
AHR Forum
The Black Power Movement, Democracy, and
America in the King Years

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TAYLOR BRANCH'S *AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS* stands as a singular achievement in civil rights historiography. Collectively, the trilogy covers the years 1954–1968, the time in which Martin Luther King, Jr. became a national civil rights leader and a global icon for human rights and racial justice. For Branch, King was nothing less than a heroic, race-transcending political leader who fundamentally transformed American democracy through an innovative nonviolent ethos rooted in Gandhism, the African American church, and Judeo-Christian traditions of militantly passive resistance. But *America in the King Years* is more than a conventional biography of King. The trilogy presents a panoramic portrait of postwar America during the civil rights movement's heroic age. Branch documents the activities of rural and urban black leaders, white volunteers and clergymen, and far-flung personalities engaged in political struggles away from the center of media attention. Unglamorous local leaders, obscure sharecroppers, religious scholars, street speakers, and ordinary citizens thrust into the maelstrom of the era receive varying degrees of attention throughout.¹

America in the King Years particularly revels in finely grained portraits of the presidents and powerbrokers whose iconography continues to shape the public's historical memory of this period. Figures such as John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson loom large in the proceedings, as does King's ability to move back and forth, at times almost effortlessly, between America's political elites and its racial underclass. Branch's trilogy thus weaves together social and political history to produce a striking historical tapestry that greatly enriches contemporary understanding of the modern civil rights era.²

Professional historians have, for the most part, been relatively silent regarding

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¹ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York, 1988); Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York, 1998); Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York, 2006).

² Academic historians have been reluctant to critically analyze and critique Branch's work. Charles Payne notes the compelling literary qualities of *Parting the Waters* while criticizing Branch for being at times too aggressively interpretive chronicler and in certain instances factually incorrect. "He tells a great story," writes Payne, "but not always the one that happened." Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995), 420.

Branch's work. David Garrow's Pulitzer Prize-winning study of King, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, covers roughly the same chronology as Branch's trilogy, with the economic prose and restrained analysis of the trained social scientist. Published in 1986, two years before the first of Branch's three volumes appeared, *Bearing the Cross* remains probably the most often cited authoritative historical work on King and the modern civil rights movement. Similarly, Adam Fairclough's important 1987 study, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, is a more familiar and comfortable reference work for most scholars.³

As popular history, *America in the King Years* has achieved the kind of critical acclaim and high profile among the general public that more conventional civil rights scholarship has yet to attain. Written in page-turning prose and organized around dramatic historical scenes, it turns the civil rights era into a gripping drama that pares down world historic events to a human scale. Although King is the trilogy's main narrative anchor, Branch seeks to document the major and minor events of the civil rights era at the local, national, and international level. On this score, *America in the King Years* is perhaps the most boldly imaginative history of the postwar civil rights era ever conceived.

ON THE SUBJECT OF BLACK POWER, *America in the King Years* hews closely to the conventional script and the received historical and political wisdom that casts the movement as politically naive, largely ineffectual, and ultimately stillborn. Black Power is most often remembered as the civil rights era's ruthless twin, an evil doppelganger that provoked a white backlash, engaged in thoughtless acts of violence and rampaging sexism and misogyny, and was brought to an end by its own self-destructive rage. A wave of new historical scholarship, however, is challenging this perspective, arguing that Black Power ultimately redefined black identity and American society even as it scandalized much of the nation. These new works combine critical analysis and prodigious archival research to historicize the Black Power era and its relationship to civil rights and wider currents of postwar American society.⁴

³ David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986). Adam Fairclough criticizes *Pillar of Fire* for devoting "an inordinate amount of space to Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam"; Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (1987; repr., Athens, Ga., 2001), 410. See also Garrow's highly critical review of *At Canaan's Edge: "Journey's End,"* *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2006, R-4.

⁴ Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York, 2006); Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights–Black Power Era* (New York, 2006); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999); Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York, 2003); Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, 2004); James Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2005); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2005); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, N.J., 2003); Yohuru Williams, *Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Black Panthers in New Haven* (New York, 2000).

Black Power transformed struggles for racial justice by altering notions of identity, citizenship, and democracy.⁵ Its practical legacies can be seen in the first generation of black urban political leaders who, thanks to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, leveraged black voting power through nationalist appeals for racial solidarity in major metropolitan centers; in the cultural impact of the black arts through poetry, the spoken word, independent schools, and dance, theater, and art; in the advent of Black Studies programs and departments at predominantly white universities across the United States; in the proliferation of black student unions on college campuses; and, finally, in a series of political conventions and conferences that crafted domestic and international agendas for racial, social, and economic justice.⁶ The sheer breadth of the movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s encompassed virtually every facet of African American political life in the United States and touched the international arena as well. Black sharecroppers in Lowndes County, Alabama, urban militants in Harlem, radical trade unionists in Detroit, Black Panthers in Oakland, California, and feminists across America all advocated a political program rooted in aspects of Black Power ideology. A broad range of students, intellectuals, poets, artists, and politicians followed suit, turning the term “Black Power” into a generational touchstone that evoked hope and anger, despair and determination.⁷

Violence is crucial to understanding the Black Power years in the United States. The political rhetoric of Malcolm X and his forceful advocacy of self-defense and physical retaliation in the face of violence against civil rights workers set the stage for the movement’s complicated relationship with violence. After Malcolm’s death, both Stokely Carmichael and the Black Panther Party (originally the Black Panther

⁵ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*. See also *Black Power*, Special Issue, *Magazine of History* 22, no. 3 (2008).

