathan as "a welcome guest."¹⁵² What is more, the public expressed interest in the women that journeyed to San Diego as a part of Jonathan's entourage. The *Union* expressed fascination with the high fashion, cuisine, and familiarity with American customs that these women maintained.¹⁵³ This international discourse defined this moment in San Diego and American history.

Later that year in December, SHTNL intern Walter Kudumu had a similar exchange with a group of forty-two international students, including twenty African nationals, sponsored by the CIC, Urban League, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In conversation with the African students in attendance, Kudumu expressed his belief that racism was a global issue that united Africans and Africans Americans and comparing African national independence

¹⁵¹ Leabua Johnathan, "Speech by Mr. Jonathan," *Official Records*, United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Second Session, 1565th Plenary Meeting, 9/25/67, p. 2.

¹⁵² "Link with Lesotho," *San Diego Union*, 9/26/67, C2.

¹⁵³ Beverly Beyette, "Hot Dogs Nothing New To Visitors from Lesotho—Miniskirts Too," *San Diego Union*, 9/28/67, E1.

movements with African American freedom movements.¹⁵⁴ Kudumu's sentiments were shared by Kenyan David Warobi and Nigerian Tom Uguru. Notions of shared coloniality emerged linking the Southern Africans and Black Americans particularly, and Africans and African Americans generally, in the minds of government officials and Black radicals. Yet, the Black internationalist bonds amongst radicals conflicted with the neocolonial transnationalism of the government officials from in the United States, Lesotho, and South Africa.

As Brown predicted, his promotion of Civil Rights and Black Power in Lesotho shortened his stay and aggravated American officials and the South African press. Brown traveled Lesotho, giving speeches on Black Power and Civil Rights in churches, homes, and at the local colleges. Brown lectured to the Basotho masses about the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. An Afrikaans newspaper accused Brown of "sowing venom against whites in Lesotho" and linked Brown to the BCP.¹⁵⁵ The South African ally at the head of state in Lesotho, Leabua Jonathan, told the South African press that Brown had embarrassed Lesotho.¹⁵⁶ Following the international stir, Brown argued extensively with the Peace Corps director in Lesotho and was subsequently fired. Despite his dismissal, Brown left Lesotho even more radicalized than when he had departed his War on Poverty post. Brown's now criticized white supremacy as a world system and expanded the black global spatial imaginary. Brown did not leave Lesotho without making leaving a lasting impression amongst the radical left in Southern

¹⁵⁴ Jamie Bryson, "Foreign Students Briefed on SD Racial Problems," *San Diego Union*, 12/29/67, B3.

¹⁵⁵ Chris Vermaak, "Peace Corps Sowing Venom Against Whites in Lesotho." Brown Papers, Box 3, Folder 15.

¹⁵⁶ "Row Over Negro." Brown Papers, Box 3, Folder 15.

Africa. Brown had been initially successful in leading a mass resignation of Black Peace Corps workers in Lesotho and South Africa, though many volunteers eventually returned to their posts. Nevertheless, the events surrounding Brown's departure from Southern Africa underscore the internationalizing moment that King's death represented.

Alongside the BCP's newspaper, the Brown affair was also covered in the *Azania News*, the official organ of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). The PAC and BCP were close allies; they shared pan-Africanist and African Socialist views and their military units also trained together in exile.¹⁵⁷



Figure 20 Harold Brown delivering his Eulogy to Dr. King at an African Methodist Episcopal church in Maseru, Lesotho. Brown's wife Laverne is to his right with her newly adopted natural hairstyle. The man sitting to Brown's left is King Moshoeshoe II. Moshoeshoe II was amongst the opposition to the Jonathan's BNP-led government. (Brown Papers, SDSU Special Collections).

¹⁵⁷ For more information on the PAC and BCP, read Bernard Leeman's *Lesotho and the Struggle for Azania. Africanist Political Movements in Lesotho and Azania: The Origins and History of the Basutoland Congress Party and the Pan Africanist Congress*, Vols. 1-2 (1780-1966), Vol 3. (1966-1984), (London: University of Azania, 1985).

Interestingly, in Southern Africa, Brown's radical politics moved further left than they had ever done in the United States.¹⁵⁸ In their newspaper, the PAC covered Brown's public statement to the Basotho people entitled "Farewell to Peaceful Suffering."¹⁵⁹ In his departing words, much like Mokhehle, Brown rejected the idea that the United States could be a purveyor of peace and democracy. Refusing to be a "black puppet" for American neocolonialism or to be silenced, Brown noted that he and his wife had chosen to leave Lesotho. Citing that he and his wife Laverne had yearned to return to Africa to "breathe the same air that was breathed by our ancestors," their role as American Peace Corps workers inhibited the union they sought to build with Southern Africans. "I must return to America because I find my presence here in contradiction with my basic principles. Those basic-principles of decency, such as dignity, respect and equal opportunities for every man.... I find my position here in Lesotho supporting that which is contrary to those principles, and find myself supporting the very things that I would be fighting against if I were in my own country," Brown notes.¹⁶⁰ Brown's departure from Africa was not a retreat from Black Internationalism nor pan-Africanism. In the *Azania*

¹⁵⁸ Brown's latter years with CORE, he had been a part of an explosive conflict with the Socialist Workers Party that ended with the expulsion of the socialist members. Brown's alignment with the PAC and BCP in Southern Africa demands a reevaluation of the expulsion of SWP members from CORE. Beyond McCarthyism, the conflict between with SWP members was undoubtedly driven by concerns over Black control of CORE and the perceived naiveté of the SWP organizers whom Brown believed had been making CORE's organizing efforts amongst the Black masses, of which many were employed by government contractors. The circulation of communist literature alongside CORE material threatened the stability of CORE's local movement in San Diego.

¹⁵⁹ Harald Barre, "A natural alliance"? The PAC's changing perception of African American activists in the 1960s and 1970s: An analysis of the *Azania News*," *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*. No. 28/2015, Vol. 15, 123-147.

¹⁶⁰ "Farewell to Peaceful Suffering – To the Basotho People," Brown Papers, Box 3, Folder 15.

News, Brown stated his time “in African had vividly impressed upon him the imperative necessity for the coordination of the African people with that of the Afro-American.”¹⁶¹,

Upon returning to the United States, Brown had hoped to create a pan-Africanist organization that organized diasporic Africans for the independent redevelopment of Africa. Brown called it the “Black International.” Archival evidence and oral history suggests that Brown did not immediately depart for the United States after being dismissed from his post but instead met with African revolutionaries in Zambia and Tanzania, strategic bases for antiapartheid fighters. While meeting with these freedom fighters, Brown and an unnamed West Indian migrant penned the outlines for the Black International. The Black International was to:

- A. Actively aid and assist in the struggle of African people against the racist policy of apartheid, and to remove the remaining vestiges of oppression, colonialism and the neo-colonialism from the African continent.
- B. Participate fully in the struggle of black Americans against white racism and white oppression.
- C. Promote mutual aid and understanding among people of African origin and ancestry throughout the world.¹⁶²

To fill the ranks of the Black International, the organization would recruit Black professionals and skilled workers who would help develop the programs to be put in place. As well, the Black International would recruit volunteers from the diaspora to provide semiskilled work. These workers would also “actively assist and support the

¹⁶¹ Barre, 132-133.

¹⁶² “The Black International,” Brown Papers, Box 1, Folder 17.

present struggle to liberate the black people of Southern Africa.” Yet, departing from the paternalism of American foreign policy, the program proposal reinforced that these plans would be constructed “in consultation with the independent African states.”¹⁶³

The Black International never manifested. Nonetheless, the draft represents an ideological shift as Brown subverted the goals of American liberalism by forging a bond that furthered Black consciousness and the mutual identification of Black people from Southern California to Southern Africa. The Black International proposal committed African Americans to African liberation but also saw the United States as a theater in that global struggle. While not under the banner the various forms of solidarity-plus that African Americans engaged in continued to forward this notion of shared struggle in communities and campuses throughout the United States. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, groups such as the African Activists Association of UCLA, Amiri Baraka’s Congress of African People, and Owusu Sadaukai’s African Liberation Support Committee made Brown’s dream a reality.

Conclusion

The outgrowth of the civil rights activism of the postwar period, Black Nationalists, in the early 1960s, departed from the integrationist demands for equal access and instead demanded community control of public resources. In Southern California, the Nation of Islam, Congress of Racial Equality and Afro-American Association prioritized Black control of local education, economics, and politics. They prioritized mobilizing the Black working class and spreading African consciousness. As Black

¹⁶³ Ibid.

Southern Californians rejected Cold War liberal ideologies, they embraced radical African ideas. Black people in Southern California had already organized radical reading groups and even organized antiapartheid rallies. However, the Watts Rebellion was a paradigm shifting moment for all Black America, and in many ways the African World. For a week, African Americans had gone to war with local police forces, from South Los Angeles to Southeast San Diego. Indeed, people died but in oral histories the participants remembered this as a moment of mutual cooperation that transformed local gangs into political units.

The aftermath of the rebellion produced heightened concern over the economic redevelopment of communities throughout Black Southern California. Government officials, liberal reformers, and Black radicals alike saw a utility in the War on Poverty programming as a solution to the socioeconomic problems that led to the rebellion. Influenced by the global understanding of third world development, government officials sought to establish Black consent to American Cold liberal ideology, and even the Democratic Party. Reformers sought steady access to government funds. Black radicals found the War on Poverty programming useful for different reasons. The Community Action Program, and the community action agencies it funded, funneled dollars directly to organizers under the belief that it was indeed the grassroots who had the solutions to their problems. Guided by what was known as *programmatic influence* Black Power activists took control of antipoverty programs such as the Teen Post and Self-Help Through Neighborhood Leadership. These programs paid the participants well, offered free public space for cultural, social, and political organizing. However, they also became ground zero for the recruitment of a new generation of Black radicals activated

by the Watts Rebellion. The Teen Post and SHTNL played pivotal roles in spreading the countercultural influence of Black Power throughout Southern California, and nationally. The War on Poverty linked Black radicals to Third World Struggles. With this, Black and Brown youth formed mutual bonds in Southern California and African Americans formed mutual bonds with African liberation movements. This is elucidated with the migration of Harold Brown, a Southern California Black Power and Civil Rights leader, to Lesotho in Southern Africa where he briefly served as a Peace Corps worker. As African Americans and African formed mutual bonds in Southern California and in Southern Africa, the ground for the future liberations struggles were laid.

With the concept of solidarity-plus, I argue that the material conditions and local action are the impetus for international solidarity. In the middle- to late-1960s Southern California, this means seemingly Black Internationalist organizations had to meet the immediate socioeconomic concerns of Black Southern Californians as a prerequisite to mobilizing them in solidarity with others. The Us Organization, Black Panther Party, Black Congress, and the Black Conference did this in their political and cultural work. Due to their success, the United States government waged war against these organizations and turned these organizations against each other. Political officials also attempted to convince the masses of the failure of antipoverty programs. Unconvinced by the dominant propaganda, the historical memory of Black Southern Californians remembers the importance of these programs to the Black leadership struggle. Instead of fostering consent to the American nation, these programs trained future activists. Antipoverty programming and political education did not cease to be forms of solidarity-plus. In the decade that followed, Black radicals in Southern California used similar

programs to establish the formal African liberation support campaign in Southern California. As well, African Americans and their allies demanded control of public universities where they syphoned resources back to the people and produced their own revolutionary knowledge.

Portions of Chapter Three appear in “Youth's Role in a City Becoming: Education, Black Power, and the Struggles for a Different San Diego” by Mychal Odom in *Sunshine/Noir II: Writing from San Diego and Tijuana* edited by Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller (San Diego: City Works Press, 2015). The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ufahamu Na Kuumba: The Road to African Liberation Support in Southern California

Black Liberation Movement in Southern California did not die on 17 January 1969. That day two members of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party, Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John Huggins, were both shot to death by a member of the Us Organization at Campbell Hall on the UCLA campus. The result of government instigation, ideological difference, and individual conflict, this fatal event between members of the Black Panther Party and the Us Organization has served as the epilogue to the historiography on African American social movements in Southern California. The shootings deserve continued research as more materials and oral histories surrounding the sectarian violence between the Us Organization and Black Panther Party emerges. This study does not disburse great attention to the events on UCLA’s campus that day. The deaths of Carter and Huggins, however, offer an important backdrop to the decade of Black radicalism followed the killings in Southern California.

The dominant historiography of the Black Liberation Movement in Southern California has 1969 crisis as the epilogue of the Black Liberation Movement in Southern California. The crisis has generally been used to explain the decline of revolutionary activism and the emergence of the Crips and Bloods street gang; and all the socioeconomic problems that emerged in the wake of this deadly feud. This study does not completely refute the dominant argument but instead forwards an addendum to the canon of literature.¹ This chapter examines the creation of two very different pan-African

¹ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 1990). Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). Scot Brown, *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, The Us Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). Joshua Bloom and Waldo E.

organizations, the African Activists Association of UCLA and the National Involvement Association (NIA/Nia Cultural Organization) in San Diego. In their activism and radical intellectualism, the AAA2 and NIA challenged the legacy of sectarianism and fratricide for which Black Power organizations in Southern California have been remembered and extended Southern California's Black radical tradition.

Historian Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua has cautioned against the reductive usage of the *long movement* model of studying Black social movements. However, the recent scholarship of historian Akinyele Omowale Umoja has challenged both extremes, acknowledging the paradigm shifts. Umoja uses terms like Black Freedom Struggle and Black Liberation Movement to respect the changes but also underscore the interrelation of strategies and ideologies.² The work of Anthropologist Joao Costa Vargas has informed this study.³ Looking at the life of former Black Panther Michael Zinzun, Vargas shows that despite the demise of the Black Panther Party, Zinzun brought the political project of the Panthers with him as he engaged a medley of other crusades. The National Involvement Association and African Activist Association are two organizations that sustained the work of the predominant Black Power organizations in Southern California while attempting to overcome the contradictions that brought the Panthers and Us Organization to deadly confrontation. Both organizations engaged radical ideologies

Martin, Jr., *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Cle Sloan, *Bastards of the Party: The History of LA's Notorious Crips and Bloods* (2005).

² Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* Vol. 92, No. 2 (Spring 2007). Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 3-4.

³ Joao H. Costa Vargas, *Catching Hell in the City of Angels: Life and Meanings of Blackness in South Central Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

coming out of Africa, developed programs to put those ideas into local action in Southern California, and they both mobilized support for African liberation movements.

Both NIA and the Afro-American Association played essential roles in connecting the Black Power Movement to the Antiapartheid Movement. Founded at UCLA in 1968 by students in the African Studies Center, not far from Campbell Hall, the African Activists Association (AAA2) simultaneously embraced Black Nationalist thought and Marxist ideologies as student activists on campus and through their radical African Studies journal *Ufahamu*. With many of their founding members being linked to the Panthers and the Us Organization, the AAA2 and *Ufahamu* played a critical role in sustaining the Black liberation movement in Southern California as it produced its own radical theory on pan-African liberation and attempted to place those ideas into immediate action. The AAA2 and *Ufahamu* challenged essentialist notions of pan-Africanism, disregarded the false barrier between Black thought and Marxism. The AAA2 provided the crucial room to maneuver where Black and white women struggle for leadership, challenged gender binaries, and became central to revolutionary collective. National Involvement Association/Nia Cultural Organization was organized in an even more direct response to the war between the Panthers and the Us Organization. As Vernon Sukumu, former head of the San Diego Chapter of the Us Organization remembered on multiple occasions, alongside Maulana Karenga's shift in character, a frustrating aspect of the war was that it brought the radical work of the Panthers and Us Organization to a screeching halt. Sukumu was a former sailor and street hustler, he had joined the movement to lift his community, not fight Black people. The San Diego Us Organization members drifted closer to Imamu Amiri Baraka, whom headed the

Committee for Unified Newark (CFUN), a Kwaaida formation in New Jersey, helped mobilize the election of Newark's first Black Mayor Ken Gibson, and organized the 1970 Congress of African People assembly in Atlanta. In 1970, San Diego Us officially became NIA, a CAP cadre and Sukumu became the CAP Western Regional director. In San Diego, as well as nationally, CAP members crafted a tradition which assisted in the international struggle for African liberation while continuing to place those revolutionary ideas into action local action.

Make African Studies Afrikan Again

The African Activist Association was created in 1968 amidst the wave of liberation struggles which connected African Americans, Africans and other anticolonial struggles worldwide. The UCLA student body was being drastically changed by outreach programs designed to diversify the campus. Scholarship programs continued to bring international students to UCLA from Africa as well as Latin America and Asia. For American-born minorities, the High Potential Program was one avenue that brought working class students of color to campus. These students were undergraduate and graduate. As well, they worked across campus in many different organizations. The AAA2 worked closely with the Black Student Union as the African Studies Center organized events with the Black Studies program. UCLA was home to a Radical African Studies movement as well as a revolutionary collective of film students who became to be known as the Los Angeles School of Black Film or the LA Rebellion.⁴

⁴ In the mid-1970s radical film students created the Third World Film Club whose members such as Ntongela Masilela, Teshome Gabriel, and Haile Gerima overlapped with the AAA2. It was also in 1969 and 1970 that students at UCLA flocked to the classes of the doctoral student Angela Davis, an acting assistant professor in the Philosophy Department. Ntongela Masilela, "The Los Angeles School of Black

The early members of the AAA2 came from a variety of radical formations; some were Black Panthers, others were affiliated with the Us Organization, others were Marxists, and others were radical feminists. The founding members of the AAA2 drew immediate inspiration from the liberation struggles in South Africa, African Lusophone colonies, and the victories of guerilla warfare in Guinea-Bissau—which just like Algeria years before, caused revolutionaries to reconsider the purpose and practice of national liberation. These student activists were inspired “by the charisma of magnificent African leaders and thinkers such as Eduardo Mondlane, Amilcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela and...by Nasser and Nkrumah.”⁵ Radical students at UCLA studied the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War and were fascinated with the ideas of Mao Tse Tong, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, and CLR James.⁶ As AAA2 members from Sondra Hale to Robin Kelley have remembered, student activists at UCLA understood that their contributions to African liberation mandated local action. “We needed to look at our own institutions, not just the US government and corporate power,” Hale remembered.⁷ Just as their predecessors at UCLA, the African Activist Association challenged the workings of the Cold War university. Negotiating the alterable space of academia, the students in the AAA2 refused to be exploited by American foreign policy and instead redirected resources to African liberation struggles and became an important intellectual force for African liberation support in the United States.

Filmmakers,” *A South African Looks at the African Diaspora: Essays and Interviews* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2017), 250-259.

⁵ Sondra Hale, “Where Have We Been and Where Are We Goin?: The Birth and Early Years of Ufahamu,” *Ufahamu* Vol. 38, No. 3, (2015): 88.

⁶ Masilela, pp. 249-262.

⁷ Sondra Hale Interview with Susan McKibben, UCLA Oral History Archive Project.

AAA2 members were a part of a contingency of students and professors who formed the African Studies Association Black Caucus. The Black Caucus took control of the African Studies Association annual meetings, first in Los Angeles in 1968 and then in 1969 at Montreal. It was in Montreal that the Black Caucus stormed the podium and demanded the ASA embrace a pan-African perspective of African studies, the promotion of Black people to leadership in African Studies centers, and for African Studies to take an affirmative position towards the liberation struggles of people of African descent.⁸ Historian John Henrik Clarke led a mass exodus of Black Africanists out of the ASA following the Montreal meeting subsequently founding the African Heritage Studies Association. While the AAA2 was not a direct cadre of the Black Caucus, it undoubtedly was a part of the same movement.⁹ Established the following year in 1969, the journal *Ufahamu* challenged the categorization of theory and praxis, academic and public intellectualism. African Studies students at UCLA eventually placed the campus at the forefront of the solidarity movements for the liberation struggles in Africa, Palestine, and Central America.

Radical African Studies students were deeply concerned with Black representation at UCLA. They demanded an increase in African and African American students and faculty as well as autonomous space for political organizing and knowledge production. Indeed, this placed the students into conflict with their faculty and even themselves. UCLA's faculty, at that time, consisted of many white liberals and progressives. Many of these professors had been very active in civil rights and

⁸ George W. Shepherd, "The Meaning of the ASA Black Caucus at the Eleventh Annual Meeting in Los Angeles," *Africa Today*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April-May 1969): 1-2.

⁹ Hale Interview.

antiapartheid struggles in the United States and Africa but by the late 1960s had begun to demand more academic output and less activism from their students. Sondra Hale remembered that while her dissertation chair Hilda Kuper, a white South African, had a long history of activism which included participation in the Black Sash Movement, which forced her into exile, “When she came here to teach, she pretty much wanted her students to finish their work and abandon activism, at least while they were studying. She once said to me that if she saw my name connected to one more petition or one more journalistic article or meeting or organization, whatever, that she would resign.”¹⁰

Surely, Hilda Kuper’s concerns was for the academic advancement of her students, many of whom were African and women. AAA2 students offered an important rebuttal to the liberal worldview of the status quo in African Studies.

At the UCLA African Studies Center, students received one of the most advanced curriculums in the United States, and by far the flagship institution in the American West. Among the fields of stud were Anthropology, Art, Economics, Education, English, French, Germanic Languages, Geography, History, Linguistics, Music, Political Science, Sociology, and an extensive listing of courses on African languages. The coursework in Anthropology and Sociology clearly crossed over as the Anthropology listings largely focused on cultural and social anthropology issues in modern African religion, language, and culture. The history classes had two-part series courses in Ancient Egypt but much like the Anthropology courses, the coursework focused on modern and colonial Africa. The language and arts courses introduced the students to a wealth of African expressive

¹⁰ Ibid.

culture. Students studied African music and read literature by African writers in European languages as well as African languages.¹¹ Students also participated in summer courses and exchange programs that allowed them to travel to Africa.

In 1969, UCLA African Studies Center joined UC Santa Barbara in sending students and faculty to the University of Ghana in Accra and the University College in Nairobi, Kenya.¹² Coherent with their status as a National Defense Education Act regional African Studies Center, the language courses made up the bulk of the listings in their bulletins. This strengthened the Cold War agenda of the American Department of State. Yet on the other hand, it provided African descended students the opportunity to recover the multitude of African languages and enabled the “re-Africanization” projects amongst Black Nationalist organizations. The UCLA African Studies Center hosted a few courses that centered comparative study of African religion, society, education, and language but nothing explicitly presented a global vision of African history. That work, was done by students and some of the radical faculty through their scholarship and activism.

The first volume of *Ufahamu* was published in 1970. Amid his liberation struggles in West Africa, it was also in 1970 that Amilcar Cabral visited the United States. In a deep irony, student radicals maneuvered the Cold War university and gained direct access to African revolutionaries. UCLA and universities with African Studies centers created a circuit of African radical thinkers and leaders to travel the United States as visiting professors and guest lecturers. While the UCLA African Center used its funds

¹¹ African Studies Brochure 1964 and 1969. James Smoot Coleman African Studies Center Administrative Files, Box 4. Folder African Studies Brochures and Leaflets 1964-1968

¹² “Education Abroad Program opens two centers in Africa,” *UCLA Daily Bruin*, 2/25/69, p. 11.

to bring in top names, the AAA2 and *Ufahamu* demanded individual time with the distinguished guests so that they could conduct interviews which were published in the pages of the journal. In the very first edition of the journal, the editorial board published the record of a talk delivered by Gil Fernandes, a member of the African Independence Party of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), close associate to Amilcar Cabral, and future Guinea-Bissau ambassador on 9 April 1970 at the UCLA African Studies Center.

The Fernandes interview, entitled “A Talk with A Guinean Revolutionary,” was the first entry published in *Ufahamu*. The Fernandes interview prefigured some of the critical inventions of the AAA2 and *Ufahamu*. Relaying the current affairs of their liberation struggle, Fernandes explained how, the PAIGC intervened into the dominant theories of national liberation struggles as they united both the urban and rural peasantries. As Fernandes noted, this was accomplished by approaching the rural communities and meeting the largely Muslim and vertically organized villagers on their own terms. Expressive culture and conversation were important recruiting tools.

Fernandes states:

You go to a hut, and somehow you have some station broadcasting in his native language, and you have a transistor. Then you come to the hut and you start talking to the fellow. Then you put on some music or some Portuguese broadcasting on the radio, and then you ask him: how would you like some day to hear you own language on this radio? He says, you’ve got to be joking. The white man made this thing. It’s not for us to be talking into it. So, you just sort of switch stations so that he’ll be hearing something in his own language. And that pretty much persuades him.

And also, the amount of repression which took place in Guinea made it somehow easier to mobilize, especially the young people. But the approach that you use is to go to the elder of the village most of the

time... If you can persuade these elders, they can easily pinpoint for you other elements which are more likely to be persuaded to join the movement. We have twenty tribes, and so we have twenty different ways of approaching the problem. One approach might be wrong a few miles away. It's a very elaborate type of work. It took us about four years to do it.¹³

The PAIGC conducted daily broadcasts of information in every major Guinean language for four hours, daily.¹⁴ With an acute understanding of the war of position, the PAIGC studied the strengths and the weaknesses of other African revolutions. "In the long run I think we will be better off than many African nations when we become independent because we are learning from their mistakes...after then years of watching the others we have a pretty good idea of what to avoid—where the pitfalls are," Fernandes stated.¹⁵ Underscoring the support the PAIGC had received throughout the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Cuba, the Soviets, and even the United Auto Workers, the struggle in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau was nonetheless still a localization of an international struggle. In their plans to win the post-independence challenges, the PAIGC had already begun to build their educational and medical systems. In 1960, Fernandes argues, 99.7 percent of the population was illiterate. The PAIGC developed their own textbooks, worked on developing writing, grammar, and phonics. The PAIGC established two boarding schools, trained Guineans in a variety of skills, and sent students for specialized training in Sekou Toure's Guinea-Conakry.¹⁶ Recognizing the limitations of Portuguese

¹³ "A Talk with a Guinean Revolutionary," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* Vol. 1 No. 1 (1970):. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 19-20.

language, the PAIGC pragmatically engaged the Lusophone tongue with hopes of eventually publishing texts in Guinean Creole.¹⁷

Just as African American activists had done with War on Poverty funds and the Peace Corps programming, the AAA2 redirected university resources to liberation struggles. As a result, the student organizers did not only produced scholarship, they produced works of rebellion which dismantled the dominant order of African Studies, fostered campus and community relations, and made important interventions into the theory and practice of pan-Africanism. In the initial volumes of *Ufahamu*, the editorial board and authors placed immediate focus on language, education, and African unity. *Ufahamu* articulated the centrality of interethnic African bonds and international solidarity amongst all oppressed people. Literature and other forms of popular discourse was to be a strategic tool to organize the masses while also respecting the particularity of their localized struggles. While some revolutionary movements had placed primary concern on the reclamation of traditions and cultural practices, writers in *Ufahamu* confirmed that the utility of cultural rebirth only extended as far as it could unite African people and help people to imagine and build a new world beyond the trappings of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy. As the late historian Manning Marable argued, “Identity may emanate from the consciousness of our culture, but its operational function can only be meaningful in political terms.... There is no point in finding out who I am if I do not know what to do with that knowledge.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid, 19.

¹⁸ Marable’s passage was originally used by Sidney Lemelle as a part of a sharp criticism of Molefi Asante’s cultural nationalism. (Asante, interestingly, was a UCLA graduate student then the head of the Center for Afro-American Studies at UCLA in the late 1960s and early 1970s.) Marable’s passage, instead, provides a bridge between the campus-based politics of *Ufahamu* and the community-based project of the

A New Purpose: The Rise of the Nia Cultural Organization

The National Involvement Association (also known as NIA or the Nia Cultural Organization) was a much different group than the African Activists Association. The AAA2 offered its own theory for pan-African struggle that they subsequently put to practice. A community-based organization, in many ways, Nia's praxis informed their shifting theories of African liberation. Nia left behind a lot less documentary material than the AAA2 and their journal *Ufahamu*. Nevertheless, the papers that have emerged reveal Nia to be a highly complex organization that challenges the general misperception of cultural nationalist organizations as reformist at best and reactionary agents of the state at worst. In a historiographic trend that began with Komozi Woodard and expanded by Scot Brown, Keith Mayes, and most recently Russell Rickford, authors have challenged the parodies of cultural nationalism that have dominated scholarship. Instead have exposed the anticapitalism, Third Worldism, antiwar politics, and indeed the pan-Africanism in cultural nationalism.¹⁹ The surviving records on Nia affirm their centrality to the history of Black radical politics and their significant contributions to the global liberation of African people. An outgrowth of the San Diego chapter of the Us Organization, Nia and the affiliated San Diego Black Federation continued the local Black Power tradition.

National Involvement Association in San Diego. Marable quoted in, Sidney J. Lemelle, "The Politics of Cultural Existence: Pan-Africanism, Historical Materialism, and Afrocentricity," in *Imagining Home: Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora* (New York: Verso, 1994), 343.

¹⁹ Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Scot Brown, *Fighting for Us*. Keith A. Mayes, *Kwanzaa: Black Power and the Making of the African-American Holiday Tradition* (New York City, NY and Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2009). Michael Simanga, *Amiri Baraka and the Congress of African People: History and Memory* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015). Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016).

The creation of the National Involvement Association cannot be understood without considering the rise of Amiri Baraka. As the West Coast cadre of the Congress of African People, Nia spearheaded the most ambitious, and last, attempt, to create a Black united front since National Negro Congress of the 1930s and 1940s. Expanding on the project of the San Diego Us Organization, Nia influenced the minds of Black Southern Californians through educational and vocational programming, cultural work, and African liberation. Under the leadership of Amiri Baraka, Congress of African People politics further radicalized the Kawaida ideology of Karenga. Through regularly published newsletters, regular publication of the literature of African leaders such as Sekou Toure and Julius Nyerere, regularly published essays in popular journals such as the *Black Scholar* and the *Black World*, annual regional and international conferences, and the national speaking circuit of Baraka, Black Power activists in San Diego developed national and international bonds that made San Diego a formidable force in the 1970s Black Power and Africa liberation movements.²⁰

Amiri Baraka's embrace of Kawaida ideology was concurrent to the drift made by San Diego activists in the late 1960s. Already active in the Black Arts Movement, Baraka (then known as LeRoi Jones) was well-respected by young Black Nationalists. Originally a Greenwich Village Beatnik of sorts, Baraka had begun to embrace Black Nationalism in the wake of the Cuban Revolution and assassination of Patrice Lumumba.²¹ Two of Baraka's popular texts were *Blues People* (1963) and *Home* (1965).

²⁰ Woodard's historical biography is the most comprehensive manuscript on Baraka's life and work. As well, Baraka has published a very good autobiography. Amiri Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones* (Lawrence Hill Books, 1997).

²¹ Woodard, 49-68.

Blues People established African Americans culture as the counterpoint to Anglo American culture and a syncretic product. Meanwhile, *Home* contained the crucial essay “Black Is a Country.” In this essay, Baraka channeled Malcolm X’s popular “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech arguing that African Americans represented what Martin Delany had called a “nation within a nation,” Baraka wrote, “In America, Black is a country.” To embrace Black Nationalism was to reject neocolonialism in Africa and internal colonization in the United States and “the Negro’s struggle in America is only a microcosm of the struggle of the new countries all over the world.”²² Departing from the emigrationist tradition of Black Nationalism in the United States, Baraka argued against repatriation and instead. “The struggle,” Baraka argued, “is for *independence*, not separation.”²³ Baraka’s ideology mirrored those of Karenga’s and a critical position of the Congress of African People. In 1966, Ron Karenga took a trip to New Jersey to meet Baraka at his Black Arts collective, the Spirit House. Later, in 1967, as Baraka lectured at San Francisco State University and collaborated with cultural workers at San Francisco’s Black House of the Black Arts West, Baraka developed a much more substantive engagement with Karenga and the Us Organization. That year, Baraka had toured both Oakland and Los Angeles, gaining more exposure to the Black Panthers, still growing and solely Oakland-based, and the Us Organization.²⁴

Much like the memories of many former Us advocates, Baraka was very impressed by Karenga’s intellect, the discipline and dedication of Us Organization members, and the emphasis placed on culture. “It seemed to me the kind of next-higher

²² LeRoi Jones, “Black Is a Country,” *Home*, 104.

²³ *Ibid*, 105.

²⁴ Woodard, 69-90.

stage of commitment and organization as compared to the Black Arts or what was going on in the Spirit House in Newark,” Baraka admitted.²⁵ Following the Newark Rebellion of 1967 and his work with grassroots activists in Newark, who had also embraced Karenga’s ideology, Baraka began a deeper engagement with Kawaida.²⁶ In 1968, Karenga influenced the creation of a united front organization in the Newark area called the Committee for a Unified Newark (CFUN) as the Spirit House, the United Brothers, and the Black Community Defense and Development (BCD), an East Orange group modelled after the Simba Wachanga.²⁷ Just as the Black Congress in Los Angeles and the Black Conference in San Diego, CFUN embraced the idea of operational unity and programmatic influence as organizational strategy. Like other Kawaida formations, CFUN promoted African consciousness and Black self-defense. Baraka maintained his own publishing house *Jihad Publications*, Amina Baraka operated the African Free School, Baraka continued to write, Baraka and the Spirit House Singers produced albums. What is more, they also made political alliances, most namely with Ken Gibson, the Chief Structural Engineer of Newark. Yet, just like in San Diego, the events of 1969 created a developing rift between Newark leadership and Karenga. At the same time, Baraka grew apart from his Newark comrades Balozi Zayd Muhammad and Mfundishi Massi, the heads of BCD.²⁸ With his growing influence, Baraka became an important ideological influence on San Diegans. One symbolic influence Baraka had on San Diego,

²⁵ Amiri Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, 358.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 387-388.

²⁷ Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation*, 108-110. Simanga, *Amiri Baraka and the Congress of African People*, 34.

²⁸ Woodard expands, in great length, on the break between Baraka and the BCD in *A Nation Within a Nation*. This, however, was not Baraka’s first dramatic break with an organization and it would not be his last.

it seems, was in the style politics. In the early years, Us advocates in Los Angeles and San Diego wore drab-colored bubas, shaved heads, and dark shades in a mode that mimicked Karenga's sartorial politics, Newark members often wore naturals and dashikis. While Sukumu never shaved his head, by 1969, photographic evidence suggests that San Diegans began to embrace the diversified wardrobe of Newark.

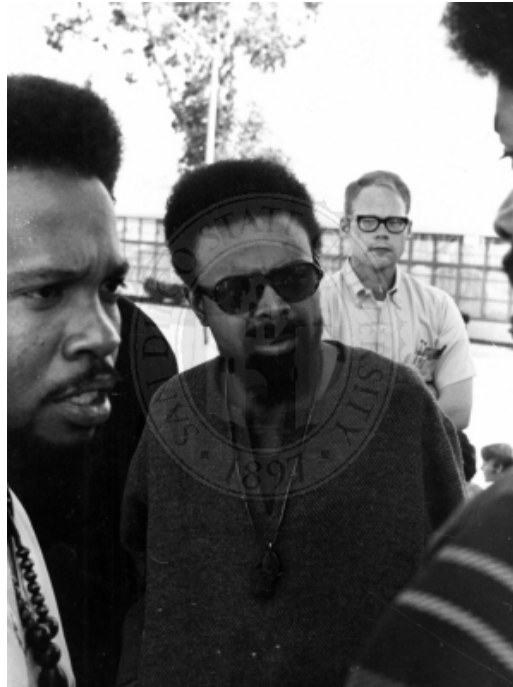


Figure 21 Baraka on one of his many visits to SDSU. Next to him is Sukumu ca. 1970. (SDSU Special Collections)

In 1969, Baraka published his immensely popular text *Raise Race Rays Raze: Essays Since 1965*. In *Raise*, Baraka argued for the broad application of Kawaida philosophy. Baraka's political theory is encapsulated in his essay "The Need for a Cultural Base to Civil Rites & Bpower Mooments." For Baraka, simple integration into a corrupted system was pointless. What was needed was cultural change, not just labor and political reform. Both Black Power and Civil Rights were meaningless unless they contained "a program for consciousness. The consciousness to Act." Baraka writes,

“Voting nor picketing nor for that matter fighting in the streets means anything unless it is proposed by a black consciousness for the aggrandizement and security of the Black culture and Black people. Each of our ‘acts of liberation’ must involve the liberation of the Black man in every way imaginable.”²⁹ For Baraka, that Black consciousness could be in the Black Student Unions, Black Studies programs or the Kawaida philosophy. Baraka, much like Karenga, articulated Black Power politics as a war of position, locating the oppositional politics even a wide variety of places. Nineteen-seventy was a pivotal year in this development as Baraka and CFUN tested their power at mass mobilization, first with Ken Gibson’s mayoral campaign and later with the Atlanta Convention of the Congress of African People.

Newark offered an important refuge for Us advocates from Los Angeles and San Diego who sought to distance themselves from the turmoil in Southern California. Circle of Seven member Ken Msemaji departed Los Angeles for Newark in 1969, after a fallout with Karenga. Following a series of shootings of Panthers and US members in San Diego, Sukumu had also begun to spend much of this time working with CFUN in Newark. This retreat to Newark for Sukumu and Msemaji was a crucial move as it expanded their political training and likely saved the Black Power movement in San Diego. The Msemaji and Sukumu families were joined by many other men and women from Southern California. In Newark, the Southern Californians contributed to the election of Ken Gibson as the Black mayor of Newark in the spring of 1970 and more importantly the Atlanta Convention. As the Southern Californians moved between

²⁹ Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Raise, Race, Rays, Raze: Essays Since 1965* (New York: Random House, 1969/70/71), 47.

