The Movement: An Integrated Approach to the Study of the Origins and Evolution of 1960s Radical Thought

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1950s and 1960s, three movements that sought to change American society emerged on the national scene: the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), the New Left Movement (NLM), and the Black Power Movement (BPM). While these three movements seemed to be independent entities with different goals, they actually shared many of the same tactics and advocated the same basic underlying messages. Historians, however, by studying the three movements separately have made it difficult to see the connections between them. What this thesis does is examine the three separate entities, in order to identify their commonalities, as part of a whole, which I call “the Movement.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. realized early on in the CRM that the black freedom struggle might turn violent. In his April 1963 letter he wrote to the public while in a Birmingham jail, King advised that “there is a more excellent way of love and non-violent protest” in opposition to “donothingism” and the “hatred and despair of the black nationalist.” ¹ In September 1963, one month after the March on Washington and the bombing of a Birmingham church that took the lives of four little African American girls, Martin Luther King, Jr. warned President Kennedy that it was becoming difficult to

encourage nonviolent protest in the black community.\textsuperscript{2} Also, a few years later, previously pacifist white youth activists, such as Students for a Democratic Society’s Tom Hayden, facing increased fear from the Vietnam War draft, and rising pessimism about the ability of the American system to change, began exploring more revolutionary and more violent means to end American social ills.\textsuperscript{3}

While white and black Americans did not always fight for the same causes, this thesis suggests that the activists belonged to a single overarching national Movement for human rights that peaked in intensity in the late 1960s. This thesis will trace how many black and white activists followed the same path during the 1960s, starting with a nonviolent-protest approach and as oppression and internal colonialism persisted, subsequently introducing the ideas of self-defense and violence as acceptable means of promoting change, and finally abandoning direct activism in favor of academia and the intellectualization of social ills. It is important to study this era’s ideas and actions in order to better understand America’s history of radicalism and racial conflict. By converging the origins and transformation of the radical ideas of these seemingly unrelated movements into one larger national Movement, a clearer picture of 1960s America can be deduced.

When used by historians, the term “Civil Rights Movement (CRM)” usually refers to a period of time in American history that began with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka U.S. Supreme Court decision to outlaw school segregation and ended with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. It is known as a period of peaceful, nonviolent protest and ideals grounded in Christianity following a

\textsuperscript{2} King, 24.

precedent set by Gandhi’s nonviolent freedom struggle against British colonial rule in India. Blacks and whites, led primarily by Dr. King, are reported to have worked alongside one another amicably and cooperatively in order to pass landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It is remembered as a time of victory, where America overcame its racist past and made grand gestures towards equal rights for all, due to the bravery of the activists who stood up to the government. What is often missing from history books are the stories of youth rebellion, from the early 1950s beatniks and poetry critical of the United States, through the late 1960s and the rise of Black Power and violent revolution. In recent years, some historians such as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall have challenged this narrow time period, arguing that the Civil Rights Movement started much earlier, to Hall as early as the 1930s, and continues today, since racism and discrimination persist. The New Left Movement (NLM) and the Black Power Movement (BPM) have been remembered as fringe movements, initially inspired by the CRM but then taking on their own identities. The NLM consisted primarily of white affluent youth, such as the students who orchestrated and participated in the 1964 Berkeley Free Speech Movement, and members of organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The BPM has historically been referred to as a sort of antithesis to the peaceful CRM. Beginning in 1966, when Stokely Carmichael yelled out the powerful phrase at the James Meredith March, the BPM, primarily led by the Black Panther Party, the BPM has been explained as grounded in radical, violent ideals and a profound hatred of white people. Many believe that Black Power was responsible for the death of the black freedom struggle because it made white Americans so fearful they retaliated instead of cooperated.  

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International fights for self-determination, such as the 1954 Algerian War for independence from French colonial rule, were extremely violent and African Americans, following the lead of influential black Americans such as Richard Wright, Robert F. Williams, and Malcolm X, followed the revolutions in Africa with a close eye because they identified with the racial oppression present in the colonies. Those intellectuals, activists, and political leaders who wrote about their firsthand experiences in these revolutions, such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Kwame Nkrumah were read by American activists and intellectuals in order to better understand their own plight in America’s racist system and also in order to come up with solutions to American racial conflict. Since men like Fanon and Memmi witnessed and wrote about successful violent revolution, disparaged blacks in America turned to violent rhetoric as well.5

Historians today are doing a lot of work to revise the “traditional” thinking about the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement and the 1960s in general. Many scholars believe that the history of this time period is more complicated than previously espoused. Historians, by looking at the period from different angles or in different ways, hope to understand it more clearly. First, the majority of the literature written about the time period focuses on black people and their involvement in changing America. There have been several articles written on the origins and activities of the New Left, but it has not been until recently that historians have closely scrutinized the overall success and effectiveness of the movement. In Hayden’s own recollection, Reunion: A Memoir, and Todd Gitlin’s The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage, accounts of the movement by

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those within it read more like justifications for their actions than historical analyses. The actors themselves have written most of the work about whites instead of impartial parties trained in historical analysis. There have been a few recent works about whites in America at the time, such as Jason Sokol’s *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975*, but Sokol’s interest lay not in activists but in everyday white Americans and the impact of the CRM on their lives.⁶

The years following World War II were a time of global revolution and historians have been challenged to view the domestic political upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s in terms of international politics. Mary L. Dudziak, in *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, explained the role of the Cold War in American racial politics. She argued that the Cold War helped CRM leaders by forcing the United States to address its institutional racism and discrimination because of the image such policies bestowed upon the United States. Attempting to improve the nation’s reputation so as to assert its superiority over the Soviet Union required grand gestures of humanity.⁷ Carol Anderson, in *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955*,⁸ exposed America’s racist policies and hypocrisy by giving an in-depth look at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) attempt to bring African American human rights issues to the international arena by appealing to the United Nations. Historians, such as Anderson and

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Dudziak, have successfully explained American institutional racism as an international phenomenon rather than something confined within the nation’s borders.

Historians of Black Power, such as Peniel E. Joseph in *Waiting ‘Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*, and Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar in *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*, have presented monographs that survey the historical impact of Black Power and challenge the reader to think more broadly about the ideology and actions behind the BPM. They argue that Black Power was more than just the antithesis to the CRM, that it had origins that ran deeper than just being fed-up with the CRM and there was more to it than gun-toting and ghetto riots. Their books have called for the historical analysis of the CRM and BPM together and separately. They illuminated gaps in study in terms of the motives of both movements for black freedom, with regard to the role of violent resistance, international reach, and the role of whites.⁹

There have also been several important works done that examine the CRM and the BPM from viewpoints other than the most famous leaders. Works such as John Dittmer’s *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, Barbara Ransby’s *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, and Timothy B. Tyson’s *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*, examine the historical period from a bottom-up approach rather than the traditional top-down. They look at individual actors who were just normal, everyday people and how their actions influenced and impacted the struggle for equality in America. These individual accounts provide for a more accurate depiction of the Movement, since leaders

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at the forefront such as King and Malcolm X would not have been able to affect change without the strong following of “local people” these books examine.\textsuperscript{10}

What the current historiography is missing, however, is the mutual dependency and connectivity between all of the activist groups of the 1950s and 1960s. All of the above-mentioned historians examine the CRM, the NLM, or the BPM essentially as individual movements independent of any others. While Joseph and others have begun to call for the importance of making connections, there have been few works that satisfactorily do so. Van Gosse, in his introduction to \textit{The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975: A Brief History with Documents}, does make claims that Malcolm X, King and others fit under an umbrella heading of “New Left,” but in doing so, he oversimplifies the time-period and takes the uniqueness out of the individual strains of activism.\textsuperscript{11} What is needed to provide the best historical analysis of the radical cultural and political phenomenon of the 1950s and 1960s is to acknowledge and appreciate the differences between the CRM, the NLM, and BPM, but, perhaps more importantly, to really understand how they were all connected. In order to do this, this thesis examines each of these movements individually, but links them together in terms of the origins and changes in their rhetoric, exposing them as parts of a whole, overarching, national “Movement.”


\textsuperscript{11} Van Gosse, \textit{The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975: A Brief History with Documents} (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2005).
Chapter one examines the antecedents of 1960s activism and what led up to the increasing intensity of the radicalism in the late 1960s. By exploring Tom Hayden and SDS’s rhetoric alongside Martin Luther King’s, Stokely Carmichael’s, and Eldridge Cleaver’s call for change in America, it is seen that blacks and whites across the nation awakened into a new social consciousness, and rejected the old ways of previous generations. Together, young activists used nonviolent and creative methods of protest to call for political changes in the United States government.

Chapter two looks at the international influence of African revolutions and ideas about colonialism in the development of American radical rhetoric. The American colony analogy, adapted from scholars and witnesses of the African revolutions such as Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, was developed and disseminated by activist leaders in order to better understand the sociopolitical hierarchical structure and resulting oppression in America. Using linkages between third world colonial relationships and the relationships in America of those with and without power, became a powerful tool in postulating solutions to America’s social problems.