⁶ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*; Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*; Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation*; Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960–1977* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006); Cleveland Sellers with Robert Terrell, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC*, 2nd ed. (Jackson, Miss., 1990); Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965–75* (Urbana, Ill., 2003); Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, 2007).

⁷ On the Black Panther Party, see Charles E. Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]* (Baltimore, 1998); Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy* (New York, 2001); Williams, *Black Politics/White Power*; William Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago, 1992); Ogbar, *Black Power*; Curtis J. Austin, *Up against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville, Ark., 2006); Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, N.C., 2006); Yohuru Williams and Jama Lazerow, eds., *Liberated Territory: Untold Local Perspectives on the Black Panther Party* (Durham, N.C., 2008); Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 205–275; Paul Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2007); Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (New York, 2007); Donna Murch, “The Campus and the Street: Race, Migration, and the Origins of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, CA,” *New Black Power History*, Special Issue, *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Identity* 9, no. 4 (2007): 333–345. For black feminists during this period, see Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 271–275; Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968–1980* (Durham, N.C., 2005); Springer, ed., *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women’s Contemporary Activism* (New York, 1999); Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights–Black Power Movement* (New York, 2001); Stephen Ward, “The Third World Women’s Alliance: Black Feminist Radicalism and Black Power Politics,” in Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*, 119–144.

Party for Self-Defense) deployed provocative rhetoric that threatened domestic racial upheavals in the face of continued economic misery and social injustice. By the late 1960s, with the proliferating civil disturbances and clashes between urban militants and law enforcement agencies, the Black Power era was to some extent contoured by violence. But while most Black Power organizations retained the right to self-defense, only a small number of groups, most notably the Black Panther Party, openly advocated proactive revolutionary violence.

Parting the Waters, the first volume of *America in the King Years*, ignores the activities of black radicals. With barely a mention of Malcolm X, Branch reinforces the notion that black radicalism did not erupt until after 1960. *America in the King Years* has been instrumental in popularizing the civil rights movement's "heroic period."⁸ Roughly comprising the decade between the Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation case on May 17, 1954, and the passage of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965 (and sometimes extended to 1968, the year in which the Open Housing Act was passed and King was assassinated), this period has come to represent the high tide of nonviolent social unrest in the postwar era. Its familiar cast of characters is led by the ubiquitous King and largely precludes the appearance of black militants. Malcolm X is the single exception in this regard; usually viewed as King's polar opposite, he is presented here as a tragic figure, doomed to an untimely death that was partially of his own making.

Pillar of Fire, the second volume in the trilogy, devotes considerable attention to Malcolm X, picking up the threads of his story in April 1962 in the aftermath of a police shooting that left Los Angeles Muslim Ronald Stokes dead. Branch portrays Malcolm as an intelligent, highly adaptable leader struggling to build a movement amid growing national and sectarian violence. He offers valuable insights into the inner workings of the Nation of Islam, especially in the aftermath of Malcolm's break from the group, which resulted in his assassination on February 21, 1965.

Yet Malcolm's presence serves primarily to enrich King's stature. Branch's mostly sympathetic portrait of Malcolm views him principally as a brilliant public speaker who was angered by the inability of civil rights leaders to offer more robust solutions beyond sit-ins, marches, and boycotts. He is depicted as less a political leader than a charismatic icon who unleashed words of fire that illustrated the limits of Black Muslim orthodoxy as well as his own inability to proactively ignite the revolution he so often predicted.⁹

IF KING'S STORY HIGHLIGHTS the ultimate resilience of democracy, America during the arc of Malcolm X's political career imparts equally important lessons about issues of race, violence, poverty, and democracy that continue to resonate. Malcolm, in many ways Black Power's most enduring symbol, serves as a powerful metaphor for black activism and American democracy in the postwar era. Like most writers of this era, Branch views Malcolm as a compelling but ultimately tragic figure. Tellingly, Malcolm's grassroots political organizing, supple political instincts, and brilliant in-

⁸ Peniel E. Joseph, "Black Power's Powerful Legacy," *Chronicle Review*, July 21, 2006, B6-B8.

⁹ Branch, *Pillar of Fire*, 3-20, 78-85, 96-98, 184-186, 200-203, 251-262, 312-320, 328-329, 332, 345-349, 380-381, 384-386, 500-502, 538-540, 572-575.

tellectual analysis of race, democracy, and U.S. domestic and foreign policy recede to the background. His relationship with civil rights–era radicals is rendered invisible at the expense of a more complicated portrait of the times. Hard divisions between the groups involved have allowed the civil rights movement to be hailed as the harbinger of important democratic surges and Black Power to be portrayed as a destructive, at times blatantly misguided movement that promoted rioting over political legislation, violence over diplomacy, and racial separatism over constructive interracial engagement. Embedding civil rights and Black Power activists in their historical context alters this portrait. The two groups may have occupied distinct branches, but they are part of the same historical family tree.¹⁰