Newark and San Diego, the political developments in San Diego drew heavily upon the efforts Baraka and other had been developing with CFUN. While many of these members were moving away from Karenga, their political transformation was not a complete rupture ideologically.

The move was, as Woodard has described it, a modernization of Kawaïda philosophy away from the much more metaphysical engagement with African thought. What historian Komozi Woodard writes of CFUN is equally true of Kawaïda in San Diego. Woodard writes, “In short, the break with BCD modernized the organization, and those developments ended the infancy of CFUN. With these many changes, a marked difference developed between CFUN and the Us Organization; there was little parallel in the Los Angeles Us Organization to political role of the women’s division in CFUN.”³⁰ CFUN’s influence brought an even deeper commitment to Third Worldism and relational politics with Latinos. In Newark, the mutual pact between CFUN and the Young Lords organizationally, and between Black and Puerto Rican Newarkers more generally, was essential to shifting political and economic power in Newark to the communities of color. As discussed later in this chapter, Nia’s Kuumba Foundation mirrored the efforts in CFUN as they sought to unite Black and Chicano youth and politically and economically enfranchise Black and Chicano San Diego. What’s more, San Diegans gained an even deeper engagement with radical African thought as they drew directly from the ideas of African socialists and African Marxists. While things did not change overnight, this deeper commitment to contemporary African thought altered the way San Diegans

³⁰ Woodard, 137.

understood their relationship to capitalism and the role of women in African liberation movements.

Remembering Baraka's writings in *Raise*, *San Diego Us*, and later *Nia*, maintained a strong relationship with San Diego State College's Black Student Council (BSC,) the Black Educational Opportunities Program, and Black Studies Program—Sukumu had been the second BSC president, one of the first Black EOP admits, and helped found the Black Studies Program. Even beyond programmatic influence, the relationship between these campus organizations and the *Us Organization and Congress of African People* redirected crucial funding to movement-building efforts of CAP. Sukumu remembered that San Diego State president Malcolm Love was so afraid that his campus would mirror San Francisco State that he conceded to their demands. Every February, the BSC organized Black is Beautiful Week, a Black Power alternative to Negro History Week. Baraka visited San Diego in his official capacity as a performer at least twice between 1968 and 1970. In these trips, Baraka visited San Diego State, UCSD and California Western University where he gave performances. This allowed Baraka to generate bonds with local activists. Baraka gave talks and performances at the San Diego hekalu and met with community members such as the San Diego pioneer Dr. Jack Kimbrough.

These resources were the movement gained were substantial. Take for example the February 1970 trip Baraka made to San Diego. For that year's Black is Beautiful Week, Baraka and the Spirit House Movers were performed two one act plays at Peterson Gym. San Diego State supplied these stage, auditorium, lighting, and other production materials needed for this event. For the engagement, Baraka and Jihad Productions was

compensated \$2,000. A substantial payment for a single performance, when accounted for inflation, this would be around \$12,000 in 2017.³¹ Apart from the financial aspect, this event underscores the organizational strategy and the growing bonds between San Diego and Newark at this moment. It was in 1970 that the National Involvement Association was official chartered. The altered allegiance of Nia can be witnessed in an image depicting Sukumu officiating an *arusi*, a Kawaida marriage ceremony or “African wedding” as it was generally known. In the photograph, a portrait of Baraka, as opposed to Karenga, is prominently displayed in on the wall, just over Sukumu’s right shoulder. The close ties to Baraka and Newark placed San Diego at the forefront of the planning for the Atlanta Convention and the formation of the Congress of African People.

³¹ Associated Students Performance Contract to Jihad Productions c/o Le Roi Jones, Associated Students Records, Box 10, Folder Jones, Le Roi, SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

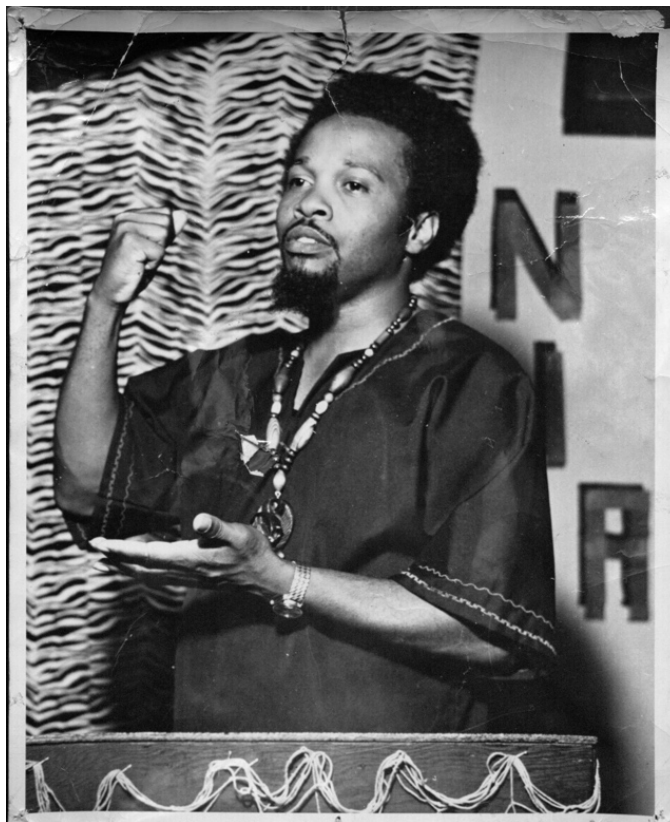


Figure 22 Though undated, this image is likely between 1970 and 1971. Notice Sukumu is still wearing the amulet worn by Us Members and other Kawaida formations. However, the NIA banner now hangs in the backdrop. (Sukumu Private Collection)



Figure 23 Sukumu Officiating an Arusi. The image of Baraka on the wall in the back suggests this image was certainly taken after the separation with Karenga (Sukumu Private Collection)



Figure 24 Sukumu facilitating the Sadikifu Arusi at Mountain View Park ca. 1972 (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)

The Congress of African People convention was held in Atlanta, Georgia on Labor Day Weekend 1970. Both Msemaji and Sukumu were on the coordinating

committee.³² Despite growing tensions between Baraka and Karenga that had manifested in the planning process, the conference was a landmark in African American history and the global struggle for African liberation. Offering a much-needed recess in the political sectarian tensions, the conference hosted over 3,000 attendees. In their proceedings, the Congress of African People announced solidarity with the Republic of New Afrika (RNA), the League of Revolutionary Workers, and the Black Panther Party. Alongside bringing together revolutionary nationalists, cultural nationalists, and the Nation of Islam, the conference also attracted the widespread support of people concerned with mainstream electoral politics. The political platform of the Congress of African People paid homage to the “twenty-seven Black Panther brothers who have paid the supreme sacrifice to make America wake up” and called for an end to the government war on the Panthers, demanding that all charges against their leadership be dropped.³³ Louis Farrakhan and Jesse Jackson spoke at the Atlanta convention and Sister Betty Shabazz and Fanny Lou Hamer also made appearances.³⁴

In the ideological statement, the Congress of African People recognized the “artificial diversity of Pan-African Nationalist theory” and intentionally sought to “reduce the contradictions” that abounded throughout Black nationalism by furthering a functional ideology which brought an end to disunity amongst Black Power groups. “It is imperative that we join our brothers wherever they are and move beyond merely rapping

³² Directory of the National Coordinating Committee of the Congress of African Peoples. Cleveland L. Sellers, Jr. Papers, 1934 – 2003. AMN 1017 Box 10 Folder 09, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, CA.

³³ Imamu Amiri Baraka, *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African Congress Black thought and culture*, (New York: William Morrow, 1972), 140 and 170.

³⁴ Woodard, 164.

about Black Power to an understanding of what we finally want to achieve with Black Power,” the statement notes.³⁵ CAP promoted the Four Ends of Black Power (Self-Determination, Self-Sufficiency, Self-Respect, and Self Defense), as the common grounds on which nationalists could begin to build on. These principles did not only unite people of African descent in the Americas but it also united African descended people with the struggles on the continent.³⁶ The programmatic wing of CAP was its Work Councils; which were initially eleven committees that sought to put the work ideology of CAP into action. Those councils were: political liberation; economic autonomy; creativity and the arts; religious system; education; history; law and justice; Black technology; communications and systems analysis; social organization; and community organization.³⁷ As Baraka had argued in “Black is a Country,” the Congress of African People’s brand of pan-Africanism departed from the long standing emigrationism of American pan-Africanism by explicitly opposing repatriation. “We feel that Repatriation people must understand, and to an extent the separation... people, that Black people, ca. 1970 ain’t going nowhere,” the Political Liberation Council announced.³⁸ Still, CAP stood committed to an Africa free of imperialism and united in struggle. The assured that it was the role of African people to in America to contribute to that struggle. As with the African Activist Association, CAP engaged the ideas of contemporary African revolutionaries like Amilcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, and Samora

³⁵ Ideological Statement of the Congress of African People, p. 1. Cleveland Sellers Papers, AMN 1017 Box 07 Folder 01, Avery Research Center.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁷ Ibid, 2-5.

³⁸ Political Liberation Council Organizing Manual, Cleveland L. Sellers, Jr, Papers, 1934-2003, AMN 1017 Box 10 Folder 09, Avery Research Center.

Machel, who called for African Americans to mobilize in their locales. Furthermore, departing from RNA ideology which had centralized the rural south as a potential homeland, CAP was focused on urban political action.³⁹ Considering the wave of electoral victories that Black nationalists had recently claimed in America's "Chocolate Cities," CAP's vision was neither reformist nor misguided. In San Diego, the development of the National Involvement Association simultaneously built on their respective tradition of activism while maintaining an adherence to CAP national directives.

Between 1970 and 1974, San Diego's Congress of African People chapter organized the Umoja dance troupe for young men, the Malaika troupe for young girls, the House of Kitabu Black bookstore, and even an answering service. Just as the San Diego Us chapter had done, Nia continued to promote the public celebration of African culture and holidays, Sukumu began to facilitate African weddings, Kwanzaa observations began to grow, and Nia organized what was arguably the largest Malcolm X Day festivals (Kuzaliwa) in the nation. Following the national leadership of the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), Kuzaliwa, which was May 19th, and African Liberation Day, which was observed on May 25th, came to be celebrated on the same day. Nia members continued to programmatically influence activism in San Diego as participants and leaders of the San Diego Black Federation, the succeeding umbrella organization in San Diego that followed the Black Conference. Lastly, Nia operated the Kuumba Foundation. With a grant from the Model Cities program, Kuumba operated the

³⁹ Ibid, 6-9. Woodard, 169.

Southeast San Diego Communications Complex and the Institute for Afro-American Studies.⁴⁰ With its focus on African centered education, practical vocational development, cultural production, and Third World solidarity between Blacks and Latinos, the Kuumba Foundation continued the aspirations and contradictions of the Africa House and the international vision of the Congress of African People. In San Diego, Nia kept the Black Power movement alive and played a crucial role in connecting the local struggles of Black San Diegans to the international struggle for African liberation as Nia and its members spearheaded local efforts to free Southern Africa.

Pan-Africanism in Translation

The radical vision of the African Activist Association turned *Ufahamu* into a work of revolutionary art through which they dismantled the African Studies at UCLA. *Ufahamu* did not only reflect the contemporary currents swirling through the Black World in the 1970s, its vision produced the antiapartheid movement at UCLA.⁴¹ Beginning with its naming and journal covers, *Ufahamu* expressed its political intervention. *Ufahamu* is a Kiswahili word meaning understanding, consciousness, or knowledge. The most widely spoken African language on the continent, the adoption of a Kiswahili word reflects the general re-Africanization that had been popular amongst cultural nationalists in Southern California but also many revolutionary nationalists

⁴⁰ CAP Organizing Manual, Reel 2 Congress of African People, Series 5 Congress of African People, The Black Power Movement Part 1: Amiri Baraka from Black Arts to Black Radicalism.

⁴¹ Their annual conventions on South Africa morphed into what became known as Nelson Mandela City as the AAA2 and members of the *Ufahamu* editorial board fought for the divestment of UCLA from South Africa in a struggle that pitted them against their own faculty—which will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter.

nationwide and throughout the African diaspora.⁴² The covers of *Ufahamu* reflected the tension between Black nationalism and revolutionary Marxism as the African art that often adorned the periodical and the essays the filled the pages often contrasted.

The art and cultural criticism in the pages of *Ufahamu* reflected the pan-Africanist views held by many of the editorial board and students in the AAA2. In the early years, the writings in *Ufahamu* argues squarely that all people of African descent were African. As African people, they all shared a universal culture and a common history of antiracist and anticolonial liberation struggles. Amidst the political struggles of the African World, *Ufahamu* proposed African unity as not only necessary to eradicate the last vestiges of European colonialism in Africa but also the overcome ethnic and national divisions at the center of neocolonial conflicts. The Mobutu dictatorship had emerged out of the Congo Crisis, Nkrumah had been overthrown in an American-backed coup d'état, and Nigeria suffered a bloody civil war that left the range of 100,000 dead and millions of people displaced. Compounded with the sectarianism in the United States and the West Indies, African unity was not a “pastiche of alien traditions held together by simplistic traditions” but instead an immediate and material necessity.⁴³ The poems and essays called for the unity and clarity in the Black Arts. Also, the writings heralded African

⁴² Not just the most widely spoken language, it was also the lingua franca of Tanzania. As I note, Tanzania is the only truly pan-African nation—a place where two nations came together to create a new singular nation. Tanzania had become a popular center for the ANC in Exile, its leader Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was among the most prominent leaders as his political philosophy of Ujamaa, an African Socialist ideology that argued Africans could organize African society based on traditional principles that, as some have argued, was both *anti-capitalist* and *ante-capitalist*. A political debate that would eventually be taken up in the pages of *Ufahamu*, at least in its early years, Ujamaa offered a common ground for cultural nationalists who sought to reorder society while rejecting capitalism and European philosophy as well as African Marxists.

⁴³ Clarence Walker, *We Can't Go Home Again: An Argument About Afrocentricism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), XXX.

liberation struggles from the confines of American prisons to Mozambican jungles and kept alive the dreams of martyred leaders such as Mondlane, Cabral, Steve Biko, Walter Rodney, and Samora Machel. This pan-African cultural worldview proved a necessary precursor to political liberation generally and more specifically, it laid the foundation for the role the AAA2 and *Ufahamu* played in the support of Southern African liberation in the following decades.

Hale notes that in the early years, every part of the editorial process of the journal was a political struggle. Considering that Hale and other members of the editorial board were white, “The question of whether an elite white student editor dared to correct the grammar of an article written by a Black or African author” was of immediate concern.⁴⁴ It was at that time many African Americans, for the first time, had begun to consume African literature in large portions. It was also this same moment that linguist JL Dillard linked to origins of the African American dialect to creole languages spoken by African descended communities. Concerns for language and dialect dominated the early pages of *Ufahamu*. In her reading of the Black Arts Movement, Black literary critic Amy Abugo Ongiri notes that writers “used language to invoke a cultural and social unity that was increasingly difficult to claim in the face of post-civil rights social changes.”⁴⁵ As editorial board member Fritz Pointer implied in his essay “An Appeal to African Writers to Be African,” abandoning a rigid commitment to European language standards was fundamental in the struggle to defeat white supremacy and restore African agency. Renee Poussaint, another board member and future award-winning journalist, identified

⁴⁴ Hale, “Where Have We Been and Where Are We Goin?,” 93.

⁴⁵ Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 116.

adherence to European language as a primary division in African art and therefore a roadblock to African unity.

The editorial board placed Pointer's "An Appeal to African Writers to be African" at the end of the first volume, just before the book reviews—it sets the tone for many of the essays and poems to come in the series. More than an academic paper, Pointer's piece was a treatise. An Oakland native, like so many other Black students in the 1960s, Pointer followed a nontraditional path to higher education. Known by many as the "Pointer Brother," he was the older brother to the prominent soul group, The Pointer Sisters. As a youth, Pointer had spent time in juvenile detention centers, alongside Huey Newton, before attending Creighton University as a standout basketball player. A member of the San Francisco's Black Panther Party of Northern California (disaffiliated from the Oakland-based party), Pointer held a deep commitment to pan-Africanist ideology and its local application.⁴⁶ In the second volume of *Ufahamu*, Pointer published the essay "Marxism and Nationalism in Black Revolutionary Movements—USA" where he argued for the mutual legibility between Black Nationalism and socialism. Pointer drew heavily from the ideas of Malcolm X, James Turner, James Boggs, Harry Haywood, and E. Franklin Frazier. In his essay, Pointer was concerned with "the masses of African People (in America and on the continent)," as he writes of the African Diaspora, citing African, African American, and Caribbean writers.⁴⁷ "An Appeal to African Writers to be African," therefore, draws a discernable inspiration from the debate amongst African-

⁴⁶ Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 28-29, 45-48, 66, and 220.

⁴⁷ Fritz Pointer, "Marxism and Nationalism in Black Revolutionary Movements—USA," *Ufahamu* Vol. 2 No. 2, (1971): 54.

born writers on the role of language in African literature following the 1962 Conference of African Writers of English Expression held at Uganda's Makerere University. Following the conference, Nigerian activist and writer Obi Wali declared that African literature written in European languages was not African. Wali's sentiments were shared by the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiongo, who subsequently influenced the cultural politics of the African Activist Association members and other UCLA students. For Ngugi, the revolutionary process required structural change as well as linguistic shifts from European languages to African languages.⁴⁸ It was in response to this decree that the famed Nigerian author Chinua Achebe prominently objected. Acknowledging the contradictions, Achebe noted that writing in European languages "looks like a dreadful betrayal, and produces a guilty feeling" but concluded "for me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it."⁴⁹ While, in hindsight, Achebe's statement was clear expression of the same contrapuntality articulated by Aime Cesaire. Cesaire acknowledged that he learned the French language so that he could subsequently develop surrealism as "a weapon that exploded the French language." Similarly, CLR James' admitted homage to Victorian literature, Pointer's criticism was harsh and unrelenting.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Masilela, "The Los Angeles School" in *A South African Looks at the African Diaspora*, 276-277. Ngugi wa Thiongo, "The Language of African Literature."

⁴⁹ Chinua Achebe, "English and the African Writer," *Transition* No. 75/76, p. 346, reprinted from the 1965 essay in *Transition*. It is worth noting that Achebe had also expressed his support in Biafran secession. It is possible enhanced Pointer's frustration with the legendary Nigerian writer, though that is unclear.

⁵⁰ Aime Cesaire, "An Interview with Cesaire" in *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1955/1972/2000), 83. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993/1994), 245.

Pointer characterized Achebe's writing as the work of "weak-minded individualistic, alienated or alienating artist[s]."⁵¹ Primarily concerned with African originality as a pathway to liberation as opposed to any form of mimesis, Pointer leaned heavily on the writings of the South African Willie Kgositsile. Citing Kgositsile, Pointer writes: "African Freedom is about Change; the deconstruction of Western values at all levels the rebuilding of the African soul; the reshaping of our attitudes." "Definition: African literature is about change," Pointer concludes.⁵² To adhere to the rigid guidelines and form of European literature is then to remain a colonized subject. In an interesting departure from Wali and Ngugi, despite Pointer's criticism of Achebe, nowhere in the essay does Pointer suggest that the decolonization of African literature, and therefore African people, should be through the orthodoxy of traditional African languages. As the Nigerian musician Fela Kuti acknowledged, the popular use of native languages only fueled ethnocentric divisions in African society. Equally, the proper English language did not allow for the maneuverability of African music and language. For these reasons, Fela chose to sing in Pidgin English, the lingua franca of British West Africa, as opposed to Yoruba.⁵³ "You see, this whole aspiration for our *literacy* is in and of itself a big hoax," Pointer writes.⁵⁴ Citing the broad non-literacy of African people worldwide, Pointer advocates for the embrace of the oral literature, the vernacular tradition. The fact that people of the African diaspora do not read or write as prolifically as Europeans, is a problem of colonialism, not a problem of African civilization. "Literacy again is another

⁵¹ Fritz Pointer, "An Appeal to African Writers to Be African," *Ufahamu*, Vol.1 No. 1 (1970): 101.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Michael Veal, *Fela: The Life and Times of An African Musical Icon* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000), 95.

⁵⁴ Pointer, 101.

device of Eur-rope-an hanging, another means of screening people out of *their* definition of humanity... You see, our problem is not that we don't write enough, but that we were enslaved," Pointer writes.⁵⁵

In the second part of the inaugural volume of *Ufahamu* by Beverlee Bruce, a graduate student in education, expands on Pointer's thesis in her essay "Afro-Americans and Language." Noting that "language can be used, either as a tool of oppression or a tool for liberation," Bruce explains, language was a primary tool for the natal alienation and social death of enslaved Africans.⁵⁶ Africans were separated first from their family and ethnic groups and then placed on plantations where they could not directly speak to each other. While separated from their native tongues, enslaved Africans retained the African worldview, Bruce argues. Africans created an English language distinct from the Euro-American language in syntax, phonology, and semantics. Despite the colonial and racist attempts to classify African American language and culture simply as "folk" or a subculture, for Bruce, it is distinctively African. Building on Pointer's thesis, Bruce argued that the new generation of African American scholars were braking with earlier generations of Black writers who fell into that colonial quagmire. However, this new generation planned to pave their new way forward by listening to their people. "We will listen to the words of our people and we will act, for the word, the thought preceded the deed. We will listen to the words of our people and we will act: Up against the wall mutha fucka. Right on. We will listen to the words of our people and we will act, for we know that when language is used to define, to describe, to hypothesize about, to control,

⁵⁵ Ibid, 105.

⁵⁶ Beverlee Bruce, "Afro-Americans and Language," *Ufahamu* Vol. 1 No. 2 (1970): 63.

one's environment, it used as a tool of liberation," Bruce wrote.⁵⁷ Similarly, Pointer had noted that African literature is meant to be conversational. Applauding the style of the Nigerian playwright and poet Wole Soyinka and Amiri Baraka, Pointer noted that they both "write and speak African literature" and they also listen while they write, African writing is therefore produced through a critical dialogue with the people.⁵⁸ While Pointer called for African writers to be African, he argued that African writing does not require high education but instead life experience. "You'll know it when you see it...or hear it," Pointer writes.⁵⁹ In the early volumes of *Ufahamu*, the writing of authors such as Bruce and Pointer incorporated the dialogical prose as they moved freely between colloquial and standard American English in their writing.

The African Film Festival, organized by the African Studies Center and held November 5th and 6th in 1970, highlights the peculiar position of AAA2 student activists. Like many other events at the African Studies Center, the festival offered direct access to the most important thinkers across the African world. With this immediate contact, AAA2 members produced radical analyses. With funding from a variety of sources such as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the brainchild of Leo Kuper, the film festival was the most ambitious of its type to be attempted, at its time and helped to spur UCLA's projectile rise in Black independent cinema. With prominent filmmakers such as Yves Diagne of Senegal, Moustapha Alassane of Niger, and the person known by some as the "Father of African film," Ousmane Sembene of Senegal, the festival was heralded as a wide scale success by the heads of the African Studies Center in their

⁵⁷ Bruce, 67.

⁵⁸ Pointer, 106.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 107.

academic journal *African Arts*.⁶⁰ However, UCLA graduate student in African Literature, Renee Poussaint had a different interpretation of the festival, in her essay “African Film: The High Price of Division” which appeared in the third part of the inaugural volume of *Ufahamu*.

Poussaint brought a critical leadership to the journal and the African Activist Association; in her practice, she challenged the gender dynamics of the AAA2 and in her writings, she provided a sharp pan-African perspective. Poussaint was a founding member of the AAA2, a member of the *Ufahamu* editorial board, the Assistant Editor for *African Arts*, and a member of the UCLA Black Graduate Student Association. Poussaint was one of the three women to found the association and the journal, alongside Joy Stewart and Sondra Hale. Women members did most of the clerical work for the journal and no one worked harder to organize the first volume of *Ufahamu* than Poussaint. Poussaint was an exceptionally qualified student leader. An MA student in African Literature, Poussaint had also attended law school and lived in East and West Africa. The female members of the African Activist Association, at that time, did not identify as “feminists.” Sondra Hale remembers that she had firmly identified as a Marxist. “I’d hardly even heard the word,” Hale remembered.⁶¹ Nonetheless, in their practice, women in the AAA2 protested the patriarchal leadership of men in the organization. The “Front Matter” of the inaugural issue of *Ufahamu* is the only issue to not have an Editor-In-Chief listed on it; the work was supposed to be conducted collectively. However, after Poussaint and Hale discussed that women did most the labor for the journal, Poussaint

⁶⁰ “African Film Festival,” *African Arts* Vol. 4 No. 3 (Spring 1971): 77.

⁶¹ Hale Oral History.

“rebelled and announced to the editorial board that she did all the work and, therefore, she should be Editor-in-Chief. This caused considerable consternation and more struggle” but eventually, the opposition conceded and Poussaint became the first Editor-In-Chief of *Ufahamu*.⁶² As cultural studies scholar Cheryl Higashida has argued, Poussaint “challenged heteronormative and masculinist articulations of nationalism while maintaining the importance, even centrality, of national liberation movements for achieving Black women’s social, political, and economic rights.”⁶³

Poussaint’s essay, “African Film: The High Price of Division” was an early entry into the canon of third world film studies that UCLA would become well-known for. In her essay, Poussaint noted that the festival underscored four central contradictions in African film directly and more broadly the crises of neocolonial Africa. The first major division that the film festival elucidated was that of geography. Most notably in the division of North Africa and “Black” Africa, the geographic fissure in African film even impacts how the artists themselves view the origins of African film. The origins of African film could be with the 1924 publication of the short film *Ghezal la fille de Carthage* by the Tunisian film maker Sama Chikli or it could be with the work of the Senegalese Sembene—it is evident that Poussaint is much more interested in the work of Sembene as a benchmark for the African film tradition due to his politics, not just his early productions. For the artists, geography could vastly impact distribution and copyright issues. The second cleft is that of the relationship between the artist and the government. Whereas filmmakers like the Congolese Joseph Kiboko had been

⁶² Hale, 95.

⁶³ Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 2.

embarrassingly reduced to making government propaganda and boosterish travelogues by his repressive government, Sembene had been able to produce work that represented “his anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeois orientation” without any compromising. Praising his film *Mandabi*, Poussaint notes that Sembene did not portray any whites in his film and used his film as a reflection of Black self-determination.⁶⁴ Previously discussed, the third paradox of language, reflects the concerns shared by Bruce and Pointer. Sembene’s use of Wolof in his film, the language of the clear majority of Senegalese, as well as subtitles, Sembene’s work was made accessible to the masses in his homeland as well as international markets. The linguistic problem directly correlated with class concerns, the final division Poussaint identified.⁶⁵

As discussed earlier in this study, colonialism produced an African elite whose education and proficiency in European languages set them apart from the masses. The contemporary generation of African filmmakers came from this class. If African filmmakers failed to resolve their class contradictions, they would in fact produce films that were simultaneously objectified by the West and alienated from the mass of their countrymen and women. However, if like Sembene, African filmmakers created motion pictures that criticized bourgeois life and embraced the struggles of everyday African people, African film “can be used as an effective arm of independent revolution to sensitize, educate, and mobilize the people for the struggle has been well proven elsewhere in the Third World, noticeably in Latin America.”⁶⁶ Poussaint’s essay is clearly not only about African filmmakers or even African revolution but it also reflects

⁶⁴ Renee Poussaint, “African Film: The High Price of Division,” *Ufahamu* Vol. 1, No. 3 (1971): 58.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

the promise of the African Activist Association and *Ufahamu*. “The problems faced by African peoples as newly independent nations are shared across the continent by North African, French West Africa, and English-speaking alike: poverty, health, education, social inequalities, etc.,” Poussaint writes.⁶⁷ For Poussaint, the unity of work and struggle does not only elevate the role of the African director but also the African intellectual.

Ujamaa in Action: The Local Application of Tanzanian Ideology

In San Diego, Nia used expressive culture to raise African consciousness and organize Black San Diegans around shared political and economic issues. Cultural work also established international bonds with African entertainers and politicians. The adoption of Kiswahili and South African names, clothing, dances, and languages was not simply for the creation of a national culture. Then still officially a part of the Us Organization, in February 1970, the San Diego Taifa Dance Troupe and Malaika Singers participated in the Black is Beautiful celebration at SDSU; the same festival that Baraka participated in. During the week of events, there was an African fashion show where men and women modeled handmade African-inspired clothing. One of the designers was the Black Student Council and Us member Patricia Salimu Moore. Gerald Chaka remembered Nina Simone had brought Salimu back to the East Coast with her once to make clothes. Simone was the sister of SDSU professor Carroll Waymon. Her song “Young, Gifted, and Black”, released in 1972, would eventually become a Black Power theme song.⁶⁸ The Malaika singers used to feature Simone’s 1969 song “Four Women”

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Shana L. Redmond, *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora*, (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 179-220.

as a part of their performances. The Umoja dancers performed Zulu dances and the South African boot dance they learned from Letta Mbulu and Caiphus Semenya.⁶⁹ The boot dance became very popular in San Diego and their performance that month as a part of the Dimensions of Black exhibition at the La Jolla Museum of Art was recorded and aired on KEBS.⁷⁰ Once San Diego Us officially became Nia, the dance troupe changed names to Umoja meaning unity. In November 1971, the Umoja Dance Troupe performed with Miriam Makeba and the Last Poets as a part of the Asante Weusi (Black Thanks) celebration held at the San Diego Coliseum that year. As Scot Brown has shown in his work, Taifa and Umoja maintained a great relationship with South African performers and Mbulu and Makeba played central roles in challenging some of the decontextualized notions of gender and sexuality that Kawaida had presented—especially regarding the role of women and the practices of polygamy in modern African culture. Despite their limitations, African cultural workers and politicians enjoyed African American interests and practice of African culture. With many African nations going through similar “re-Africanization” projects, the cultural work of Nia and the Congress of African People was one of the things that interested Tanzanian leaders to establish bonds with them. From these bonds, Radical African consciousness grew from these bonds.

⁶⁹ Scot Brown, *Fighting for Us*, 132-133.

⁷⁰ “La Jolla Museum to exhibit black art,” *Daily Aztec*, 2/10/70, p. 8. “KEBS will present black music, dance,” *Daily Aztec*, 4/16/70, p. 8. “Dimensions of Black’: Exhibit of Negro Art to Open,” *San Diego Union*, 2/8/70, Section E.



Figure 25 Umoja Dancers doing the Boot Dance ca. 1972 (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)



Figure 26 Umoja Boot Dancers at a Malcolm X Day Event (UCSD Special Collections)



Figure 27 Young Malaika Dancers at a Malcolm X Day Event (UCSD Special Collections)

Tanzania and its President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere deeply influenced the ideology of the Congress of African People. Historian James Meriwether argues that the paradox of post-independence sectarian violence in Africa overdetermined the shift in the African American gaze towards political struggles in Southern African and away from West and Central Africa.⁷¹ While generally instructive, the centrality of Tanzania escapes Meriwether's intervention. Historian Brenda Gayle Plummer has noted, "After the fall of Nkrumah [in an American-backed coup d'état] when Pan-Africanist energy shifted to Tanzania and its welcoming stance toward the black diaspora, Tanzania seemed poised to replace Ghana as a place of exile for North American expatriates."⁷² However, African American radicals did not only move to Tanzania, they moved through Tanzania and returned with a deep appreciation of the truly pan-Africanist nation as a

⁷¹ James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 244.

⁷² Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization* (New York City and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 205.

base for revolutionary action and structural redevelopment. For Black Americans, Tanzanian politics were central to the development of African solidarity politics and the antiapartheid movement. Nyerere housed Southern African exiles and rebels and the University of Dar es Salaam was arguably the premier African university and the hub for pan-African radical intellectuals from the late 1960s to the 1970s. The Congress of African People came to view Nyerere's African socialist theory and national program of *Ujamaa* as a "living model of positive development that Black people all over the world can learn from." In a move, away from strict antisocialist posturing of the Us Organization, CAP openly spoke of socialism as they developed the concept of *Revolutionary Kawaida*.⁷³ During his visit to the United States in 1970, Nyerere invited the Congress of African People to Tanzania for its ten-year anniversary of Uhuru (Tanzanian independence) in December of 1971.

For three weeks, a delegation of CAP leadership, including Baraka and Nia members Vernon Sukumu, Tiamoya Sukumu, and Salimu Moore also a member of the Social Organization Work Council, toured Tanzania and Kenya and even visited West African nations including Senegal and Ivory Coast.⁷⁴ In Tanzania, the CAP delegation met with the leadership of Tanzania's ruling party the Tanzania African National Union (TANU) including Abdulrahman Muhammad Babu as well as the leaders of other African nations including the pan-Africanist Somali President Siad Barre. In their visit, Tanzania's beautiful landscape was surpassed by the political organization the CAP leaders witnessed. Following their visit, Baraka reported admiration for the construction

⁷³ Simanga, 89.

⁷⁴ "Tanzania Strides Made, Visitor Says," *San Diego Union*, 12/17/71.

of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway and applauded the “formidable” national military. After viewing Ujamaa Villages, government-sponsored agricultural resettlements where the government relocated three million Tanzanians, Baraka and CAP felt further assured of the utility of Ujamaa as a political platform.⁷⁵ “There is a lesson here for African Americans, that African peoples wherever we are can only advance and make progress...against the tides of racist oppression and disregard by unifying as a national community and practicing cooperative economics...among ourselves; and we will make economic strides, and with them, social evolution, such we have not witnessed in this hostile land before,” Baraka wrote.⁷⁶ In a local interview, Vernon Sukumu remarked, “I noticed great strides in education and politics and in the cooperation of the citizens for a betterment of all the people in the nation. Everybody in Tanzania has a roof over his head and one doesn’t see any beggars in the street.” At the time of independence 80 percent of Tanganyikans were uneducated and less than ten people had earned college degrees, all from other nations. “Today, every youngster attends some kind of a school, the literacy rate was high, and there were three national universities, Sukumu noted.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Imamu Amiri Baraka, “Tanzania: Independence Anniversary,” *Black World*, (March 1972), 65-69.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

⁷⁷ “Tanzania Strides made, visitor says.”



Figure 28 Tiamoya Sukumu was active in organizing the School of Afroamerican Culture (Sukumu Private Collection)



Figure 29 Baraka in East Africa (Sukumu Collection)

In many ways, the success and limitations of the National Involvement Association and its Kuumba Foundation, as well as many of the other CAP projects

throughout the nation, mirrored the successes and limitations of Ujamaa in Tanzania. Alongside Baraka's aforementioned observations, Sukumu brought home the importance of local action and a racial pride built with cross-racial solidarity, and not against it. In 1967, Nyerere had opposed racist ideologies as a remnant of colonial rule and Nyerere professed that racial division must be overcome to achieve true independence. Nyerere wrote, "If we are to succeed in building a socialist state in this country it is essential that every citizen...should live up to that doctrine."⁷⁸ Nyerere eventually publicly opposed Idi Amin's expulsion of South Asian citizens. However, just as Nyerere warned against African ethnocentrism and xenophobia, he also demanded Asian consent to the national agenda for his policies to succeed. Nyerere's Third Worldism strengthened Nia's own *polyculturalism*.⁷⁹ Nyerere condemned excessive wealth accumulation yet confirmed the dignity of labor. Everyone deserved employment and that work should contribute to the nation. The wealthy had a commitment to contribute to the embitterment of all society, business leaders were not permitted to hold national office of leadership in TANU, and educational institutions were to operate as economic co-ops. Legal scholar and professor at the University of Dar Es Salaam Issa Shivji argues that the central paradox to Ujamaa as originally articulated in the 1967 Arusha Declaration was that it was "a powerful statement of an idealist policy" void of political programming. Tanzanian democratic

⁷⁸ Julius Nyerere, "Socialism is not Racialism," *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 1968), 43.

⁷⁹ Vijay Prashad writes: "The framework of polyculturalism uncouples notions of origins and authenticity from that of culture. Culture is a process...with no identifiable origin. Therefore, no cultural actor can, in good faith claim proprietary interest in what is claimed to be his or her authentic claim to be his or her authentic culture." Polyculturalism provides "a dynamic view of history, mainly because it argues for cultural complexity." Vijay Prashad, *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 65-66.

socialist bureaucrats shaped Ujamaa as policy.⁸⁰ Adding to this criticism, Vijay Prashad notes that Ujamaa became top-down and patriarchal without a “genuine attempt to organize the population into the ideas.”⁸¹ While the external pressures of the global political economy surely stunted the success of Ujamaa, the problematics derived from state-control and the limitations of electoral politics to radical movements was manifested throughout the Congress of African People.