The last chapter discusses the intensification of racial strife in America as the King-inspired movement dwindled, internal colonialism became more and more apparent, and feelings of despair permeated the activists’ thoughts. As blacks gained more political advances, they experienced backlash from racist whites fearful that black political and social equality meant they had to lose their way of life. At the same time, the federal government, entrenched in the Vietnam War, ignored its youth’s cries for an end to the killing and an end to the draft. The use of earlier nonviolent tactics was questioned and white and black leaders began to adopt strategies of meeting force with force. The departure from Gandhian nonviolent protest to the promulgation of violent self-defense
when necessary indicates the elevated levels of frustration among activists of the Movement.

It is the goal of this thesis to clearly exhibit how the three movements: CRM, NLM, and BPM, though acting independently were anything but. By showing how each individual strain contributed to and also received from the collective attitudes, sociopolitical conditions and language of the 1960s Movement, the reader will gain a better understanding of the American radical activists evolving ideological formation and resulting employment of tactics.
Chapter I:

Early Activism: Intellectualization, Gandhian Nonviolence, and Civil Disobedience

Traditionally scholars date the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) with the Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, in 1954 that outlawed legalized segregation in southern schools. While it can be useful for historians to pick a date to label as the “start” of an historical movement to make it easier to study, it may make it harder to fully understand a movement. Focusing on the CRM as a movement that began in 1954 with a court decision makes it harder to see what became the larger “Movement” of 1960s civil and human rights. It was a complicated time of politically concerned organizations and individuals all taking different approaches to seek out various solutions to a myriad of issues.

This chapter examines the multiple antecedents of 1960s activism and what led up to the second half of that decade’s heated and impassioned moment in United States history. During the years that spanned Martin Luther King, Jr.’s work in the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and King’s adaptation and expression of Gandhi’s principles of nonviolence, the 1964 Freedom Summer in Mississippi, the Free Speech Movement in California, and the death of Malcolm X in 1965, American youth (primarily those born near or after 1940) became increasingly interested in the nation’s politics, America’s abuses of its power and its people, and pervasive social problems. As this chapter will demonstrate, American youth’s growing awareness of problems in the
United States was more than a fad among college campuses. It permeated the intellectual and social lives of many youth across the country regardless of race or socioeconomic status. During the 1950s and 1960s, conversations between these young soon-to-be activists centered around current events, history, political theory, and the brainstorming of solutions about how to rectify the current state of their country.

The “intellectualization” of the movement began before the actual hands-on activism. The term “intellectualizing” with regard to early U.S. activism is taken from Huey P. Newton’s account of the origins of the Black Panther Party. In explaining his early conversations with the co-founder of the Party, Bobby Seale, Newton said that he and Seale felt the activism of the 1950s and 1960s was too much about talk and theory and not enough about direct action. Newton and Seale decided it was time to "start dealing with reality rather than sit around intellectualizing." The intellectualizing process Newton referred to took the form of critical editorials in student newspapers and members of the “Beat Generation” rebelling against their parents. In the 1950s, an attitude of individualism emerged amongst youth in spite of the attempts of the older generations and policymakers to propagate the depiction of the American family as harmonious, with bread-winning fathers, happy housewives, and well-behaved children. A member of the Beat Generation, or “Beatnik” was a defiant youth described as “beat” because it meant they felt they were “down and out” but they were still “full of intense conviction.”


New Left Movement, a group comprised of mostly white, middle-to-upper class, young individuals who were committed to bringing about change in American society.

One of the most influential and widely-joined organizations of the 1960s was the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Tom Hayden, author of their founding document, The Port Huron Statement in 1962, was heavily influenced by the writings of Columbia University sociologist, C. Wright Mills. It exhibited Mills’ intellectual influence on Hayden by being “heavily sprinkled with the rhetoric, often the jargon of sociology” and analyzing all the societal conditions and social problems of their time.\(^{14}\)

In Mills’ 1956 book, *The Power Elite*, he explains the difference between a “public” democracy of the 18\(^{th}\) century, where people acted and voted based upon their own agency, and the modern “mass” democracy where institutions, such as the government and the media, tell people what their opinions ought to be. Mills was critical of the turn from public to mass democracy, as Hayden was throughout the Port Huron Statement. The favoring of public democracy over mass democracy and the idea of giving power back to individuals was a major underlying theme for all emerging activists of the 1960s.\(^{15}\) In the Port Huron Statement, Hayden called for a society that was “organized not for a minority, but for majority participation in the decision-making.”\(^{16}\) Throughout the Port Huron Statement, Hayden repeatedly wrote in favor of the individual acting on

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their own accord, standing up against the “system” of corporate capitalism and the oppressive government led by the “power elites.”

Hayden believed that “something can be done to change circumstances” if true democratic principles were put into place. By true democratic principles, he meant “public” democracy, where the individual was the main actor, not the state. Democracy such as this included encouraging political participation amongst everyone and actively promoting “peaceful dissent” when individuals felt the government was not serving their best interest. He believed in voting, as long as the people were informed on the issues. He saw it as the responsibility of the participants in the Movement to make issues known and encourage the vote. He stated that “the organizing ability of the peace movement thus is limited to the ability to state and polarize the issues.” Even though Hayden despised the “power elites,” he still believed that national policy is “still partially founded in consensus.” In other words, Hayden believed that by exercising their right to vote, informed citizens could direct American politics in favor of public opinion.

It was the right to vote, and the usage of political power that Hayden saw as the solution to America’s social problems. “Men have unrealized potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity. It is this potential that we regard as crucial and to which we appeal, not to the human potentiality for violence,

17 Ibid.  
19 Hayden, The Port Huron Statement, 136-137.  
20 Ibid., 153-155.  
21 Ibid., 155.
unreason, and submission to authority.”

Also, notably, Hayden explained what he felt to be the highest of America’s “genuine social priorities: abolish[ing] squalor, terminate[ing] neglect, and establish[ing] an environment for people to live in with dignity.” Hayden sought to fix America, to make it richer for everyone, to leave no one out, and provide a safe, thriving place for all Americans to live, not just the well-to-do.

Hayden laid out most of these beliefs about how to change the system in his take on Mills’s “Letter to the New Left” with his own “Letter to the New (Young) Left,” published in the winter 1961 issue of The Activist. In Hayden’s take on Mill’s letter, he explained the main problems he saw in America, in terms of international, domestic, and education issues. He also explained that he believed C. Wright Mills contributed much in the way of theory and expression, “but his pessimisms yield us no formulas, no path out of the dark, and his polemicism sometimes offends the critical sense.” He went on to explain that people have a choice between submitting to a defeatist attitude or a hopeful radicalism, involving “penetration of a social problem at its roots.” This penetration, according to Hayden, had to be done by people acting as individuals, exercising their right to vote, organize, and picket and using the tools at hand to fix the system, not just “revolting in despair” against the power elite. By promoting ideas of change and the refusal to accept America the way it was, the writings of the early-1960s Hayden contributed to intellectualizing the Movement. Change was possible because the people at

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22 Ibid., 41.

23 Hayden, The Port Huron Statement, 142.

24 Ibid., 42.

the grassroots level had the ability to influence policymakers with self-education and informed voting.

Concurrent to the white youth’s postulation of ideas about change, young African Americans became increasingly interested in politics and social problems. Oftentimes, the solutions to the problems were happened upon, somewhat by accident. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in 1955 and launched a massive boycott of the city’s buses, it was to make a statement, but she had no way of knowing the mass movement it would ignite. When Joseph McNeil, Franklin McLain, Billy Smith, and Clarence Henderson sat down at a white’s only Woolworth’s lunch counter on Monday, February 1, 1960, they had no idea just how big the consequences of their actions would be, nationwide. Blair declared in a newspaper interview that day that black adults had been “complacent and fearful” and it was “time for someone to wake up and change the situation. . . and we decided to start here.” They had no long-term goals at this early point; they simply just felt it was time to do something for change. They had no idea that their actions, forty years later, would be considered one of the most important starting points of the American Civil Rights Movement.

When contemporary Americans think of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), they usually think of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. His “I Have a Dream Speech” is played on television throughout February’s Black History Month still today in the 21st century and his fight for African American civil rights has been heralded long after his death. King’s charismatic presence, and his adaptation and promulgation of Gandhi’s principles of change through nonviolent demonstration undoubtedly brought about significant change...

and the recruitment of many members into the activist movement. King was a key player in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the founding of the Poor People’s Campaign, among many others. King fought for the rights of black and poor Americans by advocating direct action in the form of civil disobedience. He encouraged people to disobey laws they knew were wrong, but to do so in a peaceful way. The main goal of civil disobedience was to disrupt the system, to shake it up, so as to draw attention to its flaws.

Young activists were inspired and encouraged by Dr. King’s calls for nonviolent civil disobedience. In the early 1960s, Howard University student Stokely Carmichael, who would later become a Black Panther, became a significant proponent for nonviolent direct action. While working towards a degree in philosophy that he received in 1964, Carmichael got involved with other young activists in Howard’s Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), a student organization whose philosophy was based on fighting racism in America through nonviolent direct action. His involvement with NAG and his time at Howard opened his eyes to the realities of American racism and motivated him to get involved however he could.