Malcolm X arrived in Harlem in 1954, the same year the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown* decision, and he quickly emerged as a powerful local leader whose appeal transcended the sectarianism of the Nation of Islam. Pushing the origins of the Black Power movement to 1954, the year Malcolm took over the Nation of Islam’s Temple No. 7 in Harlem, both complicates and enriches historical understanding of the civil rights and Black Power eras. In the historical context that emerges, civil rights activists and early Black Power militants exist side by side within a political landscape bound by the constraints of the Cold War, yet simultaneously emboldened by upheavals in Africa, Latin America, and the larger Third World. Black Power, like the modern civil rights movement, emerged out of the hotbed of global political struggles that marked the postwar world.¹¹

Tapping into the lower frequencies of the postwar era provides us with glimpses of a panoramic black freedom struggle in which Black Power militancy paralleled, and at times overlapped with, the heroic period of the civil rights era. Early Black Power activists were simultaneously inspired and repulsed by the struggles for civil rights in the Deep South that riveted the nation and much of the world during the 1950s and early 1960s. Malcolm X crafted coalitions that stretched from New York to Los Angeles during the 1950s, and in the process he helped to nurture centers for radical black political activism. Advocating political self-determination, racial pride, and the relationship between African Americans and the Third World, northern

¹⁰ I refer to this new scholarship as “Black Power Studies.” See Peniel E. Joseph, “Black Liberation without Apology: Reconceptualizing the Black Power Movement” and all the essays in special two-volume issues of *The Black Scholar* 31, no. 3–4 (2001) and 32, no. 1 (2002). See also Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*; and *New Black Power History*, Special Issue, *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Identity* 9, no. 4 (2007).

¹¹ Joseph, *Waiting ‘til the Midnight Hour*, 9–34. The new scholarship on the intersection of the Cold War, black internationalism, and American democracy is equally suggestive for scholars and students of Black Power. See, for example, Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the African American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany, N.Y., 1986); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1996); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997); Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J., 2000); Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge, 2003); George White, Jr., *Holding the Line: Race, Racism, and American Foreign Policy toward Africa, 1953–1961* (Lanham, Md., 2005); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Race Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2002); Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006).

black militants set out to reshape American democracy. Around this same time, NAACP activist Robert F. Williams captured international attention, engaging in a sharp dialogue with King about the merits of nonviolence versus self-defense.¹² In 1961, militants in New York City, including LeRoi Jones and Maya Angelou, staged raucous demonstrations at the United Nations to protest the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of the Republic of the Congo. That same year, black college students in Ohio formed what would become the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), a group that anticipated aspects of the Black Panther Party's call for an armed political revolution. In Detroit, radicals formed the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL), hosted Malcolm X during his frequent visits, and staged militant protests against urban renewal plans.

Taking part in demonstrations, rallies, and bruising protests that focused on bread-and-butter issues such as education, housing, and employment, early Black Power activists regarded Malcolm X as the national spokesman for an unnamed movement that both diverged from and intersected with conventional civil rights struggles.¹³ Perhaps the most striking example is the June 23, 1963, "Freedom Walk" in Detroit. Organized as a sympathy march in support of civil rights efforts in Birmingham, it featured King as the keynote speaker and local radicals such as Albert Cleage, a minister and Malcolm X ally who had helped organize the demonstration. The march was a huge success, drawing an estimated crowd of 125,000. The minister of the Central Congregational Church and an activist who participated in both conventional civil rights struggles and more confrontational tactics, Cleage shared King's belief in the social gospel. Even Malcolm X, so often situated as King's diametric opposite, critically engaged the very idea of American democracy in numerous speeches and interviews. At the founding rally for the Organization for Afro-American Unity on June 28, 1964, Malcolm went so far as to hold up the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as personifying "the essence of man-kind's hopes and good intentions."¹⁴ In truth, a generation of Black Power activists came of age and gained their first taste of organizing during the high tide of the modern civil rights movement from 1954 to 1965. Ranging from the iconic to the obscure, those activists fit outside the master narrative of our national civil rights history.¹⁵

THE DECADE AFTER THE PASSAGE of the Voting Rights Act witnessed massive, at times brutally disruptive democratic impulses that continue to defy historical explanation and pat analysis. The rawness of this political explosion was embodied in the Black Power movement. Although it was in 1966 that the cry for "Black Power" broke through the commotion of everyday politics, the sentiment behind the slogan preceded Stokely Carmichael's defiant declaration. Even before there was a group of self-identified "Black Power" activists, African American radicals—represented by

¹² Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 192.

¹³ See Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 68–94.

¹⁴ Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary: Speeches, Interviews and a Letter*, ed. George Breitman (New York, 1970), 40.

¹⁵ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*; Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*; Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement*; Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960–1975* (Chicago, 2007).

the likes of Paul Robeson, Lorraine Hansberry, Malcolm X, Robert Williams, Gloria Richardson, and William Worthy—were working alongside civil rights activists in the black freedom movement. While Black Power activists subscribed to different interpretations of American history, racial slavery, and economic exploitation than their civil rights counterparts, the two movements grew organically out of the same era, and simultaneously inspired, critiqued, and antagonized each other. The assassination of King, the decline of the New Left, urban rebellions, and the end of national civil rights legislation have positioned 1968 as a watershed year that saw the conclusion of the freedom struggles unofficially ignited by *Brown*.

