

**1967: HIGH TIDE OF
BLACK RESISTANCE**

by James Forman

ODE TO 1967

The year 1967 marked a historic milestone in the struggle for the liberation of black people in the United States and the year that revolutionaries throughout the world began to understand more fully the impact of the black movement. Our liberation will only come when there is final destruction of this mad octopus—the capitalistic system of the United States with all its life-sucking tentacles of exploitation and racism that choke the people of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

To work, to fight, and to die for the liberation of our people in the United States means, therefore, to work for the liberation of all oppressed people around the world. Liberation movements in many parts of the world are now aware that, when they begin to fight colonialism, it becomes imperative that we in this country try to neutralize the possibilities of full-scale United States intervention as occurred in Santa Domingo, as is occurring in Vietnam, and as may occur in Haiti, Venezuela, South Africa or wherever. While such a task may well be beyond our capacity, an aroused, motivated, and rebelling black American population nevertheless helps in our indivisible struggles against racism, colonialism, and apartheid.

The above analysis is not new to many black militants. As we struggled in the United States during the last ten years and especially during the last eight years from 1960 to 1967, we were quite aware of the international effect of our struggle. We have been molding a stronger resistance spirit, forging a greater determination to fight against injustices, developing black consciousness and a spirit of internationalism. Today we see an upsurge of understanding that we live in the belly of the octopus.

We are a colony in his eye.

We are fixed in a strategic position.

We have a debt to repay for our ancestors who were wrenched from the shores of Africa and dispersed throughout the world by white western “civilization.”

We have a responsibility to the future of all mankind but especially black people, our people.

We know this.

We have known it.

“The man” knows it, too. The man is the United States government. The man is everywhere around the world with his industrial-military complex, trying to save himself, white America, the apex of imperialism. The CIA, the warmakers, the Wall Street bankers, the Southern cracker-racists such as Senator James O. Eastland and their Northern counterparts such as Goldwater or Reagan or Rockefeller, Lyndon B. Johnson and all future managers of capitalism and the industrial-military complex—all these forces know that we are a colonized people in the United States, exploited, oppressed and suffering from a white Western racism which can never be eliminated under capitalism.

The man also knows this:

We, the blacks, the people of African descent, the people suffering the most from racism and exploitation—we are explosive enclaves.

We have given proof of our revolutionary potential.

The man does not want any more Harlems, Watts, Newarks, Detroit.

(But he ain’t seen nothing yet!)

Therefore, we must be integrated into the mainstream of Western values.

We must be “pacified.”

Contained.

Punished.

Silenced.

Imprisoned.

Or...

Exterminated.

In that order are the means to be used.

And to the man we say this:

You can only kill us, but we shall die fighting for our freedom.

We shall die knowing full well that we have advanced the cause of liberation.

We say to the man that there is no other way for us but to fight by whatever means necessary for our liberation.

We are dead already.

We are only walking corpses as long as we don’t struggle.

You have killed too many of our people.

You have killed too many people, period.

Your time is up.

We want our world, boy.

We, the colored peoples of Latin America, Asia and Africa!

A TOUCH OF HISTORY, 1947–1967

To understand the full significance of what happened in the black liberation struggle during 1967, we must first analyze some of the major developments of the preceding 20 years.

The quest for independence by colonized people around the world, which became sharply accentuated after World War II, had its effect in the United States. Many young blacks talked of the changes that must come in the United States. Many who had fought during World War II began to say, “Since we have fought to make the world safe for democracy, let’s fight for democracy here.” However, lacking a mass organization led by blacks and dedicated first and foremost to the struggle of black people inside the United States, the frustration and anger of many young blacks could not be consolidated and channeled into mass activity.

The effect of McCarthyism throughout the nation in the 1950’s also cannot be minimized. The fear of being labelled a Communist, of having one’s family persecuted, of losing one’s job, mitigated against the potential for large-scale black resistance immediately after World War II. The middle class and legalistic orientation of such popular “Negro” organizations as the NAACP and the Urban League, helped to thwart a rising tide of militancy. The treachery and abdication of revolutionary leadership in the labor movement further assisted the curbing of protest by many black workers. Guilt by association, certain words or deeds, together with a massive propaganda campaign to save the United States as a bastion of racism and exploitation, had its effect on black people.

Thus the powers-that-be bought time and suppressed the actions of many people actively concerned with black liberation. They instituted a permanent psychosis into the life of United States citizens—the fear of Communism. While this mass psychosis was developing within the United States, the military-industrial complex was fast ascending, exterior to the United States, protecting the world from

Communism and telling black soldiers in the Korean War that if they did not fight Communism abroad, there would be no country at home in which to fight against racism. The cold war and the policy of containment, as symbolized in the destructive McCarthy activities of the 1950's, had a freezing effect on protest and potential revolutionary activity inside black communities.

But the young black students who were born during World War II did not feel the chilling effect of McCarthyism so much. When most of them were finishing high school, Nkrumah was walking in the United Nations—tall, black, and proud. Sekou Toure, with his penetrating eyes, had said “hell no” to Charles De Gaulle. Images of black men in flowing African robes, sitting at the United Nations, and carrying on the business of their governments, had a profound effect on the consciousness of these black babies born during World War II. These new African realities disproved the old Hollywood images of black people as servants of Tarzan and rifle carriers for the Europeans. A new generation of blacks was emerging.

There were four events inside the United States in the fifties that greatly shaped our struggle today because of their effect on the consciousness of many black people, young and old: (1) The 1954 Supreme Court Decision; (2) The Montgomery Buss Boycott; (3) The lynchings of Emmett Till and Charles Mack Parker; and (4) The Little Rock School “Integration” crisis.