One of the first activities Carmichael became involved in was the Freedom Rides campaign in 1961. James Farmer, one of the founders of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), acknowledged that even though there were laws in place to ban segregation on the buses, there was no enforcement of the laws, due to the fear on behalf

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of the federal government of southern white backlash if such laws were enforced. So, Farmer and CORE decided that what they needed to do was “make it more dangerous politically for the federal government not to enforce federal law than it would be for them to enforce federal law.” They decided in order to do that, they would put an interracial group of people on buses, with whites in the back and blacks in the front, and drive the buses through the deep south, refusing to change seats when told to do so. Also, along the way, they would use waiting rooms and restrooms, disregarding signs posted for segregation because they thought if they challenged the southern racists in such a way then they could “count upon the racists of the south to um, create a crisis, so that the federal government would be compelled to enforce federal law.”

While the Freedom Riders did not necessarily achieve their goal of forcing the federal government to act on their behalf (instead it resulted in the arrests of many of the freedom riders), it did serve to draw attention to the actions of these youth and the injustices they were up against. Civil Rights activities such as the Freedom Rides and the Greensboro Sit-ins, not only recruited and inspired black Americans, but these events also energized white youth. White students at college campuses around the country began organizing. In *The Port Huron Statement*, Hayden wrote “the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism.”

Susan Griffin, feminist 1960s student activist, and also the writer and narrator for one of the most notable

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29 Interview with James Farmer, conducted by Blackside, Inc. on November 1, 1985, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965)*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection, http://digital.wustl.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=eop;cc=eop;rgn=main;view=text;idno=far0015.0485.037 (accessed January 2, 2010).

documentaries on white student activism in the 1960s, Berkeley in the Sixties, stated “the civil rights movement became the wellspring of student activism and inspired our entire generation.” Beginning with peaceful demonstrations to protest the “communist witch-hunt” hearings of the House Un-American Committee (HUAC) on May 13, 1960, through the 1964 Free Speech Movement, students on The University of California-Berkeley’s campus banded together to tackle what they felt was oppression by the older generation. They felt the stifling of their constitutional rights, such as the right to speak their own political opinion, was comparable to the oppression of blacks in the south who were also denied their constitutional rights.31

A few years later, Eldridge Cleaver, who would become one of the leaders of the Black Panther Party, called this newfound awareness of oppression in white youth the ability to see with “black vision.” After Cleaver obtained contraband issues of an American politically progressive publication, Ramparts Magazine, in the early 1960s, where he read about what white radicals were doing at colleges and lunch counters around the country, he started to believe there might be hope for at least a faction of the white race. Cleaver was especially encouraged by sit-ins of the college students, which he believed showed that some whites might finally be “waking into consciousness.”32 He noted the “tools” of rebellion of white youth as growing long hair, learning new dances, partaking in Negro music, using marijuana, and adopting a “mystical attitude toward


sex.” These tools were used to reject the lifestyles their parents’ generation bestowed upon them.

Cleaver believed that the rebellion of the white youth went through four distinguishable phases. First, these youth rejected conformity, as seen in their use of the previously mentioned “tools.” The second phase was to actively seek out ways to change themselves. Whether it was through using the “tools” of rebellion to change their outward appearance or taking measures to change their thoughts and their inner selves, the youth were committed to being different and distinct from their elders. The third phase was to join African-American demonstrations, which imbued white youth with a racial conscience, or an awareness of the institutional racism in America. The last phase the white youth went through was to use the techniques learned from the African-American demonstrations to attack social problems at their root causes. Cleaver saw Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement as a “classic example of this new energy in action.”

In 1968, Cleaver helped spread this “energy” by traveling up and down the west coast speaking at universities and youth rallies. It was part of a movement to wake up the young people to the realities of politics and get them to “cuss out the dogs.” He had a way of getting the college youth, white and black, motivated and rallying behind him. Reporting back to Black Panther Party founder, Bobby Seale, about one such speech at a Catholic all girls’ school, Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party, David Hilliard said,

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33 Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 75.


“He was at a Catholic girls’ college, a place where they train girls to be nuns, and Bobby, he had 5,000 girls singing ‘Fuck Ronald Reagan.’” Hilliard and Seale could not believe how the people responded to Cleaver and in turn, how Cleaver seemed to feed off the energy of the youth.

Because of their rebellious activities, Cleaver postulated that the white youth in America were beginning to be able to see through the aforementioned “black vision.” After desegregation exposed young whites to more experiences with blacks, they were disenchanted to learn the things their fathers had told them about black people were false. Cleaver charged that the “white devils” had previously intentionally kept the black and white spheres separate so they could perpetuate a “complex all-pervasive myth” that described black people as human “beasts of burden” in order to continue to justify their oppression. As whites began to interact with blacks they learned that myths about black people being less than human had no truth to them and therefore started to rebel against the lies. Due to their unwillingness to continue to accept the status quo, young whites began to experience things that blacks had always encountered, such as disrespect, ostracism, and poor and unfair treatment by the police. They began to see through black eyes.

Central to Cleaver’s growing support for the white youth was his understanding of a generation gap in the white community. It was necessary for Cleaver to separate the youth in his mind from their parents in order to see the potential in allying with them. He saw that the young whites were “appalled by the sanguine and despicable record carved

36 Seale, 261.

37 Cleaver, Soul on Ice, 77-78.
over the face of the globe by their race over the last five hundred years.” He believed the youth had replaced the heroes of their fathers, men such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, with new role models that were not typically thought of as white. These new heroes included “Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Kwame Nkrumah, Mao Tsetung, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Ben Bella, John Lewis, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Parris Moses, Ho Chi Minh, Stokely Carmichael, W.E.B. DuBois, James Forman [and] Chou En-lai.” To Cleaver, it was the realization that their parents idolized and supported a racist system and slave-owning heroes that caused the young radicals to turn to more revolutionary leaders such as these. He wrote that the youth realized the heroes of their parents’ generation built “careers [that] rested on a system of foreign and domestic exploitation, rooted in the myth of white supremacy and the manifest destiny of the white race.”

Clearly, black and white youth alike were awakening into a new social consciousness during the first half of the 1960s. They became increasingly aware of the racism and oppression of their parents’ generation and as a result became increasingly intolerant of it. Across the country, they joined together to strategize and fight employing acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, by following men such as Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, James Farmer of CORE, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. They attempted to use the elements of the system already in place in order to fix the system. They believed they could affect real change by illuminating the hypocrisy of America’s institutional racism and oppression, by educating the masses, and by getting people to vote using this new

38 Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 68.

39 Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, 81.

40 Ibid., 68.
consciousness and education. The youth joined together and fought as oppressor vs. oppressed, regardless of race and class, because of an emerging idea about America’s poor and down-trodden being similar to the colonized individuals of third world nations.
Chapter II:

The Colonial Analogy

Prior to joining the Black Panther Party in 1967, Eldridge Cleaver became a student of oppressive government systems and the revolutions that attempted to overthrow them and used what he learned to postulate his own solutions to the oppression of blacks in America. Cleaver, like many others in the Black Power Movement, viewed the black community in America as an underdeveloped colony that lacked self-determination because an outside dominant group controlled it. This chapter will argue that the colonial analogy became a vital part of radical rhetoric in the 1960s as black activists and intellectuals were drawn to the writings of those who witnessed African revolutions first-hand. Understanding African-Americans as a colonial people offered black people a sense of belonging to the larger colonial world. It also explained many aspects of institutional racism in America and offered solutions. At the same time, the colonial analogy gave whites a different way of understanding black conditions in America and the problems of the United States. In order to demonstrate this argument, this chapter will explain the colonial analogy and how it related to the American system, explore the origins of thought about the colonial relationship, and highlight how black and white activists in the larger Movement used it in America.

During the 1960s, Cleaver became one of the most influential and outspoken orators and writers of the Black Power Movement and therefore his ideas and writings
offer significant insight into the ideology of the Movement. While serving time in Folsom Prison during the early 1960s, Cleaver wrote his bestseller, *Soul on Ice*, a book that would become a political manifesto for the Black Power movement. *Soul on Ice* provided Cleaver with an outlet to vent frustrations, share his life experiences, and reflect upon what he had learned about the place of black people in the world. Recalling why he and co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Huey Newton, repeatedly requested Eldridge Cleaver’s membership in the Party, Bobby Seale said they wanted him because he was a writer and a speaker and he was “where it’s it.” Seale and Newton felt that the ideals of the Party fit with Cleaver’s already prolific writings and that with Cleaver as their spokesman, they would reach a mass audience. In their view, Cleaver could be a new Malcolm X. He was recently released from prison and, like Malcolm, could speak the language of other black men who had served time. Cleaver also piqued the attention of listeners wherever he went, just as Malcolm X did. Earl Caldwell, a *New York Times* journalist said of Cleaver in 1968 that he “was the organization’s hottest property. He was an articulate spokesman for the revolution that they espouse and his fiery oratory moved both white and black audiences.” This was why Newton and Seale gave Cleaver

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41 Conditions of Cleaver’s parole included that he had to keep his face off the television and his name out of the news for six months. This suggests that officials thought his speeches were influential they feared the impact of what he would say or do after being released from prison. Robert Scheer, ed., “Affadavit #1: I am 33 Years Old,” in *Eldridge Cleaver: Post-Prison Writings and Speeches* (New York: Random House, 1969), 7.