Careful historical analysis refutes this description. For African American political activists, along with certain sectors of the New Left, the murder trial of Black Panther Party co-founder Huey P. Newton inspired new levels of organizational dedication and community activism. Carmichael's "Free Huey" speeches in Oakland and Los Angeles on February 17 and 18, 1968, galvanized support for the Panthers and helped to turn the group into an international symbol of militancy. Black radicalism grew after 1968, ushering in new waves of cultural militancy, intellectual innovation, political unity, and international awareness that transformed the first half of the 1970s into one of America's most richly tumultuous times. Black Power loomed over the nation in 1968 in ways that are still being chronicled. If anti-war demonstrations, civil rights, and student protests were unpredictable political storms that intermittently wreaked havoc on American society, Black Power was a weather pattern whose own internal dynamics impacted and shaped parallel movements for social justice.¹⁶

In short, Black Power is perhaps the least understood of the insurgent social and political movements that are most commonly associated with the 1960s. The Black Power era (1954–1975) remains a controversial and understudied period in American history, yet it is undoubtedly one of the richest periods for historical research. America's Black Power years paralleled the golden age of modern civil rights activism, a period that witnessed the rise of iconic political leaders, broadcast enduring debates over race, violence, war, and democracy, saw the publication of seminal intellectual works, and heralded the evolution of radical social movements that took place against a backdrop of epic historic events. Civil rights and Black Power share a common history, but their stories are usually told separately: whereas the civil rights movement drew from the American democratic tradition, Black Power found kinship in ideas of anti-colonialism and Third World liberation movements. Such a framework is too facile, however, since civil rights activists found hope and inspiration in international political currents and Black Power militants looked to America's sacred democratic texts (such as the Constitution and Declaration of Independence) for a way forward at home.

At Canaan's Edge, the concluding volume of *America in the King Years*, covers the years 1965–1968, which ushered in the classical phase of the Black Power era (1966–1975). Stokely Carmichael, a SNCC worker who had previously toiled in obscurity as a local organizer in the South, gained national fame after introducing the phrase "Black Power" during the Meredith March in a late spring heat wave in Greenwood,

¹⁶ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 205–240; Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon*; Ogbar, *Black Power*; Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation*.

Mississippi. Branch provides sporadic coverage of the movement, in between more elaborate investigations of Lyndon Johnson's increasing obsession with, and eventual disintegration over, the Vietnam War. This is a surprising choice of focus considering the plentiful works on Vietnam and LBJ in comparison to the relatively few authoritative works on Black Power. Branch also details aspects of Carmichael's pre-Black Power activism, most notably in a vital chapter on Lowndes County, Alabama. In rural Lowndes we are able to see Carmichael's sensitive and pragmatic side as he helped to form an independent political party for the county's black residents, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, in 1965–1966. Adopting a black panther as its emblem, the LCFO was soon being called “the Black Panther Party” by the media—a name that would be adopted in October 1966 by the founders of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, and that would come to provide real and symbolic power for an entire generation.¹⁷ *At Canaan's Edge* depicts Black Power as an “extravagant death rattle,” made all the more ironic in Carmichael's case because, according to Branch, he almost casually bartered away six years of heroic field work for the indulgent rhetorical fantasies of a newly crowned celebrity.¹⁸

To be fair, in his description of Carmichael's steadfast activism before the Black Power era, Branch acknowledges the militant leader's grassroots organizing efforts in ways that remain too infrequently cited by others.¹⁹ After 1966, however, Carmichael and the movement he gave a name to become caricatures in *At Canaan's Edge*, less convincing as real-life figures than as tropes to animate the declension narrative in which the late 1960s are viewed as a freefall into racial violence and disillusionment. Branch's trilogy is sometimes unfairly lumped together with the scores of other “King-centered works,” but in this regard he does parrot the conventional wisdom.

A CLOSER LOOK AT CARMICHAEL'S ACTIVISM from 1966 to 1968 reveals the legacy of Black Power to be broader, deeper, and more nuanced than its portrayal in *At Canaan's Edge* suggests. While Carmichael was not the only Black Power leader of his generation, he was arguably the most important. Indeed, at the height of the movement, his activities were under surveillance by a host of local, state, and federal authorities, providing historians with an indispensable portrait of both the activist and the period that shaped him.²⁰

In 1967, Carmichael embarked on a domestic and international organizing tour that would turn him into a global icon. Black Power was a major theme in U.S. and

¹⁷ Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 455–479.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 494.

¹⁹ Some important exceptions are Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*; Stokely Carmichael with Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)* (New York, 2003); Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*.

²⁰ After Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael is probably the best-documented Black Power activist of his generation. In addition to countless newspaper articles in the black, radical underground, and mainstream press, Carmichael's activities are chronicled in a number of different archival sources, including an almost 20,000-page FBI file. See Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely Carmichael and America in the 1960s* (forthcoming).

international politics that year, connecting an entire generation through expressions of combative resistance against war, racism, and poverty. During a whirlwind speaking tour of historically black colleges in the South, Carmichael tested out twin themes, touting Black Power and denouncing the Vietnam War in rapid-fire lectures that roused student bodies from Mississippi to Louisiana. Like a political candidate in an election year, he made his way to both prestigious white universities and obscure black college campuses. According to Carmichael, the black belt in higher education represented a base of untapped power, with resources and skills that could transform living conditions in some of America's poorest communities. SNCC's plans called for banning compulsory military training ("mandatory ROTC") at black colleges and encouraging student autonomy over outside speakers and curriculum reforms that would include black history and culture. "If we don't get that," said Carmichael during one speech, "we gonna disrupt the schools."²¹

At elite white universities and private colleges, Carmichael adopted a more professorial mien, giving polished, at times purposefully subdued seminars that combined world history and political philosophy as part of a larger dissection of American democracy. The lecture circuit subsidized a broad-based effort at coalescing the disparate forces committed to the local implications of Black Power. Carmichael's experience as a local organizer had made him aware of the tendency of popular leaders to view politics from on high while barely touching the sacred ground of everyday struggles. Conversely, six months as a national political leader sharpened his attention to the telescopic vision of grassroots activists as well as the heavy burdens of instant celebrity. The philosopher in him viewed Black Power as capable of bridging the gap between black people's local needs and their national ambitions.