(1) In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision, *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, that school boards had to desegregate with all deliberate speed. This ruling, which overruled a Supreme Court decision of 1896 upholding segregation, had both positive and negative effects. Among black people, it became a tool with which to challenge White Supremacy. Although desegregation was not in itself revolutionary, to work for desegregation was a revolutionary step at that time because it mobilized the energies of large numbers of hitherto inactive people. They became involved in ad hoc efforts to desegregate schools in different parts of the country; this agitation often produced valuable experience and consciousness. A new stage of struggle opened, although at this point it hardly involved the masses of poor black people.

On the other hand, the decision opened the way for the U.S. government to misrepresent the goal of black people as being “acceptance” into the “American way of life”—in other words, integration. This is how the U.S. government, in its propaganda abroad, projected the Civil Rights activity which began soon after that Supreme Court decision. Years later, when a SNCC delegation of ten persons went to Guinea in 1964, we found even there an absence of understanding about the nature of our struggle.

In addition, the decision permitted white Southern politicians and their constituents to say that the government had ordered race-mixing—which conjured up images of the noble, white Anglo-Saxon mixing his pure blood with that of black people, a horrible prospect from their viewpoint. One result of this was the emergence of the White Citizens Councils, to fight desegregation and maintain white supremacy. These Councils were like the Ku Klux Klan but were usually composed of middle class whites rather than the poorer white racists. They used white power to neutralize and drive out of business both blacks and whites who took positive steps to eliminate aspects of racism. One of their victims was L. C. Bates, the husband of Daisy Mae Bates, leader in the Little Rock school crisis.

Because of these activities and others by reactionary whites, implementation of the Supreme Court decision moved at an extremely slow pace. Ten years after the decision, 96% of the black children in the United States still attended segregated schools. This reality completely contradicted the claims of “justice” and “equality” set forth in American rhetoric. Thus, the Supreme Court decision itself ironically contributed to the erosion of black people’s belief in legalism as a method of struggle.

(2) One of the crippling effects of our colonization was that many blacks throughout the country during the fifties complained that black people as a group simply could not get along together. “We cannot act as a group. Everytime one of us crawls to the top, the rest of us pull him back. Niggers ain’t shit. Can’t do nothing for themselves.” These self-destructive and potentially self-fulfilling prophecies were common throughout the United

States during the fifties. Therefore, when the Montgomery Bus Boycott started in Alabama, it had a tremendous impact on the consciousness of young people and many older people. It did not matter what the form of the struggle was—black people were getting together because a black woman of Montgomery named Rosa Parks had decided in 1955 that she was simply tired of going to the back of the bus, at the beck and call of cracker conductors. She would sit and remain seated. She sat, and thus started the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

(3) The lynching of sixteen-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi and the lynching of Charles Mack Parker in Poplarville, Mississippi in the late fifties—after black men had fought in World War II and the Korean War—further heightened in people an awareness that the time for action was now. Somehow, the crackers had to be stopped from lynching black people in Mississippi and other Southern states. Over 6,000 known black people have been publically lynched since “Emancipation.”

(4) The image of nine young people, especially young black girls, walking through howling mobs of mad white men in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957, intensified the contradictions in the minds of many of us and further strengthened our determination to do something about this damn crazy system that would permit such a thing, even if it meant “burning it up.”

It became quite clear that we needed a mass movement of black people, led by black people, for black people. We had to take certain techniques of mobilization used by the educated elite in Africa and apply them here as the first step in our liberation.

We had to shake the minds of our people free from the colonial shackles of fear—fear of the white man, fear of our own power, fear of acting in behalf of our own interest, fear of organizing ourselves into a self-interest group and placing our own destinies first and foremost in any consideration of what we did. We had to take positive actions in our lifetime if we were concerned about the future of our people.

The international situation was favorable to the development of our struggle, for the United States was engaged in the so-called cold war. We believed that it was necessary to dramatize events so that we could disprove

the lie that the United States was a safe democracy, a place where all men lived in peace, and that the blacks were satisfied with the American way.

Such a movement would have to take to the streets. It could not let its creative potential be stifled by allowing legalism to determine Right or Wrong, especially when that legalism had almost always worked to our disadvantage.

Such a movement would have to begin in the South, where racism was most blatant. While racism pervaded all facets of life in the Northern cities, the signs reading "White only," "Not for Colored," "Niggers go to the back" were not found there. Young blacks growing up in Northern cities usually did not have to face the legalized, open segregation of hotels, lunch counters, bus stations, and even public toilets which insulted the dignity of black people in the South. Usually, they could vote. The concentrated population of the Northern ghettos also created different problems and attitudes from those found in the agrarian South. It was in the South that the contradictions between American rhetoric and reality were greatest.

On February 1, 1960, four black students met at a "white only" lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and ordered coffee. They were determined to break down the caste system in that particular place—a system that extended all over the Southern part of the United States and in some places in the North. News of this activity spread like a prairie fire throughout the United States, and students all over the South joined in the fight against segregation in public accommodations. Some brothers and sisters were saying that they were crazy for sitting there but none could deny they were doing it together. Their actions had a profound impact on the consciousness of our people here in the United States and throughout the world. This was the beginning of what became known as "the movement."