42 Cleaver’s ideas about American politics, racism, Black Power and colonialism can be found in his bestseller: Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968. *Soul on Ice* was a collection of essays and journal entries that Cleaver wrote while in prison.

the position of the Party’s Minister of Information, because he was, from the beginning, brought in due to his ability to influence and spread ideas eloquently.\textsuperscript{44}

\textit{Ramparts Magazine}, a leading interracial and politically progressive publication offered Cleaver a job as editor shortly after his release from prison in 1967, because of the widespread influence and popularity of Cleaver’s ideas in \textit{Soul on Ice}. Cleaver wrote “The Land Question” for \textit{Ramparts} in May 1968 while serving as The Black Panther Party’s Minister of Information. He, like many other activists in America, drew connections between the colonial revolutions in Africa and struggles of blacks in America. According to Cleaver, “Black people are a stolen people held in a colonial status on stolen land, and any analysis which does not acknowledge the colonial status of black people cannot hope to deal with the real problem.”\textsuperscript{45} When comparing blacks in America to colonized individuals in other countries under Western imperialism, connections can be made, such as a lack of political and human rights. By “stolen people” Cleaver likely was referring to the taking of blacks from Africa and enslaving them in America and by “stolen land” Cleaver likely meant that the whites took the land from the natives who already lived in America when they arrived. So Cleaver’s argument in this quotation is that these connections need to be acknowledged in order to address the problem of black oppression in America.

While colonialism in America did not take the exact same form as that in Africa, the parallels based on racial oppression were striking. Cleaver and other Black Power leaders during the 1960s studied African colonial revolutions by reading intellectuals

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\item \textsuperscript{45} Eldridge Cleaver, “The Land Question,” \textit{Ramparts}, May 1968, 51.
\end{itemize}
such as Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi who wrote about their thoughts and experiences during decolonization in order to better understand black people’s hierarchical position and their lack of freedom and self-determination in America.\footnote{Black Panther Party founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale met at Merritt College in Oakland, California in 1966, where they both studied Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X. Carolyn Calloway, “Group Cohesiveness in the Black Panther Party” Journal of Black Studies 8, no. 1 (September, 1977): 57.}

In the decades that immediately followed World War II, Britain and France found it increasingly difficult to hold onto their colonies in Africa. After the war, nationalists and activists in the colonies began to rouse the people to fight for sovereignty and freedom from colonial reign. The hypocrisy of fighting against Hitler for his neglect of human rights in the name of an oppressive imperial government motivated those under colonial rule to rebel. Also, the ruling nations’ economies and militaries were obliterated during the war, leaving them vulnerable to native uprisings in their colonies. These conditions provided the conditions for those who studied revolution such as Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi to step up to the podium and share their insights into the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.\footnote{Kevin K. Gaines, American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (1963; repr., New York: Grove Press, 2004); Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).}

Frantz Fanon was born in 1925 in the French colony of Martinique. In the mid-1950s, he moved to Tunisia and began to work with the Algerian independence movement after being horrified by stories of how the French colonizers were torturing Algerians. During this time, he wrote about his experience in the movement, as well as worked politically to assist the Algerian army. He fell ill with cancer and died in 1961,
but not before writing his most scathing critique of colonialism, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon described the state of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized as a “permanent state of tension.” Fanon discussed the colonized individual as one who had to constantly be on-guard. “Confronted with a world configured by the colonizer, the colonized subject is always presumed guilty. The colonized does not accept his guilt, but rather considers it a kind of curse, a sword of Damocles.” The story of Damocles, as told by Roman philosopher Cicero, is often used as a cautionary tale to explain a feeling of imminent danger. In the story, Damocles was terribly envious of the abundance of wealth and power of Dionysius II, ruler of Syracuse. Dionysius offered his power to Damocles, so he can see what it feels like and Damocles readily accepted. While he was enjoying all the luxuries, he looked up and saw a sword, hanging by a thread, right above his head, representing an unavoidable danger. Becoming fearful, he relinquished what Dionysius had given him. Fanon’s use of the reference here suggests that the colonized, knowing that they were always presumed guilty, recognized their position as one always in peril.

However, Fanon asserted these victims of colonization possessed an inner desire for independence and an inherent feeling of self-worth, despite what they are told.

But deep down the colonized subject acknowledges no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated. He is made to feel inferior, but by no means convinced of his inferiority. He patiently waits for the colonist to let his guard down and then jumps on him.

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48 Fanon, 16.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
In this passage, Fanon explained that the colonial subject was merely playing the colonizer’s game, but only because he recognized his current position as one lacking of power. Fanon’s assertion in this quote served to motivate colonized rebels to prepare for the time when their oppressors when were weakened. He explained that the colonized, while they may have appeared to the colonizer as a horse with a broken spirit, were anything but.

Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* was his account as a Tunisian Jew who witnessed the colonial relationship between the French colonizers and the Arab population. He felt that he had a good, unbiased conceptual understanding of the colonial situation because he was a “sort of half-breed of colonization, understanding everyone because I belong to no one.” He approached the colonial situation first from the point of the view of the colonizer.

If his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them’ the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked.

Memmi’s first chapter about the colonizer stressed this idea that the colonizer’s position of power is only because of the easy exploitation of the colonized. Laws did not protect the colonized in Africa, much like they did not protect blacks in the United States, and the more the colonizer wanted, the harder life became on the colonized.

Memmi discussed how racism was the main tool of oppression in the colonial situation. Colonizers, in order to elevate their belief in their own superiority and to

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52 Ibid., 8.
justify the abuse of those with darker skin, used skin color to ensure that the colonized person could not rise above their low position in the colony’s hierarchical structure.

Memmi charges that the colonizer oppresses because he is on a “voyage toward an easier life.” He believed the colonizer did not go to the colony with the idea of racial oppression in mind, but he was willing to accept his role in it in order to gain the privileges associated with being the colonizer. In theorizing about this colonizer who has just moved to the colony and is becoming aware of his situation of power over others Memmi explained:

For how long could he fail to see the misery of the colonized and the relation of that misery to his own comfort? He realizes that this easy profit is so great only because it is wrested from others. In short, he finds two things in one: he discovers the existence of the colonizer as he discovers his own privilege.  

He goes on to explain that, of course, the colonizer knew there were indigenous people in the colony before he left, but until he got there and witnessed first-hand what was going on, those people of color were more like a myth in his imagination. And then only when forced to understand their existence, the colonizer realized that “. . . it is this very alliance which enables him to lead the life which he decided to look for in the colonies; it is this relationship which is lucrative, which creates privilege.” Therefore, to preserve the standard of living and level of the privilege that the colonizer enjoyed, he must employ tools of oppression and racism to keep the scales balanced in his favor.

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53 Memmi, 3.
54 Ibid., 7.
55 Ibid., 8.
Memmi not only described the oppressor, but also the oppressed in the colonial relationship, as he is perceived by the oppressor. For example, oftentimes, the colonized race in its entirety, is labeled as lazy, in order to justify exploitation and mistreatment.

Nothing could better justify the colonizer’s privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized’s destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time, the colonizer suggests that employing the colonized is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages.\(^{56}\)

Memmi argues that while there is no factual basis to the colonized being more or less lazy than those who employ him, the idea of the entire race being lazy was merely another tool in the oppressor’s toolkit for exploitation because it is never considered that the level of output is directly related to low wages, malnutrition, or a low conception of their role in society.\(^{57}\)

The end goal of the colonizer in the colonial relationship was to dehumanize the colonized so as to control him. Memmi explained:

What is left of the colonized at the end of this stubborn effort to dehumanize him? He is surely no longer an alter ego of the colonizer. He is hardly a human being. The tends rapidly toward becoming an object. As an end, in the colonizer’s supreme ambition, he should exist only as a function of the needs of the colonizer, i.e., be transformed into a pure colonized.\(^{58}\)

A “pure colonized,” in theory, is much like the slave was in America. He is not human, he does not have freedom, he cannot determine his own fate. He is viewed as a labor, and his value is determined in the colony by how well he serves the needs of the dominating

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\(^{56}\) Memmi., 79.

\(^{57}\) Ibid. 79-81.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 86.
order. In the colonial relationship, the preservation of the hierarchy is crucial in maintaining the standard of life of the colonizer.