Perhaps the individual most affected by Carmichael's passionate Vietnam deliberations was Martin Luther King, Jr. In the spring of 1967, King elegantly amplified Carmichael's seasoned anti-war rhetoric in a measured yet resolute speech that sent shock waves around the nation. His April 4 address at New York's Riverside Church lent international stature and moral clarity to the anti-war speeches that Carmichael had been steadily delivering for almost a year. At Riverside, King contrasted Carmichael's bitterness toward the failed promises of American democracy with weary hope. "The world now demands," he pleaded, "a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve."²² King's words resound today with an authority that began to swell shortly after his Riverside speech. But, as Branch ruefully notes, at the time King found himself in the uncomfortable position of "having to fight suggestions at every stop that his Vietnam stance merely echoed the vanguard buzz of Stokely Carmichael."²³ He need not have worried. *At Canaan's Edge* highlights King's peace advocacy as a daring rejection of the status quo, even as it downplays the stridently eloquent anti-war position of Carmichael and SNCC. Like most narrators of the era, Branch posits Carmichael as more a saber-rattler than an organizer

²¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Kwame Ture File [hereafter FBIKT], 100-446080-471, transcript of Stokely Carmichael University of Texas Speech, April 13, 1967, 30. ROTC (the Reserve Officers' Training Corps) was a military training program for male students at U.S. colleges and universities.

²² Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 593.

²³ *Ibid.*, 603.

by the late 1960s.²⁴ In retrospect, both King's and Carmichael's anti-war activism drew from a deep reservoir of African American anti-colonial activity rooted in the freedom surges of the Great Depression and World War II years.²⁵

More pointedly, Branch argues that by 1967, SNCC had devolved into internal bickering and "youthful disputes as tawdry as snipes at clothes," which represented a steep decline from the glory days when "coordinated sacrifice beyond the wisdom and courage of the nation's elders" moved America closer to racial egalitarianism and equal citizenship.²⁶ In this sense, Branch contrasts the "good" Carmichael who toiled heroically in the Mississippi Delta and rural Lowndes County in the early 1960s with the "bad" Carmichael who grew increasingly intoxicated by the allure of fame associated with his Black Power rhetoric.

Dubbed the "Magnificent Barbarian" by unnamed admirers in SNCC, Carmichael engaged in political activities during the late 1960s that remain as controversial today as they are misunderstood. What Branch characterizes as Carmichael's "daredevil cry against white America" might be better described as an extension and amplification of the SNCC leader's grassroots political organizing, which dated back to his teenage years in New York City and reached new heights in the late spring of 1961, when he spent weeks in Mississippi's Parchman Farm (the state penitentiary) for participating in Freedom Rides.²⁷ By 1966, when Carmichael declared "Black Power" in the sticky humidity of a late evening in Greenwood, Mississippi, his comprehension of American politics had become broad, deep, and complex.

"We are trying to build democracy," wrote Carmichael to SNCC supporter Lorna Smith in a 1966 letter that provided intimate details of painstaking organizing efforts taking place in Lowndes County. His search for democracy in Alabama's harsh climate rested on "the human contact that we make, while suffering," where black sharecroppers held the key to remaking American society.²⁸ He elaborated these views in an archly written report of his activities in Lowndes, published in the *New Republic* that same year. Criticizing Lyndon Johnson's Great Society as "preposterous," Carmichael offered up the political struggles of the black poor in the rural South as an alternative democratic ethos. In his America, democracy was etched in the faces of the semiliterate sharecroppers who were struggling to "redefine" Great Society rhetoric as a new vision of citizenship.²⁹ His grueling efforts to dig deep into what King described as the "great wells" of democracy were not abandoned in favor of a rash call for Black Power. For Carmichael, Black Power's call for radical self-determination facilitated the prospects of genuine democracy in American territo-

²⁴ King had come out against the war as early as 1965 but was quickly pressured into silence. SNCC subsequently became one of the war's leading critics, and from June 1966 to April 1967, Carmichael emerged as the black freedom struggle's most vocal anti-war critic. See Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 254–255, 308–309, 591–597; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 179–183.

²⁵ Plummer, *Rising Wind*; Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*; Singh, *Black Is a Country*; Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–1263.

²⁶ Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 606.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 608. For Carmichael's time as a Freedom Rider, see Carmichael with Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*.

²⁸ Stokely Carmichael–Lorna D. Smith Collection, 1964–1972 [hereafter SCLDS], Green Library, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., Stokely Carmichael to Lorna D. Smith, January 15, 1966, 1–4.