At this time, Miss Ella J. Baker was working for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, headed by Dr. Martin Luther King. She wanted very much to get some student leaders together who were active in their different "guerilla" bases so that they might find ways to consolidate and unify their efforts. Hence, a call for

a Youth Leadership Meeting was issued, and Miss Baker, one of those many unsung heroes of black liberation, worked diligently to get the students to recognize their own power and potential in future organization. The students resisted formidable pressures to become a youth arm of Dr. King's organization.

Out of this meeting on April 17, 1960, Easter morning, was born the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: an independent organization of Southern students, nearly all black, who were tired of legalism, who were tired of being told to wait for the courts, who were not afraid of the man, and from whom emerged many of our current black revolutionaries today.

There can be no question, no argument, about the vanguard role that SNCC as an organization has played since that morning in forging consciousness on the path of black liberation. This is an indisputable fact!

While black students were engaging in their vanguard work, farmers and other poor people of the South who had been denied the right to vote were also raising their voices in protest. In early 1960, in two counties of Tennessee (Fayette and Haywood), the White Citizens Council tried to drive out the black people—who made up the majority of the population—because many of them were “belligerently” demanding the vote. The whites set up a boycott, refusing to sell food and other goods to the blacks. In Fayette County, people erected Tent City and began living in the tents there to focus world attention on the plight of black people in that county. This occurred at the time when Lumumba was fighting for the life and future of the Congo. The significance of his actions was not lost upon those of us struggling in Tent City.

In Monroe, North Carolina at that time, Robert F. Williams was practicing active self-defense as opposed to passive nonviolence. His form of struggle and his later exile from the United States would prove to be omens of the future for other militant blacks.

By early 1961, it became clear that we needed to reappraise our actions and discover ways in which the momentum of the movement could be propelled forward. Several important developments resulted from that reassessment. In terms of strategy, our actions centered

around the idea of putting the federal government on the spot by assaulting the contradictions between federal law and American reality. We would play off the conflict between the federal and the state governments of the South. On one level, this strategy took the form of continuing the challenge to segregated facilities. Thus the massive “Freedom Rides” of 1961 attempted to desegregate bus stations and other public facilities in the South, which were officially part of inter-state commerce and therefore came under federal law. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) initiated the Freedom Rides but abandoned them after a Greyhound bus was burned in Alabama. The Rides were then carried through to their final destination in Mississippi under the leadership of a determined group of SNCC students from Fisk University in Tennessee who said that they would die before they saw the Freedom Rides abandoned.

It was the Freedom Rides of 1961 which opened the iceberg of Mississippi. Inside that cold monster was poverty, repression, police and civilian brutality—and a population waiting for someone to act. This brings us to the second major form of activity in 1961. We would try to get black people of the rural South registered to vote—the vote being guaranteed to all citizens under the U.S., Constitution. Hopefully, black people might then be able to win local offices in counties where blacks had a majority. To struggle for the vote or for electoral offices may sound like conservative efforts, but in a place like Mississippi—where black men had been killed for registering to vote—those aims had revolutionary implications. If we failed, at least we would have further exposed the lie of “democracy” in this country and we would have achieved some organizing of black people.

The experience of the movement’s first year and a half also led to a complete reorganization of SNCC. After the summer of 1961, it was decided that we would no longer wait for spontaneity. It was necessary to develop a disciplined organization of young people who would work full time in the movement for subsistence wages.

This was the most important decision that SNCC could have made. It completely revolutionized the nature of how black people would struggle in the United States. (Even as I write this, I am aware that it is just in the last

year that the movement in Puerto Rico, Movimiento pro Independencia de Puerto Rico—MPI—has decided to create such a cadre based on the SNCC experience, hoping to avoid some of our mistakes, especially the lack of a systematic political education program.) A full-time staff would provide us with people to assure that the efforts of the sit-in movement continued.

While we were working among the dispossessed of our people, we were testing out our theories of building a mass black consciousness. We did not call it that, however; we called it an identity, a recognition that as people you have the power to act. And if you don't, no one will. We tried to use ourselves as examples that one need be afraid of the crackers.

We also decided we would not work for profits. We were convinced that making money was antithetical to working for the liberation of our people. If we started making a lot of money or receiving high salaries off of Civil Rights, we would lose our revolutionary consciousness because we would develop a vested interest in those salaries. We examined the history of protest movements and looked at the labor unions as a clear example of leadership selling out to make money. We wanted to structure our organization in order to have checks on ourselves, i.e. ways to keep ourselves revolutionary. We therefore lived among the rural people on their level of poverty. It is precisely because we lived as guerillas that we were able to survive.

SNCC had no models. We were all young, all sixteen of us who decided that we would form this full-time cadre. Fourteen of us were students who had dropped out of college to give just one year to the movement. Two of us, Bob Moses and myself, were former school teachers. I had come for life, and Bob was not sure how long he would remain.

We had no money. We had no resources as an organization. One typewriter, one desk, and a very, very small office. But there was good will and sympathy throughout the country. Our decision to develop a staff left intact those affiliated college groups in the South from which many future SNCC staff members and officers would be recruited.

10 But developing a staff was not easy. Getting the

intellectual youth to return to the farms and work among our people proved difficult indeed. Many armchair revolutionaries criticized us bitterly, calling us integrationists. They did little work themselves among the masses and failed to see the revolutionary implications at that stage of organizing people around the right to vote in the rural South.