Ideas on colonization did not stay confined in Africa, as indicated by the speeches and writings of Eldridge Cleaver. While Cleaver felt that a study and comparison of African colonialism was useful for blacks in America, he also realized that the idea of colonialism in the United States was complicated and different from that of Africa. Interestingly, Cleaver did not espouse the ideas that all American whites were oppressors and all African Americans were oppressed. Instead, he saw an emerging dichotomy within white society. He said it was first essential to make “a distinction between the pigs and the people.” The term “pigs” was commonly used in the Black Power era to describe anyone who intentionally oppressed other human beings. In a May 1967 issue of The Black Panther (the Party’s official newspaper), “pig” was defined as an “ill-natured beast who has no respect for law and order, a foul traducer who’s naturally found masquerading as a victim of an unprovoked attack.” The “people” then, was a title given to everyone else – all the oppressed and those who were not ill-natured. As Cleaver developed these new ideas about a different group of white people than those he had encountered in the past, he came to realize the colonial situation in America was more complicated and unique than previous thought, because there were whites and blacks in America being persecuted by the “pigs.” He concluded that oppressors/colonizers simply


used different tactics to unjustly treat various groups: racism was the tool used to
discriminate against blacks, class stratification was used to discriminate against whites.\textsuperscript{61}

The rhetoric of African intellectuals energized others of color around the world
because dark-skinned non-Africans were able to empathize with dark-skinned Africans’
oppressive condition.\textsuperscript{62} In a 1969 article for the academic journal, \textit{Social Problems},
sociologist Robert Blauner, observed it was “almost fashionable to analyze American
racial conflict in terms of the colonial analogy.”\textsuperscript{63} He explained that the ideas of Frantz
Fanon and Albert Memmi were studied extensively and used in America. Memmi’s
description of the relationship between colonizer and colonized and Fanon’s argument
that violent retaliation was necessary to free a group of people from colonial oppression
led to ghetto revolts and calls for decolonization within America.\textsuperscript{64} In the United States,
this adaptation and diffusion of ideas by African colonial intellectuals was first evident in
the speeches of Malcolm X, one of the most influential African American speakers in
history. Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panthers was heavily influenced by Malcolm X.
He told Bobby Seale when got out of prison that “he was wired up behind Malcolm X.”
What Cleaver meant by that was that he believed that it was his job to carry on with
Malcolm’s arguments and strive to become a powerful speaker like Malcolm. Cleaver

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\textsuperscript{61} Lockwood, 106.
\textsuperscript{62} Kevin K. Gaines, \textit{American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era}
\textsuperscript{63} Robert Blauner, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." \textit{Social Problems} 16, no. 4 (Spring
1969): 393.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 393-408
\end{flushleft}
thought Malcolm “mastered language and used it as a sword to slash his way through the veil of lies that for four hundred years gave the white man the power of the word.”

While Malcolm never directly cited Fanon or Memmi as influences, his messages resonated with theirs and he often mentioned African revolutions and the value of studying and emulating certain aspects of them.

During the early years of the 1940s, Malcolm X moved back and forth between Harlem and Boston before getting sentenced to a prison term for convictions of grand larceny and breaking-and-entering in 1946. While serving time, he became acquainted with a man who told him of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Malcolm underwent his conversion to Islam while still in prison and joined up with the Nation of Islam shortly after his release. He studied under Elijah Muhammad and became a central spokesman for Elijah’s messages centered on “white devils” and freedom for black people through complete racial separation. Over time, however, largely due to his trips to Africa and the Middle East, Malcolm’s views on other races softened and he ventured out on his own, without the Nation of Islam behind him.

In November 1963, in his last message to the public as a member of Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam, entitled “Message to the Grassroots,” Malcolm X connected the struggles of colonized Africans to that of African Americans.

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65 Scheer, “The Courage to Kill,” 38. Other signs that indicated that Cleaver followed and revered Malcolm X was when Malcolm broke from the Nation of Islam, Cleaver did as well, and after Malcolm’s assassination, Cleaver attempted to rally together all the black organizations near him in California to memorialize Malcolm. Jessica Christina Harris, “Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party,” Journal of Negro History, 85 (Summer, 2000): 167.
The same man that was colonizing our people in Kenya was colonizing our people in the Congo. The same one in the Congo was colonizing our people in South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia, and in Burma, and in India, and in Pakistan. They realized all over the world the dark man was being oppressed, he was being oppressed by the white man; where the dark man was being exploited, he was being exploited by the white man.\textsuperscript{66}

What Malcolm X did in this speech was equate colonization to racial domination. He asserted that anywhere in the world, when white men dominated black men, the relationship was the same as between colonizers and their subjects. He further expounded this idea in an April, 1964 speech when he told his African American audience, “The white man controls his own school, his own bank, his own economy, his own politics, his own everything, his own community – but he also controls yours.”\textsuperscript{67}

Here, Malcolm was explaining that the American black man’s life was not self-determined, but rather dominating white men who were not even members of the community controlled everything around him.

Following Malcolm X’s lead, leaders of the Black Power Movement further developed this idea of American racial oppression as a form of colonialism. In 1967, Stokely Carmichael, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and later leader of the Black Panther Party, developed the idea into a model he called “internal colonialism.”

Black people are legal citizens of the United States with, for the most part, the same legal rights as other citizens. Yet they stand as colonial subjects in relation to the white society. Thus institutional racism has another name: colonialism.\textsuperscript{68}


\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., “The Ballot or the Bullet,” 42.

The basic idea of internal colonialism was that the oppression experienced by black Americans was different from classic colonialism in that the colonizer and colonized lived on the same land, albeit separate communities within the land, but black Americans were still subject to the same economic, social, and political oppression of the European colonies. They were, in Black Power rhetoric, “colonial subjects.”

The solution that Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton put forth in their Black Power manifesto, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, was that it was essential for black people to free themselves of the colonial rule bestowed upon them by the whites. Freeing themselves meant self-determination and self-identity and casting off ideas about integration and assimilation.

"Integration" as a goal today speaks to the problem of blackness not only in an unrealistic way but also in a despicable way. It is based on complete acceptance of the fact that in order to have a decent house or education, black people must move into a white neighborhood or send their children to a white school. This reinforces, among both black and white, the idea that "white" is automatically superior and "black" is by definition inferior. For this reason, "integration" is a subterfuge for the maintenance of white supremacy.⁶⁹

To black American anticolonialists like Carmichael, integration and assimilation were tools of the oppressor. As Carmichael explained here, the idea behind integration and assimilation was to make a few of the blacks deemed acceptable by the white community “more white.” This did not mean freedom for all people of color, but rather a “token” gesture to make it appear as though some advances were being gained.

Instead of accepting such token gestures, Carmichael, like Malcolm X, asserted that black people needed to determine their own fate, control their own communities, and

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⁶⁹ Carmichael and Hamilton, 54
preserve their own “racial and cultural personality” in order to really experience the freedom for which they fought.\textsuperscript{70}

The white power structure rules the black community through local blacks who are responsive to the white leaders, the downtown, white machine, not to be the black populace. These black politicians do not exercise effective power. They cannot be relied upon to make forceful demands in behalf of their black constituents, and they become no more than puppets.\textsuperscript{71}

In this quote, Carmichael illustrates a part of colonial politics found in Africa and in the United States, “the process of indirect rule.”\textsuperscript{72} He explained a system put forth in colonialism where black leaders are selectively chosen by their loyalty to the white dominating group and thereby gives an impression of a black-led community when, in fact, the political leaders of color were mere figureheads who looked out for the white society’s needs instead of that of their own people.

While the colonial analogy was primarily used by blacks to explain their unique conditions in America, white scholars and activists in America also referenced to it both to better understand the black experience in America and to highlight problems in the American government. In a 1969 article written for the \textit{Negro American Literature Forum} to discuss the writings of Eldridge Cleaver, white author Robert Gilman gave his first hand impression: “In far more than a metaphorical sense American Negroes are a ‘colonial’ people (it is the coherence they find with their own experience that make Fanon's reflections on Africa so useful and inspiring a book to the leaders of the black

\textsuperscript{70} Carmichael and Hamilton., 50-55.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 10.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 10.
Years earlier, Tom Hayden, founder of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) wrote in SDS’s manifesto, *The Port Huron Statement*, that

> The worldwide upsurge of dark peoples against white colonial domination, stirred the aspiration and created an urgency among American Negroes, while simultaneously it threatened the power structure of the United States enough to produce concessions to the Negro.

Here Hayden acknowledged how worldwide political conditions shaped American politics, particularly how decolonization motivated blacks in America to band together. While Hayden stated that the U.S. government granted some of the demands of black people, he went on to explain that this should not have been viewed as a “harbinger of change” but a “proclamation” that was “keyed to improving the American ‘image.’”

The American government’s concessions in response to black uprisings led by ideas of internal colonialism served to illuminate further the corruption in the American political system. Hayden illustrated this point by using the example of *the Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision of 1954 that ordered schools to desegregate. He said that on the surface the *Brown* decision made the American government look as though they were making a great step towards progress when in reality it was just a charade for their global image. According to Hayden, this charade is

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75 Ibid., 112.

“reflected as such in the fraction of Southern school districts which have desegregated, with federal officials doing little to spur the process.”

The establishment of a correlation between the relationship of Africans and their colonial rulers and African Americans and white Americans was very important to the development of radical rhetoric in the United States. Beginning with Malcolm X, and really emerging in the late 1960s with Black Power leaders as well as white radical leaders such as Tom Hayden, leaders in the Movement used this analogy to help black Americans understand what was happening to them. Also, once this idea was established, referring to successful African revolutions against their colonial masters provided suggestions for solutions to the African American condition.

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Chapter III:

A Case for Violence in the Peace Movement

By the end of the 1960s, the three movements, the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), the Black Power Movement (BPM) and the New Left Movement (NLM), shifted from employing the tactics of nonviolence to a more violent and revolutionary stance. The nonviolent protest movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a large following in the early 1960s. Several organizations were formed around the country to champion civil rights, and new leaders emerged to head up these young activists. The vanguard student organization was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced “snick”) of the South. In its early days, from its founding in 1960, SNCC rallied young southerners around an ideology of nonviolent resistance. Marches, speeches, and voting were the key ideas leaders Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown espoused to their members in their rhetoric. As SNCC began seeing some modest success in the South with their actions, young activists such as Tom Hayden in the North and Midwest were watching and devising ideas of how they could follow suit to solve America’s social and political problems. What this chapter will argue is that as the successes from the King-inspired movement dwindled in the mid-1960s, young leaders began to think about and try other means of making meaningful change happen. Referring back once again to the influential rhetoric of Malcolm X, white and black

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leaders in America began to argue about whether it would be legitimate to meet force with force. The use of nonviolent tactics was questioned as nonviolent protestors were beaten by resistors and by police. As blacks were met with increasing violence by racist whites, a distrust of whites intensified and calls for Black Power and against coalition politics rose. As Stokely Carmichael, one of the earliest and strongest proponents of Black Power merged with the Black Panther Party the ideas of Black Power melded with Fanon’s ideas about violent revolution and resulted in the Panthers’ call for armed self-defense.