²⁹ Stokely Carmichael, "Who Is Qualified?" *The New Republic*, January 8, 1966, 22.

ries as unwelcoming and closed off to the idea of black citizenship as Lowndes County.³⁰

BRANCH'S DEPICTION OF BLACK POWER as a political dead end obscured by polemical fireworks and the brooding charisma of Carmichael, Rap Brown, Huey P. Newton, and other Black Power icons makes for riveting reading at the expense of a more nuanced and comprehensive history. If his portrait of Carmichael remains uneven, his account of the era's most controversial and visible group, the Black Panther Party (BPP), is surprisingly undernourished. The Panthers emerge, like a fever dream, as a group of swaggering leather-jacket-clad militants emboldened by the bravado of the quick-witted, temperamental Huey P. Newton and the earthy Bobby Seale. Amid the growing maelstrom of anti-war protests, Black Power militancy, and urban rebellions, "Newton's instant fame spread romantic theories about revolutionary violence."³¹ At first glance, this point appears unassailable considering the rhetoric of the Panthers and an increasingly radicalized New Left. By all appearances an overnight revolutionary hero, Newton belonged to a generation of young black Americans in Oakland and across the country whose economic prospects would be worse than those of their parents. A juvenile delinquent, street hustler, and brawler, he listened to Malcolm X speak in the Bay Area, joined an early Black Power cultural group called the Afro-American Association, and attended a local community college where he taught himself to read. By the time he co-founded the BPP, he had done several stints in jail and participated in local community organizing. As a political leader, Newton possessed jarring contradictions: advocating peace yet committed to a violent political revolution; anti-drug yet a substance abuser for much of his life; identifying with the poor but enamored with wealth and glamour. His importance as a Black Power leader ultimately resonates when we examine both the organization he helped to create and, perhaps most important, the communities that for a time identified with the BPP.³²

Like Newton, the Panthers exhibited Janus-faced tendencies. One side advocated the belligerent tactics of Third World revolutionaries in a quest to overthrow the existing social, political, and economic order. As is perhaps best expressed in Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver's inimitable and purposefully bombastic speeches, the Panthers are most often remembered for a posture of self-defense that quickly drifted into full-blown advocacy of revolutionary political violence.³³ Their more compassionate face regaled against poverty, hunger, and deprivation and set out to create ad hoc programs (from free breakfasts for schoolchildren to health clinics and liberation schools) that would fundamentally transform American democracy. Rather than viewing the Panthers as antithetical to the freedom dreams envisioned by King and civil rights advocates, as critics and even some sympathizers

³⁰ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*; Peniel E. Joseph, "Revolution in Babylon: Stokely Carmichael and America in the 1960s," *New Black Power History*, Special Issue, *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 9, no. 4 (2007): 281–301; Carmichael with Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*.

³¹ Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 609.

³² Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 207–240.

³³ *Ibid.*, 213–214, 265–267.

frequently do, it might be more useful to see them as proponents of the robust self-determination that Carmichael defined as being integral to Black Power and American democracy. The party's ten-point manifesto, issued in 1966, called, among other things, for full employment, freedom, an end to economic misery in black neighborhoods, decent housing, and comprehensive education. From their inception, the Black Panthers displayed a deft understanding of the effects of crime, violence, and unemployment on the most vulnerable segments of the African American community. Of course, the revolution they confidently predicted did not go off as planned. Internal corruption, youthful egos, substance abuse by key leaders, and an undemocratic leadership style combined with government repression to add equal portions of triumph and tragedy to the group's legacy. However, that legacy deserves, indeed demands, a rigorous historical reassessment in a work as ambitious as *America in the King Years*.

At Canaan's Edge also fails to explore the relationship between Carmichael and the Panthers. It was Carmichael's organizing in Lowndes County during 1965–1966 that provided the group (and similar organizations that in fact predated the Oakland Panthers) with their name and their militancy. Carmichael met with members of the BPP in 1967 while he was in the Bay Area mentoring neophyte local activists in an attempt to consolidate Black Power in some of America's toughest urban areas.

Carmichael's contacts in Southern California included Maulana Karenga, founder of the Organization Us (whose name literally signified "us blacks") and a prominent local black nationalist whose influence would spread among more Afrocentric Black Power activists. An early supporter of the "Free Huey Newton" movement, Karenga and the Panthers were engaged in turf wars by 1969 that would turn tragically violent.³⁴ Bald-headed, loquacious, and canny, Karenga represented Black Power's increasing cultural thrust in the Bay Area.³⁵ His offbeat brilliance, his love of African culture, and his ritualized expression of racial solidarity rubbed more urbane street toughs the wrong way. Karenga and the Organization Us also underscored the darker side of Black Power through their deep-seated, at times brutal misogyny, their reflexive promotion of violence, and a hierarchical organizational structure that promoted a cult of personality over democratic leadership practices. Overshadowed by the leather-jacketed allure of the Black Panthers, the Organization Us would endure, like jazz, through invented cultural flourishes (in style, language, and the holiday Kwanzaa) that would be adopted by generations of black Americans.³⁶

At the start of 1967, Carmichael found himself being trailed by ex-convict-turned-journalist (and future Black Panther) Eldridge Cleaver for a story in *Ramparts* magazine and mediating disputes between militants in the Bay Area eager to be considered the vanguard of California's burgeoning Black Power movement. On May 25, he headlined a fundraiser for the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium. Loquacious urban militants denied, by dint of geography and biography, the rich experiences that propelled Carmichael's activism, the Panthers traded bravado for experience, substituting showmanship—complete

³⁴ Brown, *Fighting for US*; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*.