We made one other important decision at that time. During the fifties, human rights and civil rights organizations—under the influence of McCarthyism—had begun placing in their constitutions a clause which said that they did not advocate changing the U.S. government by violent overthrow and that they did not admit as members anyone belonging to an organization with such goals. This, in effect, was a disclaimer of any association with Communism. Many of these groups went so far as to try and isolate or destroy any other organization which did not go along with that policy. SNCC, however, took a firm position of non-exclusion, based on the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and association. This led to our being viciously Red-baited on many occasions. Some groups even offered us money if we would only insert a clause in our Constitution saying that we opposed totalitarianism. We always refused. This point is important, because there was still a strong streak of McCarthyism in the early sixties. There were many groups—as there are today—which were dedicated to patching up the American system instead of changing it basically.

In this period, world events continued to have an impact on the consciousness of black people in the United States. Few people of African descent living in this country could be unaware of the emerging, politically independent African nations. Even black preachers were praying for the success of the Mau Mau, if that's what it took to get the white devil out of Africa. Many activists showed their international awareness when they exhorted crowds of our people by saying that all of Africa would be independent before we got our freedom in the United States. The United Nations and the constant debate on the Algerian War, with frequent references to Dien Bien Phu, helped develop awareness of self-determination, the liberation of a subjected people from

colonialism.

But it was the Cuban revolution, occurring only ninety miles from our shores, which demonstrated to many young blacks that revolution was possible and that total social change—the elimination of poverty and illiteracy, corruption and large scale economic exploitation—could not be voted in, but came only after an armed revolution. This realization, like the international consciousness of our people in general, was certainly more widespread in the Northern cities than in the South, and perhaps at its highest in New York City.

While SNCC continued to do its work in the rural South during the early sixties, other leaders were emerging in the North. It is within the understanding of the different problems facing North and South—described earlier in this article—that we must place the emergence of Elijah Muhammed and Malcolm X on the one hand, and the rise of Black Power and Stokely Carmichael on the other hand. The first two were basically products of the urban North, where blacks had traditionally been more aggressive. Black people in the North suffered from racism, certainly, and Malcolm X was reared in the climate of racism which pervades the entire nation. But the psychological effects of racism were not so destructive in the North; the North had at least the myth of equality, while in the South white supremacy ruled officially as well as systematically.

Thus, on the street corners of many Northern cities, the Muslims and the followers of Marcus Garvey and other nationalists were preaching separation, self-determination and black togetherness over the years. Elijah Muhammed and Malcolm X were products of an existing stream of thought, which arose from an analysis of the condition of black people which said that our problems cannot be solved without separation or revolution. After his rupture with Elijah Muhammed, who then advocated separation, Malcolm X took the road toward revolution and thereby began to galvanize the energies of many young blacks reared in the northern ghettos who were tired of the man's system

Black Power and Stokely Carmichael arose not only from a recognition of racism but also from actual struggle for social change. They emerged directly out of

SNCC's experience in the South. However, the influence of Malcolm X's ideas played an important role. The interplay between SNCC's Southern experience and the thinking of Northern blacks stimulated the emergence of Black Power.

It was in 1966, on the "Meredith March" in Mississippi, that a SNCC Secretary named Willie Ricks raised the cry of Black Power. In reality, he merely shortened the phrase "power for black people"—a goal of SNCC since 1961. SNCC had been working for black power since it first went into the rural areas to develop a struggle against denial of the right to vote. This drive culminated in 1964 with the efforts of the Mississippi Freedom Party, formed by SNCC, to challenge the right of the racist, white so-called "representatives" of Mississippi to be seated at the 1964 convention of the national Democratic Party. That drive reached another peak in 1966, with the efforts of a new, all-black political party to win local offices in Lowndes County, Alabama. Black Power, put simply, meant power for black people and it was not really a new idea.

But the intense and widespread articulation of that concept, especially by Stokely Carmichael, struck a responsive chord across the nation and internationally as well. This occurred because, by 1965, the problems of black people all over the United States—in both North and South—were becoming similar. Voting discrimination and segregation of public facilities had generally disappeared in the South after years of protest—that protest which produced the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. At the same time, the newly established political rights of black people in the South were being undermined by whites in many ways: deliberate miscounting of votes, bribery, economic intimidation of voters. The South was becoming more and more like the North. The fundamentals of racism—inadequate housing, lack of jobs, insufficient medical attention, inferior education—remained basically unchanged throughout black communities, whether in New York or Mississippi. Thus the call for "Black Power" drew substance from the realities of the lives of black people across the nation. With the equalizing of our problems in North and South, the concept evoked a national response. It had emerged from the

Southern experience, but had meaning for black people everywhere.

A whole new rhetoric and a new set of attitudes as well as policies emerged at this time. The phrase “civil rights movement,” long moribund, died forever with the birth of “Black Power.” The issue was not legal rights but power to make basic changes. At the same time, recognition of the need for black people to organize themselves and conduct their own struggle—together with the need for whites to fight racism in white communities—led to an increasing emphasis on all-blackness in SNCC as well as other militant groups.

Not surprisingly, accusations of “extremism” and “racism in reverse” filled the air. Those accusations reflected the fact that the slogan “Black Power” was frightening to white Americans in general and the U.S. government in particular because of its revolutionary implications. That government knows that whites have power and blacks do not. Therefore, the idea of poor black people, especially in the cities of the United States, uniting for power on the basis of independent political action—and against the foreign wars of the United States—represented a type of revolution.

Black Power loomed as a dangerous threat to the Democratic Party, the ruling party of the United States. It was the Democratic Party that rose to power in 1932, and remained there, by obtaining the “Negro” vote in many major cities. It was not surprising therefore when the Democratic Party, along with other rulers of the United States Government, set out to discredit and destroy those supporting Black Power.