Malcolm X was, again, a direct influence on these activists. Huey P. Newton said that “Malcolm’s influence was ever-present” and that it was apparent to him and Bobby Seale that although Malcolm’s Organization of Afro-American Unity never came to fruition due to Malcolm’s untimely death, it was “clear that Blacks ought to arm” for self-defense. When Malcolm spoke about violence he never called for its unlimited use. Instead, he said that black people had just as much a right as white people to defend themselves. In March 1964, Malcolm X contended that “It is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks.” However, in his April 1964 speech titled “The Ballot or the Bullet,” Malcolm also told black people that their problems with white men could be handled “non-violently as long as the enemy is non-violent.” So, while Malcolm argued that blacks had the right to strike back when

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81 Ibid., “The Ballot or the Bullet,” 42.
assaulted, he encouraged nonviolent means of cooperation amongst blacks and whites whenever possible, as long as the white man was also peaceful and accommodating.

In the famous “Message to the Grassroots” speech in November of 1963, Malcolm’s words outwardly appeared to encourage physical aggression against tyrannical whites. He said, “You haven’t got a revolution unless you’ve got bloodshed.” Even though he chose the word “bloodshed”, Malcolm X never led people into the streets with weapons and told them to kill for their rights. It is possible that he meant “bloodshed” symbolically, in terms of a difficult fight. “Bloodshed,” in this manner, could be defined as “intense struggle.” When Malcolm spoke about fighting, it was in opposition to the ideas of “locking arms” and loving the enemy that were spoken by other civil rights leaders, such as Dr. King. Malcolm believed that Dr. King’s message was not aggressive enough to produce real change. He did not advocate free use of violence by blacks, but felt it was necessary at times when persecutors used violence.

Black Power activists, following the legacy of Malcolm X, also questioned the ability of American society, as it existed, to ever be able to allow the freedom and equality for all for which they were fighting. When founding the Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale extensively discussed how “Too much money had already been put into legal actions. There were enough laws on the books to permit Black people to deal with all their problems, but the laws were not enforced.” Since the legal system did not seem to work in favor of African Americans, they would have to try other means to make change. Consequently, Newton and Seale devised a program of self-

84 Newton, “Bobby Seale,” 44.
defense for blacks in response to police brutality (and also to intimidate the whites who threatened them) that involved more direct action because they felt civil rights activists spent too much time “intellectualizing” the problem. By intellectualizing, Newton meant that there were a lot of scholar-activists who wrote and spoke about what to do, but it was time to physically do something.\(^85\) Newton said that he “learned from Malcolm that with the gun [black people] can recapture their dreams and make them a reality.”\(^86\) By encouraging black people to arm themselves, Newton felt that their plight would finally be taken seriously, and the only way they could force change in America was by using fear and intimidation.

The idea of armed self-defense was the backbone of the Black Panther Party. For the Black Panthers, it became the logical next-step in the fight for African American rights in America. According to Newton:

> When a mechanic wants to fix a broken-down car engine, he must have the necessary tools to do the job. When the people move for liberation they must have the basic tool of liberation: the gun. Only with the power of the gun can the Black masses halt the terror and brutality directed against them by the armed racist power structure; and in the one sense only by the power of the gun can the whole world be transformed into the earthly paradise dreamed of by the people from time immemorial.\(^87\)

Newton advocated the use of the gun by oppressed blacks because he felt it was their right to defend themselves. Since those oppressing them freely used weapons and violence as their tool of oppression, then it was a logical response to take up arms in the same way. The idea of blacks in America only being able to change the system by

\(^{85}\) Newton never specified who the other scholar-activists were that he charged spent too much time intellectualizing. He makes frequent references throughout his writings and speeches to “other groups” and “others” but never gave names.

\(^{86}\) Newton, “from ‘In Defense of Self-Defense’ II,” 141.

\(^{87}\) Newton, “from ‘In Defense of Self-Defense’ I,” 137.
bowing their head and taking whatever abuse was given to them was absurd to Newton. He believed that the gun was a necessary tool and provided a powerful message to the oppressive whites, and that through intimidation and violent retaliation the world could eventually become more peaceful. Newton believed that the leader of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tse-tung who supported decolonization, had it right when he said that while war was not desirable for anyone, it was necessary to use war to end war.88

Not only the Black Panthers advocated armed self-defense. Stokely Carmichael’s fiery rhetoric inspired many young activists around the country. His ideas about the separation of whites and blacks due to his growing inability to trust white people greatly influenced the ideas about Black Power he espoused. When he was a child, he grew up in a predominantly black environment in the West Indies, and like many West Indians, was not exposed to American-style racism. It was not until he moved to the United States that he became conscious of the American racism he would spend so many years fighting.89

In June of 1952, six months after the death of the grandmother who was raising him, Stokely Carmichael moved to New York City to live with his parents. The first home in which he lived in America was in a primarily black neighborhood of the South Bronx and many of the children he went to school with were of African descent, but he quickly noticed a divide between African Americans and Caribbean African immigrants, though they still all seemed linked by the common bonds of being “black, poor, and recently arrived.” The culture shock of America weighed heavily on him at times. He thought it especially odd that the children disrespected their teachers. He thought it


unfair that he could not roam the neighborhood because his mother deemed it unsafe. He
did not understand that his new neighbors in New York City would not look out for him
in the same way that the islanders of Trinidad all seemed to care for one another.\textsuperscript{90}

After a few months in that neighborhood, his father and mother bought a home in
a primarily white, Italian-American, Catholic and working class section farther up in the
Bronx. Stokely was conscious of the fact that his was one of only two black families
within his new school district, but became quickly aware that in his new neighborhood,
lines were not racially drawn, but geographically drawn amongst the youth. He did not
automatically bond with the other black children because of their common diasporic
struggles, instead he became friends with those who lived in closest proximity to his own
home, a phenomenon he described as “turf over race.”\textsuperscript{91} While he was popular amongst
his white friends, he did, quite often, receive warnings from his mother that he should not
put all his faith in white people, because she believed that when push came to shove,
white people would look out for their own best interests over his.\textsuperscript{92} The influence of his
mother’s leeriness about the motives of whites would emerge from Carmichael’s adult
speeches and writings about Black Power later in his life.

Because of his mother’s efforts to keep Stokely focused on school, he was able to
attend college at Howard University, where he received a degree in philosophy in 1964.
It was during this time at Howard that Carmichael got involved with student activism in
the form of Howard’s SNCC affiliate, the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG). His
involvement with NAG and his time at Howard really opened young Carmichael’s eyes

\textsuperscript{90}Carmichael and Thelwell, 44-59.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 60-63.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., 66.
to the realities of American racism and motivated him to get involved however he could. He began participating in Freedom Rides during 1961, resulting in his first arrest in Mississippi. He would be arrested several more times for political reasons over the next few years.\textsuperscript{93}

After graduating from Howard University, Carmichael became a project director for voting registration drives in Lowndes County, Alabama during 1964’s Freedom Summer. He quickly gained respect as a leader and an orator amongst his peers in Lowndes County. Before his involvement in Lowndes, Carmichael often worked side by side with whites and did not realize the dangers involved for them or think twice about trusting anyone who desired to fight racism. However, it was during the work he did in Lowndes County that he really started to struggle with the idea of what he believed the role of the white activist should be in the struggle for equality and civil rights.

A few whites were working in Selma and some of the other counties, but not in Lowndes. This was not because we had any formal policy of excluding them, we simply did not encourage them. At that time, it was really like operating behind enemy lines. We discussed the question among ourselves. The general feeling was that we couldn’t, on principle, exclude anyone who genuinely wanted to struggle against racism. On principle. But as a practical matter, under the objective conditions, we found it would have been foolhardy, even irresponsible to bring in whites.\textsuperscript{94}

The reason Carmichael felt it was irresponsible was because of the dangers it presented for whites to be associated with the Black Freedom Movement in the Deep South. A young white man named Jonathan Daniels who was studying to be a priest approached Stokely in Lowndes and said he wanted to help. While Stokely was reluctant, he just

\textsuperscript{93} Joseph, 124-127.

\textsuperscript{94} Carmichael and Thelwell, 466.
couldn’t turn the man away. Unfortunately, Carmichael’s fears about the safety of white involvement “behind enemy lines” proved true in Daniels’ case as the young white priest-to-be was murdered by a hitman for the Ku Klux Klan because of his involvement with Carmichael and the others. The event weighed heavy on Carmichael and he felt guilty over Jonathan’s death with him for a long time. That occurrence was one of the defining moments of Stokely Carmichael’s life, and one that would undoubtedly be at the fore of his mind whenever he spoke on coalitions with white people in the future. However, Carmichael did not let Daniels’ death stop him from fighting. If nothing else, it was a sobering wake-up call to Carmichael and others about the seriousness of their crusade.  