³⁵ Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon*; Brown, *Fighting for US*; Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

with shotguns, pistols, and bandoliers—to publicize an embryonic anti-racist agenda that would shortly transform America. Carmichael’s slow, patient, radical organizing in obscure Lowndes County gave the Bay Area group distinctly southern roots. The quest of the earlier “Black Panther Party” (as the Lowndes County Freedom Organization had been nicknamed) for radical self-determination through the vote gave the Oakland-based Panthers both their name and their *raison d’être*.³⁷ FBI agents, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Justice, shadowed these developments while meticulously documenting Carmichael’s numerous speeches at colleges and universities as part of a bulky “Prosecutive Summary”—complete with affidavits—that charged the SNCC chairman with sedition.³⁸

Stokely’s threat to take over Washington “lock, stock, and barrel” through black political control over the nation’s capital sent FBI agents, local authorities, and journalists scurrying. The *Wall Street Journal* dutifully warned Washington of Carmichael’s imminent arrival, noting that the news had “the nation’s capital . . . in a sweat.”³⁹ Such fears proved to be unfounded.

By July, Carmichael was touring the world. His first stop was London, where he shared the dais with radical intellectuals such as Herbert Marcuse. Carmichael proclaimed that American cities would be “populated by peoples of the Third World” who were no longer willing to tolerate cultural degradation and institutional racism. Hailed as the “Mainspring of Black Power” in the London press, he spoke to British audiences of his childhood in Trinidad when it was still under British colonial rule. Draped in African robes, he addressed meetings in Notting Hill, Brixton, and Hackney, where he pondered the continued celebrity of the royal family and described Malcolm X as his “patron saint.”⁴⁰ Carmichael’s penchant for quoting Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus made good copy for reporters, who alternately portrayed him as a diehard nationalist whose “colour is his country” and a dedicated civil rights activist who “has spent seven of his last eight birthdays in jail.”⁴¹ In London, African and Caribbean militants received him as Malcolm X’s youthful heir.

As Carmichael was tossing rhetorical Molotov cocktails from Cuba, American cities were beginning to burn. Sparked by an incident of police brutality, a riot broke out in Newark, New Jersey, during the second week of July, shortly before the start of a planned Black Power conference. In the midst of the upheaval, poet LeRoi Jones received a brutal beating that furthered his resolve to promote black rule in the city.⁴² Detroit erupted in an explosion that dwarfed Newark’s, accelerating predictions by Black Power activists that an urban revolution was imminent. “It was as if,” wrote reporter Louis Lomax, “God himself was on the side of the organized revolutionaries.”⁴³ In the *Omaha World Herald*, Lomax penned a highly speculative account that traced the origins of the Detroit riot to a group of organized Black Power militants, at least one of whom had been on the scene in Newark. Lomax’s chronicle characterized looters, police officers, and bystanders as pawns in a political exper-

³⁷ FBIKT, 100-446080-298, “Stokely Carmichael,” June 7, 1967, 1–6.

³⁸ FBIKT, 100-446080-489, “Stokely Carmichael: Prosecutive Summary,” August 12, 1967, 1–322.

³⁹ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 182.

⁴⁰ FBIKT, 100-446080 (no further serial), *The Observer Review*, July 23, 1967.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 183–185.

⁴³ FBIKT, 100-446080-466, *Omaha World Herald*, August 6, 1967.

iment being orchestrated by urban revolutionaries.⁴⁴ The story exaggerated the ability of Black Power to organize urban insurrection but accurately reflected the mood of politicians, law enforcement, and a large segment of Americans who correlated riots with radicals.

Hubert Geroid Brown, nicknamed “Rap” for his cogent speaking style, quickly became the media’s favorite scapegoat for the riots. With his earthy sense of humor, dark sunglasses, and penchant for outrageous sound bites, Brown projected the image of a revolutionary straight from central casting. As Carmichael toured the Third World, Brown electrified partisan audiences and frightened most Americans, threatening spectacular violence and delivering quotes, such as “Violence is as American as cherry pie,” that would endure long after he faded from the political scene. Brown’s rhetorical somersaults at times served as a distraction from the movement’s more concrete efforts to organize poor people for bread-and-butter issues such as jobs, good schools, and tenant and welfare rights in favor of cathartic polemics. During Carmichael’s absence from the domestic political scene, however, Brown provided a wide range of media with what quickly became the archetypal image of the Black Power militant.⁴⁵ In this sense, his celebrity popularized a specific style of radicalism that Branch invokes as a stand-in for the entire era.