The Democrats tried to accomplish this in many ways. First, Vice President Hubert Humphrey flew to the 1966 national convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and made a major address in which he stated, “We must support the NAACP’s goal of integration.” To the best of my knowledge, this was the first time that a President or Vice-President of the United States had forth-rightly enunciated that the United States government favored integration.

Secondly, the administration and the mass media tried to discredit the concept by associating it with

violence and by making the use of violence illegitimate and contrary to the "American way." But the realities of black life, together with the recognition instilled in SNCC workers that no white institution would stop the beatings, jailings and killings which they had witnessed over the years, forced its members to further popularize the legitimacy of self-defense and rebellions when oppression becomes too great.

A third form of attempted destruction was exemplified in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania when the local police planted dynamite in the SNCC office there, thus disrupting its work to build an independent political party using the Black Panther as a symbol. In Chicago, the local police arranged a narcotics "plant" in the SNCC office and then had a national television network accompany them when they made the so-called "bust."

Thus there have been consistent attempts to isolate and destroy SNCC through the news media (by trotting out columnists to attack SNCC, including Roy Wilkins of the NAACP); by cutting off financial support through the intimidation of donors, by the harassment of investigating committees, by jail sentences and phony indictments. It is against this background of growing strength—and growing repression—that we shall now look at SNCC and other black militants in the year 1967.

1967: HIGH TIDE OF RESISTANCE-REPRESSION-RESISTANCE

1967 was the year in which SNCC Chairman H. Rap Brown articulated the mass feeling that "if America don't come around, we must burn her down. To survive, you better get your gun." It was the year that black people in Newark, Detroit, and 57 other cities raised the flaming, armed rebellion generated by Watts (1965) to a new level. It was also the year when the pattern of resistance, countered by repression, which in turn stimulated new resistance, became clearer than ever.

Black resistance rose to a new height, not only with the rebellions in fifty-nine cities but also with tumultuous

revolts by Southern black college students. They were not sitting-in nonviolently this time, but repaying pistol fire with pistol fire, throwing rocks and bottles at the white racist Gestapo cops. At Texas Southern University, the Friends of SNCC group was charged with the murder of one cop, found dead on the side of a building where there were no windows—a cop who had actually died from a ricocheting bullet of his fellow cop.

Black students at predominantly white colleges also prepared for resistance in 1967. They organized themselves for survival throughout the country, holding conferences and forming Afro-American Student Associations or Black Student Unions such as the one at San Francisco State College.

Black high school students, too, held conferences and formed organizations to discuss their role in the rebellions. Schools in Philadelphia, New Haven, Trenton and Los Angeles were but a few of those where revolt took place against the slighting of black history in the school curriculum.

All black youth, 1967, intensified their study of revolution and guerilla leaders like Che Guevara became more important to them than ever before.

Black resistance in 1967 took the form of growing self-defense organizations, such as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in California. These young blacks picked up guns and said: no more occupation of our communities by foreign white cops. Huey Newton, Minister of Defense in the Panther group, still languishes in jail on an illegal charge of killing one cop and wounding another. But the will to survive cannot be imprisoned, and self-defense units continue to grow.

It was in 1967 that one of the original architects of the self-defense policy, Robert F. Williams, announced that he would return to the United States from his exile in Peking. In the U.S., he faces prosecution on a trumped-up charge of kidnapping which dates back to 1961.

Black resistance took the form of widening resistance to the draft. Ron Lockman of the W.E. Dubois Club, Eddie O'Quendo and Ernest Dudley were among the many blacks who said "No" to the illegal war. "Our fight is in the ghettos of the United States."

Many of the forces of black resistance came

together in 1967 at the first Black Power Convention, held immediately after the Newark Rebellion, where militants met with moderates and middle-class blacks with poor blacks. They agreed that the United States was instituting genocide against blacks in various ways—the war in Vietnam, the sterilization of black mothers on welfare, the unwillingness to adequately feed, house and give medical attention to poor blacks.

Black militants also met white activists at the National Conference on New Politics and confronted them with the realities of revolutionary leadership, thus forging a new awareness of the roles which whites must play in white communities to fight racism and exploitation. The position taken by the black militants also undercut the efforts of Robert F. Kennedy to turn the Conference into another pro-Kennedy front. Meanwhile, many activists in the American peace movement—composed mainly of whites—moved in 1967 from the position that war is bad to the position of “Hell, no, we won’t go.” From protest to resistance. From “saving our boys” to fighting imperialism. Some 300,000 demonstrators went to the Pentagon, and many were beaten; thus, middle-class whites began to understand what had been happening for years to black people in the ghettos.

But if black (and white) resistance grew in 1967, so did the forces of repression. It was the year of growing conservatism and fascism in general. With the resignation of Defense Secretary McNamara, the Military-Industrial Complex emerged as the top policy-maker on the war in Vietnam. Its ultimate aim, affirmed by former generals on television, is clearly to stop China—and probably to go to war against China.

On the domestic scene, the domination of the U.S. Congress by racist elements was reconfirmed in 1967 by the unseating of Adam Clayton Powell, the Representative from Harlem, who supported Black Power. The same House of Representatives which unseated Powell had previously seated the racist Representatives from Mississippi, despite the overwhelming evidence presented by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party of voting discrimination in that state. The House was not going to allow some “crazy niggers” from Mississippi and from SNCC to challenge its right to seat racists among racists.

They could, however, and did expell Powell—a black man from New York. And that same House went on to appoint one of the white racists from Mississippi as head of a key committee, and replaced Powell as chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor with a Kentuckian.