The Kuumba Foundation arose from a Nia partnership with the Model Cities program. As noted in the previous chapter, Black Power organizations such as the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party formed strategic relationships with antipoverty programs. Back in Newark, the Congress of African People attempted to make tactical use of antipoverty and urban renewal programming in the management of a many of their projects such as the African Free School, the *Black NewArk* radio and television program, and their most ambitious projects Kawaida Community Development and the planned construction of the Kawaida Towers, a sixteen-story apartment complex.⁸² In San Diego Model Cities program forwarded and funded projects dedicated to vocational and educational advancements in San Diego areas most impacted by poverty, namely Southeast San Diego and the San Ysidro area. In May 1970, 6.6 million dollars of government funding was approved for the establishment of 35 educational, job training, rehabilitation, and counseling programs with another possible \$1.7 million available. Of this funding, over 300,000 dollars were committed to what became the two main

⁸⁰ Issa Shivji, “Debates at the Hill,” *Intellectuals at the Hill: Essay and Talks 1969-1993* (Dar Es Salaam University Press, 1993), 142-143.

⁸¹ Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 202.

⁸² Woodard, 219-254.

programs of the Kuumba foundation: The Southeast San Diego Communications Complex and the Institute of Afroamerican Studies.⁸³ This partnership with the Model Cities program and other urban renewal projects, represented one of the most ambitious attempt by Black Nationalists at seizing structural power in the United States. Yet unlike the programming of the community action agencies during the Johnson Administration, the expansion of the Model Cities program that placed the final power with local mayoral offices. Indicative of national shifts in the relationship between Black Nationalists and elected officials nationally, by 1974, the strategic union had been dramatically shattered.

The National Involvement Association was one of the most active of all CAP chapters and Kuumba was its jewel. Nia hosted the Western Regional Congress of African People at San Diego High School from June 18th through 20th, 1971. Attended by over 500 people, the Western Regional conference continued the Atlanta conference's focus on Black unity and represented the renewed optimism amongst Black radicals in Southern California. California State Senator Mervyn Dymally, one of the speakers, affirmed this in his address where he noted that "the future is looking bright politically for blacks. Black people are switching to politics as a substitute to their approach in the past to civil rights."⁸⁴ "We believe we must work toward eliminating the problems that have separated black people and try to make whatever field or profession we serve in become useful to the black community," Sukumu a reporter.⁸⁵ The Western Regional was attended by an international cast of individuals. Local and regional elected officials

⁸³ "\$6.6 Million Fund Plea OKd by City," *San Diego Union*, 5/13/70, B2. Joe Stone, "Kuumba Calling," *San Diego Union*, 2/28/72, B1.

⁸⁴ "Dymally Cites Negro Political Awakening," *San Diego Union*, 6/20/71, B6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

such as Dymally, San Diego City Councilman Leon Williams, State Assemblywoman Yvonne Braithwaite, and State Assemblyman Bill Green. Baraka and Haywood Henry, the official chairman of CAP, were in attendance. Workshops focused on religious systems, political liberation, history, community organizations, Black economics, creativity, education, law and justice, technology, communications, and social organization.⁸⁶ There was even an earnest effort to organize Black professional athletes at this conference. Elvin Hayes of the San Diego Rockets, Abner Haynes of the Dallas Cowboys, and the Dallas Cowboy and National Football League Players Association president Ernie Wright were among the athletes on the panel.⁸⁷ The evenings were packed with African-centered entertainment that included a performance by Nia's Umoja Dance Troupe who performed the South African boot dance. As well, Hugh Masekela and the Union of South Africa were headline performers at Saturday night show at Russ Auditorium.⁸⁸

In the transcript to a Nia orientation session that is likely from the Western Regional Meeting, Msemaji outlined the philosophy of Nia and the Kuumba Foundation. Msemaji argued, "Kuumba Foundation is a dream. It is a dream because we have worked and struggled for so many years to have a real program that can begin to educate the masses of minority people....What we wanted to do for a while is have a program that really addresses itself to the needs of black people, brown people, and other minorities."⁸⁹

⁸⁶ "African Peoples Confab to be Held in San Diego," *Sacramento Observer*, 5/20/1971, B11.

⁸⁷ "Dymally Cites Negro Political Awakening."

⁸⁸ Sherman S. Skeete, "Nation Time West'—The Western Regional" and "Conference of the Congress of African Peoples," *San Diego Voice and Viewpoint* 6/23/71.

⁸⁹ Kuumba Orientation Transcript, p. 1. Frank Albert Young Papers, Box 7 Folder 1 Kuumba Foundation, San Diego, CA 1971. College of Charleston Avery Research Center.

Noting the previous struggles between community activists and antipoverty bureaucrats, Msemaji noted that Kuumba departed from the previous “makeshift arrangements” arrangements that enriched administrators while ignoring the needs of people of color. In what clearly reflected the teachings of Nyerere, Karenga, and Baraka, Msemaji recognized the centrality of collective work and economic production as a solution to the ills that Black and Brown San Diegans encountered and that any effective program needed to instill:

A total value system that teaches us how to live and teaches us how to be married and take care of our children, and teaches us how to buy black and vote black, and teaches us how to have a black concept of beauty instead of Elizabeth Taylor and Twiggy concept of beauty. That teaches us to stop fighting and arguing among ourselves in the community, something that teaches us to realize that we have interest groups in the black community, no classes, we are all a part of one class—a class of those who are catching hell, or the class of the dispossessed. Therefore, we have to realize if a brother is a doctor or lawyer that he belongs in a professional interest group, and if a brother is a nationalist, the he belongs in that interest group. But everybody that contributes towards the struggle is equally important as the next person.⁹⁰

With an African-centered cultural base to its programming Kuumba intended to meet the immediate employment and educational concerns while also mobilizing African Americans in support of African liberation. Msemaji argued that just six years following the Watts Rebellion, African Americans had begun to abandon the struggle for all struggles besides their own. “And now, just like in 1965, we suffer the most unemployment; we are subject to poor housing; we study Hamlet rather than LeRoi Jones; we are being shot down in the streets and in our homes, all over country; we are still being sent to Vietnam to murder our brothers who are fighting for the same things

⁹⁰ Ibid, 2.

that we are. We are still being wiped out in the Middle East; and now the Portuguese have started killing our brothers in Guinea,” Msemaji stated.⁹¹

A brief analysis to the employment and education figures might appear to suggest that Msemaji was being hyperbolic. However, upon deeper examination, the statistical gains Black Californians had made since 1960 actually influenced new forms of acute alienation by the early 1970s. Educationally, Black Californians had made strides in their high school and post-secondary education per capita. From 1960 to 1970, Blacks had moved from a median 10th grade education to a median 12th grade education. Of Black people over the age of 25, the high school graduation rates had moved to 50 percent compared to 1/3 in 1960. Black education rates rose at a higher rate than whites but not as high as the white high school education rates had moved from just above 50 percent to 64 percent. The largest and most clear gap still was in six percent of Blacks had completed college while 14 percent of whites had completed college. In the work force, one out of three Black men remained unskilled laborers, a slight decrease in from the 42 percent in 1960. Comparatively, Black women had moved from 50 percent employment in domestic service roles to 32 percent. Black women in clerical and professional roles improved threefold and fourfold respectively.⁹²

These gains suggested that there were indeed material gains from civil rights and Black Power activism. However, these gains did not shift African American positions in the overall economy. While Black wealth had grown, Black women remained the poorest, earning less than half of what men had made in 1969 and 90 percent of what all

⁹¹ Ibid, 5.

⁹² *Black Californians*, 7-11.

women made.⁹³ Black men earned two-thirds of all male wealth. Most strikingly, Black unemployment remained over twice the rate of whites at 10.5 percent and the unemployment rate for Black teenagers was astonishingly almost three times that of whites between 33.5 and 37.5 percent compared to 14.1 for white teens.⁹⁴ These problems and contradictions could only be overcome by teaching “a synthesis of many African cultures, taking the dominant themes that run through all of them” and presenting a clear alternative to mainstream American culture.⁹⁵

Kuumba offices were first located at 3042 Ocean View Boulevard it was moved to 3040 Imperial Avenue in 1972, located in the designated Model Cities area. While Sukumu was the head of Nia and Msemaji played an important programmatic role, the foundation was initially headed by Harold Sadikifu. Sadikifu's tenure with Kuumba was short and by late 1971, Sadikifu was replaced by Tommy Meshack, a San Diego resident and graduate of San Diego High School, UCLA, and Berkeley where he studied political science and public administration. Alongside being the nephew of Jackie Meshack, a longtime activist and Black Conference member, and his status as a standout athlete, Meshack was also fluent in Spanish. The assistant director was Oliver McKinney, was also a San Diego High School graduate and alumnus of the University of Oregon, a former consultant to Hubert Humphrey and systems analyst for AT&T. Meshack and Oliver's professional experience was ideal for the direction of the direction of the Communications Complex.

⁹³ Ibid, 11.

⁹⁴ National Manpower Policy Task Force, “The Status of Black Unemployment,” (January 1975), 3-4.

⁹⁵ Kuumba Orientation, 6.

While the Kuumba board oversaw the Institute of Afroamerican Studies, Walter Kudumu maintained primary control over the IAS. Other Nia members were involved in the IAS such as: Joe Vinson-Chochezi, Ted Endesha and Majadi. Majadi was also the lead Zulu dancer for Nia's dance troupe.⁹⁶ The professional expertise of Meshack and McKinney was used in their oversight of the Communications Complex. The IAS is an interesting place to begin to look at Kuumba programming. The IAS programming embodied the cultural nationalist philosophy of education. The IAS sought to create culturally relevant programming that would generate the future leadership of Southeast San Diego by generating programming that would raise Black consciousness as well as place students into important positions of influence throughout their community.

The programmatic influence of educational programming by Black radicals enabled the spread of Black Power ideologies.⁹⁷ Cultural nationalists have largely ended up in fields such as anthropology and archaeology, psychology and psychiatry, and education administration. Considering the emphasis cultural nationalists placed on the psychological wages of white supremacy, the concerns with recovering African history, remedying Black mental health, and building African centered institutions was crucial. As Msemaji explained, soul, expressive culture, was central to African American life but it should not be used to only push Black labor towards professional cultural work—in sports and music. Nia and the Kuumba foundation, “feel that those images are necessary but not sufficient. We must teach our people to channel our sold towards science,

⁹⁶ Vernon Sukumu response to a Facebook Post by Mychal Odom 2/6/17.

⁹⁷ View the recent study on pan-African education: Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016).

technology, and education, and those things that can help us restore our people and community back to its traditional greatness,” Msemaji stated.⁹⁸ For this reason, Kuumba, the IAS, and the Communications Complex focused on developing the relevant vocational skills as a part of its leadership training programs.⁹⁹

The IAS was established to “eliminate the ‘brain-drainage’ in the Southeast community” by involving “students in the everyday community affairs” and exposing them to a variety of happenings in Southeast San Diego, Kudumu argued.¹⁰⁰ Despite the growth in population and expansion in middle class residential housing, no institutions of higher education served Southeast San Diego. The IAS listed their five main goals as: to provide employment for students in the designated Model Cities area, provide training that focused on both theory and practice, inspire the students to remain active in the community after completion of the projects, and to eventually establish a degree-granting college in Southeast San Diego. Reminiscent of the leadership training program that

⁹⁸ Kuumba Orientation, p. 22.

⁹⁹ While the conflict between the Us Organization and the Black Panther Party was the product of government manipulation, the struggle over the UCLA African American Studies program was indicative of the real conflicting visions for Black Studies programming. The growth in African Studies programs during the Cold War played a direct role in the rapid growth of African consciousness in the 1960s, as noted. It is no surprise that so many of the early radical thinkers had majored in African Studies, this is especially true of people educated in the University of California system. African Americans were exposed to extensive training in African language, literature, music, dance, history, and politics. However, Black Nationalist freedom schools such as the School of Afroamerican Studies taught this programming. As attention turned towards the construction of collegiate African American studies programming, it may come as a surprise to 21st century students that the humanities did not always predominate the curricula. The architects of Black Studies had placed heavy emphasis on the social sciences and even science and technology. A brief survey of the academic credentialing of former Black Power activists shows that activists from cultural nationalist formations and revolutionary nationalist formations often fell in different disciplines as they transitioned to higher education. With the emphasis placed on historical materialism and political economic structures, many former Black Panthers and Black Marxists found their way to history, philosophy, political science, and legal studies.

¹⁰⁰ “IAS Comprehensive Planning Board June 24, 1972 Notes” p. 1. Thurgood Marshal Provost Records San Diego Model Cities Program, 1970-1972 Box 32 Folder 12 UCSD Mandeville Special Collections, San Diego, CA.

Kudumu had gone through as a part of Hal Brown's antipoverty program in the previous years, the IAS developed and facilitated internship programs that placed college students from Southeast San Diego to give them the skills in business management, education leadership, and youth program management.¹⁰¹ Students received training in those fields by three different venues. First, they attended accredited courses in public administration, social welfare, and marketing and research design in collaboration with the extension programs at UCSD and SDSU. The IAS even organized a master's degree program in Urban Studies through Pepperdine University.

The students were placed at multiple local agencies as administrative interns. Their education was put to practice as a part of three demonstration project task groups: the business task group; education task group; and a youth task group.¹⁰² The business task group students worked at a telephone switch board. The youth task force workers worked with the Community Rap Line. In alliance with multiple local nonprofit and government agencies, the hotline provided drug abuse counseling. The education task group was the most expansive. Under the education task group, interns worked with Nia's School of Afroamerican Culture Shawishi, Maisha Kudumu, and Azima. Students participated in the Ujima Outreach Program. Staffed by Tamasha Spears, the coordinator, Rashidi, Liz and Debbie, the Ujima program offered college preparatory counselling to Southeast San Diego residents. Moreover, interns participated in the Crockett Demo School Project. With a pre-school lab staffed by Tawili and Busara Sadikifu and an elementary lab staffed by Hazina, the demo school project worked in

¹⁰¹ "Program Brief" and "IAS Organizational Structure." Thurgood Marshall College Provost Papers, Box 32 Folder 12.

¹⁰² Ibid. Kudumu Letter to Joseph Watson, September 8, 1972.

cooperation between parents and administration, the special project was created at Crockett Elementary School in Logan Heights to improve the basic spelling, reading and comprehension skills of kindergartners.¹⁰³ Undoubtedly, the education taskforce played an important part in the spread of African culture amongst primary and secondary students in San Diego. By 1971, schools in San Diego learned of Kwanzaa, African and African literature, dance, and theater.¹⁰⁴ The most ambitious project of the IAS was their attempt to create the degree granting program.

In the spring of 1972, at the height of the Congress of African People's cultural and political power, Kudumu and the IAS began the development of the External Degree Program, which would have been the first Black college in San Diego. The thrust toward the creation of an independent program was the result of success, not only deficit. Increased demand for IAS participation also prompted this the move toward accreditation. The fees for the Pepperdine program were too high and the graduate program left the clear majority of those interested unaccommodated. The creation of an independent degree granting program, initially in cooperation with SDSU's School of Afro-American Studies, headed by Hal Brown, or another institution would bring more resources, accessibility, and local academic and vocational training to the masses.¹⁰⁵ To assist in the transition, a comprehensive planning board (CPB) with a wealth of experience in education was formed that included Kudumu, Endesha, Majadi, and Chochezi from the IAS as well as "The Father of Black Psychology" Dr. Charles Thomas from UCSD, Mina Perry from United States International University (USIU), Wally

¹⁰³ "Program Brief."

¹⁰⁴ "Five Schools Learn About Afro Culture," *San Diego Union*, 12/17/71, B3.

¹⁰⁵ "External Degree Program," Thurgood Marshall College Provost Papers, Box 32 Folder 12.

Porter from the local community colleges, and Bob Foster and Hal Brown from SDSU. The CPB was intended to give intellectual direction to the formation of the institution, serve as the academic senate, and provide leadership for the administrative staff of the different task groups.¹⁰⁶

In an interesting exchange between members of the CPB at the planning meeting on 24 June 1972 exposed the promise and the limitations of the IAS as it attempted to navigate the structure of the Model Cities program. Nia and Kuumba, as noted, despised “poverty pimping.” Their participation in the Model Cities program was intended to radicalize the minds of Black San Diego. As Kudumu noted in the planning meeting, the importance of IAS was not in its administration of its managerial skills training workshops, despite as Kudumu noted, “all requirements of the contracts have been made.” As Charles Thomas noted in response to a question from Chochezi about the focus of the IAS degree program, Thomas said, “We want to develop an attitude of confidence—taking a variety of Afroamericans to develop them into conscious Black individuals. However, this kind of thing cannot be documented but we want to do it.”¹⁰⁷ Wally Porter noted, to achieve the goals of the IAS degree program, the IAS would need to distance itself from the Model Cities program which sought quantifiable solutions to urban issues. The limited Model Cities funds, as Kudumu noted, narrowed the scope of training to the enhanced managerial skills of its participants. Dr. Thomas argued that the focus needed to be moved beyond a managerial focus if the program would effectively meet the immediate needs of Black San Diego, namely in child-development and mental

¹⁰⁶ “Board role and responsibility 6/24/72 notes,” Thurgood Marshall College Provost Papers, Box 32 Folder 12.

¹⁰⁷ CPB Planning Board Notes 6/24/72, Thurgood Marshall College Provost Papers, Box 32 Folder 12.

health. Adding to the constructive criticism, Mina Perry added a critical intervention noting the negative, and possible elitist, connotations of the term manager highlighting resistance in the Black community to that term. Dr. Thomas proposed the program designed within the structure of Organizational Behavior. Yet, regardless the disciplinary obligations, Kudumu's immediate goal was to create a program that would give conscious individuals the credentials to commandeer local businesses and social service agencies. Further planning meetings were scheduled but divisions between the Kuumba Foundation and Model Cities leadership eventually brought an end to the project.¹⁰⁸

“Kuumba Calling”: Print Media, Telecommunications, and the Rise of African Consciousness

The Southeast Communications Complex was a different project than the IAS, placing direct focus on vocational training. The Communications Complex employed 25 people: 10 employees and 15 interns who received training in television, radio, and print media. The interns were both Mexican American and African American. Already from the same neighborhood, the common working conditions became a necessary engine for the solidarity politics that emanated from Kuumba. The interns received an hourly wage of \$2.50 an hour which was well above the minimum wage of \$1.65. Kuumba interns produced a weekly newspaper *Kuumba Times* that had a circulation of 5,000 copies. In production of the interns learned all aspects of journalism including: photography, dark room production, printing and plate-making, reporting, composition, editing and layout. With access to the KPBS station, Kuumba interns operated a radio show that aired 22 hours of weekend programming on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. *Kuumba Times*

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

broadcasted jazz music, conducted interviews of prominent African American and Chicano figures (including Cesar Chavez), and broadcasted historical segments which highlighted the impact of African Americans such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X to American history. Simulating the broadcasting of African stations on the continent, the radio station and the newspaper were good examples of the internationalist politics Kuumba members developed.¹⁰⁹

Only one copy of *Kuumba Times* has been archived, the 25 February 1972 edition, but many surely remain in private collections. This copy has been retained in the papers of Maria Garcia, a local teacher and Chicana activist. The articles printed in *Kuumba Times* represent a wide array of advanced, and at times competing, Black and Chicano radical thought and gives a window into the political development in Black and Brown San Diego. The images of a Chicano male stenciled in brown ink and an African American male stenciled in black ink on the cover of *Kuumba Times* were an implication of Kuumba's emphasis on relational politics and polyculturalism. As Msemaji articulated, Kuumba and the Communications Complex sought to challenge the polarization between Black and Brown people that socioeconomic issues and other agencies sought to enflame. "It amazes me to see how an age-old technique such as divide and conquer always works among minority people....I presume there are some differences between black and brown people.....But whatever the differences between blacks and browns, they have in no way the same magnitude as the differences between people with color and people without color," Msemaji explained in a seminar on the

¹⁰⁹ Joe Stone, "Kuumba Calling—For Opportunity," *San Diego Union*, 2/28/72, B1 and B3.

Kuumba Foundation.¹¹⁰ Invoking Malcolm X's remarks on the Bandung Conference, Msemaji noted the similarities between Black and Brown liberation struggles. Black and Brown communities have both been denied self-determination, faced cultural genocide, have endured European religious imperialism, suffered from "minority mentality" by not realizing they are indeed the world majority and internalizing white supremacist notions of white superiority and Black and Brown inferiority. "Another example of a minority mentality. Blacks and Mexicans are always fighting over these jive-time poverty programs," Msemaji stated.¹¹¹

Another aspect of the similarities between Black and Brown, Msemaji stated, was that Black and Brown people were both "pyramid builders." Beyond a superficial cultural nationalist obsession with the past, the emphasis on similar architecture in Africa and Latin America underscored the Third World as a site of an alternate form of modernity, scientific innovation, and the intellectual capacity of Black and Brown people. Uncovering the history of civilization building was meant to highlight the possibilities for the present. A final similarity between Black and Brown people, Msemaji argued, has been their communal social organization and their commitment to common struggle across ethnic lines. Symbolic of the paradoxes of the Third World Solidarity between Black and Brown radicals, the cover of *Kuumba Times* represented the liberation of people of color as a masculine struggle. Much like *Ufahamu* in the early years, the principle staff of *Kuumba Times* was male while many of the women did the heavy lifting in the editorial process. The editorial assistant for *Kuumba Times* was a young woman

¹¹⁰ "Afroamericans and Mexican-Americans (Second Day's Session)," p. 1. Frank Albert Young Papers, Box 7 Folder 1 Kuumba Foundation, San Diego, CA 1971. College of Charleston Avery Research Center.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 11.

named Rocsan Clark. The heteronormative politics of the power movements and 1970s American society, notwithstanding, the pages of *Kuumba Times* reveals the complex politics of Nia's rank and file membership.



Figure 30 *Kuumba Times* Cover Page (Maria Garcia Papers, SDSU)

As McKinney argued, the *Kuumba Times* staff sought to examine the local application of national and international events. “This is what happened in Newark. Is it likely to happen here? That kind of thing,” McKinney explained.¹¹² The messages printed in *Kuumba Times* also reached beyond the youth of Southeast San Diego. The February 25th edition featured a “Letter to the Editor” from a Black Nationalist seaman on the USS Shasta, nineteen-year-old Alfred Miller. Drawing inspiration from the “Awareness Message” in the December 6, 1971 edition of *Kuumba Times*, it caused Miller to “realize that we may never see freedom of all Third World peoples, but we can

¹¹² Stone, “Kuumba Calling,” B3.

damn sure open-up and make a way for our lovely Black children.” Observing the need for a single Black organization, Miller called for unity of action and thought amongst Black people as he praised the awareness of Msemaji. Miller writes, “My heart yearns for freedom of a special type, to know that me and mine are free and the sense of knowing that no one in the world can separate one great Black Third World from living on earth in [decency] and respect, with the glory that a proud Black peoples should possess.” Miller pledged to raise the consciousness of Black service members on his base “and wherever I shall be sent by this white exploiter.”¹¹³

Miller’s letter represents the local political sentiment. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Southern California had been ground zero for Black radicalism amongst African American servicemen. It was in San Diego that the collective defense of Ed Lynn, a seaman at the San Diego Naval Hospital in Balboa Park, became Angela Davis’ entry point into the Black Power movement as she organized with UCSD’s Black Student Council and the San Diego Black Conference in support of Lynn. San Diego had also been home to direct action and physical resistance by Black sailors and Marines on the USS Kitty Hawk, the USS Constellation, the USS Midway, and the USS Coral Sea. These servicemen protested racist actions of their superiors, poor working conditions, and the continued deployment of American troops to Vietnam. In 1972, thousands of Black military personnel led the SOS (Stop our Ships/Save our Sailors) Movement. On the Constellation, hundreds of Black sailors formed a radical organization the Black Faction. Members of the Us Organization had organized their own Kawaida cadre while in

¹¹³ SA Alfred Miller, “Letter to the Editor,” *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/72 p. 6. Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

Vietnam called the Fulani Tribe. As well, San Diego Us Organization and Nia advocate Gerald Chaka was a member of a radical collective called the Mau Mau. African American servicemen observed Kawaida holidays, promoted Black history, and organized the mutual support of Black servicemen.¹¹⁴ As Chaka explained, white servicemen were known to kill Blacks in Vietnam so the Mau Mau organized in self-defense of Black servicemen.¹¹⁵ Surely, *Kuumba Times* was not the only stream of information Black servicemen received. Still, Miller's correspondence suggests Nia and Kuumba played an affirmative role in raising the consciousness of enlisted men and women.

Amidst the Nia commitment to raising Black consciousness, *Kuumba Times* presented issues to Chicana/o readers. As well, the editorial staff published topics of relational concern such as white supremacy and mass incarceration. Nia member John Aminifu published an article that chronicled a Ku Klux Klan cross burning that took place on the lawn of JT Lambert at 341 South 35th Street in Logan Heights the previous January. A reminder for residents of Logan Heights and Southeast San Diego of the reality of white supremacy, the coverage of the cross burning revealed a central nexus to Black and Brown politics in San Diego. By the 1970s, San Diego became, arguably, the most active home to white right activism outside of the South which was aided by the rise

¹¹⁴ Scot Brown, 86-87. William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 104-105.

¹¹⁵ Angela Davis, *Angela Davis—An Autobiography* (International Publishers, 1974), 157-161. "Blacks Protest Aboard the Constellation," *Inside the Beast*, 11/20/1972, p. 1. "Navy Riots," *Inside the Beast*, 12/5/1972. Greg Moser, "Teach-In Features Marcuse, Schiller, Kitty Hawk Sailors," *Triton Times*, 1/19/73. "The USS Kitty Hawk 'mutiny' and Vietnam War resistance among sailors (1970-1972), *Religious Left Law*, 10/12/16. (<http://www.religiousleftlaw.com/2016/10/the-uss-kitty-hawk-mutiny-and-antiwar-resistance-among-sailors-from-1970-1972.html>) accessed 2/11/17). Telephone Conversation with Gerald Chaka 2/8/17.

of white supremacist organizer and writer Tom Metzger, a San Diego County resident. As historian Jimmy Patiño has shown, by the late 1970s, antiapartheid and anti-Klan activism brought Black and Brown activists together. The anti-Klan activism became one arena of Black and Brown solidarity-plus during the antiapartheid movement.

In the weekly February 25th “Awareness Message” an unnamed author wrote, “Whether we are struggling in Baton Rouge or Zimbabwe, we are struggling against the same degenerate agents of white supremacy, agents who are opposed to our liberation because according to their diseased social philosophy and structure, we are on this early only to be abused, exploited or disregarded.”¹¹⁶ Kuumba intern Michael Torres published an article that called for radical prison reform which appeared immediately after “The Awareness Message” on Zimbabwe. The American prison system embodied the global system of white supremacy and was an important theater of struggle. Sukumu remembered that when he went to Africa, the two Americans he was constantly asked about were “Soul Brother James Brown” and “Sister Angela.” Even on the continent, African revolutionaries followed African American struggles against mass incarceration. Just months following the Attica uprising and during the highly-publicized trial of Angela Davis, the Torres article covered the radical plan for the construction of a Washington State prison. The \$1 million proposal approved by the prison administration as well as an inmate council, was amazingly designed by a Don Anthony White, an extremely intelligent incarcerated Black man in Washington who had received his high school diploma and associate’s degree while in prison and studied architecture extensively. The

¹¹⁶ “The Awareness Message: Strife in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia),” *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/72, Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

new structure was to focus purely on rehabilitation and reentry, break up the monotony of prison architecture by introducing different colors, fresh air, and natural lighting to the prison. Most of all, it was proposed to reverse the recidivism rate of 80% percent cut the nearly \$10,000 the state spent on inmates in half. The Torres article, in this sense, reflected the critical engagement Black and Brown people had with the state and hopes for urban reform in the early 1970s.¹¹⁷

Kuumba Times also published on issues related to physical and mental health. Healthcare brought African American, Latino, and Asian American activists together in the 1960s and 1970s as communities sought autonomous solutions to issues of mental illness, disease, and drug addiction. In fact, the final pages of *Kuumba Times* promoted the Kuumba Rapline, a crisis hotline operated by the Institute of Afroamerican Studies and a Spanish language article on Model Cities programs promoted a Chicano Hotline. There was an article that examined the Sickle Cell Anemia awareness movement—in the 1970s, knowledge of the disease was still developing and a national campaign was embarked upon in 1972. The article reprinted from the September 1971 edition of *Health Rights News* was skeptical of what it saw as the overabundance of resources placed on Sickle Cell Anemia research in the United States and in Africa. In the article, Black doctors and medical students questioned the intentions of governmental and medical agencies on an American-centered research when the abundance of people in Africa had the disease. “If scientists were serious about look for a cure, Africa would be the proper place for most research centers,” the article states. In the United States, there were far

¹¹⁷ Michael Torres, “The Prison of Tomorrow: Inmates Propose Constructive Alternative,” *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/72, p. 12. “Robert F. Utter: Justice’s Sailor,” *Legacy Washington* (<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/robert-utter> accessed 2/12/2017).

more diseases caused by structural inequality and life under white supremacy that were going understudied. The poisoning of Black children from lead-based paint chips in their homes, hypertension, malnutrition, and drug abuse.¹¹⁸

This skepticism of the medical industry within the pages of *Kuumba Times* was strengthened by an article on birth control, “Control de Natalidad,” translated by Jesus Rodriguez, a Kuumba intern and Chicano Hotline worker. The Rodriguez translated article originated in what appears to be an African American science journal. The report chronicled the headaches, nausea, vomiting, and blood clots faced by African American women who had used birth control pills and intrauterine devices. The translation of this article into Spanish denotes the shared concerns and conversations about birth control amongst Black and Brown people. The article does not take as much of a conservative stance on gender as many Black and Chicano men had done in the 1970s, blaming birth control to genocide. As well, amidst the reality of forced sterilizations that the African and Latin@ world continues to experience, a healthy level of skepticism was merited. Still, with almost half of the Kuumba interns being women and at least an eighth of them being Latinas, the voice of the Mexican American woman is absent in this article.¹¹⁹ As noted, the voices of radical women of color were often omitted, exposing a reactionary vein in revolutionary movements. In these movements, Black and Brown women were heralded for their beauty. The African continent and Latin America were often envisioned as a woman, sexually assaulted by white male invaders, and in need of strong

¹¹⁸ “Is Sickle Cell Anemia the Number 1 Killer?” *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/72, p. 11, Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹¹⁹ “Control Natalidad” translated by Jesus Rodriguez, *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/72, p. 18. Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

men to defend her. This ideal is reflected in the paradoxical poem “Black Woman” by Don Williams that appears at the end of the February 25th issue. With the sketch of a seemingly large afro-wearing nude Black woman at the bottom, Williams waxed poetic about the beauty and grace of Black women but ignores the political agency of the Black woman.¹²⁰

One subtle piece of radical journalism was Rocsan Clark’s review of the recently released film *Shaft*.¹²¹ While Blaxploitation cinema has always been received with high regards by the Black public, Black cultural nationalists, including Amiri Baraka, were highly critical of the genre as a projection of false consciousness, “cheap thrills that degrade Blacks,” and void of positive Black images.¹²² This was the impetus behind the creation of *Five on the Black Hand Side* which featured a cameo of Sukumu and other members of Nia during the wedding scene. Clark’s review, however, challenges the heteropatriarchal visions of Black nationalist leaders. As the writings of Renee Poussaint in *Ufahamu* and Francee Covington in the seminal anthology *The Black Woman* illustrates, film criticism was an operable place for the intervention of Black women into Black radical thought in the early 1970s. Clark lauded the complex and realistic dialogue in the film; implying that the film does not seek to dumb-down African

¹²⁰ Don Williams, “Black Woman,” *Kuumba Times*, 2/25/7, p. 24. Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives. Richard Iton identifies a prominent contradiction in Black radical spaces in the 1970s. While Black women were often upheld as matriarchs and widows, the everyday work was often relegated to that of support. Africa, though often depicted as a woman, was the victim of rape, and African men were “castrated.” The solution to this problem was generally Black male upliftment. Nonetheless, Black women in their political work and cultural work sought to challenge this dynamic. Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic* (New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 93-100.

¹²¹ *Kuumba Times* Vol 1 No.16. Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives. Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

¹²² Ongiri, 164-165.

American vernacular but it also provides rich oratory. “*Shaft* (like *Sweetback*) is making money, and lots of it because it’s a film with excitement, sex, thrills, suspense and action...all the proper ingredients for a successful motion picture...not a film biography,” Clark exclaimed.¹²³

For Clark, Black art, and to an extent politics, was not simply meant to be instructive or educational, it must also be attractive and exciting to gain mass appeal. Clark was not interested in suppressing images of black disrespectability. Instead, Clark expressed concern for the quality of Black art and mass employment. *Shaft* did not only employ Black actors but it also had Black production staff and featured the music of Isaac Hayes, at that moment, a cultural representative of the pan-African spirit of African American activists. *Shaft* was to be supported, in Clark’s analysis, for the opportunities it promised to enable. In fact, Clark was correct. What followed was an explosion in rich and diverse Black filmmaking. In fact, Richard Roundtree became a supporter of Black Power and the Congress of African People. Later that year, Roundtree made appearances at the Wattstax Summer Festival and the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana. The following year, Roundtree’s *Shaft in Africa* embraced the call for African liberation as his character John Shaft was recruited by East African dignitaries to come to Ethiopia and disrupt the illegal slave trade of Africans to Italy.

As the letter to the editor from seaman Miller showed, *Kuumba Times* explicitly displayed the pan-African vision of the National Involvement Association and the Kuumba Foundation and prefaced the explosion in African solidarity events in 1972. As

¹²³ Ibid, 21.

briefly noted, “The Awareness Message” of the February 25th issue of *Kuumba Times* raised the concern for the liberation of the Zimbabwean people from the white minority rule led by Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith. Since 1964, the Zimbabwean people had been involved in an armed independence struggle called the Bush War in which African revolutionary forces such as the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), against the white-rule Rhodesian Army and the apartheid South African army. The unnamed author of “The Awareness Message” argued for the universal conditions of African people living under white supremacy. “Events today in Africa are not too different from events happening anywhere in the world where Africans are, especially [sic] when we are confronted by foreigners who seek to limit our self-determination, self-respect, self-reliance or self-defense,” the message states. The message affirmed solidarity with the Zimbabwean people and urged them to accelerate their struggles for liberation. However, despite the exceptional violence of the Smith regime, “The Awareness Message” condemned the support of British and American imperialism for propping up the “white Rhodesian Nazis.”¹²⁴

1972: The Year of African Liberation

Nineteen-seventy-two was a pivotal year for African liberation struggles, internationally, in the United States and in Southern California. In April of that year, Kwame Nkrumah died in Bucharest, Romania where he had been receiving treatment for prostate cancer. Nkrumah had been a resident of Sekou Toure’s Guinea-Conakry for six

¹²⁴ “The Awareness Message,” *Kuumba Times*, Maria Garcia Papers, Box 1 Folder 25. SDSU Special Collections and University Archives.

years following the American-backed overthrow of his regime in 1966. It is in Guinea-Conakry that Nkrumah had formed the All-African People's Revolutionary Party, of which Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) became the central organizer.¹²⁵ Ture played a prominent role in fostering the embrace of socialist thought by many pan-Africanists through thousands of lectures at colleges and community centers in the 1970s and 1970s. It was also in 1972 that Amilcar Cabral made a return trip to the United States. Acknowledging the centrality of white supremacy to American life, Cabral also urged Black radicals in the US to pay closer attention to universal class concerns "and discouraged blind emulation of other societies."¹²⁶ As Brenda Gayle Plummer notes, "An African focus could complement but not supplant local struggles. African leaders continued to remind diaspora subjects of their obligations in their birthplaces and of the need to clearheaded about aims."¹²⁷ The work of African liberation was to be done by engaging the masses, as Fernandes had noted, and not by mere vanguardism. In the months that followed Nkrumah's death, African Americans mobilized some three of the most significant events in the struggle for African liberation support: African Liberation Day, the Second Congress of African People, and the National Black Political Assembly in Gary, Indiana. It was also that year that Teshome Gabriel became the Editor-in-Chief for *Ufahamu*. Though Gabriel's stewardship of *Ufahamu* his one year stint was pivotal. Following his departure, the editorial board credited Gabriel for sole expanding *Ufahamu*'s "international acceptance as a potent factor in African studies."¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 278.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 279.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 278-279.

¹²⁸ "Acknowledgements," *Ufahamu* Vol. 3, No. 3, (1973).

Just as the Congress of African People had traveled to Africa in 1971, Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) of the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) and Malcolm X Liberation University had visited with revolutionary forces in Lusophone Africa, namely FRELIMO and the PAIGC. Like CAP, Sadaukai was informed by the revolutionary leadership, instead of a mass migration of African Americans to the continent, the best thing Sadaukai could do was to deepen the commitment to African solidarity amongst African Americans. Upon his return to the United States, Sadaukai “elaborated on plans for political education and community mobilization, which would culminate in a national demonstration on May 25, the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity.” The May 25th celebration became known as African Liberation Day and its organizing body became known as the African Liberation Support Committee, a coalition of grassroots activists and Black elected officials. The founding of the ALSC and the African Liberation Day celebration signaled the national shift in African American commitment to African liberation.¹²⁹ Congress of African People cadres nationwide committed their membership to assisting in the mobilizing efforts. Falling within the same week as their annual Kuzaliwa celebration of Malcolm X’s birthday on May 19th, CAP affiliated organizations already had the infrastructure in place to make African Liberation Day a success. Throughout the United States and Canada, African Liberation Day drew tens hundreds of thousands of protestors with the largest rally of thirty to thirty-five thousand people being held in Washington, DC.¹³⁰ The inaugural African Liberation Day was dedicated to the recently deceased Nkrumah.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Woodard, 173-180.