Due to Daniels’ death, Carmichael’s repeated arrests, and his unfavorable experiences with white racism in the South, he came to believe that “raw political power, not social integration, would purchase black freedom.” He believe that there were no white armies that were going to swoop down from the North and come into Lowndes to save the black people there, because saving black people, Stokely thought, was against the collective white interests. It is at this time it seems that his mother’s warnings to the young Stokely emerge about white people and their interests. It was also during this time that Carmichael came to really espouse the idea that in order for a successful movement to occur, black people were going to have to do it all themselves. When Carmichael assumed the leadership of SNCC in May 1966, he brought these ideas with him, and they became the driving force behind the organization under his tutelage.

Carmichael, like many others to follow in the Black Power Movement, became disenchanted with the Civil Rights Movement, mostly because he felt it was ineffective,

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95 Carmichael and Thelwell, 466-470.

96 Joseph, 129.
or maybe, to put it better, not effective enough. He believed the language and tone of the Civil Rights Movement was that of appeasement, one that served as “a buffer zone between [liberal whites] and angry young blacks.”\footnote{Stokely Carmichael, \textit{Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism} (New York: Random House, 1971), 17.} He rejected the common solution of integration promoted during the 1950s and early 1960s. To Carmichael, integration meant “Anglo-conformity” which he defined as “the idea that English language, cultures, and institutions are superior and good for everyone.”\footnote{Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, \textit{Black Power: The Politics of Liberation} (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 62.} Carmichael felt that black people had to establish their own traditions and community, not merely accept the traditions and ideals of whites.

Carmichael asserted that white liberals preferred integration because it did not require a systematic overthrow of the entire way of life. Instead, it was

\ldots based on the complete acceptance of the fact that in order to have a decent house or education, blacks must move into a white neighborhood or send their children to white schools. This reinforces, among black and white, the idea that “white” is automatically better and “black” is by definition, inferior.\footnote{Carmichael, \textit{Stokely Speaks}, 23.}

The very basis of integration meaning blacks needing to become “more white” was deplorable to Stokely Carmichael. Not to mention the fact that he believed, in the end, true equality under his contemporary system was an impossible goal to achieve due to the overwhelming influence of white privilege and one’s “whiteness” in general. Carmichael believed that no matter how good a white person’s intentions were, in the end, because the system was established so firmly in a way that kept black people down, he could not
“ultimately escape the overpowering influence - on himself and on black people – of his whiteness in a racist society.”100

As these ideas about the exclusion of whites took firm hold in Stokely Carmichael’s mind, another idea emerged from these thoughts. Carmichael came to be one of the most influential proponents for the ideas behind “Black Power.” Carmichael defined Black Power as “the coming together of black people to elect representatives and to force those representatives to speak to their needs.”101 From this quote, it is seen that Carmichael saw Black Power as a political vehicle for achieving equality in America. He believed it was necessary to give black people something solid, an almost tangible idea to stand behind, regardless of the press’s attempts to claim that it meant racism or separatism. To Carmichael, black people in America needed Black Power, the phrase/slogan, to unify them against the white power structure.102

With the emergence of Black Power and the firm belief that whites and blacks could not successfully operate alongside one another, Stokely Carmichael came to hold certain views on “coalition politics” or biracial alliances in the struggle for civil rights. In response to questions about SNCC’s official stance on coalitions, Carmichael’s stated “CC is not opposed to formation of coalitions per se; obviously they are necessary in a pluralistic society. But coalitions with whom? On what terms? And for what objectives?”103 Carmichael asked these questions because, for him, the only way coalitions could work was if all parties involved saw the necessity in challenging Anglo-

100 Carmichael and Hamilton, 61.
101 Carmichael, Stokely Speaks, 21.
102 Ibid., 18.
103 Carmichael and Hamilton, 59.
conformity. In other words, Carmichael did not see whites as valuable allies until the time they were willing to cast off their white privilege and their ideas that white was inherently better than black.\textsuperscript{104} He believed that the idea of coalitions as it presently was, served only the interests of whites, not blacks. Since Carmichael had been taught from childhood that people act in his or her own self-interest, he thought the idea that coalitions based on morality or conscience as they were often claimed was preposterous. He argued that “political relations are based on self-interest: benefits to be gained and losses to be avoided.”\textsuperscript{105} Since whites were not the ones being oppressed, it would be unlikely for them to act against their own comfortable way of life. Because of this, Carmichael came to passionately believe that white groups that claimed to support blacks would always be “unreliable allies when a conflict of interest arises.”\textsuperscript{106}

These thoughts about the unreliability of whites and about whites not being able to cast off their white privilege led Carmichael, to reject King’s nonviolence approach and to advocate more extreme ways to fight the dominant power structure. The “buffer zone” idea did not work, according to Carmichael, because it gave the impression that blacks in America were passive and would not fight for their lives in the way that the white mobs would.

\textsuperscript{104} Carmichael and Hamilton, 62.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 76.
A key phrase in our buffer-zone days was non-violence. For years it has been thought that black people would not literally fight for their lives. Why this has been so is not entirely clear; neither the larger society nor black people are not for passivity. The notion apparently stems from the years of marches and demonstrations and sit-ins where black people did not strike back and the violence always came from white mobs. There are many who still sincerely believe in that approach. From our viewpoint, rampaging white mobs and white night-riders must be made to understand that their days of free head-whipping are over. Black people should and must fight back. 107

From this quote it is quite clear that Carmichael’s turn from nonviolence to the self-defense was due to his belief in the ineffectiveness of the nonviolence movement and his distrust of white people. For Carmichael, like many others, the idea of blacks not defending themselves against white attackers was preposterous. He charged that the reason that Black Power made whites so fearful was because whites realized that “if they were subjected to the injustices and oppression headed on blacks” they knew they would have defended themselves all along. This idea of Black Power and self-defense was, to Carmichael, a major component of finally being “equal” to whites because it was a human right to defend oneself and one’s community because “there can be no social order without social justice.” 108

Carmichael was not the only influential activist leader during the 1960s who came to see that nonviolent protest was not working to change American society. There were also white student activist organizations in other parts of the country that desired to work towards changing America. In 1965, the Vietnam War caused SNCC and other student-led organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which Tom Hayden founded, to increase their activities aimed towards change. Images coming back from the jungles showing the horror of war and the looming of the draft over the American youth.

107 Carmichael and Hamilton, Black Power, 52.

108 Ibid., 53.
caused them to lash out against the government. Staughton Lynd, who, in 1965, was a professor at Yale University, heavily influenced Hayden. During that year, Lynd lost his position as professor because he, Hayden, and Herbert Aptheker, the “leading theoretician of the Communist Party in the United States,” traveled to Hanoi on a trip unauthorized by the U.S. government. They claimed it was a fact-finding mission, but Hayden came back heavily affected by what he saw and the company he kept and became one of the most outspoken young people against the draft on his return. It was “the shadow of the Vietnam war cast its darkness over [Hayden’s] hopes.”

By April 1965, SDS had grown from its original handful of members in 1962 into an extensive organization of 1700 members in 44 chapters around the country with 50 staff members. On April 17 of that year, SDS held its first antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C.. Interestingly, SDS sought support from other organizations such as SNCC, but refused to allow anyone to help in the planning.

In a piece written in 1966 titled “The Ability to Face Whatever Comes,” Hayden’s language remained similar to the dialogue of change from the Port Huron Statement, but subtle differences began to appear.

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112 Morris, Jr., 189.
'Building a movement' means that however alienated new radicals might be, they somehow work in the existing American communities. If only to prevent the total closing of society, or to take real steps that create change, there must be community controversy inspired by an organized left. Without developing a human base, clearheaded about the way its needs are denied, the new radicalism will have neither leverage or growth.\textsuperscript{113}

While Hayden discussed working within “existing American communities” and “change,” his tone was increasingly colored with pessimism, discussing “alienated new radicals” who, he felt, needed to take “real steps” and be more “clearheaded.” If his agenda in publishing these pieces was to make an argument or to motivate the masses, then he was making a claim that more needed to be done, and done from a well-thought-out standpoint. Also, in another section of that piece, he wrote of “modest gains” including welfare reform, higher paying jobs, and rent control. He followed that by calling for “democratic movements” where the people made policy decisions.\textsuperscript{114} Ideas such as this were clearly radical in nature because they called for adaptation and change within the existing American system. He concluded this article by asserting that radicalism should become commonplace. He stated, “radicalism needs to become ordinary. As ordinary as the mainstream beliefs. Then it would become grounded in ‘realism and sanity.’”\textsuperscript{115} Here Hayden was espousing his belief that if radicalism was treated as a fad, it would soon burn out and disappear. Instead, he called for the idea of


\textsuperscript{114} Hayden, “The Ability to Face Whatever Comes,” 394.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 395.
American radicalism; a brand of radicalism that countered the “mass democracy” led by corporate liberal elites, to become a part of everyday life.