As for the President, his true attitude was made clear in various statements. In a Presidential speech, he told black people that they were only 10% of the population and that whites, the other 90%, would have something to say about their rights. (He lied about our percentage; no one knows exactly how many of us there are, but the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has estimated 30%—60 million black folk!) Johnson also told the local police throughout the nation that it was up to them to serve as the first and last barrier against lawlessness. Johnson could not risk any more rebellions with an election coming up in 1968. Meanwhile George Wallace of Alabama campaigned intensely for the Presidency of the United States, castigating all the war resisters and saying that if elected, he would place all rioters in jail—concentration camps, in other words.

Against this background, repression raged. We spoke earlier about the forms of repression in the United States:

Integration into the mainstream of “American life” and Western values.

“Pacification” and containment.

Punishment.

Silencing.

Imprisonment.

Extermination.

In 1967, each of those forms was used or in preparation for use.

The 1967 appointment of Thurgood Marshall as a Supreme Court Justice was an example of the highest form of trying to integrate the “Overseas Africans” into the American system. His appointment was designed to convince young blacks that there is real opportunity to succeed in the United States. One need only work hard and incur the favor of the politicians and businessmen, and one is certainly rewarded in this society!

The election of Carl Stokes as Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, is another example of protected integration. Stokes was a safe person for the Johnson administration to back

for mayor of Cleveland. He supports the Johnson Administration's policy in Vietnam. He is against a Civilian Review Board for the police. He has publically rejected Black Power leaders.

The election of Hatcher as Mayor of Gary, Indiana, has the potential of backfiring on the Administration, should Hatcher carry through on his anger against the racists who run the Democratic Party in Indiana and who failed to support his election. However, since the national Democratic Party has come to his aid, it may be that he will not take a position against the Johnson Administration.

Pacification was the method applied in Washington, D.C., where the colonial relationship of black and white can be seen more vividly than anywhere else in this country. The black and white population do not have self-government, and everyone, including President Johnson, knows that this is because blacks form 60% of the counted population. Within the last two years, members of SNCC have been agitating for complete "home rule" for the District of Columbia. This year, after failing to pass voting legislation through Congress, the President of the United States resorted to appointing a Negro mayor of Washington. The President is acting as all colonial powers do, when the natives become restless. He is trying to pacify us, the restless, rebelling blacks.

Containment: 1967 was the year in which the influence of the CIA on the National Student Association, labor unions and foundations was exposed—but people forget that there are other foundations well founded to carry on the CIA's job. The powerful Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation are two outstanding examples. After the election of Stokely Carmichael as SNCC Chairman, Presidential Advisor McGeorge Bundy called a meeting at the Ford Foundation where the discussion centered on how to isolate and destroy SNCC. Among those present were representatives of certain civil rights organizations, including the NAACP and the Urban League. Conservative American blacks with vested interests are, unfortunately, all too ready to help the containment process.

Punishment was the method used with Muhammed Ali ("Cassius Clay"), world heavyweight champion. A

black man and a Muslim, he asserted that his religious beliefs prevented him from fighting in Vietnam and refused to be drafted. He was then stripped of his world title.

In New York City, Chase Manhattan Bank—the grand designer of financial exploitation around the world—fired nine of its black employees when they challenged discrimination in the bank's promotion practices. The employees won a hearing on their case before the New York Commission on Human Rights; the importance of this case to Chase was indicated by its hiring of former Governor Dewey of New York as its lawyer. Nine black people, most of them with families to support, against all that power: the Establishment is out to crush “uppity niggers.”

Silencing: The old McCarthy Committee was reactivated under the name of the McClellan Committee. But this time the committee was not looking merely for so-called Communists. It was out to get Black Power people—all of them—on a conspiracy charge. In Kentucky, the local police officials conspired with the McClellan Committee and stole the records of the Southern Conference Education Fund in order to launch an attack on SCEF, SNCC, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Justifying their actions by a statue ruled unconstitutional ten years ago, they took possession of three truckloads of material and arrested SCEF staff workers on sedition charges. When SCEF lawyers presented the crime before the Federal Court, the Court concurred that the police acted illegally. In the meantime, however, important information had been duplicated.

Also in 1967, Congress passed a bill giving new life to the McCarran Act. Under that bill, the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB)—the investigatory instrument of the old McCarran Act—will be authorized to investigate “subversive” groups with the approval of the Justice Department. Some parts of the McCarran Act have been declared unconstitutional, but still intact is that section which allows the President to declare an “internal security emergency” in the event of “national insurgency” (like the summer rebellions). The “detention centers” (concentration camps) located throughout the U.S. can then be filled by the rebelling blacks, imprisoned “indefinitely” without any possibility of legal redress.

There are six other new provisions to this bill which makes it extremely dangerous for all militants:

1. The SACB must initiate proceedings and conduct hearings on at least one new case by December 31, 1968 or go out of business.

2. The old criteria for defining a Communist front organization has been amended to the effect that the Attorney General may declare and order to register any organization.

3. There is a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$5,000 fine and a one year in jail sentence or both for disrupting the hearings of a SACB meeting.

4. The registration of a "subversive" group is filed by the Attorney General with the SCAB.

5. All privileges against the Fifth Amendment have been revoked. The SACB itself will grant immunity to all witnesses that appear. They are therefore obligated to testify.

6. No affirmative legal action can be brought against the Board to halt or interfere with its proceedings.

In 1967, Senator Eastland's Senate Internal Security Committee continued its illegal activities. This time, it stated that it had the records of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party—stolen at the National Conference on New Politics—and that the Committee would not relinquish them. Throughout the U.S., it is a crime to receive stolen goods but this notorious racist and plantation-owner from Mississippi can steal records without prosecution. It is not difficult to imagine how he will use them to intimidate militant blacks of the Freedom Democratic Party and other organizations.