¹³⁰ “Rallies Proclaim Unity of African People,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6/8/72, A13.

¹³¹ Plummer, 278.

The National Involvement Association assisted in the planning for the West Coast rally in San Francisco which drew 5,000 participants on a cold afternoon in May.¹³² Much like the 1970 Atlanta convention, African Liberation Day brought together a broad coalition reminiscent of the days before the crisis in 1969. The list of invited speakers for the San Francisco march and the Washington DC march included Ralph Abernathy, Huey Newton, James Forman of the Black Workers Congress and formally SNCC, Ron Dellums, Mervyn Dymally, David Sibeko of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania, Walter Rodney, Bobby Seale, Black liberation theologian James Cone, Gary, Indiana Mayor Richard Hatcher, and even representative from FRELIMO. Four bus loads and dozens of cars made the trek to the Bay Area from Los Angeles and San Diego.¹³³ Marchers expressed solidarity with the struggles in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. Just as Kuumba expressed in their “Awareness Message,” protestors expressed their rebuke of American economic and military support for Portuguese imperialism and apartheid in South Africa. Emphasizing this, protestors from San Francisco’s Black enclave to the financial district. Protestors chanted “Africa for Africans,” “We are an African people,” and “We must unite.”¹³⁴ The following September, YOBU published an expose on the multitude of California investments in Southern Africa. Signaling the divestment movement of the 1970s and the 1980s, cultural nationalists, revolutionary nationalists, civil rights activists, Latinos, and other non-Black allies mobilized in support of African Liberation Day. African Liberation Day

¹³² “San Diego delegation marches through Filmore,” *San Diego Voice and Viewpoint*, 6/14/72, A2. “Liberation Day Planned in Bay Area,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5/25/72, A12. “Rallies Proclaim Unity of African People,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6/8/72, A13.

¹³³ “Liberation Day Planned in the Bay Area.”

¹³⁴ “Rallies Proclaim Unity of African People.”

became the embodiment of *solidarity-plus* as the calls for liberation in Southern Africa were directly linked to issues of unemployment, political corruption, and police abuse in the United States.

African Liberation Day became integral to antiapartheid activism since it proved successful in mobilizing broad swaths of the African diaspora and their nonblack allies. In San Diego, Nia used African Liberation Day to forge a multiracial front against apartheid and fight for workers' rights. In Los Angeles, the African Activist Association responded by producing analyses that proved essential to future African liberation support campaigns, locally and nationally. California remained a political and cultural bellwether for the United States in the early 1970s. California was home to the nation's leading radical and conservative political movements. California's economy seemingly outpaced the rest of the nation from 1970s, despite the racial disparities. It was precisely this divergent economic growth that overdetermined the material links between Black Southern California and the struggles for liberation in Southern Africa.¹³⁵

For many reasons, much of the scholarship on divestment and African liberation support has focused on Northern California. The San Francisco Bay area was home to Congressman Ron Dellums and range of community and campus activism that made the Bay Area's leadership unrivaled in the West Coast. However, scholars must not overlook

¹³⁵ California's economy seemingly outpaced the rest of the nation from 1970 to 1980. While the nation added less than a million manufacturing jobs in the 1970s, California added 225,800 jobs. In comparison, New York City lost over 300,000 jobs. California experienced a population boom as well, adding 1.3 million residents and the number of non-agricultural salary workers also grew by 1.3 million. For conservative economists, this was a cause for celebration. Just as California GOP dominated the national politics, these numbers supported their economic plan. However, as Soja et al display, a closer look at the numbers represent, display a radical reconstruction of California's economy in support of the wealthiest segments of California's society to the detriment of the working class. Edward Soja, Rebecca Morales, and Goetz Wolff, "Urban Restructuring: An Analysis of Social and Spatial Change in Los Angeles," *Economic Geography* Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 1983), 195-196.

the pivotal role played by Southern California activists and organizations, often in cooperation with liberation fronts in Northern California. In 1972, *Ufahamu* Volume 3 (2) examined liberation struggles, connecting the local to the international. In this issue, editorial board published the first and incredibly extensive report on the California's investment into the colonial and segregationist regimes in Southern Africa. The report was written by John Harrington, an MA student in African Studies at UCLA, for the California State Assembly Office of Research and state assemblyman John Burton, a former professor at San Francisco State University. An abbreviated version of the report was also published in YOBU's national publication, *The African World* on 2 September 1972.¹³⁶ Harrington found that the State of California held over \$1.1 billion invested in Southern African nations. The University of California held \$340 million invested in companies which operated in Southern Africa. The Public Employee Retirement System held almost \$800 million in investments. The Legislator's Retirement System maintained an excess of \$200 thousand invested in Southern Africa. Of the corporate interests in Southern Africa, Standard Oil of California sat at the top. In a partnership with Texaco, Standard Oil (now Exxon), owned the South African oil company Caltex. Caltex, Mobil, and Esso (all of which now make up the ExxonMobil corporation) controlled 44 percent of the South African oil market. Nonwhites made up nearly one-third of Caltex's South African workforce. However, these workers made only an average of \$18.20 in weekly wages while white workers made \$43 per week. Harrington also focused on automotive, mineral, rubber, financial, and military industrial investments in Southern Africa.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ "California Gives Support to Southern African Racism," *The African World*, 9/2/72. The Black Power Movement Part 1: Amiri Baraka from Black Arts to Black Radicalism. Reel 7 Series 15.

¹³⁷ "The State of California and Southern African Racism."

Harrington's report called for American corporations to do one of two things: maintain activity in these Southern African nations but from a position of active opposition to their colonial and racist practices (which Harrington concluded to be improbable) or to completely "disengage" from these nations. On 22 August 1972, the World Council of Churches had removed its \$3.5 million investments in firms doing business in Southern African nations under white rule. Harrington concluded that California needed to follow suit. "The question of employee benefits and 'equal pay for equal work' is not the overriding issue here. The real issue is that the American dollar has supported the Southern African economy and assisted racially oppressive regimes in perpetuating the most unjust, most barbaric, most racially exploitative system of government against the African people, the rightful bearers of political power in Southern Africa," Harrington wrote.¹³⁸ By the late 1970s, the term *disengagement* would be replaced by *disinvestment* and *divestment* and the groundwork Harrington produced made the University of California campuses amongst the most active schools in the nation during the divestment campaign.¹³⁹

The same week that Walter Rodney spoke at the San Francisco African Liberation Day march, he visited the UCLA African Studies Center on May 30th, where he delivered a talk entitled "Problems of Third World Development;" The AAA2 began *Ufahamu* 3 (2) with a transcript of this discussion. In a speech that highlighted many of the same points as Rodney's seminal text *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, published the same year, Rodney underscores the effects of slavery and imperialism on Third World nations.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 136-137

¹³⁹ Ibid, 137.

Yet, Rodney's analysis also be read as a critique of the internal colonial conditions of Black America. First World nations of Europe, North America, and Japan, Rodney argued, underdeveloped the Third World by creating unequal trade relationships which subsequently transfer any profits from the colonies and Third World to the metropolitan centers. "It is always a means of transferring to the metropolitan economy capital produced out of the material and human resources of the Third World," Rodney states.¹⁴⁰ To maintain the underdevelopment of the Third World, the metropolitan nations, Rodney argues, prevent the flow of meaningful technology from the center of the nations in the periphery. Instead, the infrastructural continuity exists between the nations in power while the only thing that connects the Third World nations are their shared disjuncture. Only one part of the system of underdevelopment, Western imperialism also effected the political structures in the Third World, impeding any attempts at gaining true independence. Reducing colonial territories to tourist attractions and "branch plant economies."¹⁴¹

This legacy of imperialism severely stymied the independence projects of Third World nations, creating weak governments. In an argument that class upon previous interventions made by E. Franklin Frazier and Bernard Magubane, Rodney notes that very few Third World nations produced true bourgeoisies that maintained pure political economic control of their nations. Instead, the real power remains in the metropolis while the isolate petty bourgeoisie control very few things such as real estate and the automobile sales. Without economic control, their power remained dependent on foreign

¹⁴⁰ Walter Rodney. "The Problem of Third World Development," *Ufahamu* Vol. 3 No. 2 (1972): 27-28.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 31-34.

support and their ability to organize local police forces.¹⁴² Nonetheless, the problem of sustaining progressive change in the Third World is a political question and not an economic one. The route towards true independence was in alliance between Third World alliances starting within continental unity. Despite the external and internal contradictions that Third World nations faced, Rodney argued that he remained increasingly optimistic that the necessary objective conditions were being in the Third World. The conditions in the Third World were ripe for change because while slavery and colonialism had dehumanized the enslaver and colonizer, the humanity of the enslaved and the colonized remained intact, Rodney argues. What is more, the ever-presence of white supremacist structures serve as a unifying force in the Third World.

Rodney states:

Besides, there is a factor of racism which is all pervasive throughout the Third World, and which is particularly strong where Black people live in Africa and the Caribbean. It is a unifying factor. Imperialism has used racism in its own interest, but it turns out to be a double-edged blade, and the very unity that is engendered among Black people—the unity of common conditions and common exploitation and oppression—is being turned around as a weapon to be used against imperialism.¹⁴³

Despite his optimism, and argument for the adoption of scientific socialism, Rodney echoed Cabral's cautioning against mimicking Third World movements. The problem is not in the adoption of Marxist analyses but in the application of those ideas. "Having adopted Marxism or Scientific Socialism as a framework of analysis, one may or may not apply it creatively to one's own environment," Rodney states.¹⁴⁴ In presenting what

¹⁴² Ibid, 34-35.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 38.

Michel Foucault has called a “history of the present,” Walter Rodney’s historical analysis was indeed a political directive to his American audience.

The remaining parts of *Ufahamu* 3 (2) answered that call. This issue featured the essay “International Capital in Namibia” by the Lusophone Heidelberg University doctoral candidate Eduardo de Sousa Ferreira. de Sousa Ferreira was a member of the Southern African Committee in Heidelberg, Germany and a founding member of the Southern Africa Information Bureau stationed in Bonn, Germany and he became an essential contributor to the early issues of *Ufahamu*.¹⁴⁵ *Ufahamu* commemorated the ten-year anniversary of Algerian independence and published an eighteen-page international directory of African liberation movements and support groups. It was also in this issue that the editorial board published the “Reflections from Prison,” an assemblage of poems from Imamu Abdul Andemosi Mali and DH Wilhight, two radical black cultural workers incarcerated in the Mansfield State Reformatory. Much like the issue of *Kuumba Times* published earlier that year, this issue of *Ufahamu* moved from the international to the local. Like the occupied territories of Southern Africa, the American prison system represented an American Bantustan in which full liberation could only be achieved by empowering the most oppressed of people: the incarcerated people.

The Congress of African People also responded to that call with their biennial convention held in San Diego during Labor Day weekend, August 31st through September 4th. While the 1970 conference theme emphasized unity, many organizers

¹⁴⁵ de Sousa Ferreira was the author of three essays published in *Ufahamu*: “International Capital in Namibia,” *Ufahamu* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1972). “Amilcar Cabral: Theory of Revolution and Background to His Assassination,” *Ufahamu* 3:3 (1973). “Portugal and Her Former Colonies: Prospects for a Neo-Colonial Relationship,” *Ufahamu* Vol. 5, No. 3 (1975).

came to believe that it lacked a singular focus. The theme of the 1972 general assembly was *Kazi*, the Kiswahili word for work; the work of political action. The action was to be focused in four arenas: public offices; community organizations; alliances and coalition building; and disruption. As CAP leaders, including Sukumu, had organized the National Black Political Assembly, CAP plotted the capture of political power in the United States but also stressed the need for autonomous, nongovernmental institutions. CAP instructed people to continue building alliances with other African American groups and as to established stronger links with international African liberation support organizations. To prepare its members for this work, Baraka noted CAP's emphasis on training its cadres in self-defense as well as with a deep study of African theories of guerilla warfare.¹⁴⁶ CAP reasserted its commitment to Black Nationalism, pan-Africanism, and Ujamaa.

It was at the Second International Assembly that Baraka replaced Heyward Henry as the official head of CAP, despite Baraka's *de facto* stewardship from the onset. The CAP executive committee and the work councils being restructured. Amongst the international leadership was the Jazz musician Jitu Weusi (Big Black) of the East Organization, Haki Madhubuti of the Institute for Positive Education, and Imamu Sukumu. Of the many work councils, Sukumu headed the Community Organizing council and Amina Baraka led the Social Organization council, breaking the threshold as the first woman on the Executive Committee. Congress of African People members were beginning to stake out more radical positions; in their own ways, they began to move further left. Archival evidence suggests that members began to read more radical African

¹⁴⁶Imamu Amiri Baraka, "Black Nationalism: 1972," *The Black Scholar*, (September 1972), 29.

literature beyond Nyerere. As well, Baraka made direct and private communiques with radicals such as Rodney. As Komozi Woodard notes, “As the chair, Baraka began fashioning the loose federation structure into a new national vanguard organization, drawing from his own reading of the experience of CFUN as well as those of African liberation movements.”¹⁴⁷

The San Diego assembly was not as large as the Atlanta convention, but still nevertheless attracted well over 1,000 participants. There were seven workshops at the conference that were led by the leaders of the work councils: communications, community organization, economics, education, social organization, politics, and law and justice. All the workshops drafted political resolutions. It was here that the Law and Justice work council drafted their resolution stating: “We must mobilize all Africans for an alternative structure to provide for the relief and release of all our brothers and sisters from the penal institutions. In a war there are no prisoners, just captives. That’s what our brothers and sisters incarcerated are, captives who must be freed.”¹⁴⁸ The evenings were filled with cultural and music entertainment. Some of the cultural workers in attendance were the Umoja Dancers, the Last Poets, Shades of Black, Marvin X, Abbey Lincoln, Pharaoh Saunders, Gwendolyn Brooks, the Spirit House Movers, Malambo and Watumbe Kuumba.¹⁴⁹

The Trinidadian socialist CLR James was the keynote speaker for the conference. In his address, James focused on the development of African leadership. In this talk,

¹⁴⁷ Woodard, 220.

¹⁴⁸ Gina Taylor, “Kazi is the Blackest of All,” *Sun Reporter*, 9/9/72, p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

James eulogized the late Nkrumah as the greatest of African leaders.¹⁵⁰ While the archival record of the San Diego assembly remains limited, James' writing on Nkrumah in his 1969 edition of *A History of Pan-Afrikan Revolt* provide likely insight into his remarks. In *A History of Pan-Afrikan Revolt*, James simultaneously lauded Nkrumah's revolutionary leadership in his rise to power in Ghana but also criticized Nkrumah's bureaucratic measures once he gained power. For James, leaders were first to commune the everyday people and then revolution must be fought on their terms. It was "the masses and only the masses" that can make the revolutionary ideas of African leaders a reality.¹⁵¹ James would have urged the young activists too adhere the many lessons of Nkrumah's Ghana: One must have true democracy, involving all the people in the revolutionary process and that process is not complete until all the structures of colonialism are overthrown, not just replaced.¹⁵² James spearheaded a list of dynamic speakers. On Saturday of the conference, speeches were delivered by Philip Maddy of the Sekou Toure's Democratic Party of Guinea-Conakry (PDG), Owusu Sadaukai, and Essia Zhuwarara of the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI).¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Simba Nyamavu, "2nd CAP Assembly Held in San Diego...Kazi Proves ot Be the Blackest of All!," *Black NewArk* (September 1972), p. 1 and 5.

¹⁵¹ Robin Kelley, "Introduction," *A History of Pan-African Revolt* by CLR James (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 1938/1969/2012), 3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 27-28.

¹⁵³ Nyamavu.



Figure 31 CLR James at the Congress of African People Biannual Conference in San Diego ca. 1972

Baraka notes that in the fall of 1972, CAP was at “its high point of organization and influence.”¹⁵⁴ Yet, despite these successes internal contradictions began to emerge within CAP and its affiliated organizations like the ALSC that would soon split the organization. At the 1972 conference, Baraka remembers, there was a standoff between former US members who had joined CAP and advocates who were still aligned with Karenga, despite his incarceration in San Luis Obispo. “For one thing, Karenga sent a few carloads of intimidators down from LA to pull the same shit at the CAP conference as he had pulled in Atlanta two years before,” Baraka writes.¹⁵⁵ Arguably the most immediate of concerns for CAP, however, were the fissures erupting between the Black political elite. NAACP and the Congressional Black Conference (CBC) boycotted the 1972 conference, voicing their opposition to, what they termed, the separatism of

¹⁵⁴ Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, p. 415.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 416.

some of the groups. However, shifts in America electoral politics had clearly influenced the moderation in the NAACP and CBC.¹⁵⁶

While many CAP cadres began occupying positions further to the left, Nia did not make such a sharp move. Yet they too were not immune from the rightward shift in America political economics either. By late-1974, Kuumba's doors were shut, Nia left CAP, and Sukumu returned to his home in Louisiana for the first time in over two decades. At UCLA, the situation was different yet interrelated to Nia's transformations. Directly influenced by the liberation struggles, members of the African Activist Association also moved increasingly Left. Political Scientist Cedric Johnson's take on this period is instructive. "Sectarian politics," Johnson argues, "isolated radical activists from each other and perhaps, more critically, the retreat toward doctrinaire ideology alienated radicals from vast sectors of the African American population."¹⁵⁷ Community-based organizations like Nia and Kuumba felt this brunt of realignment of American politics and pan-Africanist mobilization. Political assassinations in Africa as well as central debates coming out of the Sixth Pan-African Congress in 1974 influenced the direction *Ufahamu* took. As they negotiated their relationship with the liberal university system, the African Activist Association experienced growth at a period many community organizations encountered crises. Nevertheless, Nia and the AAA2 survived the mid-1970s and emerged as crucial actors in the divestment campaigns of the late

¹⁵⁶ "Worldwide Unity Urged for Blacks: Militants Chant for Power at San Diego Meeting," *New York Times*, 9/4/72, p. 5. Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946-1994* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2004), 80.

¹⁵⁷ Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 171.

1970s. Johnson notes, that despite the fractured alliances, by the late 1970s, many of the ideals of the African liberation support community “came to fruition.”¹⁵⁸

Neoliberalism, The Sixth Pan-African Congress, and Political Realignments in Southern California

Unlike the previous decade, by the mid-1970s, African consciousness and solidarity was widespread throughout the United States. Education, antipoverty work, and expressive culture expanded the black global spatial imaginary. From 1973 to 1977, Black radical organizations in the United States experienced another transformation. The rightward move in American politics and the acceleration of African liberation struggles influenced this restructuring of Black radicalism. Despite their differences, the African Activist Association and the Nia Cultural Organization navigated this moment with comparable and divergent results. Neoliberal crises in the United States, dismantled the Kuumba Foundation. As well, sectarian conflict and assassinations in Africa shook up the African World. African Activist Association and Nia Cultural Organization countered these crises through a deeper engagement with African liberation politics. As the Sixth Pan-African Congress (6PAC) in Tanzania (1974) displays, this moment heightened the contradictions of Marxism and Black Nationalism in pan-Africanist formations, namely regarding class and gender. These issues reverberated in the United States; the African Activist Association and the Congress of African People responded differently to this moment. The AAA2 memorialized fallen leaders and used *Ufahamu* to keep the dreams of these martyrs alive. The Congress of African People splintered attempting resolve its contradictions. Yet, unlike the moment of crisis in 1969, this

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

fragmentation of the mid-1970s was not violent and it is arguable whether it stymied the mass movement. While the national united front collapsed, the local organizations sustained and became the driving force for African liberation support and antiapartheid activism of the late 1970s and 1980s.

From Newark to San Diego, evidence suggests that the Congress of African People became the victim of the nationwide purge of the antipoverty programming amidst the shift from Cold War racial liberal programming to the emergent neoliberal policy. In the early years of his administration, President Richard Millhouse Nixon's embrace of Black Capitalist ideology drew the support of many Black liberals and Black Nationalists. In recent decades, Laura Warren Hill, Julia Rabig, Cedric Johnson, and Devin Fergus have completed excellent interrogations of the tragic outcome of this union.¹⁵⁹ It would be inappropriate to classify the Kuumba Foundation or many of the projects affiliated with the Congress of African People as Black Capitalist endeavors. Unlike the business endeavors of former Congress of Racial Equality leader Floyd McKissick, for example, CAP projects did not place extreme emphasis on entrepreneurship or private corporate development. Just like the Nyerere's Ujamaa policy the CAP drew much of its inspiration from, the Kuumba Foundation, and other CAP urban renewal projects, were far more democratic socialist in its practice, if not its ideology. Members of Nia locally and CAP internationally sought to redirect

¹⁵⁹ Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009). Laura Warren Hill and Julia Rabig editors, *The Business of Black Power: Community Development, Capitalism, and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012). Julia Rabig, *The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

government funds to public projects that would counter the effects of the urban crisis and empower the Black masses, as Black Power activists had done in the 1960s. The Kuumba Foundation had focused on educational and vocational development. Kuumba sought to raise the Black and Brown consciousness of their trainees and place them, largely, in various sectors of public employment—education and social work. The Kuumba programming was widely successful and popular; the IAS and Communications Complex produced multiple generations of activists and educators who still do amazing work throughout Southern California as community organizers, educators, and cultural workers. What is more, by the late 1970s, young Nia members and Kuumba interns like Greg Akili and Robert Tambuzi became the leaders in the antiapartheid and divestment movement in the city and on the local campuses. The *socially meaningful power* of the National Involvement Association was perceived as a threat to many local powerholders.¹⁶⁰

In San Diego, a premier Black conservative Clarence Pendleton, played a prominent role in dismantling the Kuumba Foundation and other Black antipoverty programs. As critical geographer David Harvey has identified, we can trace the rise of neoliberal policies to the 1971 Powell Memorandum which argued for a shift of power from the state to private corporations and the contemporaneous defeat of radical

¹⁶⁰ As historian Steven Hahn has explained socially meaningful power: “The appropriate conceptual universe of study must be determined by a specific social and historical context. What could sensibly be regarded as political activity at one time and place might not be regarded as political activity in another, while different forms of activity in any one time and place assume political character in relation to others forms of activity.” This means that simply running an antipoverty program might not be a form of resistance. However, when we consider what groups like Nia did with their funding and the political opposition they experienced, we can clearly identify the radical politics in their administration of the Kuumba Foundation. Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2003), 3.

movements in the United States.¹⁶¹ Pendleton had served in the United States Army and become a swimming instructor as a part of American diplomatic efforts in Egypt. From 1968 to 1972, Pendleton served as the recreational coordinator for the Baltimore Model Cities program. In 1972, Pendleton became the head of the Model Cities Programs in San Diego. Once Amiri Baraka found out that Pendleton had been transferred to San Diego, Baraka called San Diego and informed Sukumu to not trust Pendleton. Pendleton and Baraka had attended Howard University together. It was believed, during Pendleton's foreign service in Egypt, he had been a part of a team surveilling Malcolm X. By September 1972, Kuumba had begun to be charged with multiple accounts of misappropriation of funds. The Kuumba programs received as much as \$20,000 per month in funds from the Model Cities Program totaling around \$450,000 in two years.¹⁶² Yet, Kuumba was accused of misusing funds following an audit by the City Manager's office. When it determined that most of the missing funds had been collected as taxes, and not stolen, Kuumba's detractors were able to charge the foundation for \$25,000 in missing equipment. The equipment was eventually recovered and all the charges against Kuumba members were dropped but not until after Kuumba and its leaders were heavily slandered in the local press.¹⁶³

The reality is that the city was downsizing and the IAS and the Southeast Communications Complex, along with five other programs that included a youth employment project, were all proposed for termination. The reasons given for

¹⁶¹ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43.

¹⁶² Transcript of Kuumba's Presentation 9/5/72. Leon Williams Papers, Box 56 Folder 3 Model Cities 1972-73, SDSU Special Collections.

¹⁶³ "City Equipment Recovered," *San Diego Union*, 2/1/74, B1.

termination was that the programs made no institutional change; Kuumba was blamed for not reversing the material conditions of Black San Diego in two years with a limited budget.¹⁶⁴ Yet, as the *Union-Tribune* noted, the community found the programs to be a success.¹⁶⁵ The collective memory of Black San Diego confirms this, as many activists and cultural workers began their careers in the Kuumba Foundation. The impact of Kuumba Foundation's programming could not be found in quantitative analysis, as Kudumu had argued about the IAS. In fact, the swift termination of the Kuumba programs in early 1973 was a testament of its success and not its failures. In Kuumba's response to the proposed termination, they noted, "Any fool...knows that you can't put \$240,000 into a Black training and production program and compete with a billion-dollar industry, even locally where the media encompasses hundreds of millions of dollars yearly."¹⁶⁶ The problem was not they underachieved but that they were underfunded. The termination of Kuumba was undoubtedly an attempt to stymie its success in political mobilization.

On 20 January 1973, the African World was rocked by the assassination of the beloved Amilcar Cabral. The African Activist Association memorialized Cabral by dedicating *Ufahamu* 3 (3) to him. "[W]e not only wish to express our anguish at the loss of so great a man, we also hope to generate a more sensitive awareness of the things for which Cabral has laid down his life. In this sense, our tribute is also an expression of our abiding faith in the ultimate victory of the African Revolution," the Editorial Board

¹⁶⁴ Recommendations on Project Termination 9/22/72. Leon Williams Papers Box 56 Folder 3, SDSU Special Collections.

¹⁶⁵ "Model Cities Probe Puts Kuumba in Hot Water," *San Diego Union*, 7/29/73, C5.

¹⁶⁶ Narrative San Diego Communications Complex, September 1972, p. 6, Leon Williams Papers, Box 56, No. 3, SDSU Special Collections.

wrote.¹⁶⁷ The board opened the edition with original writings by Cabral. Cabral's words were then followed by the transcript from a talk given by the American-born Cape Verdean Salahudin Omowale Matteos, the national organizer for the PAIGC Support Committee. In the talk delivered on 23 February 1973, Matteos pledged solidarity between struggles of African people and African Americans, underscoring that he indeed saw himself as an African American despite many of the problems with Cape Verdean identities. Matteos later acknowledged the tragedy of Cabral's death but ensured the audience at the African Studies Center that the struggle would continue.¹⁶⁸

The Matteos interview was followed by twenty pages of praise for Cabral by his contemporaries and comrades including Basil Davidson, Walter Rodney, Bernard Magubane, and Teshome Gabriel entitled "Tribute to a Fallen Comrade." The letters were prefaced by Claude McKay's "If We Must Die," calling upon the words of the pan-Africanist revolutionary writer to remember Cabral's life and inspire his followers. "Tribute to a Fallen Comrade" was then followed by two pieces of original poetry by AAA2 members, Sondra Hale and Ntongela Masilela, then an MA student. Hale's poem titled "Renga" was a fitting entry. A renga, she notes, is a three-part poem constructed from different yet united parts. "Renga" was undoubtedly representational of Cabral's pan-Africanist politics. A South African in exile who had lived part of his youth in Los Angeles and Nairobi, Kenya, Masilela's "Amilcar Cabral: A Threnody" critiqued the death of Cabral as well as the neocolonial "treachery" that "stained" the African continent. Ntongela began his piece noting that, "The vulture danced all night/The mass

¹⁶⁷ "Editorial Note," *Ufahamu* Vol. 3 No. 3 (1973), p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ "The Cape Verdeans and the PAIGC Struggle for National Liberation: An Interview with Salahudin Omowale Matteos," 43-48.

of shadows mourned.” Though these forces, some of Cabral’s own PAIGC comrades, had killed him, they had not killed his revolutionary optimism that “charts in silence.” Ntongela, called upon the “Children of Africa” and the “Children of the World” to “regain the fallen gun” and continue the Cabral’s fight against imperialism in Africa. Indeed, this new fight would be against internal and external forces.¹⁶⁹ Sectarian struggles were taking place throughout the continent. Notably, the competing ideas that came out of Tanzania drastically influenced political developments in Southern California.

In April 1974, the Sixth Pan-African Congress (6PAC) was held in Dar Es Salaam; the first PAC since the 1945 convention organized by Kwame Nkrumah in Manchester, England. 6PAC had a crucial importance on the development of pan-Africanist ideology in the United States which impacted the Congress of African People and *Ufahamu*. 6PAC expressed the importance of revolutionary pan-Africanist ideology yet “within the context of class struggle.”¹⁷⁰ This was not a new concept for CAP or the African Activist Association as many people in both formations had already embraced this position. However, now it caused a divide in the pan-Africanist community. African American delegates conflicted with members of the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) over their support for Jonas Savimbi and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), the heterodox Black Nationalist formation. Babu had been imprisoned by Nyerere for his suspected participation in the assassination of another Tanzanian official; Baraka was deeply bothered by Babu’s

¹⁶⁹ Ntongela Masilela, “Amilcar Cabral: A Threnody” *Ufahamu* Vol. 3, No. 3 (1973): 42.

¹⁷⁰ William H. Watkins, Abdul Alkalimat, and Marian Kramer, “The Seventh Pan-African Congress: Notes from North American Delegates” in *Imagining Home*, 353.

incarceration, crediting Babu and not Nyerere with as being the major force between African American-Tanzanian relations.¹⁷¹ The American delegation, of which Baraka, Madhubuti, and Sadaukai were members, even reflected the resurgent sectarianism in pan-Africanism. On one side were the people Baraka described as “narrow nationalists” who besmirched the cross-racial alliance of organizations like the MPLA. On the other side was Baraka, Sadaukai, Nelson Johnson, and others who argued for a deeper commitment to Third World coalition building and a severance of relationships with the Black petty bourgeoisie.¹⁷² Unlike the Black Panther and Us Organization crisis in 1969 or the Angolan Civil War, this split was not violent but it was indeed deeply emotional and profound. The first trip to Tanzania represented CAP’s ascendancy in the African World, the second visit underscored its decline. Baraka charted his break with Kawaida upon his return to the United States.

On 7 October 1974, at the third Congress of African People general assembly in Newark, the executive committee formally announced new position of CAP as a Marxist-Leninist organization. This official move rocked CAP. While Madhubuti and the famous Black Nationalist historian John Henrik Clarke expressed fierce opposition to this change, Sukumu and other San Diego delegates expressed much more bewilderment in this shift. Unaware how he would be able to return to San Diego’s sundry collective of activists, educators, and social workers, and inform them of their new political position as revolutionary Marxists, Sukumu went into a deep depression. Nia left CAP, Sukumu vacated the chair of Nia to Msemaji, and returned to his native New Iberia, Louisiana for

¹⁷¹ Baraka, *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, 443.

¹⁷² Plummer, 334-335.

a much-needed break from the movement. As Gerald Chaka has noted many times, this Southern retreat was necessitated, not only as a response to the split in CAP but also as an escape from their own cultish engagement with Kwaidera at the time. For a year, Sukumu attended Southern University and reconnected with his extended family.

Comparatively, the African Activist grew because of 6PAC, challenging the internal gender and class contradictions in the African liberation movement in the pieces they published. *Ufahamu* 4:3 contained an interview with Gerri Stark, one of the African American women organizing the Sixth Pan-African Congress. A Black American resident of Tanzania, Stark worked at the Tanzania Publishing House and played an important role in disseminating information from East Africa to the United States. In 1975, Stark published a review essay on Tanzanian socialism in *Ufahamu* Vol. 5, No. 3. Reviewing the writings of important scholars at the University of Dar es Salaam such as Issa Shivji and Walter Rodney, Stark argued that Black North Americans needed to expand their understanding on the political developments in Tanzania, beyond reading *Uhuru Na Ujamaa* or their familiarity with Ujamaa. Instead, whether readers agreed with scientific socialist teachings, Stark urged that readers engage them. Reflecting the debate amongst activists, *Ufahamu* published several essays that fiercely debated the merits of traditional pan-Africanist perspectives as well as orthodox scientific socialism. The consensus was that class analysis should be heightened but that it was not incompatible with Black Nationalist ideologies. What is more, there was a much larger focus on the role of women in revolutionary movements. The subsequent issue, *Ufahamu* Vol. 6, No. 1, highlighted studies of African women with four essays on Black women in Nigeria,

Tanzania, South Africa, and the United States. There was even a short story by Deidre Gomez, a graduate student in literature.

In San Diego, it was cultural work that sustained Nia following their departure from the Congress of African People. As well, during this period, Black women made advancements in their participation and leadership in San Diego. Nia continued to teach and run the School of Afroamerican Culture. Following the demise of the IAS, Maisha Kudumu created the Community to Establish Better Institutional Systems (CEBIS)—Maisha served as the director and Walter Kudumu as the chairman of the board. A summer program for children between 5 and 12, CEBIS taught students African culture, language, and history—just as the School of Afroamerican Culture had. Nia continued to organize its Umoja dance group for boys and Malaika dance group for young women. Kuzaliwa/African Liberation Day festivals continued to grow. Despite the way cultural nationalism has often been parodied as apolitical metaphysical obsessions with precolonial African civilization, in fact, the cultural work was central to the continued mobilization of the Black public sphere. By continuing to promote African centered cultural practices during revolutionary times, *solidarity-plus* continued to grow. As the next chapter argues, specific economic struggles and campaigns against police brutality created the political culture which produced the divestment movement in Southern California.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Free South Africa, You Dumb SOB”: Culture, Education, and Resistance in the Southern California Divestment Movement

The 1989 blockbuster film *Lethal Weapon 2* stands out amongst the mainstream cinema of the 1980s.¹ Incorporating Blaxploitation themes into its storyline, the film sequel stands apart from many crime films in the 1980s. Instead of blaming Los Angeles’ social problems on the Black and Brown poor, *Lethal Weapon 2* identified global white supremacy as a cause of American social problems. *Lethal Weapon 2* placed the interracial duo of Roger Murtaugh, a senior police detective, and the younger combat veteran Martin Riggs against a posse of drug dealing, murdering, Krugerrand trading South African consulate headed by the fictional South African Minister of Diplomatic Affairs Arjun Rudd. A clear representation of the antiapartheid activism that had filled Southland streets and campuses in the 1980s, *Lethal Weapon 2* also embodied three decades of political and cultural struggles. With San Francisco State University Black Student Union leader and radical cultural worker Danny Glover starring as a protagonist, the film channeled a complicated blend of protest traditions. Concerns over the neoliberal restructuring of the Southern California economy, the contradictions of

¹ This chapter and the epilogue incorporates a significant amount of film analysis alongside my study of Black cultural and social history in the last decades of the 20th century. Just as I began my discussion of the Black global spatial imaginary, I feel it is important to end my study with such analysis of Black visual culture. The most accessible of cultural texts, films such as *Lethal Weapon 2*, *Bush Mama*, *Boyz N the Hood*, and *Dangerous Ground* were able to articulate universal themes that linked Southern Africa and Southern California. What is more, these cultural products are able to circulate the Black international. While I have not done much to theorize language in this study, the use of language in the Black global spatial imaginary operates as a counterculture to the white global spatial imaginary’s operation in the Anglosphere. Simply put. African Americans and South Africans are able to communicate to each other because both places are English-speaking. Despite the sympathy for the Portuguese-speaking nations in Southern Africa, there is no doubt that linguistic similarity was intentionally manipulated by Black activists. I would be equally interested in the way that the struggles in Mozambique and Angola were articulated in Brazil for the same reasons.

Black representation, the links between campus and community protest, and the paradox of Black immobility and white mobility. In doing so, *Lethal Weapon 2* offers competing the black global spatial imaginary and the white global spatial imaginary.

Symbolized by his middle-class home, station wagon, and continued consideration of retirement, to an extent, Murtaugh epitomized a domesticity made possible by the preceding decades of Black struggle in Southern California. However, Murtaugh's continued concern for urban social issues—drugs, gang violence, the small arms trade, and labor exploitation—also channeled a responsibility of Black leadership that Glover undoubtedly brought to the series. By the 1980s, even the mobility of the Black middle class was jeopardized by neoliberalism and deindustrialization. Throughout the course of the film, Murtaugh continuously ponders retirement, has his home raided by South African commandos, and literally gets stuck in a “shitty situation” when Rudd had a bomb placed under Murtaugh's toilet. Comparatively, with the protection of diplomatic immunity, Rudd and the other South African officers live in a palatial hillside estate, flood the streets with drugs, use high-powered semiautomatic weapons, and *even* a kill white woman. In an iconic scene, Murtaugh and their special asset Leo Getz distract an official at the Beverly Hills South African consulate office while Riggs sneaks upstairs to confront Rudd. With protestors in the background holding ANC flags and antiapartheid picket signs, Murtaugh requests a visa to travel to South Africa. When asked why a Black man would want to travel to South Africa, Murtaugh replies: “To join up with my oppressed brothers. To take up the struggle against the tyranny of the racist, fascist, white minority regime. One man! One vote! Free South Africa, you dumb son of a bitch!” At the climax of the film, Riggs and Murtaugh tracked

Rudd and his posse to the Los Angeles Harbor on a South African Transvaal Lines cargo ship filled with millions of dollars in Kruggerands. After severely shooting Riggs, Rudd, standing up above Murtaugh, produces his credentials and again invokes his diplomatic immunity. With the precision of sniper, Murtaugh aims his revolver at Rudd, sets his sights, and then shoots Rudd in the middle of the forehead and proclaims, "It's just been revoked."