In 1967, in his reflections on his experience with the riots in Newark, Hayden began to lose faith in the American system’s ability to change from ground up because the people who ruled at the top of the hierarchy were committed to resist change. According to Hayden, there was “no apparent commitment from national power centers to do something constructive.” This was one of the first times Hayden spoke out against his earlier idea of participatory democracy. Hayden was beginning to think that popular democracy could never sway the “power elites” to act in the public interest.

Since Hayden was getting frustrated with the ineffectiveness of the tactics of peaceful demonstrations that encouraged participatory democracy, he began to change his language and called for a new type of public pressure on the elites. He called for “persistent, accurately-aimed attacks” to create disruption so that a crisis might ensue. Hayden posited that such disruption would “create possibilities of meaningful change.” He thought that creating some havoc in the ghettos would force policymakers and the “administration of the ghetto” to consider a new system. This idea of attacks and creating havoc mark a significant departure from the preaching of “peaceful dissent” in the Port Huron Statement, but not a complete separation of ideas, because Hayden still advocated change from within the system resulting from these more radical means.

Later in 1967, after Hayden’s initial departure from the Port Huron rhetoric, language regarding violence begins to appear in Hayden’s public statements and writings.


117 Ibid., 71.
In a *New York Times* article in December 1967, Hayden is quoted as saying “I say a case can be made for violence in the peace movement.” He followed this statement by discussing how violence in the “slums” and the Vietnam War were a direct result of the failure of democracy and asserted that he believed in resorting to violence because of that failure. He spoke about the failure of democracy again in an interview in 1968 in which he stated a new goal for the New Left: “Our goal is to underscore the illegitimacy of the government and to show that it doesn’t have any hope of governing without social change.” Again, this was a dramatic departure from the language chosen six years prior. There was more pessimism (“doesn’t have any hope”) and higher demands placed on the government without any mention of the people acting to change it. His advocacy of violence suggests that Hayden was showing signs of desperation and hopelessness in his fight to fix the existing American system.

Hayden was aware of his departure from his earlier ideas. In a statement defending violent protests he talked about how, initially, New Leftists fought “with confidence that the country was behind us. And [then] we discovered that the law serves power.” He went on to discuss how those feelings were intensified by the outbreak of riots in Northern cities such as Newark, the war in Vietnam and the draft, and the government’s inadequacy in addressing the ghetto problem. In saying that “law serves power” he was explaining the commonly emerging beliefs amongst the youth that those who possessed economic power in America could not be trusted and since they controlled the government with their power, the government could not be trusted either. He said that

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he no longer believed in talking about issues because “the officials won’t conduct reasonable dialogue.” He closed with a very telling statement where he assured the American public that the New Left was not going to shy away from the fight, but instead will “accelerate, using any tactics that seem suitable.”

By 1968, Hayden had incorporated and adapted much of the language used by other activists at the time. The phrase “any tactics that seem suitable” closely resembled Malcolm X’s earlier call for “any means necessary.” Hayden’s advocacy of violence as a means to fight oppression therefore appropriated the language of the Black Power Movement which, at the same time, drew on the postcolonial ideas of writers such as Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, who advocated the only way to be victorious against the power elite was through violent measures. Significantly, in Hayden’s 1969 book, *Rebellion and Repression*, he began to refer to the policymakers and American corporate elites as “rulers” and the activists as “warriors.” Such language shows that he felt some camaraderie with the postcolonial subjects he was hearing about in Africa and around the world. “Rulers” to Hayden and the New Left meant those who held economic power and political authority in a “mass democracy.” Also, in that book, he wrote about the rights to “self-defense and revolution as protected by the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence.” The Black Panthers, years before this was written, had advocated that using violence as a means of self-defense and revolution were their right.

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under the nation’s founding documents as well. In appropriating this language, Hayden began to link the struggles of the white youth against the older generations to that of blacks in America and colonial subjects around the world.

In a 1970 reflection piece on the past decade for the *New York Times*, Hayden’s revolutionary rhetoric came to a head. The article titled “At Issue, Peaceful Change or Civil War: A Grim Prediction from the New Left” summed up where Hayden felt the country was headed. He no longer had the same optimism he had eight years earlier when he wrote the Port Huron Statement. According to Hayden, “The Sixties were a decade of frustrated protest proving the inadequacy of the present constitutional system and pointing out the need for a new foundation to guarantee life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Here, Hayden drew on the same language as before, the language of the Panthers, to argue that the current system, as it was, was too flawed to continue. If America wanted to realize more fully the principles put forth under its founding documents, it would have to overhaul the system entirely.123

To believe a system will change simply through a new ‘consciousness’ is utopian. There is no change possible without program, organization, struggle, and conflict. A revolution in ‘consciousness’ will erode and weaken the present system, but we need institutions of protest and resistance which can eventually become the new forms of self-government.124

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124 This reflected Black Power language at the time as well. The Panthers often stressed that conflict and struggle was necessary to bring about something new, since the existing system was not designed to work for anyone besides those who already held political and economic power, i.e. white, elite men. Cleaver stated that black people had to “put themselves through
Here, he argued that overhaul would not be done by merely talking about or changing ideas from the grassroots as previously espoused. Instead, Hayden argued change was going to take a fight because the present system was too strong. He argued that the American capitalist system had to be replaced by a socialist economic system but that alone would not be enough to eradicate poverty in America. Socialism could create a “foundation of equality” but the only way Americans could realize true equality and democracy was to break down the American Empire and rebuild the nation under institutions of self-government.125

Hayden was not optimistic about the ability of the peaceful change to take place in America.

It is questionable, however, whether such a sensible rearrangement of our society will be accepted peacefully by those benefiting from the status quo presently. The alternative to peaceful change is not intimidation, submission, and conformity, we have come too far for that and too many people need change and need it immediately. The alternative to a peaceful transition is sharper confrontation, leading into a prolonged civil war.126

The white power elites, or really anyone benefiting from American society as it was, were not going to be readily willing to change their way of life to help others. Hayden, at this point, had completed the transition from peaceful dissenter to a “by any means necessary” revolutionary calling for immediate, not gradual change, through the revolutionary struggle, into a position from which they are able to inflict a political consequence upon America.” Eldridge Cleaver, “The Land Question and Black Liberation,” in Scheer, 65.

125 Hayden, “At Issue.”

126 Hayden, “At Issue.”
mechanism of a civil war. A violent restructuring of society was in opposition to the 
peaceful dissent, grassroots education on issues, and voting he preached earlier. He had 
lost faith in the effectiveness of such measures and believed something more 
revolutionary needed to be done to affect meaningful change in America.

During the 1960s, activists took on a different, more revolutionary tone in the 
second half of the decade. No longer were speeches being given that advocated turning 
the other cheek, instead blacks were encouraged to stand up and defend themselves. 
Following the influence of Malcolm X, leaders of Black Power as well as white radicals 
such as Tom Hayden started to see that the only way to fight against a violent regime 
determined to maintain their hierarchical position in society was with an equal response 
of violence. These activists had clearly become more and more frustrated with the 
American system and wanted to shake things up and meet their goals of human rights for 
all, by any means necessary.
Conclusion

Clearly, it is difficult to classify the ideas within “the 1960s” as an overarching Movement because the rhetoric, strategy, tactics, and goals differed throughout the decade at different times and for different groups of people. It is apparent, however, that trends of fighting against injustice and for human rights of all individuals prevailed throughout. Also, the methods employed in these fights followed the same path whether the activist was a member of the CRM, the NLM, or the BPM. White and black leaders began inspired and motivated to change through peaceful protest and as time went on and the racist power structure prevailed and the internal colonialism persisted, they became more aggressive, more radical, and more revolutionary in terms of speech, imagery, and actions.

To study each movement separately, while important in order to examine the uniqueness and details within each, leaves out the importance of their interconnectedness to one another. It is important to know that the CRM inspired the formation of the NLM and the BPM. Understanding the international implications and the influence of third world colonialism is vital to attaining a more complete comprehension of the upheavals in the United States as oppressed Americans realized they were not much different than colonized individuals overseas. And awareness that the main actors in each movement borrowed rhetoric and language from the same originators and also from each other lends to a cognizance of the formation and evolution of their messages and tactical solutions. Understanding that none of the events of the 1960s occurred in a vacuum, but instead had
many beginnings, many influences, many changes along the way and many ends, is key to understanding the complicated decade’s historical events and the lasting impact of those events. However, more work needs to be done about this unique period of America’s history. As it is still fairly recent history, there are many gaps in study that need to be filled. The field would benefit from further exploration of what happened in the early 1970s that transformed radical youth into conformist, conservative 1980s adults. In order to do this, scholars should look at the individual actors as well as prevailing social and political trends that emerged. It could be that the rise of conservatism was too overpowering. Or perhaps the Cold War détente, the end to the Vietnam conflict, and the dismissal of draft fears led to the downward trend of activist behavior, especially among whites, since their lives were no longer at stake. Maybe it was as simple as the generation got older, began raising families, and could not find the time or the money to fight any longer. Perhaps that is why so many activists, such as Huey Newton who initially spoke out against intellectualizing, return to colleges and academia and began writing, speaking, thinking and “intellectualizing” instead of engaging in direct action. As Peniel Joseph says in Waiting ‘Til the Midnight Hour, “the final word on the Black Power Era has yet to be written.” This is true for the New Left Movement and the Civil Rights Movement as well. Historians have only begun to scratch the surface on the study of The Movement.127

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