The mass media, as a pillar of the Establishment, agreed in 1967 to help suppress black resistance through a technique of silencing. The press decided in that year to stop giving quick coverage to black rebellions. Such coverage only fanned the flames of the ghetto, they said. (Their gesture was clearly destined to failure; even the Establishment magazine, Newsweek, issued a special report saying that perhaps the problems of black people could not be solved under the present system of government.)

Imprisonment: the number of arrests of black rebels in 1967 has not been counted, but it reached well into

the thousands. On June 21, 1967, the U.S. decided that it could prevent the summer upsurge of rebellion by falsely arresting seventeen Afro-Americans for a so-called plot to assassinate moderate "civil rights leaders." They tried to use the name of RAM, the Revolutionary Action Movement, to smear this group of people. The truth is that some black government spies had concocted a network of lies to silence Max Stanford of RAM and other black militants. Faced with \$150,000 in bail which cannot be raised, Stanford awaits trial in America's kangaroo court system.

In Atlanta, Georgia, nine black people—mostly SNCC members—protested the draft at an Induction Center, were charged with destroying Government property and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

Cleveland Sellers, former Program Secretary of SNCC, said "Hell, No, I Won't go!" in 1967 and was sentenced to five years in jail. Many other blacks who also refused to be drafted received sentences of two to five years.

In Newark, New Jersey, poet-playwright Leroi Jones was falsely arrested for carrying pistols in his car during the Newark rebellion. Jones told the judge, "You have no right to try me—you are white, and not one of my peers." On January 4, 1968, Jones received a sentence of two-and-one half years without parole. After reading aloud to the courtroom one of LeRoi's poems the judge stated that the poem was clear indication of Jones' intention to foment rebellions in Newark. (Jones is appealing his sentence.)

Toward the end of 1967, on Christmas Day, five people were arrested in New Haven, Connecticut on a charge of conspiracy to blow up a public building. And, as of December 31, 1967, H. Rap Brown was still a political prisoner on the island of Manhattan and a few counties to the north—unable to travel more than a few miles. His supporters were mobilizing a campaign to free him from his "preventive arrest," fearing that his voice might be permanently silenced. Preventive arrest and confining militants to one locale may become a widespread technique which the U.S. government will use more and more in the future. Eddie O'Quendo of Brooklyn is another person under the same form of house arrest.

One could say that the U.S. Government would like to encircle, isolate, and destroy a few leaders, hoping this will contain the masses of black people.

But the U.S. Government was preparing to go much further than imprisonment or the destruction of a few leaders at the end of 1967. Its new plans signified nothing less than extermination.

The Johnson Administration has been and is still devising highly sophisticated and brutal machinery to contain the armed rebellions. This included the distribution of a chemical called MACE to police departments—a potent form of tear gas that leaves its cannister as a liquid but turns into a vapor upon contact. The victims, the black people, will find themselves blinded by the gas, their eyes irritated, and their oxygen supply severely reduced. We shall be winded and dazed when the U.S. troupes, the National Guard and the local police agents use Chemical MACE on us in the ghettos of the Octopus.

In addition to MACE, the government is manufacturing riot tanks that are half tank and half-armored troop carriers, to be used in the streets of such places as Detroit, Newark, Watts, Harlem, Chicago, Houston, and all other cities with large populations of blacks. This vehicle will carry up to fifteen men. It is air-conditioned and fully equipped with tear gas, fire extinguishing equipment, rifles, loud speakers, a floodlight system, a look-out turret, and six gun ports.

This tank also has a “curdler,” a machine that makes a high shrill noise which the human ear cannot stand. Our extermination may take various forms in this country, but we shall all be permanently deaf if we are caught in a rebellious area.

The U.S. Government is researching and manufacturing other non-lethal but crippling ways to handle the revolutionary, rebelling blacks:

1. The Institute for Defense Analysis reports that the night stick is still the most important weapon.
2. Super water pistols.
3. Itching powder.
4. Sticky blobs of glue to wedge us together.
5. Dyes and infra-red markers to spray on blacks so that when they emerge into the light, they can be identified.

- 6, A large net that could be dropped from a helicopter.
7. Plastic confetti to spread on the streets making walking difficult and escaping the bullet of a white racist cop impossible.
8. Foam generators to block streets and be sprayed crowds.
9. Tranquilizing darts, normally used on wild animals, to be used on blacks—who are considered lower than animals by some crackers. These darts often prove fatal.

But the above are mere toys compared to the Stoner gun, so inhuman that it has reportedly been outlawed by international agencies. This gun fires a bullet which can go through ten feet of steel plus ten men. It has a grinding motion intended to tear up the intestines and kill instantly. A television report said that the Detroit police force has acquired one hundred of these guns, while the cities of Newark and Philadelphia are in the process of ordering them. The U.S. government is spending literally millions to produce items for the partial or complete genocide of black people.

The choices are clear: resistance or accommodation, struggle or servitude, freedom or death. White repression of black resistance has not destroyed that resistance but instead bred a new defiance. At the end of 1967, the spirit of resistance and acts of resistance still flourished.

At the same time, black resistance has taken on a new dimension: 1967 might be called the year of internationalization.

In May, 1967, SNCC formally declared that it was no longer a Civil Rights organization but a Human Rights organization interested not only in human rights in the United States but throughout the world. It declared its support of those liberation groups struggling to free people from racism and exploitation.