International consciousness is what generated the antiapartheid movement but local relevance is what sustained the movement. Therefore, *Lethal Weapon 2* is a useful tool to begin the final chapter of this study. As noted, the film represents the culmination of three decades of activism where local struggle had become the catalyst for African solidarity. "Free South Africa You Dumb SOB" charts African solidarity work in Southern California from 1974 to 1994. Four arenas of solidarity-plus are chronicled in this chapter: labor and economic relations, police brutality and mass incarceration, cultural politics, and campus divestment movements. These overlapping terrains of struggle generated the critical mass of liberal and radical activists that were necessary for the objectives of antiapartheid to be achieved. Nationally, this period coincided with a far-right shift in American politics. Internationally, this period coincides with the acceleration of national liberation struggles in Southern Africa, notably South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, as well as contemporary struggles in Ireland, Palestine, Central America, and the Caribbean.

Under the rise in neoliberal policy, Black America witnessed heightened Black unemployment and underemployment, soaring racial violence, police brutality, mass incarceration, and receding educational access. Despite the rising prominence of Black

bodies in American popular culture and electoral politics, the everyday lives of Black working people constricted. Recognizing this paradox, African Americans and other antiracist activists solidly understood the labor, economic, and social conditions to be directly linked to freedom struggles in Southern African and other places. The African liberation struggles of the 1970s and 1980s was defined by a conflict of the competing spatial imaginaries of the Black world and the white world. As with the immediate postwar years, these conditions also expanded white global spatial imaginary with varied interests such as financial firms, police officers, cultural workers, and white supremacists moved between Southern California and Southern Africa.

The embodiment of solidarity-plus, antiapartheid activists mobilized for the freedom of Southern Africa against the same forces who oppressed African Americans. This phase in Black Internationalism was eventually successful because it pitted activists against common foes. Take for example the Bank of America. Beyond theory, a new generation of activists mobilized alongside veterans against the financial conglomerate. In 1964, Civil Rights activists protested the unequal employment policies and lending practices of the Bank of America. That same year, antiapartheid activists utilized the same methods as they protested an international financial firm on Wilshire Boulevard that traded in Kruggerands. By the late 1970s, antiapartheid activists identified the Bank of America, and other firms, as the purveyor of the shared oppression of African Americans and Southern Africans. This same analysis was applied to police brutality and incarceration, and the American university. Still, this moment also brought activists against new opponents such as the liberal vision of the Southern California cultural

industry. As much as this chapter explains the successes of antiapartheid activism and African liberation struggle, it also proposes a way forward in the postapartheid era.

Just as this chapter displays a culmination of the translocalism which bonded Southern California to Southern Africa, it also displays the regional translocalism that conjoined San Diego and Los Angeles. In many ways, Los Angeles has always been understood to contain a much more advanced radical political culture than San Diego. The limited tradition of industrial labor, the dominance of finance capital and land speculation, the proliferation of military industry, and the militarized border have made San Diego the bastion of a conservative culture, white spatial imaginary, that extends from the border and northward to Orange. It is these precise conditions that makes it an important place to think about the particularity of African liberation struggles in Southern California. San Diego underscores the way multiracial dimension of Africa liberation. It was in this struggle that transborder issues, again, becomes a site of solidarity-plus. Therefore, the beginning of this chapter pays acute attention to San Diego. It was in San Diego that shared material concerns united African Americans, Latinos and other people of color for African liberation and mutual class concerns.

This cross-racial alliance created what historian Natalia Molina calls a *counterscript*. In both the daily lives and high levels of political protest, “we can see that the process of racialization can be more important than the identity of who is being racialized, therefore enabling seemingly unlikely antiracist alliances to form based on similar, but not identical, experiences of racialization when groups recognize the

similarity of their stories in the collective experiences of others,” Molina writes.² Just as in the previous chapters, be it the Africa House, BOMB, the *Voices from the Ghetto* anthology or the cultural and literary work of the Kuumba Foundation, this committed solidarity of the racial counterscript is not antithetical to the black global spatial imaginary. Instead, multiracial cooperation has been central to all manifestations of the Black Radical Tradition. It was in this struggle that Nia Cultural Organization transitioned to a multiracial labor union. In the latter sections of this chapter, I move to Los Angeles where I concentrate on the culture industry and campus activism at UCLA. Despite this transition, this period contained the most extensive interaction between activists in both metropolitan areas. Unlike the 1960s when the municipal sectarianism and factionalism of Black Power groups like the Us Organization and Black Panther Party generated conflict. This moment was defined by the proliferation of multiple organizations whom in their permutations of what Jacques Derrida termed *differance*, generated a moment aided by decentralized political struggle.³

The Global White Power Surge

During the late 1970s, there was a surge in global white power that conservative economic and political power from the United States to Southern Africa. In the late 1970s, despite their many differences, both the late historian Manning Marable and Maulana Karenga argued that the Supreme Court case of *Regents of the University of*

² Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 10.

³ Stuart Hall, “Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities,” in Anthony King, *Culture, Globalization, and the World System*. Also see Brent Hayes Edwards writings on difference in *The Practice of Diaspora: literature, translation, and the rise of Black internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 1-15.

California v. Bakke (1977) signaled a major paradigm shift in America politics. Marable argued that *Bakke* was the first in a three-pronged series of “Green lights” signaling the unleashing of racist terror against African Americans and Latinos which. Following the Bakke Decision was the 1979 Greensboro Massacre, where Klansmen executed five members of the Communist Workers Party and were subsequently acquitted, and the 1980 presidential election of Ronald Reagan. To this conservative movement, Karenga adds the California Tax Revolt and rise in police power.⁴ The *Bakke* decision was a major event in the expansion of the postwar *global white spatial imaginary* which connected white supremacists from California to Southern Africa. Concurrently, *Bakke* mobilized the local antiracist efforts and fueled the antiapartheid struggle.

In 1974, the University of Minnesota alumnus, engineer, and Marine Corps Vietnam veteran Allan Bakke sued the University of California Davis (UC Davis) for denying his admission to their medical school because of their Affirmative Action program that utilized racial quotas. In September 1976, the California Supreme Court agreed with Bakke’s claim finding the UC Davis admissions program to be unconstitutional and mandated that Bakke be admitted to the UC Davis medical school. Securing the ability to continue its admission program, the UC systems submitted the case for federal supreme court review in December 1967. In October 1977, the Supreme Court began hearing the arguments from both sides. In June 1978, the Supreme Court confirmed that Bakke should be admitted to Davis but offered a much more measured

⁴ Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 1999), 243-244. Seminar on Social Theory and Practice, Kawaia Institute of Pan-African Studies, Dr. M. Ron Karenga, 1 July 1978, Page II. Herman Baca Papers Maulana Karenga Folder

verdict on Affirmative Action programs. With the opinion being written by Justice Powell, the Supreme Court declared the quota system unconstitutional while upholding the ability for the UC to use preferred admissions. Despite this subdued decision by the Supreme Court, Bakke indeed became the beginning of the end for Affirmative Action in California.⁵

Between 1977 and 1978, the Bakke Case became an important arena of solidarity-plus of that united the struggles of antiracists in Southern California and to liberation struggles in Southern Africa. Bookended with the 1978 visit of the Rhodesian premier Ian Smith to San Diego, the California current events of the late 1970s illuminates the competing *global white spatial imaginary* and *global black spatial imaginary* that the postwar political economy created. As Historian Natalia Molina notes, *Bakke* institutionalized the notion of “reverse discrimination”—the belief that antiracist legislation had “swung too far from the center” and begun to harm white people.⁶ This sentiment was not lost amongst young white supremacists in California, for which the San Diego-area was the *de facto capital*.

The *San Diego Union* reported that there had even been a rise in card-carrying Ku Klux Klan membership in the United States Navy following the Supreme Court ruling.⁷ Supporting the rise of Neo-Nazi activism, one young member argued, “It’s about time whites got together in an organization like this. Just look at what’s happening around us.

⁵ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998), 21, 36-37. Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 203. Molina, 141.

⁶ Molina, 141.

⁷ Kip Cooper, “Navy Orders Crackdown on ‘Racists’: Former 12% Quota on Black Recruits Also Is Rescinded,” *San Diego Union*, 8/30/79, p. 1.

Blacks are taking over. I think that guy Bakke is absolutely right. Federal law is beginning to build up blacks and put down whites.”⁸ *Bakke* emboldened notions of white victimhood that led to a flare in white supremacy in California and nationwide. To be clear, the economic crises of the late-1970s had an adverse impact on white poor just as it had on people of color. Nonetheless, white supremacist literature identified liberal democratic policies that, they believed, privileged Blacks over whites as well as hidden Jewish agendas as the source for the economic restructuring. Neo-Nazi literature collected by Chicano activist Herman Baca argued things such as: “Having made America’s Blacks the happiest they have been since Lyndon Johnson and the ‘Great Society’ of the 60s, Mr. Carter then turned his full attention to his real source of power, his Jew buddies. Anxious to show his gratitude, he began at once to end Jewish unemployment in America.... Needless to say, the Jews are very pleased with ‘their boy.’” Carter was accused of turning his back on the struggles of everyday working white people, pardoning draft-dodgers, preparing to withdraw troops from Korea, and preparing to stand aside while “his henchmen hand Southern Africa over to the Communist equipped Black terrorists.”⁹

For White Supremacists, and even mainstream conservatives, the Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith was a global symbol of white pride since the 1960s. In November 1966, the *San Diego Union* printed a large laudatory story about Smith, whose uncle was a resident of San Diego. Comparing Smith to the late-18th century American revolutionaries, Smith Regime’s separation from Britain was praised for its anticolonial

⁸ Dean Calbreath, *The Daily Californian*, 3/2/77, p. 7. Herman Baca Papers KKK File.

⁹ “If You Thought Ford Was Bad...Meet the Scalawag Goy from Georgia,” *White Power*, January-February 1977, p. 1 &3. Herman Baca Papers, KKK File

independence while its segregationist policies were glossed over. In contrast, the Black Rhodesians (Zimbabweans), opposed to Smith's white-rule government, were described as terrorists.¹⁰ White supremacists such as the well-known Harold Covington, an instigator of the Greensboro Massacre, migrated to Southern Africa, and was one of the 1,400 mercenaries from foreign nations to serve with the Rhodesian military.¹¹ In fact, historian James William Gibson has shown that the popular magazine *Soldier of Fortune* played a prominent role in recruiting men, especially white American Vietnam veterans, to Southern Africa and Central America during this moment.¹² By 1977, the message in White Right periodicals was a lot more confrontational than mainstream conservative discourse but nevertheless keeping with the racialized anticommunism that filled mainstream media in the previous decade. In another article compiled by Baca entitled "Black Terror Spreads in Africa," *White Power* editor Norman Anspach argued that "Black terrorists" had unleashed murderous waves on whites and even "loyal" Blacks in Rhodesia and South Africa. Arguing that whites in Rhodesia were especially vulnerable, Anspach states that seven "White Catholic missionaries were cut down in cold blood by invading Black butchers from nearby Communist Mozambique" and that the rebels were killing "White women and children." While portraying Smith as an innocent victim, Anspach criticized Carter and "America's high-yellow foreign diplomat" Andrew Young for quickly abandoning the hopes of over a quarter-million White Rhodesians.¹³

¹⁰ "Rhodesia's 'Smithy', Lion Tamer," *San Diego Union*, 11/6/1966, p. C1 and C6.

¹¹ James Wilson Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 215.

¹² *Ibid.*, 142-169.

¹³ Norman Anspach, "Black Terror Spreads in Africa," *White Power*, January-February 1977, p. 3 & 5. Herman Baca Papers, KKK File

From Southern California to England to Southern Africa, despite their actual control of society, a North Atlantic Anglo white majority identified with the brutal white minority governments of Rhodesia and South Africa where Black liberation movements were deemed a threat to white survival.¹⁴ For his part, Ian Smith tactfully appealed to the sentiments of white Americans, moderate and conservative, and even a small amount of African American anticommunists. Smith's Salisbury government enjoyed the support of Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater, Henry Kissinger, Patrick Buchanan, Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. When Smith visited the United States in 1978, he was welcomed warmly by Ronald Reagan, the popular favorite with the American Right to defeat Carter in the 1980 election. Even the nominally liberal Bayard Rustin traveled to Salisbury, Rhodesia to meet with Smith's government and lobbied alongside Senator Helms to lift sanctions on Rhodesia. Smith's most shrewd public relations event was his fall 1978 tour of the United States with Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, a founder of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Abel Muzorewa, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau all of which were nationalist moderates.¹⁵ In the fall of 1978, Smith's visit to Hotel Del Coronado brought the local San Diegan Black, Chicano, and Radical Left into confrontation with the White Right in a moment that elevated this local skirmish to international significance.

¹⁴ The events in San Diego represented an international trend in the Anglo world. Just as in the United States, British antiracists engaged in a similar fight against the National Front. For more on the struggles against the National Front and antiracist organizing in the United Kingdom, examine Paul Gilroy, "Two Sides of Anti-Racism" in *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987/1991), 114-152.

¹⁵ Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 113-114, 138-139, and 161-164.

The same conditions that engineered the white power surge also birthed multiracial alliances. These coalitions forced academic and municipal divestment from South Africa and compelled sanctions on the nation's apartheid regime. In Southern California, a multiracial cast of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and white radicals and liberals, created a counterscript to the dominant, and international, racial ideology. As in earlier moments in this study, counterscripts have been constituent to the Black global spatial imaginary. In San Diego, even while the Nia Cultural Organization had parted with the Congress of African People which became an orthodox Marxist organization in 1974, Nia had also moved further left by placing an even increased emphasis on Third Worldism and labor organizing. Msemaji articulated the need for the formation of counterscripts to white supremacy when he acknowledged that an early success of Black Radicalism was that it had generated the formation of a new cultural identity amongst African Americans but that a much more humanist and economic approach was necessitated.¹⁶

Divestment and the Black Global Spatial Imaginary

On Friday 20 May 1977, the Nia Cultural Organization held San Diego's 10th Annual Kuzaliwa/Malcolm X Birthday Celebration. In San Diego, the Kuzaliwa had been merged with the African Liberation Day celebration and no Kuzaliwa better reflected the uniqueness of Malcolm X/African Liberation Day in San Diego than this event. The organizing committee and speakers for the 1977 Kuzaliwa consisted of Ken Msemaji, now the head of Nia, Fahari Jeffers of Nia and the Black Federation, California

¹⁶ George Ramos, "Msemaji Says Blacks Need More Than '60s Militance," *San Diego Union*, 2/23/77, B4.

Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally, Dennis Banks of the American Indian Movement, Tom Hayden then with the Campaign for Economic Democracy, Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers of America, City Councilman Leon Williams, George Stevens, and Niko Ngwenyama of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). A former UCLA African Studies graduate student, Ngwenyama had previously served as the Editor-in-Chief for the radical African Studies journal *Ufahamu*—forming the first solid connection between Nia and the African Activist Association.¹⁷ That Friday, over 500 people marched through the streets of Downtown San Diego from San Diego City College down towards the post office on 10th and E Street where United States Congressional Representative Lionel Van Deerlin and Senator Alan Cranston had offices. During the march, people held signs in Spanish that read “Viva La Liberacion De Africa,” “Arriba South Africa,” and “Chicanos Por South Africa.” Scores of people, even some who appear to be Black, can be seen carrying traditional UFW banners.¹⁸ Once at the post office, organizers distributed a list of demands to the participants and representatives from the offices of Van Deerlin and Cranston made by Vernon Sukumu, now the head of the San Diego Black Federation. Sukumu called for the federal government to sever of all American ties to “racist regimes in Southern Africa,” an extraction of all military, technological, and financial support to white supremacist governments in Southern Africa, recognize the organizations that were the “legitimate

¹⁷ Kuzaliwa Certificate Baca Papers Box 2 Folder 17 In Honor of the 10th Annual Malcolm X Kuzaliwa Birthday Celebration

¹⁸ Malcolm X March Image in front of City College. Baca Papers Box 56 Folder 10.

representatives of the African people,” and to lend support to the liberation struggles in the Southern African nations.¹⁹



Figure 32 In the 1977 Kuzaliwa, Chicana/os marched through San Diego, conjoining their struggles with calls for African liberation (Baca Papers, UCSD)

The 1977 Kuzaliwa represented a pivotal moment in African liberation support in Southern California. The public festivals organized by cultural nationalist organizations had often been a place of ridicule and even sectarian disagreement within the Black Liberation Struggle. Neither African mimesis nor petty bourgeois pageantry, cultural work allowed for Nia to survive its dramatic split with the Congress of African People and actually brought the organization to a similar position as many other revolutionary organizations. The multiracial and transnational coalition that Nia assembled was motivated by the same events and conditions motivating the white backlash. Nia and their allies also came into conflict with mainstream Democratic Party representatives like

¹⁹ Jennifer Williamson, “Malcolm X Rally Spurs Unity Call: Human Rights Urged,” *San Diego Union*, 5/21/77, B2.

Van Deerlin and Cranston as well as the Carter Administration. The obvious difference is that the 1977 Kuzaliwa coalition envisioned a world free from economic, political, and racial stratification. It was during this moment that students at the University of California San Diego's (UCSD) Third College helped organize a performance of Saleolo Maredi's play *Survival* by the South African Theater Project.²⁰ UCLA alumnus Tony Ngubo, now an Assistant Professor of Sociology, and Nia members were among the UCSD faculty and students that participated in an antiapartheid forum held in Third College. Ngubo was now a member of the ANC and an organizer with the Southern California-based Working Committee on Southern Africa (WCSA), a coalition of organizations that included Nia and the Black Federation. Ngubo stressed the entire campus was complicit with apartheid because UCSD invested its funds, including tuition, into corporations like General Motors, IBM, and Polaroid and also the UC system had ongoing projects in South Africa. Aminifu Farwell and Greg Akili of Nia urged for increased student activism.²¹

Not just in San Diego but throughout the California college systems, students and community members made the conscious choice to mutually combat the *Bakke* decision, segregationist policies in Southern Africa, and campus cutbacks to TA staffing and funding. Students throughout the UC formed what was called the Coalition Against Cutbacks. At UCSD, the student coalition included the Black Student Union (BSU) and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/as de Aztlan (MECHA). In January 1978, the coalition

²⁰ "Drama Depicts Oppression by Apartheid," *Triton Times*, 5/13/77, p. 8.

²¹ "S. Africa Forum Stresses UC-Apartheid Ties," *New Indicator*, May 12-26, 1977, p. 1.

published a multiple page manifesto that linked apartheid to the *Bakke* decision. A portion of the public statement read:

And what supports this unprecedented atrocity? Foreign investment accounts for fully 80% of private industry in South Africa. American companies...have invested over 1.5 billion dollars in the South African economy. And the University of California has over \$300 million invested in these companies! What this means is that your education is being financed by the blood of Black South Africans. And the crime does not end in South Africa. In fact, it begins here at home. One of the most blatant examples of legally entrenched racism and oppression in the world today involves a court case where the University was [defendant]. We refer to the [infamous] Bakke decision.²²

The *Bakke* decision, according to the Coalition Against Cutbacks was of historical proportions because, much like the overturn of Reconstruction, it nullified the historical ground African Americans had gained in civil rights.²³

The short-lived San Diego Coalition Against the Bakke Decision offers a useful example of a *counterscript* whose solidarity-plus linked local struggle to international liberation movements. From the fall of 1977 to the spring of 1978, the San Diego Coalition Against the Bakke Decision operated out of the offices of the San Diego Black Federation at 4181 Market Street. The coalition consisted of a variety of student and community organizations such as the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/as de Aztlan (MECHA) chapters from San Diego State University, Southwestern Community College in Chula Vista, and UCSD; the San Diego Black Federation; the Nia Cultural Organization; the Black Law Student Association (BLSA); the North American Indian Student Alliance; and the Black Student Union (BSU) chapters from SDSU and San

²² David N. Smith, "The Knowledge Industry," *The New Indicator*, 1/10-23/1978.

²³ Ibid.

Diego City College (SDCC). The co-chairs of the steering committee were Conley Major (now known as Abraxas) of the Black Federation, and Raquel Beltran of SDSU MECHA. The coalition was student-led but maintained the active support of Sukumu and other older members. The San Diego Coalition Against the Bakke Decision organized a “Third World Community Conference” at Lincoln High School on 28 January 1978. The coalition printed their promotional materials for the conference in both Spanish and English and the theme of the conference was “Fighting Apathy and Mounting a Collective Struggle.”²⁴ The conference sought to challenge the idea of “reverse discrimination” but it also placed a primary concern on creating “strategies and schedules for raising consciousness of the masses of third world and oppressed people in our community.”²⁵ African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other people of color immediately understood the long-reaching implications of the *Bakke* ruling, even before most people had discovered the Powell Memorandum.

The *Bakke* decision severed old relationships and, therefore, demanded the formation of new bonds as prominent Jewish civil rights organizations sided with Allan Bakke. None of the major Black Nationalists in San Diego identified as Marxists. Yet as the previous chapter noted, Kawaida formations had always been anticapitalist and their leftward turn had become more pronounced in oppositional politics of Nia and the San Diego Black Federation. *Bakke* threatened the survival of all other economic and educational policies that Black radicals had strategically engaged to advance their social

²⁴ SD Coalition Against the Bakke Decision Memorandum 1/18/78 Black Federation of San Diego Folder Herman Baca Papers.

²⁵ “COME TO A THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON THE BAKKE DECISION AND RELATED ISSUES.” Black Federation of San Diego Folder Herman Baca Papers.

and economic agendas. Alongside university admissions, desegregation, fair employment, federal grant programs, and even federal government contracts with construction firms were all in jeopardy. The new multiracial and leftwing coalition building that Nia and the Black Federation embarked upon in the late 1970s radicals of color into conflict with the liberal politicians, as well as conservatives, as they demanded local, state, and federal government reinvest into the lives of the poor and disinvest from oppressive regimes abroad. In the community, as on the campus, mobilization against the *Bakke* decision was therefore directly linked to the earliest of divestment campaigns of the late 1970s.

The Nia Cultural Organization continued to establish bonds with African freedom fighters as well as local grassroots organizations such as Baca's CCR and Tom Hayden's Campaign for Economic Democracy. As noted, Nia and the Black Federation were members of the Working Committee on Southern Africa. The WCSA organized the Conference on Southern Africa at the Trinity Baptist Church in Los Angeles from February 3rd to February 4th in 1978. Much like the 1977 Kuzaliwa, the Conference on Southern Africa brought together a radical Third World Coalition. Sponsored by the WCSA, Nia and the Black Federation, it was also endorsed by the Los Angeles chapters of the Southern Africa Support Committee, AIM, and the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP). Speakers at the conference included Tony Ngubo, Niko Ngwenyama of ZAPU, and Chipasha Luchembe, a UCLA doctoral student in African History, African Activist Association member, and *Ufahamu* contributor. Other speakers at the conference were the UN representatives from Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa: Dr. Callistus Ndlovu of the Patriotic Front (PF) and ZAPU, Thami Mhlambiso of the African National

Congress, Ben Gurirub of the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), and Tiri Kangai of the PF and ZANU. At the conference, the speakers discussed the existential conditions in Southern Africa, the political goals of the liberation movements, and American neocolonial policies in Southern Africa. Discussing American corporate investment in apartheid and segregationist regimes, the final day of the conference was dedicated to the development of a plan of action. Conference participants discussed the need to concentrate on American corporate investment in South Africa, South African presence in the United States, impacting federal policy towards Southern Africa, and the development of the necessary communication and political networks.²⁶

On 6 February 1978, Nia hosted a meeting between Black San Diegans and Ndlovu, Mhlambiso, Gurirub, and Kangai. In his public announcement of the event, Msemaji underscored the need for all African Americans to become more involved “at some level with the survival and future of our African counterparts. Afroamericans, or black Americans are the sole force that can be activated to help free our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa and support their liberation efforts. We can do this through self and mass education, effective lobbying, and developing our political presence here in America.”²⁷ In multiple speaking events that winter and spring, Greg Akili underscored the links between direct links between African American unemployment and the alienation of Southern African natives by American corporate investment. In March 1978, Akili and Nia, alongside the CCR, CED, Black Federation, and Southeast

²⁶ Conference on Southern Africa program. African Activist Archive website. Carol B. Thompson and Bud Day Papers on Southern Africa, Michigan State University Libraries Special Collections.

²⁷ Invitation to meet Southern African Dignitaries 1/31/78. Herman Baca Papers Folder Nia Cultural Organization

Ministerial Alliance announced that 75 million dollars of San Diego retirement funds were invested in corporations doing business in South Africa. A near 30 million dollars were invested in the Bank of America and Wells Fargo. “We feel there are alternatives that are just as productive,” Akili noted. The funds, should be redirected towards local housing and employment projects.²⁸

The divestment campaign revitalized the struggles from the 1960s by targeting many of the same corporate powers that had been the target of African American liberation movements. The protests against the sale of South African Kruggerands and the Bank of America underscored the transgenerational campaign that antiapartheid had become. In commemoration of the second anniversary of the Soweto Uprising, the Southern Africa Support Committee, Working Committee on Southern Africa, and the African Activists Association were amongst the groups that organized the June 16th protest against the Bank of America main office on 525 South Flower Street in Downtown Los Angeles as a part of the International Bank Withdrawal Day. Proclaiming that the “Bank of America is the Bank of Apartheid,” it was announced that in 1977 the Bank of America had nearly 200 million dollars outstanding to South Africa, accounting for a tenth of all loans to the nation. Unlike the investments of some corporations, these Bank of America funds largely went directly to the Vorster government. For this reason, activists called for the protests and divestment from other banks headquartered in California such as Wells Fargo and the United Bank of California but they directed their attention towards the Bank of America. The Bank of America

²⁸ Press Statement: San Diego Public Monies Used to Prop Up Apartheid, 3/14/78 and “City, County Hit Over Fund Tie to S. Africa,” *San Diego Union* 3/14/78. Nia Cultural Organization Folder

directly enabled the increased militarization of South African police and national defense forces. After the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, Bank of America was amongst the corporations to immediately invest \$150 million dollars into South Africa.

In 1978, over 400 Bank of America branches were protested in California.²⁹ Directly recalling the Congress of Racial Equality protests of the 1960s, promotional material for the 1978 Bank of America protests connected the oppression of South Africans to “B of A’s exploitation of working people here in the US, including red-lining minority communities, job and loan discrimination, and anti-union activity.”³⁰ As the SASC noted, in Los Angeles, the Bank of America’s investment in predominantly white areas was disproportionate to its lending patterns in communities of color. In the West Adams district that was over 70 percent black, 13 percent Latino, and nearly eight percent Asian, the Bank of America lent at a per capita rate of merely \$1.83. Comparatively, in Pacific Palisades, which was 95 percent white, the Bank of America lent funds at a per capita rate of \$128.18. Despite having 14 branches in West Adams, the Bank of America offered only ten mortgages to West Adams residents in 1977 compared to the nearly 80 mortgages loans in Pacific Palisades. As the SASC noted, “Redlining makes it difficult for moderate or low-income families to obtain loans to buy or improve their homes. This encourages absentee ownership and accelerates housing deterioration.”³¹ Beyond theory and imagination, the gruesome paradox here is that poor people of color directly capitalized their own misery and the oppression of Southern African people.

²⁹ Southern Africa Support Committee files. African Activists Archive.

³⁰ Bank of America is the Bank of Apartheid...Picket Friday June 16, 11:30-1:00. Southern Africa Support Committee files. African Activists Archive.

³¹ Stop Banking on Apartheid: Withdraw Your Money from the Bank of America



Figure 33 Cesar Chavez and Ken Msemaji (UCSD Special Collections)



Figure 34 Fahari Jeffers, Ken Msemaji, Cesar Chavez, and two other unidentified people (Ken Msemaji Private Collection)

It is in this context that the 1978 Kuzaliwa seems a lot less like a deviation from the previous Malcolm X Birthday celebrations and instead the logical progression. Nia responded to the economic crises of the late 1970s making full employment the theme of the 1978 fete. Named the “Malcolm X Jobs March” and “Malcolm X Full Employment

Day,” the 1978 Kuzaliwa utilized economic issues to find common ground amongst people of color and progressive whites without being crude and reductive in their analysis. Apartheid, African American unemployment, American immigration policy, and Native American unemployment were all the product of an increased restructuring of the American economy from its postwar liberalism to neoliberal policy that has given more rights to oppressive transnational corporations while disregarding the rights of oppressed people around the globe.³² Jane Fonda completed a dynamic list of speakers that included Dolores Huerta of the UFW. Making globalized capital the focus of her speech, Fonda told the crowd of 1,500 that transnational firms were “the real illegal aliens” as they “go into Mexico, leaving thousands out of work here.” Transnational firms invested in dictatorships abroad in search of expanded profits. The Southern California Gas Company for example “invested \$40 billion in Indonesia, a dictatorship whose prisons were full of those protesting the lack of democracy” in their efforts to develop liquefied gas but that money could immediately create 42,000 jobs in the short term and 3 million jobs if it was invested into solar.³³ The Malcolm X Jobs March embodied the idea of *solidarity-plus* as radicals established direct material ties to the liberation of the Third World with the domestic empowerment of the poor and people of color.

³² Malcolm X Jobs March invitation 5/3/78. Nia Cultural Organization Folder, Baca Papers.

³³ Ed Sylvester, “Fonda Stirs San Diego Job Rally: Actress Denounces Multinational Corporations,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5/20/78, C5.



Figure 35 Sukumu and his son at a Kuzaliwa, 1977 or 1978(Vernon Sukumu Private Collection).



Figure 36 At the 1978 Kuzaliwa, demands for economic justice conveyed the organizational shifts NIA undertook as well as the role of practice of solidarity-plus. (Baca Papers)

Concerns over global economics and politics brought the *global black spatial imaginary* and the *global white spatial imaginary* came into direct confrontation amidst Ian Smith's 14 October 1978 visit to San Diego. In the fall of 1978, the brutal former San Francisco State University President turned United States Senator and anticommunist SI Hayakawa, a vocal supporter of the *Bakke* decision, was amongst Republican legislators to invite Ian Smith to the United States. In June 1978, Hayakawa had made a twelve day visit to Rhodesia and concluded that it was indeed Smith who had the best peace plan for the war-torn nation. On October 14th, Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole, and Chirau spoke at the historic Hotel Del Coronado in what was described as an appeal to

the American public for the support for the peace agreement Smith had penned with the moderate Zimbabweans.³⁴ Yet, despite Smith's performance of moderation, in 1971 he had famously said that Black Rhodesians would not be ready for self-government for one thousand years.³⁵ A Black Federation-led multiracial coalition filled with the, now usual, African, African American, and Chicano activists, noted that there was a visible absence from Smith's entourage, the ZANU-Popular Front (PF) led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. Reminding the public that Zimbabweans lived under forced segregation with little access to formal education and made "slave wages" of \$840 annually versus the \$8,800 of whites, the anti-Smith coalition decried the omission of the PF in their press release:

The American revolutionaries actually fought bloody battles and killed their oppressor, the British. Americans have heralded this as a monumental struggle for freedom. Why, then, is the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe being labelled terrorist by the American press and conservative politicians in this country? Do they not have the same right to freedom as the Americans did?

The main concern of the American press and politicians is that ZANU, one of the groups in the Patriotic Front is of Marxist orientation. It appears they want to protect the people of Zimbabwe from Marxism by keeping them enslaved to Ian Smith and his puppets Sithole, Chirau and Muzorewa.

The Patriotic Front is the main reason that it has not taken Blacks 1000 years to learn to rule themselves as Smith predicted. They fought like American revolutionaries. They are the ones who should decide the fate of Zimbabwe.³⁶

³⁴ Gene Cubbison, "Demonstrators Back, Oppose Smith: Police on Hand for Coronado Visit," *San Diego Union*, 10/15/78, A10.

³⁵ Black Community Protests Against Ian Smith's Regime and for the Patriotic Front. Baca Papers Box 17 Folder 5

³⁶ Ibid.

The protests on Saturday October 14th garnered hundreds of supporters, many against the Smith regime but also those supportive.

The anti-Smith crowd consisted of Blacks and Chicanos but was in fact largely white. A contingency of the anti-Smith agitators were student members of the Socialist Workers Party from local colleges including UCSD.³⁷ Antiracist protestors held signs calling for the impeachment of Hayakawa, the prosecution of Ian Smith, and advocated for a PF overthrow of the Salisbury government. One rather clever sign stated: “The Only Masses Sithole Represents Are Mass Murderers.” However, there was a sizeable number of whites in support of Smith with signs that derided Andrew Young, Marxists, and demanded freedom for Whites and Blacks, suggesting that it was indeed the White Rhodesians who were being denied independence. One white man held a sign stating, “American White Majority Welcomes Mr. Smith.” Tom Metzger, KKK members, and Neo-Nazis attended the rally. A pilot of a small aircraft even buzzed the proceedings pulling a sign stating, “Wake Up White Man—Klan” including a local phone number for people to call for membership. Another sign read “Down with the Murdering Gorillas of the Popular Front,” making a clear double-entendre to their insurgent military tactics, and another sign declared “Keep Rhodesia in Civilized Hands—No Marxism.” The most interesting White Right participant was a man named John Zeller. An American citizen, Zeller had once lived in Rhodesia where he managed sixteen department stores for five years. Repeating a trope stated by local car salesman Paul Bremner over a decade earlier,

³⁷ Letter to Herman Baca from Jay Ressler, SWP Chairperson in San Diego. Baca Papers Box 36 Folder 5 Socialist Workers Party.

Zeller argued that the rising tide of Black Power amongst Zimbabweans forced him to leave Southern Africa.³⁸



Figure 37 Sukumu at the Ian Smith Protest (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)

The general support for Ian Smith by the Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazis exposed the Smith façade. However, the white spread support for Smith by the American conservatives revealed the sharp right turn in American politics during the 1970s. Conservative support for white settler regimes in Southern Africa reflected their domestic discourse on race, class, and gender. Obscuring the fact that Allan Bakke had benefitted from a variety of preferential admissions and entitlement programs himself as a nontraditional-aged military veteran, Affirmative Action programs were projected as an offense to the individual achievements of hardworking white Americans. Domestically,

³⁸ Cubbison, "Demonstrators Back, Oppose Smith."

Black women and men became racialized as lazy, immoral, and dishonest “welfare queens” driving Cadillacs and “strapping young bucks” using food stamps to buy T-bone steaks, as the former California Governor and Republican Presidential Primary candidate Ronald Reagan famously stated in 1976.³⁹ Ian Smith and his supporters in Coronado similarly projected the image of the violent and uncivilized African as evidence of their unpreparedness for self-government.

In December 1978, these globalized ethnic notions manifested in local politics following remarks the San Diego developer and member of Governor Jerry Brown’s Housing Task Force made on African people following his 1978 visit to South Africa and Rhodesia. Huffman stated: “Generally, it is difficult to keep the black man working. The more you give him, the more he relaxes and the less he is inspired to do for himself.” “It is a fundamental truth that the black man in Africa, by and large, will do whatever he can to get away from work,” Huffman stated, adding that slavery is “what made America great.”⁴⁰ An earnest admonition of Huffman came from the Lemon Grove resident James Rex, a British-born white emigrant from South African. In a letter-to-the-editor, Rex lampooned Huffman’s report on Southern Africa as “just another instant expert’s report after spending what was tantamount to a long weekend in South Africa and seeing it through the eyes of a very well organized South African travel bureau which is very well financed by the South African government.” Surely not a radical activist, Rex’s rebuke of Huffman provides a sobering analysis of the global misinformation campaign conservative business leaders and politicians embarked on in defense of the white-

³⁹ Kelley, *Yo Mama’s Disfunktional*, 91

⁴⁰ Gene Cubbison, “Developer Huffman Quits Housing Panel at Brown’s Request,” *San Diego Union*, 1/9/79, B1.

minority ruled governments in Southern Africa. “The most disturbing aspect is the example of yet another businessman or corporation attempting to administer and influence American foreign policy,” Rex wrote.⁴¹ The San Diego Black Federation was able to force Huffman out of his seat on Brown’s task force with the support of their allies in state government. The Nia Cultural Organization, the San Diego Black Federation, and their allies were not able to influence city or county officials to withdraw its funds from corporations that operated in Southern Africa. It nevertheless forged the ground for the successful push for divestment in the years to come.

In San Diego, the Nia Cultural Organization and the Black Federation represented the counterpoint to the national conservative hegemon, of which Southern California was ground zero. At a time that even some Black and Latino organizations argued for conservative notions of “self-help” and other radical organizations advocated for anarchist retreats from the mainstream, groups like Nia bravely demanded the reconstruction of state, local, and federal governments that invested into the well-being of its citizens. Not merely “as entitlements but as a matter of rights,” as Robin Kelley has noted, the early divestment campaign in San Diego mandated the redistribution of wealth from the coffers of transnational firms to local employment and housing developments.⁴² Throughout California, the early calls for divestment were not only a response to the sensational images that emerged from the Southwest Townships of Johannesburg or the brutal lynching of Steve Biko. The conservative shifts in American political economy deepened the bond African Americans, and others, had with the independence struggles

⁴¹ James W. Rex, “South Africa,” *San Diego Union*, 2/1/79, B6.