A weekend excursion with Fidel Castro in July placed Carmichael in the private company of a revolutionary icon even as elected officials in the United States were openly calling for his arrest on charges of sedition.⁴⁶ Washington-based political reporters Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, whose syndicated column was required reading inside the Beltway, alleged that SNCC represented nothing less than “Fidel Castro’s arm in the United States.”⁴⁷ Breathless FBI reports seemed to confirm such suspicions, with confidential informants suggesting that Carmichael was learning insurrection techniques in Cuba that he planned to use upon his return to the States.⁴⁸ Carmichael held up Cuba’s revolution as a daring experiment in freedom and outraged American officials by predicting a domestic race war complete with urban guerrillas. In addition to defying the government’s embargo, he spent weeks in Havana attending the Organization for Latin American Solidarity Conference, where he was feted as the leader of the black revolution. By early August, the U.S. attorney general had seen enough; he contacted the FBI, “desperately trying to obtain speeches, radio and television tapes” of Carmichael’s time in Havana.⁴⁹ With Carmichael’s trip to Cuba, Black Power had become a global export. Newspapers and wire services in Paris, Algeria, Vienna, Warsaw, Hanoi, and Peking carried excerpts of his radical press statements. From Cuba, Carmichael would trek to a number of

⁴⁴ Ibid., Louis Lomax, “Detroit Proved a Fertile Field for Riot Seed,” *Omaha World Herald*, August 5, 1967; and Lomax, “Agitators Used Twists of Fate, Human Weakness in Rioting,” *Omaha World Herald*, August 6, 1967.

⁴⁵ Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 181–183, 186, 188–190.

⁴⁶ FBIKT, 100-446080 (further serial not recorded), Memorandum, August 4, 1967.

⁴⁷ FBIKT, 100-446080-466, “Snick—Castro’s Arm in U.S.,” *Omaha World Herald*, August 6, 1967.

⁴⁸ FBIKT, 100-446080 (further serial not recorded), “Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee,” August 4, 1967.

⁴⁹ FBIKT, 100-446080-498, Memorandum, “Stokely Carmichael, Sedition,” Deke DeLoach to Clyde Tolson, August 7, 1967, 1.

other countries, including Vietnam, Algeria, Guinea, and Tanzania, as part of a life-altering tour around the world.⁵⁰

CARMICHAEL MOVED PERMANENTLY TO AFRICA in 1969, just as the Black Power movement he had helped unleash was gaining momentum, touching virtually every facet of American life (from education to the arts, prisons to organized athletics, and welfare rights activists to black elected officials) in a process that would transform U.S. democracy. Long after the verbal polemics of Carmichael and other Black Power icons subsided, the era's legacy remains in the enduring debates over race, violence, citizenship, and democracy that it sparked. Despite its Dickensian sprawl, *America in the King Years* fails to portray this vital era in all of its confounding and messy complexity.

At Canaan's Edge presents the civil rights movement in rich, vibrant Technicolor. It has unquestionably added nuance and complexity to the historical record that scholars would do well to recognize. At times, however, the brightness of this portrait obscures as much as it reveals. Civil rights and Black Power are consistently represented as dichotomous, separate movements rooted in sharply contrasting traditions. Branch portrays Black Power activists as drawn to a pantheon of international revolutionary heroes and the corresponding flights of fantasy, while civil rights workers form bonds to an earthier and more domesticated vision rooted in traditions of American democracy. The rich tapestry and interconnections between civil rights and Black Power are ignored, for the most part, in favor of a more conventional approach to the era that argues that Black Power's defiant call for robust political self-determination accelerated the decline of the 1960s by frightening white Americans, marginalizing black moderates, and inspiring racial reactionaries in politics that fueled a backlash that thwarted both the movement's short-term goals and its long-term prospects.

In fact, the high tide of Black Power came after 1968, touching multiple aspects of American life: from labor unions and the arts, to high schools, colleges, and universities, to local and national political elections. Civil rights activists drew consistent inspiration from global political upheavals, too, just as Black Power militants found unexpected (and too often unacknowledged) strength in American democracy. The movement's impact spanned local, regional, and national borders and beyond, galvanizing political activists in the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and much of the rest of the world. For scholars discussing Black Power, memory too often serves as a substitute for rigorous historical analysis.

Black Power offered new words, images, and political frameworks that impacted and influenced a wide spectrum of American and global society. The movement's breadth spanned continents and crossed oceans but indelibly shaped local struggles at the grassroots level in urban and rural communities across the nation. Before contemporary discussion of multiculturalism and diversity entered America's national lexicon, Black Power promoted new definitions of citizenship, identity, and democracy that, although racially specific, inspired a variety of multiracial groups in

⁵⁰ Carmichael with Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*.

their efforts to shape a new world. In locating the roots of Black Power radicalism among groups of activists who waged political wars in the long shadow of the civil rights movement, historians will not only improve contemporary understanding of postwar American history, but, perhaps more important, allow us to reframe conventional understanding of civil rights struggles and the way in which a broad range of black activists attempted to redefine American democracy.⁵¹

⁵¹ For examples, see Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*; Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation*; Williams, *Black Politics/White Power*; Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement*; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*; Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York, 1999); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003); Singh, *Black Is a Country*; Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York, 2004); Williams, "Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power," in Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*, 79–103; Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Countryman, *Up South*; Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York, 2005); Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2005); Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia, 2007); Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston, 2006); Simon Wendt, *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Gainesville, Fla., 2007); Brown, *Fighting for US*; Ogbar, *Black Power*; Christopher B. Strain, *Pure Fire: Self-Defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens, Ga., 2005); Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York, 2003); Theoharis and Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York, 2005); Kent Germany, *New Orleans after the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society* (Athens, Ga., 2007); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York, 2008); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York, 2008); Susan Youngblood Ashmore, *Carry It On: The War on Poverty and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama, 1964–1972* (Athens, Ga., 2008); Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965–1980* (Athens, Ga., 2009); Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York, 2009).

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