It further broadened its international perspective by sending Cleveland Sellers to Japan to attend a meeting of the radical peace organization, Gensuikyo, explaining the rising tide of resistance to the draft and the war by black Americans. Sellers himself, we have noted, faces a five-year jail sentence for refusing to be drafted if his appeal is denied.

In the late summer, SNCC took a strong position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. It maintained that the basic issue of the conflict was aggressive, expansionist Zionism backed by U.S. imperialism. Although bitterly attacked by former supporters, SNCC refused to waver from its original stand.

That summer, Julius Lester and Charlie Cobb of SNCC traveled to Vietnam as representatives of the International War Crimes Tribunal to investigate the brutal actions of American imperialism against the Vietnamese people and to express solidarity with their struggle. Courtland Cox also served as SNCC representative on the War Crimes Tribunal. SNCC's position on the war in Vietnam had been set forth officially in January, 1966; today SNCC considers continuation or extension of that war as clearly necessary to vested interests of the Military-Industrial Complex. It also recognizes that the war is an experiment-ground for new weapons, to be used against insurgents in other parts of Asia, in Latin America, Africa and the United States itself.

The travels of Stokely Carmichael played an important role in the internationalization of black consciousness. In July, 1967, Carmichael was granted special delegate status at the Havana conference of OLAS (the Latin American Solidarity Organization). There he articulated the revolutionary aspects of the concept of Black Power, explaining to revolutionaries from around the world the thrust of black people in the United States. At that time, many of the unsung and unknown heroes were dying in the streets of Newark and Detroit while the United States Government feebly tried to explain the contradiction presented by the 101st Air Cavalry Division, just returned from fighting for "freedom" in Vietnam, occupying the streets of Detroit.

Carmichael went on from Cuba to Vietnam, Algeria, Syria, Egypt, Guinea, Tanzania, Scandinavia and France. He talked with leaders in all these countries, including Ho Chi Minh, Sekou Toure, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyere. The impact of his trip and his message about the conditions of our people evoked many responses. But the words of Fidel Castro at the closing of the OLAS Conference express, I am sure, the sentiments that world revolutionaries feel toward the struggle in the United States:

“It is logical that the exploiters, who for centuries practiced racism against the Negro population, now label as racists all those who struggle against racism... But it will not be long before they will discover something that is inevitable according to the law of society, the law of history. And that is that the revolutionary movement in the United States will arise from this Negro sector because it is the most exploited and repressed sector, the most brutally treated in the United States; the revolutionary vanguard within the United States will arise from the most mistreated, the most exploited and oppressed of the Negro sectors....

“The drawing together of the revolutionaries of the United States and those of Latin America is the most natural thing in the world and the most spontaneous. And our people have been very receptive to and very capable of admiring Stokely for the courageous statements he has made in the OLAS Conference, because we know what it means to make such statements within a society that applies the most cruel and brutal procedures of repression, that constantly practices the worst crimes against the Negro sector of its population; we know how much hatred his statements will arouse among the oppressors.”

So it was that Julius Lester, George Ware, and Stokely Carmichael, representatives of SNCC in Havana, helped to move the concept of Black Power from the interior of the United States to a world forum at the OLAS Conference.

In August, the United Nations held a conference in Kitwe, Zambia, on Racism, Colonialism and Apartheid. Howard Moore, Jr., the law officer of SNCC, and I participated actively, trying to alert members of the world community to our forthright stand against United States policy in Southern Africa. We presented the position paper of our organization. “The Indivisible Nature of the Struggle Against Racism, Colonialism and Apartheid.”

Following this conference, in late August, Chairman H. Rap Brown called upon black people to prepare themselves physically and psychologically for the day when

we may have to form a Black International and return to Southern Africa to help liberate our Motherland.

On November 17, 1967, on behalf of SNCC I made a presentation before the Fourth Committee of the United Nations dealing with foreign investments in Southern Africa.

In the presentation we attacked the United States for buying arms *from* South Africa and for shifting some of the former Cuban sugar quota to South Africa. Our organization does not believe that the United Nations will solve the problems of oppressed people anywhere in the world including the black people in the United States. The futility of the UN debates on the Arab-Israeli war further made that clear. Still, we believe that whenever possible we should use the United Nations as a forum for airing our viewpoint.

In Los Angeles, on November 23-25, eight hundred black students from eleven Western states met at a Western Region Black Youth Conference. It was there that black athletes decided to boycott the 1968 Olympic games, thus indicating a thorough understanding of the International effects of our struggle. The Conference also passed a resolution encouraging student groups to consider SNCC as their International Wing, thereby recognizing the efforts of SNCC to internationalize the struggle of black people.

As the black liberation struggle becomes internationalized in its outlook, black resistance to the war in Vietnam will mount. Our struggle is clearly against racism, capitalism and American imperialism, whether it is directed against black people abroad or at home. Mounting resistance breeds repression, but the repression will only heighten the resistance. The technical destruction of a single organization such as SNCC would be unfortunate but it can no more stop the black liberation movement than the murder of Che Guevara can stem the tide of liberation in Latin America. We do not despair or fear the future. Too many brothers have taken up the cry: Freedom or Death. The year 1968 will surely bring the greatest repression we have seen to date. We must organize to meet the new techniques and weapons of the enemy with new strategies of our own. It will be a crucial year, a year in which the solidarity of liberation forces around the world is of absolutely vital importance.

**STUDENT NONVIOLENT
COORDINATING COMMITTEE
100 FIFTH AVENUE ROOM 803
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011**