⁴² Kelley, *Yo Mama’s Disfunktional*, 10.

in Southern Africa. Nia responded to this crisis in the most unexpected way. One understudied portion of the antiapartheid movement is the way that the divestment campaign “opened doors to labor that might have otherwise been shut.”⁴³ Since the 1977, Ken Msemaji, Fahari Jeffers, and other Nia-affiliates had grown close Cesar Chavez. Following the 1978 Kuzaliwa, Jeffers and Msemaji joined Chavez at the UFW headquarters in Keene, California. There Nia began the preparations to do the unthinkable, transitioning the Black nationalist Nia Cultural Organization into the nation’s first modern labor union for homecare employees, the United Domestic Workers of America (UDW). The UDW first began to organize workers in November 1978 and held their inaugural convention 29 April 1979. Msemaji was its president, Jeffers served as the vice president, and the former Kuumba intern Greg Akili was the union’s secretary-treasurer. Forty-percent of the UDW’s initial membership was Latino, 30 percent was African America, 20 percent was white, and ten percent was Asian.⁴⁴

International Police Terrorism: From South Africa to Southeast San Diego

Filmed in 1976 and released in 1979, Haile Gerima’s *Bush Mama* captures this moment of the *black global spatial imaginary*. *Bush Mama* follows the life of Dorothy, a Black South Los Angeles resident and alienated welfare recipient. Throughout the film, Dorothy endures the incarceration of her partner TC, an unemployed Vietnam veteran, the denigration of the welfare system, the harassment and deaths of her friends by local law enforcement, and the continued pressure by social workers to get an abortion or suffer the discontinuation of her aid. In the midst of her melancholy, Dorothy received

⁴³ Ibid, 119.

⁴⁴ Greg Ross, “Homemakers Union to Sign Its 1st Pact,” *San Diego Union*, 11/20/80.

inspiration from, what some might consider, two of the most unlikely places: TC's radical correspondence from prison and an African Liberation Day poster placed on Dorothy's wall by her daughter's friend Angi that depicts an Angolan woman holding her child in the left hand and a semiautomatic rifle in her right hand. Increasingly radicalized by the accelerating conditions in South Los Angeles and the inspirational African Liberation Day poster, much Zachariah in *Come Back, Africa*, Dorothy is propelled to an act of armed resistance as she kills a police officer attempting to sexually assault her daughter. As Daniel Widener has observed, *Bush Mama* is of primary significance "because it reflects the continuing problem of a police force bent on behaving as an army of occupation."⁴⁵ Gerima depicts the visual representation and soundscape of military counterinsurgency. African American men and women suffered from checkpoints, aerial surveillance, physical abuse, and extrajudicial killings. In *Bush Mama*, the violence of the postwar economy is another critical point of *solidarity-plus* as shared concerns over carcerality united Southern California and Southern Africa.

In 1975, the Southern African Support Committee was formed in Los Angeles. For the next fifteen years, the SASC was at the forefront of grassroots mobilization and consciousness raising in Southern California. Also in 1975, the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA) was founded, also in Los Angeles. A principle member of both these organizations was Michael Zinzun, a valiant former Black Panther whom the radical historian Mike Davis has characterized as the most phenomenal organizer he ever knew. In 1977, Zinzun was the spokesperson for The Committee to Stop the United-States

⁴⁵ Widener, 258.

South African Tennis Match, in response to the Davis Cup competition being held at the Newport Beach Tennis Club, April 15th through 17th.⁴⁶ At this event, where Zinzun organized a reported 2,000 protestors in opposition to not only the competition but also a South African cargo ship docked in San Pedro, Zinzun rushed the court in the middle of play in a boldly disruptive action.⁴⁷ In another event, Zinzun suffered a brutal assault from the Pasadena Police Department on 22 June 1986 that left him blinded in the left eye. Zinzun was eventually awarded \$3.8 million in damages for the assault.⁴⁸ Despite the immense public record, the intersections of antiapartheid and local campaigns against biased policing and mass incarceration has received limited attention by scholars. In Southern California alone, not just CAPA and the SASC but at every moment in the African Liberation Support struggle, activists keenly articulated the correlation between the carceralization of Southern California and the state-sponsored violence in Southern Africa. An analysis of information disseminated on Southern Africa and local protests against police brutality and mass incarceration displays the shared struggles against state violence.

Southern California's antiapartheid activists articulated a sharp assessment of the correlation between the restructuring of the global economy and its relationship to carceral state formation. Consider, once again, Gerima's *Bush Mama*. Gerima's intersectional analysis reveals the myriad ways carceralization enclosed Black bodies and foreclosed on the possibilities of Black futurity. As Dorothy represents the particularity

⁴⁶ "The Newswire: Major Leagues to Send All-Star Team to Cuba," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/12/77, D4.

⁴⁷ Deborah Hastings, "Activist Escalates His Anti-Police Campaign," *Los Angeles Times*, 8/21/86, SG A1. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 308-309.

⁴⁸ "Long Time Revolutionary Passes On," *ABCF Update* Issue 45, Fall 2006, p. 5.

of the Black woman's experience it is also clearly represents the universal struggle for Black liberation. As with the Soweto Uprising of 1976, Black children, born and unborn, were at the forefront of the struggle for Black survival. The SASC organized clothing drives for Zimbabwean refugee families.⁴⁹ In their January-February 1978 newsletter, the SASC chronicled the massacre of Zimbabwean refugee families that was carried out on November 24th and 25th of the previous year following a Rhodesian invasion of the Manica Province of Mozambique, the home of two refugee camps. The SASC reported that 105 refugees were slaughtered and over 600 people were injured. "Most of these were women and children (some less than one year old)," the SASC reported. Refugees had been shot while lying on the ground, defenseless. "A mass grave with the bodies of 26 girls (ages between 8 and 14) was also discovered," the SASC reported.⁵⁰

In recent decades, the discourse on mass incarceration and police killings has been dominated by a liberal concern over rising number of inmates. For many scholars, activists, and elected officials, the moment the American prison population exceeded one million in the fall of 1994 was demarcated the moment of crisis. The steepest inclines in prison rates being amongst Black men and Black women while the rates for white men and women largely remained flat.⁵¹ Anti-prison and anti-police brutality campaigns have been central to the Black Radical Tradition since chattel slavery. Nonetheless, in the late 1970s, Black and Latino Southern Californians mobilized against Proposition 7 and the reinstatement of capital punishment. In response to Democratic State Assemblyman

⁴⁹ "Clothing for Zimbabwe" SASC African Activist Archive

⁵⁰ "Rhodesian Army Slaughters Refugees," *SASC Newsletter* Vol. 9 (January-February 1978), p. 1. SASC African Activist Archive

⁵¹ Department of Justice, "State and Federal Prisons Report Record Growth During the Past 12 Months," 12/3/1995.

Peter Chacon's support for the death penalty's reinstatement, Ken Msemaji sent a correspondence to Chacon expressing the discontent of the Nia Cultural Organization for his decision. A nation with the history of racism and biased policing could never have the capital punishment fairly administered. "The death penalty is not a deterrent to crime.... The majority of crimes committed today are the result of the ineffectiveness and unwillingness of government, industry, and big business to provide adequate employment, housing, education, and health care to a large portion of the population."⁵² Antipartheid activists articulated a parity in American domestic and foreign policy towards Black death. In their analysis, activists identified what in this study is called *the necrosorcery of neoslavery*. Examining white supremacist *biopower*, political and cultural workers exposed the state's ability to kill Black people and destroy future generations in this instance, by controlling Black reproduction, limiting access to healthcare, and through mass incarceration—literally exterminating Black youth.⁵³

⁵² Ken Msemaji to Peter Chacon 6/9/77. Nia Cultural Organization Folder Baca Papers

⁵³ The concept of necrosorcery is informed by the writings of Achille Mbembe and Colin Dayan. Slavery and neoslavery is not only understood, historically and by its subjects, as a control of Black labor but also a control over Black life. From this develops the concept of necrosorcery. As antebellum slavery was posited by Orlando Patterson and others as a form of social death, "the expulsion from humanity," neoslavery has been offered by not just scholars but legal precedence as a civil death: "civiliter mortuus" (Ruffin v. The Commonwealth 1871). Mbembe writes that "slave life, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life... a person's humanity is dissolved to the point where it becomes possible to say that the slave's life is possessed by the master. Because the slave's life is like a 'thing,' possessed by another person, the slave existence appears as a perfect figure of a shadow" (Mbembe 2003, 20-21). It is this control of Black life and death that this essay is concerned with. Here, though, Mbembe's theorization is only partially informative. Yet in combination with Dayan's essay "Legal Slaves and Docile Bodies," we understand that slavery's power over the subject life is not only political but metaphysical. As well, it is generational. Dayan is concerned with the source that allocates to law the ability to both preserve and manipulate the spirit and the body. "The creation of an artificial entity, whether the civil body, the legal slave, or the felon rendered dead in law takes place in a world where the supernatural serves as the unacknowledged mechanism of justice," Dayan cites (Dayan 2002, 53-54). As with Dayan's examination of blood and genealogy, it is understood that the racialization and subsequent criminalization of Blackness was passed down generationally. During the colonial and antebellum periods Blackness marked one's offspring as slaves for life. However, neoslavery continues this precedent, what is also of concern is the way that the necropolitics has rendered Black people invisible—through removal from society and simultaneously from preventing those who are incarcerated from reproducing. This bewitching, the power over the born and the

In their response to the murder of South African Black Consciousness Movement leader Steve Biko on 12 September 1977, SASC protests and circular material directly connected police killings in South Africa to officer-involved killings in Los Angeles. Following years of a banning order, Biko was detained after he defied his magisterial district restriction and traveled towards Cape Town to meet with radical antiapartheid leadership there. For over twenty days, Biko was detained, held in a cold cell in the nude, and savagely beaten. After suffering three brain lesions and a brain hemorrhage on September 6th, Biko was later “rough-ridden” in a truck for 700 kilometers to a hospital. At the hospital, Biko died alone in a cell of massive organ failures. South African officials denied any wrongdoing despite over twenty people dying in their prisons that year.⁵⁴ The death of Biko was received with sympathy in the liberal elements of Western Democracy, nevertheless, there were few foreign policy changes. “Regardless of what doubletalking politicians say about ‘human rights’ and majority rule,” the real reason for Steve Biko’s death was American indifference and economic support of South Africa, the SASC reported.⁵⁵ The state violence in Southern Africa was in fact directly linked to the police killings of citizens in Southern California. Just two days after the Soweto Uprising and massacre, CAPA records show that the LAPD was called to help a mentally ill Black Vietnam Veteran named Anthony Brown on June 18th. Instead, the officer maneuvered on Brown’s home and fired tear gas into the residence. When Brown exited the home

unborn is the essence of what here is labeled necrosorcery. Joan Dayan "Legal Slaves and Docile Bodies" in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics* edited by Russ Castronovo and Dana Nelson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 53-94. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15 no. 1, (2003), 11-40.

⁵⁴ Wikipedia page.

⁵⁵ “What Does Southern Africa mean to Us?,” *Southern Africa Support Committee Newsletter* Vol. 8, November-December 1977, p. 4. SASC Records African Activists Archive

with a knife in his hand, the LAPD officers shot and killed Brown. In May 1977, an off-duty motel security officer shot Gregory Williams, an unarmed Black man and good Samaritan, in the face who attempted to intervene in the beating of another person. Williams was left to bleeding and to die for almost an hour. In August 1977, the LAPD shot Ron Berkholder, a naked man with his hands up, six times, killing him. Since 1978, the LAPD shot and killed 128 people, with 50 of them being African Americans. Though Blacks were only 18 percent of Los Angeles, they were over 40 percent of the casualties from officer-involved shootings.⁵⁶ Per capita, the LAPD, alone, was killing African Americans at a similar rate to South Africa.

The 93rd Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACOP) conference in Los Angeles reveals the material connections between the police killings of Black people from Southern California to Southern Africa. On 6 October 1977, LAPD Chief Edward Davis hosted over 7,000 law enforcement executive officers. Promoted as the largest gathering of police officers in the world, Davis welcomed officers from American-sponsored dictatorships like the Philippines, Pakistan, Chile and South Africa. “Clearly reveal[ing] the connections between police forces and multi-national corporations,” as Zinzun noted, over 400 American and British firms, including Motorola and General Electric, displayed armored vehicles, new fingerprinting and surveillance materials, as well as new weapons and ammunitions such as exploding bullets.⁵⁷ In response to the conference, the SASC and CAPA organized over a Third World coalition of 800 protestors that included students from Southern Africa, Iran, and the Philippines.

⁵⁶ Marshall Meyer, “Police Shootings at Minorities,” 103.

⁵⁷ “Hundreds march Against Police Conference,” SASC Newsletter Nov-Dec 1977

They held signs with slogans such as “End International Police Terrorism” and “Down with Imperialism.”⁵⁸ The private collection of Michael Zinzun reveals that he was deeply concerned with the development of aerial technology and weaponry, especially ammunition. LAPD Chief Ed Davis had promoted the expanded helicopter patrols as cost-efficient and effective. As well, the public debate over the adoption of hollow-point and flathead bullets amongst police forces filled popular and professional periodicals. Variations of this technology had been around since the 19th century but the wars in Southern Africa as well as the militarization of American police forces in the 1970s gave notoriety to the lethal ammunition. Interestingly, LAPD Chief Ed Davis opposed the ammunition as a danger to the public and the safety of officers. Yet, the former SWAT commander Darryl Gates, who succeeded Davis in 1978, was a fierce advocate of the bullets.⁵⁹

Mike Davis has elucidated the influence of the Vietnam War on the advancements in American policing and Gerald Horne has shown that those methods and technologies were adopted by Southern African security forces.⁶⁰ The United States provided military assistance to white regimes in Southern Africa and those regimes in return influenced the modernization of American policing, including in Southern California. American and Southern African gun-runners established international connections and smuggled weapons from the United States into Southern Africa. White Rhodesians and white South

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “LA Police’s All-Turbine Patrol” and Ed Davis, “Considerations on Hollow-point Ammunition,” *The Police Chief* (September 1975). Coalition Against Police Abuse Records. Box 11 Folder 6 Police Chief Edward Davis, 1971-1977. Lynn O’Shaughnessy, “Panel OKs Use of Hollow-Point Bullets by LAPD,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6/12/88.

⁶⁰ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 251-256. Horne, 218.

Africans created paramilitary units with names and tactics they learned from the United States.⁶¹ To bypass the restrictions on weapons trade with South Africa and Rhodesia, American corporations found a loophole by shipping deconstructed aircrafts to nation such as Israel and Italy then sold to Rhodesian and South African businesses. Moreover, American aerospace disinvested from the development of American urban centers while they increased their Southern African operations. The Burbank, California-based Lockheed was amongst the leading exporter to Southern Africa. In 1979, twelve Aermach-Lockheed Trojans-AL60-C4 were in Rhodesia.⁶² Assembled in Germany, Lockheed F-104G Starfighters were in South Africa.⁶³ As well, the Lockheed C-130 Hercules cargo airplane operated in South Africa and transporting supplies to the Smith government in Rhodesia with the actual blessing of the American government—no loopholes were needed for this.⁶⁴

Conversely, weapons and methods used by South African and Rhodesian regular and irregular forces influenced the militarization of Southern Californian police agencies. The Uzi and Armsel Striker riot shotgun were first used in Southern Africa by Rhodesian and South African forces and such small arms were eventually adopted by American patrol officers and SWAT teams. Rhodesian Mike Rousseau, while serving as a mercenary for the Portuguese forces in the Mozambican war for independence, developed what became known as the “Mozambique Drill” or the “Failure Drill.” This is a close-combat maneuver where the gunman delivers two bullets to the body and one to head of

⁶¹ Horne, 218.

⁶² Horne, 218.

⁶³ United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 10.

⁶⁴ Horne, 220. UN Centre Against Apartheid.

an enemy. Forming a friendship with the US Marine Corps Colonel Jeff Cooper, Rousseau taught Cooper the maneuver. In 1980, Cooper taught LAPD officers Larry Mudgett and John Helms the Mozambique Drill as a part of the 250 Pistol Course at the Gunsite Academy in Arizona.⁶⁵ The transnational police culture between Southern California and Southern Africa pleads for a deeper study. Nevertheless, the record presented here uncovers a material and ideological bond between Southern California and Southern African police agencies. In San Diego, an unnamed Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) officer with relatives in the South African and Rhodesian military was quoted as saying, “anyone who hated niggers was alright in his book”—in reference to the allegedly racist officer Donovan Jacobs.⁶⁶ In 1989, Black LAPD officers reported that white officers were wearing swastika rings while on duty and informed their superiors of two white homicide detectives who placed a South Africa badge on their vehicle as they patrolled predominantly Black areas of South Los Angeles.⁶⁷

In both Los Angeles and San Diego, African liberation support organizations mobilized against locally against this international culture of police violence. In 1978, Nia, the Black Federation, the CCR, a local chapter of the African Liberation Support Committee and the National Coalition to Support African Liberation (NCSAL) were among a host of organizations to form the Coalition for Freedom and Justice in response to the May 30th killing of Tyrone Thomas, and unarmed Black man, by San Diego police officer Frank Christensen. After reportedly “fitting the description” of a burglary

⁶⁵ Sherriff Jim Wilson, “Failure Drill,” *Shooting Illustrated*, 11/10/2011.

⁶⁶ George Flynn, “Surprise witnesses raise questions in Penn trial,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 4/25/86, A1

⁶⁷ Andrea Ford, “LAPD Investigates Placing of South Africa Badge on Police Car,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/12/89, p. 147. Andrea Ford, “LAPD Begins Probe of 2 Detectives Who Had S. Africa Emblem on Car,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8/23/89, A1.

suspect, Christensen chased Thomas, first by car and then by foot. Christensen said he attempted to bludgeon Thomas with the butt of his service revolver and his weapon discharged, shooting Thomas in the head and killing him.⁶⁸ It appears that Thomas was merely a hitchhiker in the car he fled from. Two weeks after Thomas' death, the San Diego Chief Deputy District Attorney Richard Huffman announced that it would not file charges against Christensen, despite admitting that Christensen could have been eligible for involuntary manslaughter charges and subsequently disallowing officers from using pistols as clubs as well as the chokehold.⁶⁹

Considering that fact that members of Freedom and Justice Coalition such as Msemaji, Sukumu, Baca, and Akili were also at the head of their organization's African liberation struggles, as well two explicit African solidarity organizations helped organize against the killing of Thomas, activists linked the killing of Thomas with the struggles in Southern Africa. A poem presented by local educator and activist Ernest McCray at a public forum on the Thomas killing expressed the Third Worldism imbedded in San Diego's radical politics as he criticized police brutality as a part of a universal system of oppression to all people of color and white radicals. McCray highlighted the contradictions between American notions of freedom and the persistence of police brutality.⁷⁰ While the members of the ALSC and the NCSAL are not on record of

⁶⁸ Jack Jones, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/8/78, pg. SD A8. Ed Sylvester, "DA Won't File Charges on Policeman in Fatal Scuffle," *Los Angeles Times*, 6/13/79, p. SD A1. Richard Paddock, "Panel Recommends Revised Weapons Policy for SD Police," 3/8/79, *Los Angeles Times*, p. SD A7. Robert Welkos, "SDPD Denies It Hid Facts in '76 Choke-Hold Case," *Los Angeles Times*, p. SD A1, Ted Vollmer, "SD Police-Related Shootings Show Marked Decline," *Los Angeles Times*, SD A1. Ted Vollmer, "US Attorney Probes Shooting By Policeman: Interviews Witnesses to the Slaying of Burglary Suspect at Request of Family," *Los Angeles Times*, C4.

⁶⁹ Ed Sylvester, "D.A. Won't File Charges on Policeman in Fatal Scuffle," *Los Angeles Times* 6/13/78, SD A1.

⁷⁰ "A Gathering of the Community" TYRONE THOMAS FOLDER

making explicit links between Southern Africa and Southern California, their presence as organizers clearly implies that this ever-presence of internationalism was generally common. The work of the ALSC was well-established however, the short-lived NCSAL organized for the liberation of African American political prisoners by drawing links between Biko and the Wilmington 10, they protested the Bakke Decision, and they held African Liberation Day events.⁷¹ While the coalition was successful in forcing a federal probe into the case, the Justice Department also refused to prosecute Christensen.

In Los Angeles, CAPA, SASC, and the ALSC mobilized against police brutality and in support of African liberation. There is no more an iconic case than the killing Eula Mae Love by the Los Angeles Police Department officers on 3 January 1979, at the Love home over an unpaid \$22 gas bill. In a truly surreal statement, it's been recorded that officers feared Love might throw the knife at them. Despite the skill and precision, it would take to kill the officers from long distance with a knife, officers nonetheless shot Love to death.⁷² Love was only one of dozens of the many scores of people killed by the police in Southern California that year. In 1979, San Diego itself had a record year for officer-involved shootings. As Robin Kelley notes, African Americans in Southern California did not only mobilize against the shootings, they also opposed the deadly chokeholds that caused dozens of deaths in the 1980s. None was higher profiled than the June 1981 death of the California State University Long Beach running back Ron Settles at the hands of the local police department of the city of Signal Hill, an extremely small oil rich independent enclave in the center of Long Beach. Pulled over for a traffic

⁷¹ African Liberation Day 78. Inkworks Press Poster Archive. African Activist Archive

⁷² Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 184. Cross 322.

incident, Settles was savagely beaten and choked to death by Signal Hill police officers who subsequently tried to cover up the death as a suicide and blame it on Settles' physiology and drug abuse. Attorneys even attempted to link a college essay Settles wrote on Stackolee as justification of the purported homicide.⁷³ LAPD Police Chief Darryl Gates famously quipped that Black people died from the chokeholds because their "veins and arteries do not open up as fast as they do on *normal people*."⁷⁴ The methods of killing and the racial pseudoscientific justifications for the deaths of Black Southern Californians were reminiscent of the discourse on Black death in Southern Africa. Practically no Black Southern Californian was untouched by the harassment, abuse, and killings of state violence in the late 1970s. Black support for law enforcement fell to record lows. In Long Beach for example, Black trust in the Long Beach police was already a low 17% in 1983.⁷⁵ These conditions produced resistance. In the context of antiapartheid activism and the global culture of white supremacy embraced by many in Southern California law enforcement agencies, the case of Sagon Penn, for many, has been understood as a local phase of African resistance directly linked to the global revolutionary movements of the mid-1980s.

Vernon Sukumu, the executive director of the Black Federation and founding member of San Diego's Community Patrol Against Police Brutality in 1967, led the Sagon Penn Defense Committee and organized a defense fund in his support. Penn stood trial for killing San Diego Police Officer Tom Riggs and wounding his partner Donovan

⁷³ Judith Cummings, "SUIT OVER FOOTBALL PLAYER'S DEATH IN COAST JAIL SETTLED FOR \$1 MILLION," *New York Times*, 1/14/83.

⁷⁴ *Race Rebels*, 184.

⁷⁵ Cynthia Kirkwood, "Fear, distrust hinder central city's war on crime," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, 13 January 1983.

Jacobs and their ride-along Sarah Pina-Ruiz, whom allegedly was having an affair with Riggs. On the afternoon on 31 March 1985, Penn, his brother, and other passengers, were pulled over after being described by Riggs as a “truckload of Crips” though none had gang affiliations.⁷⁶ Witnesses noted that Jacobs told Penn, “You think you’re bad, nigger.... I’m going to beat your Black ass.”⁷⁷ Despite complying with the officers, Penn was subsequently beaten by Jacobs and Riggs. A martial arts expert, Penn was able to block most of the blows that Jacobs and Riggs distributed, obtain Jacob’s revolver and shoot the three.⁷⁸ The case of Sagon Penn was unusual on many levels because unlike many of the brutality victims, Penn survived and dozens of witnesses corroborated the claims of Penn and his brother. Also, as Sukumu noted, “Sagon is so straight that he is the kind of young man whom every father would want to have his daughter take to the prom. Sagon is the type who stops fights, not starts them.”⁷⁹ Sukumu noted that if Penn had been a gang member, many in the public would not care.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Genetic Disorder article

⁷⁷ Allan Grady, “Attempt to Victimize Sagon Penn Continues,” *The Militant* Vol. 50 No. 29, 7/25/86, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Genetic Disorder article

⁷⁹ Terry L. Colvin, “Suspect was beaten, friends say,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 4/2/85, A1.

⁸⁰ Ann Levin, “Penn: Killer or Martyr? —Publicity Barrage Seen for Trial,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 1/23/86, A1.



Figure 38 Sagon Penn Defense Committee Rally at Lincoln High School (Vernon Sukumu Private Collection)

The long history of police brutality in Southern California and the international struggle against apartheid elevated the Penn case to international prominence. The Sagon Penn Defense Committee and the Sagon Penn Defense Fund, administered by the Black Federation, successfully raised the \$25,000 bail bonds fee and organized public rallies in support of Penn that drew support from the community and the local campuses. The defense committee was able to lobby the support of notable people like Ron Dellums, Muhammad Ali, Maxine Waters, and Angela Davis. Activist and cultural worker Makeda Dread (Cheatom) organized a benefit concert for Penn. At the public rallies, diverse groupings of protestors drew a direct connection between biased policing in Southern California and South African apartheid policies. The International Committee Against Racism (InCAR), an arm of the Progressive Labor Party, passed out literature on “How to Fight Apartheid in South Africa and the USA.”⁸¹

⁸¹ R. Andrew Rathbone, “Speakers at rally denounce police,” *Daily Aztec*, 10/18/85, p. 1.

At an SDSU rally, graduate student Dan Smith stated, “If we look at Sagon’s case, we have a black man who was trying to defend himself against a brutal attack by two San Diego Police Department members. Not South African police, but San Diego Police Department members who were beating this man because he might have been a little slow in giving them his ID. Thousands of black South Africans are in jail right now for not having proper passes required to travel in their own country.”⁸² The Penn case happened amidst the largest student protests since the 1960s and a survey of the student newspapers at local San Diego campuses reveals that even when South Africa was not directly cited in the articles about Penn, updates on the case were surrounded by articles and images of antiapartheid protests. In August 1985, the Sagon Penn Defense Committee held a fundraiser entitled “Human Rights: From South Africa to Southeast San Diego” at the Radisson Hotel attended by over 100 people including Ali that raised over \$5,000.⁸³ At the 16 August 1986 rally staged by the Sagon Penn Defense Committee, acute links with South Africa emerged with one of the speakers Scott Daugherty. Daugherty, a 19-year-old San Diego native, Humboldt State student, and admirer of Desmond Tutu had recently been jailed in South Africa.⁸⁴ At the August 16th rally, Daugherty brought direct correspondence from Beyers Naude, the South African Council of Churches Secretary General, stating: “Dr. Naude said they fully support Sagon Penn and extend him and his

⁸² R. Andrew Rathbone, “Speakers at rally denounce police,” *Daily Aztec*, 10/18/85, p. 1.

⁸³ Preston Turegano, “Reception, dinner raise \$5,000 for Sagon Penn’s defense fund,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 8/5/85, B3.

⁸⁴ HG Reza, “Jailed Student an Admirer of Bishop Tutu: San Diego Man Arrested in Raid on South African Church,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6/17/86.

supporters their love and prayers. He believes Sagon Penn is a victim of extreme racism.”⁸⁵

After two trials, Penn was acquitted in a second trial on 10 June 1987. Penn’s successful defense Penn’s trial victory was the result of twenty years of antipolice brutality activism in Southern California as well as the decades of African liberation support. The national and local political economy of the 1970s and 1980s united Southern California and Southern Africa. Southern California and Southern Africa were also conjoined through the competing racial imaginaries, one antiracist worldview and the other a white supremacist international vision. Southern California’s transnational firms financed and equipped white supremacist regimes in Southern Africa, its police forces trained people in these regimes, and in return, local police officers appropriated the tactics and weaponry of these Southern African regimes. Very early on, the *black global spatial imaginary* witnessed the transnational systems of white supremacy that linked Southern California and Southern Africa as well. In Los Angeles, CAPA and the SASC overlapped in membership and direct action. In San Diego, the multiple coalitions that the Nia Cultural Organization and Black Federation spearheaded should be understood as relational campaigns and not independently. The African Liberation Support Committee and National Coalition to Support African Liberation helped organize against what have often been understood as local antipolice brutality cases. There is even evidence that freedom fighters in Southern African were in solidarity with African American struggles against white supremacy in Southern California. Penn’s acts of self-defense elevated him

⁸⁵ Jeannie Wong, “Penn backers stage a rally,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 8/17/86, B4.

to the status of a folk hero in San Diego, and his case still garners international attention. In this instance, Sagon Penn was Gerima's Dorothy, an everyday person whose act of revolutionary violence embodied the global liberation struggles. Cultural workers and antipolice brutality activists commonly recall the Penn case as a moment of victory. Yet, like all examples of African liberation, there is always a counterrevolution. For the next 15 years, Penn was tormented by San Diego-area law enforcement, suffered severe depressions, and subsequently committed suicide in July 2002. Likewise, Black Southern Californians also had many economic and political struggles ahead of them as the local police continued to militarize and the state prison population grew to exceed most nations.

Sold Out to Apartheid: Unity in Action and the Cultural Boycott

In October 1983, the UN's Special Committee Against Apartheid published a list of entertainers who had violated the boycott by performing in South Africa. In many ways, the cultural boycott of South Africa represented the one of the most effective terrains of struggle in the solidarity struggle against apartheid. The cultural boycott disrupted the economies of Southern California and South African economy by attacking revenue from tourism and the creative industries. The most memorable arena of the cultural boycott was the Sun City protest but, in fact, the cultural and sports boycotts of South Africa dated back to the 1960s. In many ways, the cultural boycott began with the self-exile of South African musicians and entertainers and there was no fiercer and advocate for the sports boycott than South African poet and former political prisoner Dennis Brutus. With the South African apartheid regime as its backdrop, the rightward restructuring of Southern California's political economy, and the carceralization of its

public space, the cultural boycott exposed the local and international contradictions of race, class, and representation that linked racial formation in Southern California and Southern Africa. Considering two major efforts—the public protests of entertainers who performed in South Africa and the protest of the miniseries *Shaka Zulu*—this section argues that, just like transnational capital, mass incarceration and police killings, and other issues, cultural politics were as significant a terrain of African liberation struggle. With the cultural boycott, antiapartheid activists exposed the contradictions of race and class that united Southern California and Southern Africa. This campaign was led by Unity in Action (UIA). Some of the fiercest actions were against Black entertainers, not whites whose transnational popularity obscured the severe alienation of everyday Black people in the United States and Southern Africa.

From 1982 to 1990, the antiapartheid coalition Unity in Action were the vanguard of the cultural boycott in Southern California. UIA was formed as a response to the African National Congress declaration of 1982 the “Year of Unity in Action” as they noted that the only path towards true unity was in conjoined struggle on the battlefield. In New York, Elombe Brath of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition answered this call, establishing the Unity in Action Network in New York and the Los Angeles UIA soon followed; a closely aligned committee led by the Biko Rodney Malcolm Coalition also existed in Toronto, Canada.⁸⁶ In Los Angeles, the alliance was headed by Ron “Brother Crook” Wilkins of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, a revolutionary pan-Africanist organization with chapters in Los Angeles and New York. A former Slauson gang

⁸⁶ Ron Wilkins, “Unity in Action: Towards a Program to End Cultural Collaboration with the Apartheid Regime in South Africa,” 10/10/83. Wilkins, “Final Paper.” Ron Wilkins Private Collection. African Activists Archive

member turned grassroots activist, Wilkins had been a founding member of the South Los Angeles-based Community Alert Patrol, the pioneers of antipolice brutality that influenced the formation of the Black Panther Party, and Wilkins had been a founder of the SNCC West Coast chapter.

The Los Angeles UIA consisted of the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, the Southern African Support Committee, the Southern Africa Resource Project, and the Southern Africa Task Force. “The name Unity in Action has implied a joining together to carry out a serious program of work toward the elimination of apartheid,” Wilkins wrote. Promoting collective struggle and African liberation, the UIA aimed to challenge sectarianism. By 1983, the UIA became explicitly pan-Africanist and anticapitalist ideologically. Also, UIA drew inspiration from Maurice Bishop’s New Jewel Movement in Grenada and supported the revolutionary regimes in Libya and Zimbabwe. The remarkability of the antiapartheid movement’s effectiveness was in its ability to mobilize a broad political spectrum. In this sense, Unity in Action diverted from that aspect of antiapartheid activism and instead assumed a much more advanced position in the struggle. Their criticism and activism, at times, placed them at odds with even the popular mainstream activists and organizations. Nevertheless, this difference also permitted the UIA to effectively influence radical change in the antiapartheid movement. The UIA operated many of its events from the Black Employees Association office and they eventually sought to organize “LA’s Black working class, which includes a cross section of blue collar and professional workers, students, and the unemployed.”⁸⁷ The

⁸⁷ Ron Wilkins, “Unity in Action: Towards a Program to End Cultural Collaboration with the Apartheid Regime in South Africa,” 10/10/83. Wilkins, “Final Paper.” Ron Wilkins Private Collection. African Activists Archive

cultural boycott, was therefore a strategic and materialist engagement. The artists were targeted by the UIA because of their international notoriety. “We are all aware of how greatly images and trends depicted on television influence public opinion. This is especially true for Black people, in media because, for better or worse, the media has turned our leaders into celebrities and our celebrities into leaders,” Wilkins wrote.⁸⁸ The cultural boycott led by Unity in Action challenged the representational politics championed by many mainstreamed elements of Black Power ideology that had many people content with merely seeing “Black faces in high places.” The UIA compelled artists and entertainers to not only honor the boycott but become active members of the boycott. This is significant because Los Angeles and Southern California represented such stark contradictions in the public representation of Blackness.

From Los Angeles to San Diego, Black images were the public face of progress and civic pride. Los Angeles was the home to the newly relocated Los Angeles Raiders who won a Super Bowl championship in only their second season in the Southland (1983). The Los Angeles Lakers, powered by their greats Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, James Worthy, and Magic Johnson sat at the top of basketball as the most dominate trio in the history of the game with the franchise appearing in eight NBA Finals tournaments, winning five of them during the 1980s. The home of the 1984 Olympiad, Los Angeles was the home of many of the most dominant Olympians. The San Diego Padres and the Los Angeles Dodgers both had successful and racially diverse franchises. Fernando Mania in Chavez Ravine led to two World Series victories (1981 and 1988) and the Long

⁸⁸ Wilkins, “Towards a Program,” p. 2.

Beach-native Tony Gwynn powering the Padres to a World Series appearance in 1984. Los Angeles was the home to some of the most diverse television shows in history and the most vibrant acts the music industry—and there was no bigger name than Michael Jackson. Possibly the largest image of them all was Mayor Tom Bradley. However, this thinly obscured another Southern California popular culture obsession in the 1980s, gang proliferation and the crack cocaine epidemic. Multiple televised investigative reports into the Crips and Bloods filled the airwaves and periodical columns in the 1980s which undoubtedly led to the establishment of two long-running television series *America's Most Wanted* and *Cops* which sold the viewing public on age-old notions of Black criminality. Combined with the prominent images of Black upward mobility in entertainment and politics, these crime stories reinforced the culture of poverty narrative that blamed the Black poor for their predicament giving a new meaning to Los Angeles Noir. Concurrently, violation of the cultural boycott by American entertainers including very prominent Black performers combined with the theoretical enfranchisement of South African Coloured and Indian citizens in 1983 sought to divide those communities from the Black masses.

Even before the creation of Unity in Action, Wilkins and the PLC protested the tour of the popular South African musical *Ipi-Tombi* in 1980. Written by the white South African Bertha Egnos and produced by Don Hughes, the ensemble represented an admittedly non-political fairytale about a Zulu man who leaves his village and matron to work in the Johannesburg mines only to return to the village to find love and happiness. Protestors argued that the play rendered South African natives rural and unprepared for

self-government.⁸⁹ As historian Robert Trent Vinson has shown, the image of the “semicivilized” and rural South African Native had been a cornerstone of exclusionary and paternalistic policies.⁹⁰ Instead, the following month, the PLC aired the film *Remember Kassinga* chronicling the 1978 massacre committed by the South African army in Namibia.⁹¹ *Remember Kassinga* underscored radical antiapartheid activists interests in cultural productions which exposed the violence of the South African state and presented the modern struggles for self-determination in South Africa.

The cultural boycott, therefore, stood in stark contrast to the neoliberal multiculturalist visions of African and African American relations embodied in the policies of Mayor Tom Bradley represented. In 1978, Bradley established the Task Force for Africa/Los Angeles Relations. Between 1978 and 1989, the task force aimed to establish cultural and economic exchange between Southern California’s Black middle class and African nations. The task force facilitated student exchanges and organized cultural expositions. In 1981, the task force organized the “Treasures of Ancient Nigeria: Legacy of 2000 Years” exhibit where they displayed a variety of forms of visual culture from the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zaire (the Democratic Republic of the Congo); with dozens of artifacts from early modern Africa.⁹² Yet, the hallmark of the task force was its investment of hundreds of thousands of public dollars into programs sought to spur trade relationships and African American investment into African nations—many of them brutal dictatorships like Zaire and Nigeria. In 1984, Bradley heralded his

⁸⁹ Dan Sullivan, “PROTESTERS VS. 'IPI-TOMBI'--WHO WON?,” *Los Angeles Times*, 7/6/80, O1.

⁹⁰ Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming!: Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 104 and 112.

⁹¹ “Film Shows Brutality,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 8/7/80, A3.

⁹² Josine Ianco-Starrels, “Art News: USC Showcases Portraits, Africa,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10/25/81, L86.

negotiation of a deal that for three million dollars of timber contracts from West African nations. Another venture that Bradley facilitated was increased trade relations between a Southern California cosmetics firm and African nations. The task force, was not intended to play a role in the divestment campaign and Bradley took very few steps, before 1985, to oppose South Africa.⁹³ To be fair, Bradley had voiced his disapproval for South Africa but he had not placed his political capital on the line.⁹⁴ In fact, in 1982, during his gubernatorial run, Bradley attended the grand opening of the South African Consulate in Beverly Hills and subsequently awarded the South African Consul General Sean Cleary with a Key to the City. Bradley later admitted that he expressed his ambivalence to his staff about the event yet, Bradley was photographed smiling as he handed Cleary the award. Regardless of Bradley's own reservation, as TransAfrica head Randall Robinson and also Wilkins noted, the image of Bradley and Cleary became an essential propaganda tool for Pretoria and "was included in every South African publication sent around the world."⁹⁵

The South African government was in the middle of a process of rebranding its society in the public's eye and Hollywood was one of their propaganda mechanisms. Pretoria tolled hundreds of millions of dollars attracting American and African-descended athletes and entertainers to its nation and adopted the Tricameral Parliament following its constitutional reforms of 1983 which enfranchised all South African Coloureds and Asians. With the establishment of the Beverly Hills consulate, antiapartheid activists

⁹³ Margaret A. Novicki, "Tom Bradley, Mayor of Los Angeles," *Africa Report* Vol. 29 No. 3, 5/1/84, pp. 17-18.

⁹⁴ In 1981, Bradley had spoken in opposition to the South African Rugby Team.

⁹⁵ "Press Statement: Unity in Action Pickets Mayor Bradley." Ron Wilkins Private Collection. CITE THE OTHER DOCUMENTS HERE TO.

believed that Pretoria had begun to lobby for the reentry into the Olympics. Bradley had become a pawn in their game. “It is ironic that while fascist South Africa has been barred from the Olympics since 1970, Tom Bradley has seen fit to graciously welcome its consulate to LA—the site of the 1984 Olympic Games,” Wilkins stated.⁹⁶ Many of Bradley’s comments about South African reentry into the Olympics had been opaque. In 1983 UIA was a part of a coalition of organizations that stood in opposition to South Africa’s reentry efforts, the Ad Hoc Committee to Keep South Africa Out of the Olympics. Of its many members, this committee included Elliot Barker of UIA, Maxine Waters, Randall Robinson, Dennis Brutus, and Michigan State University Athletic Director Frank Beeman. African Activist Association and UCLA graduate student Robin Kelley chaired the Ad Hoc Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee lobbied city hall and the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) as well as organized direct actions. Even while South Africa officially ended their bid for reentry into the 1984 games in March of that year, the Ad Hoc Committee used the Olympic games to simultaneously oppose apartheid, the Reagan policy of “constructive engagement” with South Africa, and to oppose neoliberal economic policies.⁹⁷ On 5 August 1984, Ad Hoc Committee members joined ten thousand protestors in the Survivalfest 84 march through downtown Los Angeles and a week later, the committee organized a much smaller yet intense protest in front of the South African consulate in Beverly Hills.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ UIA 10/83 pamphlet. Wilkins Collection.

⁹⁷ Offered as an alternative to the boycott, divestment, and sanctions, the Reagan Administration proposed a policy of constructive engagement with South Africa. Driven by American Cold War goals, Reagan’s Administration argued that gradual engagement with South Africa was the best route towards social reform.

⁹⁸ Ad Hoc Committee to Keep South Africa Out of the Olympics Correspondence 12/26/83. Carol B. Thompson and Bud Day Papers on Southern Africa, Michigan State University Libraries Special

In December 1984, Unity in Action publicly opposed the NAACP's Image Awards and a month later in January 1985, UIA protested the Spingarn Medal ceremony. As American Studies professor Jenny Woodley has noted, since the release of DW Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, the NAACP had maintained a cultural struggle for civil rights in the United States. Since the great WEB Du Bois was at the helm of the *Crisis*, the NAACP challenged the cultural representations of Blackness while promoting and rewarding prominent Black figures and people who contributed to the promotion of positive Black images. Beginning in 1915, the NAACP has awarded the Spingarn Medal in honor of outstanding achievement by an African American. In 1967, the NAACP Image Awards first honored the achievements of Black cultural workers.⁹⁹ In 1984, Tina Turner and Danniebelle Hall had been nominated for Image Awards and Bob Hope had been named an Honorary Chairperson of the December proceedings despite all three of the performers being on the list of entertainers who had performed in South Africa, despite the cultural boycott. In the recent years, many prominent entertainers such as Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and Stephanie Mills had either performed or been nominated for Image Awards. In 1983, Bradley was an honorary committee member. As well, Bradley had been named the recipient of the Spingarn Medal. Unity in Action's pressure forced the Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP to rescind the nominations of Hall and Turner as well as Hope's honorary chairpersonship. In likely response to the pressure, the Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Bishop Desmond Tutu was honored with the

Collections. African Activist Archive. Kelley, *Yo Mama's Disfunktional*, 79. Kelley, "Our South African Freedom Dreams," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* Vol. 38 No. 1 (2014), 241.

⁹⁹ Jenny Woodley, "Conclusion: 'The true picture of America,'" in *Art for Equality: The NAACP's Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2014), 194-201.

Stevie Wonder Key of Life award the Image Awards. Wilkins and the UIA had appealed directly to Bishop Tutu for his support. Out of respect for Bishop Tutu, UIA scuttled its planned demonstration of the December ceremony.¹⁰⁰ Yet, despite opposition from many antiapartheid activists and allies such as California Assemblywoman Maxine Waters, UIA publicly remonstrated Bradley at the Spingarn Medal ceremony on 24 January 1985.¹⁰¹ UIA was not successful in overturning Bradley's honor. Instead, UIA accomplished a much more important feat. That January Bradley moved towards a much more aggressive position against apartheid—Bradley eventually forwarded a plan to pull Los Angeles pension funds out of companies tied to South Africa as well as banks who traded in Krugerrands.¹⁰²



Figure 39 Unity in Action members. Wilkins is second from the left in the back. (African Activist Archive)

¹⁰⁰ For Immediate Release 12/3/84. UIA Tutu letter

¹⁰¹ Apartheid Foes to Picket Fete for Bradley, 1/18/85. Wilkins Private Collection. African Activists Archive

¹⁰² Jonathan Freeman, "Sun City and the Sounds of Liberation: Cultural Resistance for Social Justice in Apartheid South Africa," UCLA MA African American Studies Thesis 2014 10.

Unity in Action also launched an offensive against the film industry. In contrast to their strategy against entertainers, UIA focused much of their efforts on the production companies and financial support for films that either violated the cultural boycott or sought to undercut the self-determination of African natives. As with their protests against the South African-produced miniseries *Shaka Zulu* (1986), the position taken by UIA and their allies, such as the Coalition Against Black Exploitation (CABE), conflicted with the general perception of the Black viewing public but their positions were nevertheless aligned with the African National Congress. Unity in Action took direction from the ANC positions and on several of their flyers printed the insignia of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). On 11 October 1985, UIA organized a public forum on the liberation struggles in South Africa, Angola, and Namibia at the Black Employees Association in the Crenshaw District. Organized as a part of the International Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, UIA aired the film *Generations of Resistance* (1979) by the radical documentarian Peter Davis.¹⁰³ A popular political education tool, *Generations of Resistance* spotlighted Black resistance and leadership in the long struggle for independence from colonial and apartheid government in South Africa. *Generations of Resistance* paled in comparison to the production value of *Shaka Zulu* that Davis admits “is an accomplished work of cinema.”¹⁰⁴ Davis argues that *Shaka Zulu* could be best described as an American Western film that presented the heroic Shaka in the impeccable figure of Zulu actor Henry Cele—which explains why posters from the film “hung over the beds of thousands

¹⁰³ UIA *Generations of Resistance* flyer

¹⁰⁴ Peter Davis, *In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema's South Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996), 184.

of young boys.”¹⁰⁵ *Shaka Zulu* had a largely African cast and White South African director William Faure unapologetically appealed to Black middle class representational politics as he flew Cele to the United States to join the promotional tour. Nevertheless, Unity in Action and their allies aggressively protested *Shaka Zulu*.

Produced with the financial backing of Pretoria, the ANC boycotted the film in South Africa and UIA protested the film in Southern California. *Shaka Zulu* presents Shaka an effective leader. However, as Davis notes, the film was far more about the presentation of the magnificent body of Shaka, embodied by Cele, than by the intellect of the Zulu patriarch. In fact, as Wilkins protested, the series maintained 2.5 million dollars of financial support from the government-run South African Broadcasting Company (SABC).¹⁰⁶ A revisiting of the *Ipi-Tombi* protests, the resistance to *Shaka Zulu* regarded the film’s projection of the leadership qualities and the humanity of South African Natives. Beyond the beautiful production value, Shaka was largely presented as a vindictive and increasingly maddening individual reliant on the material and intellectual support of white civilization to survive—literally. The story was narrated by Henry Francis Fynn an Englishman whom instead Faure portrays as a doctor responsible for saving Shaka’s life. In fact, the actual Fynn was a trader and not a doctor. Faure’s film thus obscures the settler colonialism’s overdetermination of South African political events and instead offers a paternalistic account of white-Black relations in Southern Africa. Davis notes: “The lesson to be learned from this might have been that South Africa still needed law and order to stop the country from falling apart” as it had done

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 181.

¹⁰⁶ Victor Valle, “BLACK GROUPS STEP UP ‘ZULU’ ATTACKS,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12/2/86, H8.

after the assassination of Shaka.¹⁰⁷ As Wilkins remarked, the essential narrative in *Shaka Zulu* suggested “if it were not for white intrusion [into South Africa], the land would have stayed in savagery.”¹⁰⁸ UIA and CIBE launched a series of protests against Los Angeles’ KCOP studios in Hollywood that spanned several months from late 1986 to 1987. Dismissing the criticism, the KCOP station manager Rick Feldman stated: “The truth of the matter is that it didn’t show blacks as incapable of ruling themselves, it showed one of their most brilliant leaders in history. It showed blacks as they were 2,000 years ago. This has nothing to do with South Africa today.”¹⁰⁹ Feldman was ostensibly remiss to the fact that Shaka’s death was little over 150 years in the recent past and fundamental to the formation of modern South African society. Reclamation of the historic narrative of Shaka had been foundational to the counterdiscourse of South African literature and expressive culture going back to the New African Movement. Faure’s fictional account did not engage that literary tradition, nor did activists demand it. Instead, Faure’s tale was a product of the *global white spatial imaginary* which at best presented Shaka as a noble savage.

Presenting a radical counterculture to Southern California’s cultural industry, Unity in Action weaponized humor and imagination in their protests. UIA described the entertainers who visited South Africa as “cultural mercenaries.” In its September 1985 protest of Shirley Bassey, the UIA wrapped their flyer with a banner that read “Sold Out to Apartheid.” In the 1986 and 1987 protests of Ray Charles, a serial offender of the cultural boycott, the flyer and some of the picket signs read, “Hit the road, Ray, and don’t

¹⁰⁷ Peter Davis, 182.

¹⁰⁸ Valle, “Black Groups.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

cha come back no more!” making a direct reference to Charles’ famous song “Hit the Road Jack.” As well, the UIA published the addresses of stars who had appeared in South Africa and distributed them to the public. In doing so, UIA activists subverted the star culture of Southern California which simultaneously brought fame, notoriety, and fortune to popular entertainers. Concurrently, the highly-controlled images of these entertainers provided them a level of anonymity in which their personal beliefs and practices were rarely questioned. By publishing the address of these entertainers that had violated the cultural boycott, the UIA reimagined the celebrity homes tours and the “star maps” culture that publicized the addresses of popular entertainers.

The UIA used a variety of creative means to place pressure on entertainers to consent to the cultural boycott. UIA obtained and distributed the personal addresses of artists and entertainers. In a December 1985 correspondence with Amer Araim from the Centre Against Apartheid in New York, Wilkins shared the home addresses of Linda Ronstadt, Frank Sinatra, Danniebelle Hall, and Ray Charles, a serial offender of the cultural boycott. UIA protested concerts and even the Grammys. If Unity in Action was unable to directly contact performers, they contacted the managers by obtaining their information through the variety of entertainer guilds.¹¹⁰ UIA strategy prefaced the crucial strategies and tactics that would be used by labor organizers in Southern California in the coming decades where movements such as Justice for Janitors and the Korean Immigrants Workers Alliance targeted the homes and churches of oppressive business

¹¹⁰ Correspondence to Amer Araim 12/21/85.

owners.¹¹¹ As Wilkins noted, “LA’s distinction as a primary entertainment, film, and record producing center makes it ideal for cultural boycott activity.” The strong presence of an independent Black press in Los Angeles also aided the UIA and the Cultural Boycott. The radio station KJLH and the *Sentinel*, Los Angeles’ longest running Black newspaper, offered very favorable coverage of UIA and Wilkins even posted occasional columns in the periodical. As well, Wilkins began to operate his own biweekly radio show “Continent to Continent: An African Issues Magazine” on the progressive independent station KPFK-Los Angeles.¹¹²

In Southern California, the cultural boycott, undoubtedly, best represents the particularity of the Southern Californian antiapartheid activity. The campus protests were the largest, the community protests the most personal with their intersections with the local struggles against white supremacy, mass incarceration, and police brutality. But the cultural boycott targeted Southern California’s true source of international power. Since World War II, the Los Angeles County population grew three-fold from roughly 2.8 million to nearly 9 million people. San Diego County exploded from less than 300,000 residents to 2.5 million residents. The Inland Empire counties of Riverside and San Bernardino grew tenfold and Orange County swelled from 130,000 to 2.5 million people by 1990. The symbol of American progress and modernity, people flocked to the Southern California for perceived opportunity and recreation. It should also be noted that, during the postwar period, South Africa also experienced a population boom,

¹¹¹ For more on these tactics, explore: Karen Brodtkin, *Making Democracy Matter: Identity and Activism in Los Angeles* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) and Ruth Milkman, Joshua Bloom, and Victor Narro editors, *Working for Justice: The LA Model of Organizing and Advocacy* (Ithaca, NY, 2013).

¹¹² UIA Final Paper.

expanding three-times to nearly 40 million people during the lifespan of formal apartheid. Undoubtedly, these expansions were partly due to the global postwar baby boom. However, from Southern California to Southern Africa, boosterism and the lure of opportunity attracted increasing numbers of white migrants despite the extreme racial violence.

From travelogues to premier motion pictures, the cultural industry produced a shared bonds and common experiences across space and time for Southern Californians and Southern Africans. For their part, Unity in Action challenged the extreme fiction of racial and economic progress that dominated Southern Californian life. A true vanguard, UIA's impact was reached well beyond their size as their strength was to influence the people with the most notoriety. The groundswell of support for the cultural boycott by artists and entertainers between 1985 and 1990 was indeed a response to the events in Southern Africa but also greatly influenced by the local campaign that UIA led in Southern California. This influence led to the creation of two of the most locally significant cultural works of the antiapartheid movement: Little Steven Van Zandt's record "Sun City" (1985) and the remarkable motion picture *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989).

A Dying Apartheid

Retrospectively, the increased violence and coerciveness of the apartheid state in South African indicated the decline of the system. The highly-publicized killings increasingly mobilized the global public and the half-hearted reforms of the South African government failed to divide and conquer the masses. Amongst the people motivated by the events of the 1970s and 1980s was the renowned poet and African Studies professor Mazisi Kunene who was inspired by the resistance that he saw within

the same images of violence that circulated. As with the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, in the United States, the nexus of the campus and the community was a vital arena of the antiapartheid and divestment movement. As novelist and SDSU creative writing professor Harold Jaffe remarked in his *Los Angeles Times* op-ed, by the mid-1980s, “due in part to the resurgence of student activism” a wealth of nations had applied intense pressure on Pretoria “and American university students have, in the spring of 1985 awakened—for however long—from their Van Winkle sleep.” By May 1985, antiapartheid protests had taken place on over 100 campuses. Jaffe queried his students for their thoughts on the causes for the rapid increase in campus activism. “Their responses...ranged widely from idealistic to cynical to politically astute.” Jaffe’s students remarked: South Africa represented a “clear-cut” example of oppression; the struggle in South Africa aroused paternalistic notions of American moral authority in the liberal conscience; the increased media coverage “made [the antiapartheid struggle] chic;” and more advanced students argued the struggle built on the collective knowledge from the 1960s and that a “growing vanguard of student activists...have allied themselves” in opposition to apartheid—as well as “other issues both at home and abroad.”¹¹³ At UCLA, members of the African Activists Association were undoubtedly a part of the latter. Yet, like so many political struggles, success of the campaign was the result of a groundswell in engagement as well as the appropriate conditions. After twenty-plus years of activism, in 1986, many of the campuses and cities in Southern California had officially divested from South Africa. As Robin Kelley notes, radical

¹¹³ Harold Jaffe, “Apartheid Awakens Long-Silent Campuses,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6/9/85, SD A2.

activists were not “naïve enough to believe divestment, alone, would topple apartheid.” These activists, as noted, looked towards the ANC and the United Democratic Front for leadership as they fought a bloody struggle for liberation.¹¹⁴

On campuses and in many cities, the first strong attempts to force divestment were in the late 1970s, as chronicled earlier in this chapter. Following sixteen years of activism, a coalition of students led by the South African Native Tim Ngubeni, the African Activists Association, and the Black Students Alliance forced the Associated Students of UCLA Board of Control agreed to remove its finances, totally 25 million dollars, from banks that loaned money to South Africa on 18 July 1980. This measure was adopted by many other UC campuses such as Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Davis, and San Diego.¹¹⁵ The election of 1980 brought an abrupt shift to the momentum of the 1970s. William Minter and Sylvia Hill note that Ronald Reagan’s ascendance to the White House was “a wake-up call for the US anti-apartheid movement.” Just months before, the movement had been focused on the measured response to violence in Southern Africa by the Carter Administration but at the very least “there were still links to officials seen to be sympathetic to liberation. Under Reagan, liberal as well as radical activists knew they had little hope of access to policy-making circles”—mass mobilization.¹¹⁶ At UCLA, the African Activists Association and their radical African Studies journal *Ufhamu* continued to mobilize students and raise consciousness of the

¹¹⁴ Kelley, “Our South African Freedom Dreams,” 241-242.

¹¹⁵ “UCLA Divestment,” *Ufhamu* Vol. 10. No. 1-2 (1981), p. 171.

¹¹⁶ William Minter and Sylvia Hill, “Anti-apartheid solidarity in United States-South Africa relations: From the margins to the mainstream,” *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* Volume 3, International Solidarity, Part 2 by the South African Democracy Education Trust (Unisa Press and Teshai Publishers: 2008), 787.

campus and the public. From 1979 to 1984, the African Activist Association held its annual conference on Apartheid and Imperialism at UCLA and *Ufahamu* published multiple editions on the freedom struggles in Southern Africa. As they continued to bring students, faculty, and the public, in contact with freedom fighters and radical intellectuals, their activism provided the crucial leadership for what became known as Mandela City, the tent encampment on UCLA's campus that led the final thrust towards university divestment.

The inaugural AAA2 conference was held as a part of a week of events commemorating African Liberation and the birthday of Malcolm X alongside the BSA, African Studies Center, and the African Language and Culture Club. At that moment, the African Activist Association was led by Ngubeni, a graduate student, member of the *Ufahamu* editorial board, and a member of the UCLA BSA—Ngubeni eventually became the first director of the UCLA Community Programs Office where he had direct access to students and became a leader of the campus divestment struggle.¹¹⁷ Following Ngubeni, the AAA2 was headed by Palestinian activist and graduate student Mahmood Ibrahim. The leadership of Ngubeni and Ibrahim displays an essential characteristic to campus antiapartheid struggles which have been largely forgotten by contemporary activist, analysts, and even academics. Beyond relationality, the struggles for the liberation of Southern African Natives and Palestinians were intricately intertwined. As a graduate student at UCLA, historian Robin Kelley entered the poem “No Mystery” into *Ufahamu* Volume 14 Issue 1. Reminiscent of the iconic Langston Hughes poem, “A Negro Speaks

¹¹⁷ Kelley, “Our South African Freedom Dreams,” 241.

of Rivers,” Kelley moves across space and time as he chronicles the historical oppression and sorrow of Black, Chicana/o, and Asian people. Yet, after Kelley catalogues the history of racial violence, he writes: “No more tears Lord, /We of colour say, /We know you ain’t got much power/anyway. Just bring us some bullets, /and some guns. /some bullets and some guns. /and we’ll make the world/One, *Together...*”¹¹⁸

As Robin Kelley remembered, “In the movement circles that nurtured and trained me, ‘Free Palestine’ rolled off the tongue as easily as ‘Free South Africa,’ ‘Free the Land,’ ‘A Luta Continua,’ ‘Power to the people,’ and the ubiquitous ‘El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido!’”¹¹⁹ Similarly, as he organized the first “From Apartheid and Imperialism to the Final Liberation of Africa” conference, in May 1979, Ngubeni noted that the ambition of the AAA2 was “not to fight racism because we believe that racism is an instrument of the capitalist. Our aim is to change attitudes. If we can change attitudes of people to become the right attitudes, then we have achieved what we want.”¹²⁰

Ngubeni’s argument should not be interpreted as postracial nor were they the product of a Vulgar Marxism. Instead, in their activism and criticism, Ngubeni and the AAA2 articulated an interconnectedness of capitalism, white supremacy, and cultural formation. In activism and scholarship, the African Activist Association of the 1970s and 1980s exposed the material links between the settler colonialist states of South Africa and Israel. Israel provided military and financial support for South Africa. The conferences were thus a critical tool for the necessary consciousness raising. As well, a new generation of

¹¹⁸ Kelley, “No Mystery,” *Ufahamu* Vol. 14 No. 1 (1984), p. 73.

¹¹⁹ Robin DG Kelley, “Yes, I said ‘National Liberation,’” *Counterpunch: Tell the Facts, Name the Names*, 2/24/16.

¹²⁰ “Terry Patterson, “Africa Week to feature conference on apartheid: Festival to honor Malcolm X also a part of 6-day campus event,” *Daily Bruin*, 5/11/79, p. 4.

activists gained direct interaction and training from revolutionary leaders. The upsurge in activism during the mid-1980s therefore not a coincidence.

The first annual conference focused explicitly on liberation struggles with separate days and panels that focused on Southern Africa and Palestine however by the second conference in May 1980, a workshop on revolutionary struggles in Central America and South America had been added to the itinerary. The fifth annual conference held in 1984 (there does not seem to be a conference held in 1983), reflected the progression in the analysis within the AAA2. Titled, "Imperialism: Real or Imagined?," the AAA2 abandoned Cold War area studies conceptualizations and organized the days and workshops thematically and abandoned a primarily geographically structure. Panels were titled, "Class Struggle and the Economics of Imperialism," "Culture and the Struggle Against Imperialism," and "The Present State of National Liberation." Conference attendees discussed intersectional issues such as health care and women's liberation. Global struggles were undoubtedly the focuses of these conferences but they were also meant to prompt immediate and local actions. From the initial conference forward, student activists were addressed by a host of locally and internationally recognized activists. Some of the speakers were Callistus Ndlovu, Dennis Brutus, Ben Magubane, Dorothy Healey, Frances Williams, Sondra Hale, Prexy Nesbitt, Carol Thompson, Vusi Shangase of the ANC, and Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu. Conference attendees interacted with representatives of all multiple revolutionary national fronts such as SWAPO, ANC, ZANU, the Communist Workers Party, the KDP, and a host of Caribbean and Latin American revolutionary formations. The final workshop of the 1984

conference was titled “What Is To Be Done?: Organizing in the US” and the previous day attendees learned about the sports and cultural boycotts.

In respectful consideration of Robin Kelley’s assertion that no one UCLA’s antiapartheid struggle would assume that their activism brought the racial separation in Southern Africa to its knees, the work of the AAA2 was indeed recognized as radical and subversive by the Cold War university and by the South African government. In the early 1980s, radical activists were shaken by the assassinations of Walter Rodney of Guyana and Maurice Bishop of Grenada. academic work and cultural labor of the African Activists Association. In remembrance of fallen African freedom fighters, the AAA2 dedicated *Ufahamu* Volume 11 Issue 1(1981) to the memories of Amilcar Cabral of Guinea, Agostino Neto of Angola, the Malawian radical Henry BM Chipembere, Walter Rodney, and Steve Biko by reprinting the words of these revolutionary thinkers. Volume 11 Issue 3 (1982) was subtitled “Towards the Total Liberation of Southern Africa” and was the outgrowth of the Third Annual Conference in May 1981—the essays examined Southern African liberation, antiimperialist struggles in the Middle East, as well as South African-Arab relations. The cover of Volume 11 Issue 3 featured the visual art of South African native and UCLA alumnus Dan Rakgoathe titled “Manifestation of Duality” (1974). Many of Rakgoathe’s pieces had featured in *Ufahamu* since the early years of the journal. “Manifestation of Duality” presents a male and a female form, with the masculine image engorged with the image of a sun in its midsection and the feminine adorned by the image of a moon in its abdomen. Both images are connected by a common leaf-shaped organ. While the standard readings of this image highlight its appeals toward gender equality, in the context of antiapartheid struggles, “Manifestation

of Duality” is also a petition for racial equality, as it depicts two separate worlds, as different as night and day, united by a common land. Volume 11 Issue 3 was banned by the South African government.¹²¹

The African Activist Association were central in the rapidly increasing boycott and divestment struggles of 1980s Los Angeles, as discussed earlier in this chapter. From Southern California to the San Francisco Bay Area, college students played an essential role in the civic, state, and campus divestment campaigns—helping to make the state leaders in the antiapartheid struggle of the 1980s. Black elected officials in Southern California such as Maxine Waters, Bob Farrell, and Leon Williams played pivotal roles in advocating for boycott, divestment, and sanctions of South Africa as well as supporting the various community struggles previously chronicled in this chapter. As the result of a combination of lobbying and the intense pressure of direct action, in Spring 1985, Tom Bradley had finally expressed his support for divestment. Though Bradley was still widely criticized from people to his political Left for not going far enough, this was likely the most radical position that he had taken as the Los Angeles Mayor. It was only three years earlier that Bradley had extended a warm welcome to the South African consulate. In 1982, Bradley was in the middle of a highly contested gubernatorial race that he was expected to win but narrowly lost, leading to what political scientists call the “Bradley Effect.” Reflecting what Alvin B. Tillery labels a “two-level game,” Bradley’s public position on South African liberation had now changed drastically as it now

¹²¹ Donve Langan, *The Unfolding Man: The Life and Art of Dan Rakgoathe* (Cape Town: David Philip Publisher, 2000), 111 and 129.

became a favorable position in electoral politics.¹²² In May 1985, Bradley announced his plan to gradually withdraw Los Angeles 700 million dollars in civic pension funds from banks invested in South Africa.¹²³ In San Diego, a coalition that included Leon Williams and Greg Akili renewed their proposals that over \$100 million of county and city funds be divested from South African financiers. Students played an immense role in the actions of the mid- to late-1980s. However, this time, it was not just the revolutionary students but as the SDSU professor Harold Jaffe noted, a broad coalition of students had emerged extremely activated by spring 1985. The general history of campus divestment movements place the highly-publicized events at Columbia University as the impetus for the wildfire of campus events yet this study has clearly argued for the longstanding local tradition as the motivation as well. Little more than two decades removed from the Congress of Racial Equality Bank of America protests as well as the initial actions of the South African Freedom Action Committee, campus activists were able to find success because they utilized tactics and strategies that Civil Rights, Black Power, and earlier antiapartheid activists used in the very same places that the new students protested.

At UCLA, there was no African Activist Association International Conference in May 1985. That spring, antiapartheid activism overtook the campus events and local news. On 13 April 1985, the BSA, African Students Alliance, and the AAA2 joined a broad coalition of campus organizations, sponsoring the South African Solidarity Day festival that combined political education and cultural expression. As students heard

¹²² Alvin B. Tillery, Jr., *Between Homeland and Motherland: Africa, U.S. Foreign Policy, and Black Leadership in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 6.

¹²³ Jay Mathews, "California Regents Vote To Divest \$3.1 Billion In South Africa Holdings," *Washington Post*, 7/19/86.

speakers from revolutionary African organizations and heard live music from Burning Spear.¹²⁴ On 23 April 1985, the UCLA Black Students Alliance and Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) joined forces to lead the largest protest at UCLA since the antiwar movement. At a noontime rally, BSA and USAC student leaders urged faculty members and students to boycott classes that Tuesday afternoon. A part of a system-wide coalition, at least 4,000 students and dozens of faculty members attended the rally and innumerable classes were cancelled as a result—7,000 rallied at Berkeley and even 2,000 at marched at the much smaller UC San Diego. For the longstanding antiapartheid activists, the motives for the mass mobilization were apparent. Meanwhile, the everyday UCLA students who joined the protests directly rejected the neoliberal culture of the 1980s and the popular portrayal of Generation Xers as an apathetic, “do-nothing, care-nothing, out-for-ourselves yuppies.” According to UCLA student body president Gwyn Lurie, the protest was also more than just a replication of the Free Speech Movement of decades before. Instead, the mass uprising was grounded with a deeply material and universal analysis of American political economy. What is more, this coalition leveled a sharp criticism at the feet of the UC Regents that has now been identified in the academy as “critical university studies.” There is hardly little coincidence that the pages of student newspapers throughout California chronicled radical opposition to the rising student fees, food prices, accessibility, and admissions policies alongside the stories of antiapartheid protests.¹²⁵ Student activists denounced

¹²⁴ “South African Solidarity Day,” *Daily Bruin*, 4/12/85, p. 15.

¹²⁵ The connection between student fees and antiracist protests has a long tradition in the University of California. In the spring of 2010 it was a key generator of mass mobilization amidst the Compton Cookout Protests at UCSD. It is therefore, a useful thing to return to.

American foreign policy but also understood the UC system as a center of American power and external support for the apartheid regime. Since the Regents overturned divestment in an 11-6 vote in the 1970s, the UC investment in apartheid had ballooned to six billion dollars. As the *UCLA Daily Bruin* reported, fourteen UC Regents held around ten million dollars in South African investments, including Governor George Deukmejian who held around \$200,000 in South African investments. At UCLA, a few hundred students, led by BSA Chairwoman Dion Raymond, occupied Murphy Hall on the Tuesday the 23rd. The sit-in eventually led to an occupation of Schoenberg Quad during. Student activists transformed the center of campus into what they termed Nelson Mandela Village.¹²⁶

Having risen to the level of a popular front, the protests at UCLA united a politically diverse and multiracial coalition that was strategically necessary for victory but it was crucially a Black-led struggle. Athletics and student government, often considered to be apolitical sectors of student life at best, were one key sector that was mobilized in this struggle. The protests exploded during the student government election season. With the support of all the Black organizations, the past student body president Lurie, and multiple other organizations, the Black track and field athlete Ron Taylor was elected president. Taylor's influence helped continue the system-wide push for divestment by the Regents. The Associated Students campaigned to divest from Coca-Cola, a supporter of South Africa. As well, Alpha Phi Alpha and other Black fraternal

¹²⁶ Laurie Becklund, "Huge Rally at UCLA Attacks Ties to S. Africa," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/24/85 B3. Mark Stein, "Anti-Apartheid Protests Spread Across the US," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/25/85, p. 1. William Trombley, "UC Regents Torn by South Africa Investment Issue," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/25/85, p. 3. Jean-Pierre Cativiela, "14 Regents have holdings in S. African Companies," *Daily Bruin*,

contributed to the struggle as protestors and organizers. Since the 1970s, the growth in Black college enrollment had initiated the largest expansion in Black Greek like in decades. A member of Alpha Phi Alpha, Robin Kelley has noted how Afrocentric readings and iconography were essential parts of his initiation process. Black fraternities and sororities read George James' *Stolen Legacy*, promoted African images like pyramids, Sphinxes, and the Nile River. By the 1970s and 1980s, they had also amalgamated the South African Gumbo dance into their own ritual forms of cultural expression known as stepping. In the middle of the struggle at UCLA, Alpha Phi Alpha held a symposium on divestment that bridged the campus and the community. On 20 May 1985, Maulana Karenga now the head of CSULB's Africana Studies program, Karenga's colleague and compatriot Professor Amen Rahh (formerly known as Arthur "Sleepy" Montgomery), Bert Hammond of Cal Poly Pomona and a KJLH host, Lawyer and former BSA activist John Caldwell, and Michael Zinzun made up the panel for the public discussion "Where Do We Go From Here: Black Political Strategies from 1985 and Beyond" in the Ackerman Grand Ballroom.¹²⁷

Faculty and alumni played a prominent role as well. UCLA faculty made up a plurality of the professors in the UC system that demanded full divestment. Of the 51 professors to sign the petition circulated by the University of California Faculty for Full Divestment, 24 were from UCLA including Mazisi Kunene, Robert Hill, Boniface Obichere, Teshome Gabriel, Gerry Hale, and Edward Soja. There were some notable names absent from the petition, for unknown reasons, such as Leo and Hilda Kuper.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ "Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. Presents," *Daily Bruin*.

¹²⁸ UC Faculty For Full Divestment article

Nevertheless, UCLA faculty and staff coordinated multiple teach-ins during this push. UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies Director Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, professor of history Gary Nash, Kunene, and others offered their intellectual power to the movement. Tim Ngubeni's public speaking appearances offered a crucial link between the divestment efforts of BSA, AAA2, and other groups in the turn of the decade with the late-1980s.¹²⁹ Surely, not all the UCLA campus were in support of divestment. The editorial columns of the *Daily Bruin* presented anti-divestment positions. Many of the positions paternalistically argued that change must be gradual, divestment would hurt the South African Natives the most, or they expressed anticommunist positions. Still, the overwhelming support proved to be for divestment.

Mandela Village was the organizational heart of the campus struggle. A tent city, representative of the inhumane living conditions of South African townships and Bantustans, Mandela Village harkened back to the South African Freedom Action Committee protests of 1964. It was then that Martin Legassick occupied a makeshift shanty home and went on a hunger strike in protest of the Rivonia Trial as a part of a national thrust for antiapartheid activism that had been led by Mazisi Kunene. Twenty-one years later, UCLA students revisited the tactics of the previous decades. Protestors orchestrated mass die-ins and mock funeral processions included with provisional coffins to represent the tens of thousands of people slaughtered in Southern Africa. The die-ins and funeral processions also directly linked the antiapartheid campaign with the Central American solidarity movement and the anti-nuclear weapons campaign that had been

¹²⁹ Ron Bell, "UCLA professors to hold open forum on apartheid," *Daily Bruin*.

closely interrelated with the antiapartheid struggle—in the 1970s, mass die-ins were a popular tool for consciousness raising in that campaign also. On May 7th, hundreds of students marched from Mandela Village through the UCLA campus, making their way to the Reserve Officer Training Corps programs office.¹³⁰ Mandela Villagers also ventured off the campus and led protests against bank branches in Westwood, namely Bank of America.¹³¹ Students kept pressure on campus administration, the BSA hosted sleep-ins in Murphy Hall and hundreds of students regularly gathered throughout the campus in public protest. Students did not always use direct confrontation and often used satire as a counterhegemonic device. On May 17th, conducted a mock UC Regents meeting on Bruin Walk. In the simulated debate, “Concerned Students” opposed the “UC Regents” as they reverberated their lukewarm positions against apartheid morally yet their adherence to the ineffective Sullivan Principles and partial divestment schema.¹³² Despite the outburst in activism, the UC Regents, again, voted in opposition to divestment by claiming that it would cause economy calamity on June 21st. However, the rejection by the Regents was taken as a personal insult to campus activists. As Van Scott, BSA Chairman stated, “Their actions make all that we’ve done seem like a joke. We weren’t taken very seriously.” Dion Raymond, the past-BSA chair, stated that the Regents decision presented a challenge to protestors for the following academic year. “If we are really committed...we will come back twice as strong (next year),” Raymond

¹³⁰ Maura Dolan, “UCLA Protest on Apartheid Takes form of Mock Funeral,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5/8/85, p. 3.

¹³¹ Russell Covey and Ron Bell, “Protestors march on Westwood banks,” *Daily Bruin*, 5/1/85, p. 1.

¹³² Chris Howell, “Students Pose as UC Regents in Mock Divestment Meeting,” *Daily Bruin*, 5/20/85.

stated.¹³³ Indeed, they did. System-wide protests ensued as students renewed their tactics again through spring of 1986. That July the UC Regents finally voted to withdraw the billions of dollars it had invested in South Africa.¹³⁴

Undoubtedly, the tidal wave of South African solidarity had receded following the divestment. Still, campus and community activism remained extremely active until the release of Nelson Mandela and legalization of all banned political parties in 1990. Black students and radical students continued to struggle against the increasingly neoliberal public university. In 1986, the African Activist Association and its journal *Ufahamu* were experienced its largest internal austerity crisis in 16 years as the AAA2 students and African Studies Center faculty struggled over the control and future existence of *Ufahamu*. African Studies Center Director Michael Lofchie had ordered the journal to be suspended as the faculty conducted an internal review. Lofchie claimed the journal was a financial burden on the center and appointed Robert Hill to lead a unilateral review of *Ufahamu*. Only one issue of *Ufahamu* had been distributed in 1986 and one more the following year. Only after student protest, Robin Kelley was added to the Bob Hill Review Committee, as it was called. The African Activist Association only retained control of the journal following a vigorous campus and international campaign of support for the journal and the AAA2 from places and faculty as distant as Horace Campbell at the University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.¹³⁵ AAA2 members wanted to ensure *Ufahamu* remained an organ for radical African thought while the ASC plotted their

¹³³ Ernest Hardy, "UCLA apartheid protestors find Regents' decision challenging," *UCLA Summer Bruin*, 7/2/85, p. 1.

¹³⁴ Anne C. Roark, "UC to Sell Investments with Links to S. Africa: \$3.1 Billion in S. Africa," *Los Angeles Times*, 7/19/86, p. 1.

¹³⁵ Cite Campbell Letter

sought to seize control under the guise of increased professionalization. The AAA2 retained control of the journal but just as the height of the divestment campaign revisited the struggles of the past, struggle between students and administration for control of the journal was harbinger for future campus struggles nationwide.

Conclusion

Nelson Mandela was released from Victor Vorster prison on 11 February 1990 following 27 years of incarceration. Apartheid had not been repealed, the UC system was just ending its gradual divestment process, and activist continued to push for tightened sanctions against South Africa. Still, Mandela's release resonated with the public generally but the African Diaspora more specifically as a moment of pride. In the long history of Black liberation struggles, so many leaders had been assassinated, died of stress-related illnesses, or been imprisoned that the commutation of Mandela's sentence was an honest victory. For activists Mandela's freedom venerated the three decades of armed struggle and international solidarity that had preceded this his discharge. As well, a new group found immense inspiration in Mandela's freedom: Black youth.¹³⁶ Upon his release, Mandela commenced a national tour of the United States as he bonded with activists and mobilized support for the continued struggles back home. Mandela's American tour coincided with a resurgence of pan-Africanism and Afrocentricism amongst the Black public. Black youth wore leather African pendants, increasingly read Black radical literature, African centered themes had been infused into hip hop culture, Black youth increasingly embraced African spiritual traditions, and adopted names from

¹³⁶ Sheena Lester, "A Hero for Our Time': Mandelamania Strikes America's Children," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 7/5/90, B9.

indigenous African languages. Only ten when Mandela was released, as a child, I had a white t-shirt with a red-black-and-green silhouette of Africa on the front with a large M which prefixed a horizontal list of the names, Marcus, Malcolm, Martin, Marley, Mandela, and Me and wore an African medallion and Malcolm X hat. At the top of the shirt it stated, "It's a Black thing" and at the bottom of the shirt, "you wouldn't understand." Los Angeles became, arguably, the center of this sartorial pan-Africanism. It was in Los Angeles that clothing designer Carl Jones created the iconic brand of clothing, Cross Colours in 1989. The mottos of the clothing brand were "Stop D Violence" and "Educate 2 Elevate."

On Friday 29 June 1990, Mandela made his first visit to Los Angeles where he spoke at the Los Angeles Coliseum to a packed house of over 75,000 people with millions of others watching on television and listening to radio broadcasts of the event; that evening, Mandela attended a fundraiser and dinner that attracted 1,000 people and raised over one million dollars. However, the international circumstances during Mandela's visit were not as blissful as the public celebrations suggested.

Deindustrialization, police violence, economic bifurcation in the Black community, mass incarceration, and gang violence gripped the streets of Southern California. That Friday, the Los Angeles Student Coalition organized a rally and concert at the Los Angeles Coliseum during Mandela's address. An organization of Los Angeles high school students, the coalition aspired to transmit the internationalist fervor about Mandela's

liberation to local success. Their promotional leaflet stated: “Let’s work to build a just society here in LA.”¹³⁷

Ron Wilkins publicly criticized the organizing committee for the Mandela visit as opportunists. While legitimate antiapartheid activists were being pushed aside, in preparation of Mandela’s intrepid West, early foes and boycott violators were being promoted. Wilkins deduced that many of the event organizers were using the event to gain increased power, locally and internationally, while they “repudiated and isolate genuine supporters of the African Democratic revolution.”¹³⁸ Following the Mandela visit, Wilkins expressed the need for true leadership in Los Angeles. Mandela’s tour of Los Angeles came within weeks of the 25th anniversary of the Watts Rebellion. A leader in the Watts Rebellion, Wilkins remarked that the uprising was followed by a Black political and economic elite that capitalized from the event, furthering their own careers and abandoning the struggles of the masses. In the second of a two-part editorial in the *Sentinel*, Wilkins wrote:

The gap between rich and poor is wider and even more polarized along racial line (with Black faces in the mayor’s office, on the city council, in the state legislature). Social disintegration has accelerated at an alarming rate. Racial attacks are rampant while the police have been welcomed back into the community by certain ‘leaders’ to escalate the assault against African males whom they now boast are half the inmate population. All of this while the Black establishment is rewarded with testimonials and votes—for a job well done. But, according to what standards?¹³⁹

¹³⁷ “Join the Los Angeles Student Coalition in conjunction with Coalition of Black Trade Unionists in a March for Freedom to Meet Mandela.” Carol B. Thompson and Bud Day Papers on Southern Africa, Michigan State University Libraries Special Collections. African Activist Archive.

¹³⁸ Ron Wilkins, “Mandela’s Tour Controlled by Political Opportunists,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6/21/90, A7.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Arguably more than before, postapartheid Black Southern California and South Africa became conjoined by the global effects of neoliberal and neocolonial policies. Currently, South African imprisons more Black people than it had during apartheid. The American prison population has metastasized five-times to nearly 2.5 million inmates, since the 1970s and nearly thirty-times since Mandela was initially incarcerated. The largest incarcerator, California now houses nearly twice as many inmates as the entire American prison population in 1960. From Southern California to Southern Africa, African American life has been severely stunted by access to standard health care, education, housing, and employment. The material conditions that once created the black global spatial imaginary persist. Activists are nevertheless challenged to move beyond the contemporary contradictions and generate new global movements for Black liberation.

EPILOGUE

“You Still Got One Brother Left”: The Black Global Spatial Imaginary in a Post-Apartheid World

African American filmmaker John Singleton’s magnum opus *Boyz n the Hood* (1991) commenced and concluded with scenes whose Black Internationalism have remained enigmatic. Beginning and ending with the fratricidal deaths of Black men in South Los Angeles, *Boyz n the Hood* makes an abundant denunciation of gang violence. Singleton opened the film with the bifurcated quote: “One out of every twenty-one Black American males will be murdered in their life time.... Most will die at the hands of another Black male.” In the film’s epilogue, viewers are alerted that Doughboy, a supporting character played by Ice Cube, had been murdered shortly after he avenged the slaying of his brother Ricky, played by Morris Chestnut. Though it was never stated in the film, Doughboy was unmistakably a Crip and Ricky’s killers were Bloods. *Boyz n the Hood* can be read as a reformist, and even conservative, assessment of postindustrial life in Southern California. Its protagonist, Trey, the only child of unwed middle class parents, was the only one of his friends to “survive in South Central” while the children of a young and single welfare-recipient mother, Doughboy and Ricky suffered violent deaths—their close friend Chris had already been paralyzed by an assassin’s bullet. This paradox was a point of contention at the climax of the film when Trey was confronted by his father Furious prior to Trey’s departure with Doughboy on the retaliation mission—Trey eventually opted out of the mission. However, an alternative reading of *Boyz n the Hood* reveals its radical vision.

The beginning and final movements in *Boyz n the Hood* were in fact accompanied by Black International references. After traversing his South Los Angeles neighborhood,

including a trip past a murder scene, Trey reached his school. Following his interruption of a lesson on the pilgrims and Thanksgiving by his teacher, a white woman, Trey commenced an impromptu lecture on Black history. After Trey identified Africa on the classroom map, as the birthplace of humanity, he was derided by a classmate who famously states, “I ain’t from Africa, I’m from Crenshaw Mafia.” Seconds later, the student informed Trey: “I ain’t from Africa. You from Africa. You African booty scratcher.” In the film’s closing dialogue, Doughboy confided with Trey:

Yo, cuz, I know why you got outta the car last night... shouldn't have been there in the first place. You don't want that shit to come back to haunt you. I ain't been up this early in a long time. I turned on the TV this morning, they had this shit on about... about living in a violent world. Showed all these foreign places... I started thinking, man, either they don't know, don't show, or don't care about what's going on in the hood. Man, all this foreign shit, and they didn't have shit on my brother, man.

Undoubtedly, linked to the disavowal of African heritage by Trey’s “Crenshaw Mafia” classmate, Doughboy’s statement concurrently underscored his natal alienation; Doughboy subsequently states “I ain’t got no brother. I ain’t got no mother either.”¹ Never dismissing the prevalence of international violence, Doughboy contests the erasure of South Los Angeles as a site of that global culture of violence. Considering Bernard Magubane’s argument in his doctoral thesis and later book, *The Ties That Bind, the Boyz n the Hood* reveals the repudiation of Africa by Trey’s classmate was a response to the miseducation of Black youth. Trey’s classmate had not rejected a real Africa but instead the fictive “African booty scratcher”—a representation of the backwards and uncivilized African natives portrayed in popular media such as *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980) and

¹ David Marriott, *On Black Men*, (Edinburg, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

the paternalistic images of famished African children in American advertisements and infomercials. An alternate reading reveals the rejection of the white spatial imaginary by Doughboy and Trey's classmate. As well, Trey's classmate also rejected Trey's own essentialist and biologically determined interpretation of Blackness. Beyond biology, it was in fact, materiality that had bound Black Southern California with Southern Africa. In this study, I have attempted to make this point by conceptualizing what I have termed solidarity-plus.

This study has chronicled the influence of African liberation politics on Black activism in Southern California and the concurrent growth of African solidarity. As I have argued, local struggles for control over education, employment, housing, and policing influenced organizational breaks with mainstream Cold War Civil Rights strategy and embraced ideologies generating from Africa and the Third World. This new generation of internationalism informed the consciousness raising and organizational strategy of Civil Rights and Black Power organizations. African Americans learned African languages, acculturated African names and cultural practices, Black Southern Californians deeply engaged African literature, and attempted to place it into action in their projects from the campus to the community. As African Americans turned their heads towards Africa, Africans increasingly embraced African American struggles for liberation. In Africa and in Southern California, African radicals studied African American history and radical thought. Africans offered support to African American liberation struggles. Just as Africans directly influenced the generation of a pan-African tradition in Southern California, African revolutionaries on the continent and in exile were influenced by African American thought and practice. In Southern California and

beyond, this connection between the African American masses and African liberation movements and ideology gave meaning to the antiapartheid movement. As I showed in the final chapter, the movement for divestment, sanctions, and boycotting of South Africa was directly linked to the longstanding local struggles against the political economic structures.

The release of Nelson Mandela and other South African political prisoners prompted a retreat from internationalism by many American liberals, Black and white alike. Coinciding with collapse of the Soviet Union, post-apartheid South Africa's was concurrent to the rise of a unipolar American global hegemony. As Ron Wilkins had noted in a series of editorial articles, liberals, and even early opponents to South African liberation, had begun to reconfigure the narrative of the antiapartheid movement to support their political and economic agenda. What is more, a generation of international media emerged that imagined the demise of apartheid as a success for neoliberal multiculturalism, post-racialism, and South African nationalism. In the process, Mandela became de-radicalized and other revolutionaries have been forgotten and in the case of South African Communist Party leader, Christopher Hani, assassinated. This process can be witnessed in the blockbuster Clint Eastwood film *Invictus* (2009), starring Morgan Freeman, which represented antiapartheid as a national process of racial reconciliation placed equated Mandela and a random Afrikaner rugby player as contemporaries. Despite this, "Disneyfication" of Mandela and Southern African liberation struggles, the Black global spatial imaginary has persisted in underscoring the rhizomes binding post-civil rights African America to post-independence and neocolonial Africa generally, and post-apartheid South Africa specifically. In the almost three decades since Mandela's

release, shared experiences of fratricidal and non-revolutionary violence, collective health epidemics, economic crises, and the limits of Black electoral leadership, have all remained central themes in the post-apartheid and post-civil rights pan-Africanism of activists and culture workers. Though it might be surprising to some, one place where elements of the long African liberation struggle have been retained is amongst Southern California's hardcore hip-hop community.

Even before Mandela's election and the official termination of de facto apartheid policy in South Africa, the revolutionary activists continued to raise consciousness in Southern California. This is most evident in the work of Michael Zinzun and his affiliated organizations, the Southern African Support Committee and the Friends of the ANC and the Frontline States. It was clear that many in the public had celebrated Mandela's release as the end of apartheid in South Africa. What is more, reactionary forces had seized upon the Mandela's release to call for the lifting of sanctions and boycotts against South Africa. However, the SASC and FANC organized conferences, seminars, and public information campaigns to remind people that apartheid was still state policy in South Africa. Radical antiapartheid activists lobbied the support of elected officials such as Mervyn Dymally and Ron Dellums to ensure that the United States Congress keep the sanctions in place. Locally, new sets of immediate concerns generated bonds between African Americans and Southern Africans. On 5 January 1991, the Friends of the ANC were amongst a committee of organizations which sponsored the symposium: "From South Africa to South Central Los Angeles: The Decline of Health Care." Demanding healthcare as a human right, this colloquium discussed the shared concerns over the environment and Black health, apartheid's impact on Black health,

gender and healthcare, alternatives to Western medicine, and the psychological impact of violence on Black mental health.² These activists challenged the conservative discourse on Black life in South Africa. As well, groups such as the FANC also combatted the culture of poverty and culture of violence narratives that liberals had begun to produce.

The popular discourse on race relations in South Africa, following the release of Mandela, had surely sounded very familiar to American activists as the mainstream media and politicians began to blame the problems of South Africa on Black South Africans. The largest of these were the emergent narratives of “Black-on-Black” violence which had begun to fill the liberal news outlets, blaming Black people for the conditions of South Africa. As an article produced by the Friends of the ANC noted, while Ted Koppel had wept amongst his coverage of Mandela’s release, Koppel was “confident and comfortable” as he aired “footage of a black man thrusting a spear through the chest of another fallen black man and then using his foot as leverage to prize the spear from the dead man’s chest.”³ As Chairman Omali Yeshitela of the African People’s Socialist Party has argued, Black-on-Black violence is in fact “horizontal violence” and are “contradictions that are inflamed and provoked by the imperialist disruption of African life and the substitute of synthetic foundation of colonial society.”⁴ Similarly, the FANC argued that the violence the continued result of apartheid policy on the lives of Blacks in South Africa, just as Lewis Nkosi and others had argued in *Come Back, Africa* over thirty years earlier. The highest amounts of violence were

² 32-130-158B-84-Friends Health 1-5-91

³ Surendren Moodilar, “The Apartheid Roots of ‘Black-On-Black’ Violence,” *Friends of the African National Congress and Frontline States* (Winter Edition 1991-92), 2.

⁴ Chairman Omali Yeshitela, *An Uneasy Equilibrium: The African Revolution versus Parasitic Capitalism* (St. Petersburg, FL: Burning Spear Press, 2014), 314.

concentrated, the article states, where housing was poorest, unemployment the highest, and police had engineered divide and conquer strategies that equipped armed warlords to patrol the streets of South African shantytowns.⁵ The solutions to the problems, the FANC argued, were to empower the Black majority, abolish the segregationist policies, and ebb the flow of small arms into South African society where semiautomatic weapons were being used in a majority of the fratricidal killings.

Mutual distress over Black horizontal violence influenced African American organizing efforts in Southern California as activists sought to end their own civil war between local street gangs. Black youth unemployment caused by government foreclosure of antipoverty programs, deindustrialization, and privatization joined the ballooning incarceration rates, biased policing, and government repression of Black Power organizations to produce the resurgence of Southern California's gang culture. From the mid- to late-1960s, Black gangs had been mostly eradicated in Southern California as groups like the Us Organization and Black Panther Party, as well as the antipoverty programs, provided refuge, organization, and discipline the youth. As noted in this study, the sectarian war between the Panthers and the Us Organization, instigated by local and federal police agencies, halted the survival programming of these radical organizations that directly engaged the youth. In this void, street gangs reemerged.

Between 1969 and 1972, the Crips and the alliance that eventually became known as the Bloods arose as the "bastard offspring" of the Black radical movements of the 1960s.⁶ By 1972, the result of a Los Angeles initiative known as "Operation

⁵ Moodilar.

⁶ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, 298.

Transfer” which sent Crips and Brims (an early Bloods set) to San Diego, the new generation of youth gangs had begun to spread. While it was not frequent, gun deaths had been the leading cause of death for young Black men since 1968. Less than criminal cartels, gangs were best described as social clubs for the chronically unemployed. In South Los Angeles, Black youth unemployment was forty-five percent and in Watts it was as high as seventy percent.⁷ The heightened unemployment rates of the 1970s contributed to the increase in gang membership and extended gang participation of youth into their 20s. The adverse effect of the Gun Control Act of 1968, inexpensive and high caliber American-made “junk guns” began to flood the streets of the United States.⁸ As well, “mysterious” crates of semiautomatic weapons appeared in Black neighborhoods. The presence of crack cocaine on the American streets, in the mid-1980s, intensified the already severe conditions of Black life as street gangs became employed as enforcers and street-level merchants in the international drug trade. To be sure, the average drug dealer made less than \$1000 per month, despite the sensationalized media. However, for most young people, in a place where the average income of a Black household was less than \$6000 annually, about two-thirds of the general median income, street-level drug dealing became an important supplement for many people. These conditions ushered in Southern California so staggering that it surpasses American combat casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, the first Intifada in Palestine, and three decades of armed struggle in

⁷ Robin DG Kelley, “Into the Fire: 1970 to the Present,” in *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans from 1880*, Vol. 2 edited by Robin DG Kelley and Earl Lewis (New York and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 298.

⁸ Rodrigo Bascunan and Christian Pearce, *Enter the Babylon System: Unpacking Gun Culture from Samuel Colt to 50 Cent* (Random House Canada, 2007), 55-56.

Northern Ireland. From 1979 to 1993, the gang-related death toll in Los Angeles city alone exceeded 6,000.⁹

With little exception, white liberals and Black middle class leadership abandoned the struggles of the Black masses just as they had retreated from the international arena. White and Black Democratic party officials and church leaders supported the draconian policing measures and mandatory sentencing legislation which ballooned California's prison population. Despite this abandonment, individuals like Michael Zinzun and organizations like the Coalition Against Police Abuse remained on the frontlines as they wedded the local quest for peace in Southern California to continued liberation struggles South Africa. While the general media has portrayed the April 1992 Watts gang truce, known by many as the "Truce of Nine-Deuce," as the result of the Rodney King Uprising, it was instead the result of a long body of work of Zinzun's CAPA, the Community in Support of the Gang Truce, Jim Brown's Amer-I-Can, the Nation of Islam, and the endless cultural work of local rappers and entertainers, as well as thousands of Black and Brown youths. In 1990, a compilation of California rappers including Ice Cube, NWA, Tone Loc, and Ice T, known as the West Coast All Stars produced the hit record, "We Are All in the Same Gang." The next year, three months after the release of *Boyz n the Hood*, Ice Cube released his sonic political treatise *Death Certificate*. Filled with the musical discerning influence of Khalid Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan's lieutenant in the Nation of Islam, Cube urged the collective resistance

⁹ Daniel Widener, *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 276. Alex Alonso, "Out of the Void: Street Gangs in Black Los Angeles" in *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities* edited by Darnel Hunt and Ana-Christina Ramon (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 140-167.

against the Black social death, and actual death. In many ways, *Death Certificate* prophetically proclaimed the April 1992 uprising, however, in many ways, the writing was already on the wall.

Though it was short-lived, the Truce of Nine-Deuce revived the hopes of the Black Power movement as well as the antiapartheid movement. Consider two of the, seemingly, least political gangster rappers of Southern California, Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg. Two of the songs on Dre's solo debut *The Chronic* (1992), with extensive cameos from Snoop, contained vocals from KDAY intern Matthew McDaniel's documentary on the rebellion *Birth of a Nation*. In this footage, protestors pledge their loyalty to the rebuilding of Black Power in Southern California and the liberation of South Africa. Modeled on the ceasefire reached by Palestinians and Israelis, the Truce of Nine-Deuce embodied solidarity-plus and reminds us, while the black global spatial imaginary has faded, it is not disappeared. In a document entitled "Give Us the Hammer and the Nails, We Will Rebuild the City," Crips and Bloods revived the war of opposition of their predecessors in the 1960s and the 1970s by boldly demanding billions of government funds be streamlined to education, healthcare, employment, and minority businesses. The manifesto also advocated the creation of the Bloods/Crips Law Enforcement Programme which incorporated former gang members in the policing of Black neighborhoods and monitored the interactions between police officers and the community.¹⁰ As Robin Kelley notes, Tom Bradley and the Los Angeles City Council

¹⁰ Kelley, "Into the Fire," 332-333. "CRIPS AND BLOODS PLAN FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LOS ANGELES: Give us the hammer and the nails, we will rebuild the city," *gangresearch.net*, <http://gangresearch.net/GangResearch/Policy/cripsbloodsplan.html> (accessed on 7/1/17).

ignored the proposal.¹¹ Even more, the media and police agencies cynically misrepresented the truce as a conspiracy to consolidate drug operations. Nevertheless, this moment has not been forgotten amongst activists in Southern California. The Truce of Nine-Deuce and its South African analog has continued to inspire grassroots activism in Southern California.

Despite its paradoxes and limitations, the Million Man March held on 16 October 1995 in Washington, DC was an important generator of Afrocentricism and Black self-reliance. Its heteropatriarchal contradictions have been well-documented. However, bottom-up analyses of the Million Man March reveal the moment to be extremely important for people of what Bakari Kitwana has termed the “Hip-Hop Generation.” Speakers at the march condemned the erosion of the social welfare system, demanded mass employment, and provided material analysis of mass incarceration in the United States. The Million Man March was bookended by the Seventh Pan-African Congress in 1994 and the Million Woman March in 1997. In commemoration of the Million Man March, Sound of Los Angeles Records (SOLAR), organized the hip-hop compilation *One Million Strong* (1995). SOLAR was owned by the pan-Africanist entrepreneur Dick Griffey. As Scot Brown has shown, Griffey was involved in the antiapartheid movement, raised funds for FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front), and attempted to create bonds between SOLAR and the African music market. Locally, Griffey influenced the creation of Death Row Records and sought to find ways to mitigate white control in the music industry. While Brown argues that the 1992 soundtrack for *Deep Cover* was

¹¹ Kelley, 333.

SOLAR's "last major recording" but that designation should be reserved for *One Million Strong*.¹²

Notwithstanding the tragic feud between rappers from the East Coast and West Coast exemplified in the immortal conflict between Tupac "2Pac" Shakur and Christopher "Notorious BIG" Wallace, *One Million Strong* brought from around the United States together for this monumental project. The tracks all supported the major agenda items of the Million Man March: economic mobility, antipolice brutality, anti-prison, and Black unity. The second track on the album, "Runnin," is the only published studio recording featuring 2Pac and Notorious BIG. The track is an embrace of Black fugitivity and armed resistance in response to biased policing and mass incarceration. *One Million Strong* opened with the track "Where Ya At?" featuring a medley of New York and Los Angeles rappers including Ice-T, Ice Cube, Kam, Da Lench Mob, Mobb Deep, Chuck D, RZA, and Killah Priest. With many of the artists being affiliates of the NOI, Nation of Gods and Earth (Five Percent Nation), or the Hebrew Israelites, the track contained a strong element of Black religious nationalism that spoke directly to people on the street while attempting to internationalize the consciousness of "brothers and sisters on the corner." Shorty from Da Lench Mob rapped, "One two three I'm a G/But the God inside is the G I chose to be/The World is a stage is a stage and everybody plays a part." "Where Ya At?" began with a recording from Ice Cube "all the way from Johannesburg, South Africa." "The world has never seen a million black men in one place. But on October 16th, in Washington, DC, a million black men will gather," Cube proclaimed.¹³

¹² Scot Brown, "SOLAR: The History of Sounds of Los Angeles Records" in *Black Los Angeles*, 277-279.

¹³ Ice Cube et. al., "Where Ya At?", *One Million Strong* (Los Angeles: SOLAR Records, 1995).

Cube was in Johannesburg shooting the motion picture, *Dangerous Ground* (1997). *Dangerous Ground* was directed by South Africa's most prolific filmmaker Darrell Roodt. A white progressive, Roodt had also directed *Sarafina!* (1992) and a remake of *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1995) in the preceding years. However, Cube's production company Cube Vision produced the film and Cube starred in as the lead character Vusi Madlazi. The script was written by Roodt but Cube's acting and production made the film a product of the Black global spatial imaginary and directly connected the film to Cube's breakout film, *Boyz N the Hood*. *Dangerous Ground* recovered the shared literary and cinematic traditions of Southern California and Southern Africa that had existed before the Interregnum Period (pre-1960). The similarities between *Dangerous Ground* and *Boyz N the Hood* are so apparent that they are far from consequential.

Dangerous Ground tells the story of Vusi Madlazi, a South African student activist who migrated to California in 1983 where he became a professor and activist in exile. The eldest son of three, Vusi returns to South Africa fourteen years to attend his father's funeral in the rural countryside. At the funeral, Vusi's brother Ernest, a former revolutionary soldier, was present but the youngest brother Steven was not present. Presented with his father's spear, Vusi had become the head of the family. Reminiscent of the rural to urban migration that had become a common trope in African diasporic cinema including *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Come Back, Africa*, Vusi heads to Johannesburg in search of Steven only to find the horrid conditions of post-apartheid South Africa. Once in Johannesburg, Vusi is accosted by a van full of tsotsis. The gangsters take Vusi's shirt, black leather jacket, and his red sedan. Vusi quips, "We are

supposed to be brothers.” With guns pointed at Vusi, from a red sedan, the tsotsis scoff and speed away with one remarking that he isn’t Vusi’s “fucking brother.” This scene immediately recalled an early scene in *Boyz n the Hood* where the lead character Trey is harassed by a posse of Bloods in a red sedan, the same crew that killed Doughboy’s brother Ricky. The tsotsi retort to Vusi’s claim of universal brotherhood evoked the sentiment of Trey’s classmate and Doughboy’s melancholic dialogue with Trey in the conclusion of *Boyz n the Hood*. Vusi discovers that Steven is addicted to crack cocaine and is indebted to a Nigerian crime boss, Muki, who subsequently kills Steven only to be killed by Ernest and Vusi.

At one point, Vusi tells Steven to not be like African Americans who got free and then they got high. Vusi’s message to Steven represented Ice Cube’s Black Nationalist ideology. Vusi’s statement is clearly critical of individual and cultural shifts in African American society following the 1960s. However, it also reflected the existential reality of post-civil rights life in Black America where even many Civil Rights and Black Power activists fell prey to the multiple drug epidemics in the 1970s and 1980s. Tupac Shakur famously chronicled the drug addiction of his mother Afeni Shakur, a former Black Panther and Black Liberation Army member, in his music. As well, Huey Newton, was addicted to crack cocaine at the time of his slaying in 1989. Though Vusi’s statement is very individualizing in its analysis, *Dangerous Ground* implicitly displayed postindustrial bonds between African American and South African society. Neither in the United States nor South Africa was mass wealth redistribution received. Another, the limits of Black electoral representation links South Africa to the African American life specifically, and Southern California more generally. Black presidents nor Black mayors stemmed the

effects of neoliberal economies on Black lives. What is more, much like the United States, the decades following their liberation struggles in South Africa have been marred with heightened incarceration rates.

With over two million people behind bars, the United States is the world leader in incarceration. In the United States, for every 100,000 people, around 800 are incarcerated. South Africa, though not as voluminous, has a prison population around 160,000 which amounts to almost 300 inmates for every 100,000 citizens. These numbers have placed South Africa at number eleven on the list of the world leaders in incarceration.¹⁴ In an interesting twist, the South African rate of imprisonment has fallen since the height of apartheid but its prison population has indeed expanded. South Africa had once incarcerated 368 South Africans for every 100,000 citizens and 851 Black males per 100,000. Comparatively, the United States now imprisons almost 5,000 Black males per 100,000 males. American and South African societies are continually linked by globalization and neoliberal economic policies. These conditions have produced the waning Black Internationalist consciousness reflected in Trey's classmate or Doughboy in *Boyz N the Hood* or the tsotsi carjackers in *Dangerous Ground*. At the same time, globalization has shrunk the distance between people in the African World due to the telecommunications revolution of the past three decades. Despite the glimmering pan-Africanism, these bonds have not been lost. Just like in the immediate postwar years, I

¹⁴ "South Africa's prison population vs the world," *Business Tech*, 11/2/2015, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/102821/south-africas-prison-population-vs-the-world/> (accessed 7/7/17).

have argued that cultural work retained the black global spatial imaginary. Hip-Hop culture and politics helped to produce the political moment we are currently in.

Known by some as the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), immediate antecedents can be found in local campaigns like the Stolen Lives Project and Project Blowed as well as national project like Bakari Kitwana's Hip-Hop Convention. Importantly, this moment has brought together two generations with their own peculiar sets of contradictions. First, the hip-hop generation (a Black generation x of sorts) were young during the antiapartheid movement but still hold fond memories of the height of pan-Africanism. Second, the millennials were raised in a totally post-apartheid and neoliberal moment. The high-profiled struggles against mass incarceration and police killings over the past two decades has united with each other. It has also bound the post-Civil Rights generations to the earlier traditions of struggle. The most visible of the M4BL formations is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization which has many international chapters and affiliates in Canada, Latin America, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. BLM has captured the imagination of millions of people. It has conjoined African American student mobilization on the United States and in South Africa. BLM has helped to excavate the bonds between mass incarceration in the United States and the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This notwithstanding, it is indeed solidarity-plus, as I have argued, that served as the engine of Black liberation struggles from the 1960 to 1994.

With no disregard to BLM and formal M4BL organizations, the energy in this current moment is being driven by the multiple and simultaneous grassroots campaigns. Remembering that San Diego CORE began with a local campaign against housing

discrimination, in San Diego, a place that has been home to two BLM chapters, the most active campaign is in fact Reclaiming the Community (RTC). RTC is a coalition of organizations in Southeast San Diego whom, in their mission statement, battles the attacks against San Diego's communities of colors from the state and economic powers—mass incarceration, police violence, gang injunctions, and poverty—while also challenging horizontal violence. RTC organizations focus on employment training (Paving Great Futures), organizing the formerly incarcerated (Pillars of the Community), and empowering Black women (NUBIA), and against gang documentation (Justice4SD33). In 2014 and 2016, RTC organizations campaigned for the passage of the California referendums Proposition 47 and Proposition 57.

By no means revolutionary legislation, these propositions nevertheless have resulted in the release of hundreds of Black men from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As they come home, men like Alonzo Harvey and Aaron Harvey of Justice4SD33 have fought to gain employment, housing, and education for formerly incarcerated men. Justice4SD33 was formed in response to the unjust prosecution of Aaron Harvey, Brandon “Tiny Doo” Duncan, and 31 other Black men under previously unused statute that allowed people to be prosecuted for crimes they did not commit if it has been proven that they had profited from the commission of a crime. San Diego District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis had proposed Duncan's rap lyrics and a Facebook photograph featuring Harvey as her evidence. Harvey's family formed Justice4SD33, led the campaign for their freedom, and many of the defendants who had not already taken plea deals were released. RTC, Justice4SD33, and Pillars has organized public conferences, Know Your Rights trainings, and seminars for the formerly

incarcerated and people documented as gang members and those on gang injunction lists. Pillars of the Community holds weekly political education sessions where activists, educators, and cultural workers teach the public, amongst them the formerly incarcerated, about internationalism, grassroots political action, and other topics.

In spring 2017, Pillars of the Community, the Association of Black Psychologists, and the San Diego State University Community-Based Block program organized the Ubuntu Community Counseling Anti-Recidivism Project and Research Study (Ubuntu Project). A Southern African humanistic philosophy translated by some as “I am what I am because of who we all are,” the Ubuntu Project was organized to improve “the well-being and academic achievement of individuals, families and communities that have been negatively impacted by the prison industrial complex, through community-counseling and social justice education.”¹⁵ The Ubuntu Project was organized by Nola Butler-Byrd, Michelle Rowe-Odom, Jazzalyn Livingston, Arcelon Osborne, Ojore Bushfan, and a community of volunteers of formerly incarcerated people and others who have been impacted by mass incarceration. With a half dozen participants, the Ubuntu Project as inspired by the restorative justice work of post-apartheid South Africa as well as the work of prison abolitionists in the United States. The embodiment of solidarity-plus, the Ubuntu Project consciously borrowed from Southern African principles yet they understand that local unity and wellness is a prerequisite to global change.

Reclaiming the Community has also used a variety of cultural work to raise consciousness, promote unity, and empower the masses. In 2015, RTC released an

¹⁵ “A Community Celebration Honoring participants of Ubuntu” flyer, (Michelle Odom and the Ubuntu Project files).

album and mixtape project. The album and mixtape brought together over a dozen artists, many of which who hold heavy gang ties. Beyond the “We Are the World,” dematerialized cultural productions the public has grown used to, the artists critiqued neoliberalism, social death, mass incarceration, fratricidal violence and urged the reemergence of mass mobilization. “If rap lyrics could be used by Bonnie Dumanis to try to take away the lives of people, then why couldn't rap music be used as a tool of unity and to give life? As a counterpoint to the oppression and misappropriation of justice waged by Dumanis and her office, collective mobilization against these charges served to energize the RTC album project,” I wrote elsewhere.¹⁶

As well, Pillars of the Community has organized a literary project called Reclaiming Our Stories Community Writers Workshop facilitated by Mona Alsoraimi-Espiritu and Roberta Alexander, a former member of the Oakland Black Panther Party and lifelong activist. Much like the Ubuntu Project has sought to organize and engage San Diegans of color through interpersonal relationships and training, Reclaiming Our Stories similarly understands the role of the written word in processes of healing and empowerment. Participants have participated in public readings of their work and, in 2016, 19 of the authors published their stories in the book *Reclaiming Our Stories: Narratives of Identity, Resilience and Empowerment*. As the editors and workshop organizers note: “If we believe that humanity's greatest wisdom has been transported and preserved via the ancient tradition of storytelling, looking forward, it is the indomitable truthsayers that will continue to save us from ourselves examples of such found in these

¹⁶ Mychal Odom, “Reclaiming the Community: A People's Project for Self-Determination,” *The Hampton Institute*, 8/27/15, <http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/reclaiming-the-community.html#.WWVjDMaZOCQ> (accessed 7/11/17).

pages. These narratives exemplify the healing that occurs when the courageous work of introspection confronts the merciless blank page and emerges victorious.”¹⁷

Reclaiming the Community has been increasingly active over the last six years and many of the organizations have been active for at least a decade. RTC is essential to much of the work in Southeast San Diego but they are, by no means peculiar. In San Diego, there is a thriving culture of resistance which engages the past while trying to move forward. For example, the death of Alfred Olango, a 38-year-old Ugandan resident of El Cajon ignited more resistance and influenced the creation of new fronts in San Diego. On 27 September 2016, Olango was murdered by Richard Goncalves, an El Cajon police officer previously accused of sexual assault by one of his colleagues. News of Olango’s death immediately brought together thousands of San Diego residents, many whom had never been politically active, others with a long history of activism. A varied group of people came to immediate action and worked together to force pressure on the City of El Cajon, its police, and Dumanis. The Uhuru Movement, ACLU, the NOI, Pillars and RTC, Alliance San Diego, Hebrew Israelites, and other groups immediately showed up in support. However, the struggle was led by an organic collective of activists who identified themselves as Olango Village. A collective of working class residents from El Cajon, Olango Village has upheld the memory of Olango, fed the community, and remained on the frontlines of the fight for justice in San Diego. Olango Village has led to the creation of the San Diego Huey P. Newton Gun Club and the Black Female

¹⁷ Mona Alsoraimi-Espiritu, Roberta Alexander, and Manuel Paul Lopez editors, *Reclaiming Our Stories: Narratives of Identity, Resilience and Empowerment* (San Diego, CA: City Works Press, 2016).

Advisory Board (BFAB). It also led to the reorganization of the San Diego chapter of the Black Panther Party.

Undoubtedly, this local process is happening a thousand times over throughout the United States and abroad. As I have argued, this is the real engine of social movements and international struggles. Though some of these actions may seem reformist by some and others dogmatically idealistic, this project has taken seriously Minkah Makalani's proclamation that radical black internationalism is a process not an event. The Black Panther Party in Oakland and Us Organization in San Diego began with local efforts to monitor police brutality. The Afro-American Association emerged from concerns over the public administration of education. The Civil Rights and antiapartheid struggles gained intergenerational meaning and purpose in opposition to the discriminatory practices of the Bank of America. These predatory political and economic systems have not vanished. Instead, the omnipresence of neoliberal social and economic policies will undoubtedly continue to generate cultures of resistance. In the face of immense tragedy, Trey proclaimed his fraternal bond with Doughboy, despite their divergent economic positions. Similarly, Vusi's commitment to Steven influenced his repatriation to South Africa and a commitment to the completion of African liberation there. Likewise, as communities of color continue to unite in the United States and internationally, the necessary counterculture will emerge to resist the status quo as well and create the new world envisioned by our ancestors.

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