4 Dan Berger

"The Malcolm X Doctrine"

The Republic of New Afrika and National Liberation on U.S. Soil

Self-Determination is a wonderful thing.

— Albert Cleage Jr., *The Black Messiah*

Sponsored by the Malcolm X Society, the Black Government Conference brought about five hundred Black radicals to Detroit's Shrine of the Black Madonna church for a weekend-long meeting at the end of March 1968. Some two years after "Black Power" had received national attention as a militant rallying cry against white supremacy, the Detroit gathering ended with a hundred of the attendees signing a declaration of independence from the United States.

Building off deep histories of Detroit radicalism and Black nationalism, the Black Government Conference was more than a next step in the burgeoning Black Power movement.[1] It brought together Black Power militants with frustrated youth, insurgent workers, fiery Marxists, and old Garveyites. While only one of many such events aiming to further such Black radicalism, it differed from the Black Power conferences held in Berkeley (1966), Newark (1967), and Philadelphia (1968).[2] Although those gatherings often drew bigger crowds, the Black Government Conference was arguably the most programmatic. Amidst the most volatile year of 1960s-era rebellion, the conference proffered a declaration of independence for all people of African descent in the United States. Out of its call emerged both an entity and an ideology.

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The political thought and structure of the conference crystallized in the Republic of New Afrika (RNA). From the beginning the RNA put forth an ambitious program calling for self-determination. At a time when numerous leftist organizations were declaring Black people to be colonized by U.S. imperialism and white supremacy, the Republic of New Afrika declared independence from the colonial power and established mechanisms for self-rule. Borrowing from (and inspired by) the many successful revolutionary national liberation struggles then dotting the globe, the RNA attempted to forge a new nation in North America. It aimed to make concrete a homeland for those who, like heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, proclaimed that being Black was antithetical to being American.[3] Unlike the Nation of Islam, however, the RNA platform was decidedly political, unequivocally revolutionary, and irrepressibly internationalist. In that, the RNA built on the platform pioneered by Malcolm X in the last year of his life, a strategy based on revolutionary nationalism and international law.

The RNA's history traces the contours of nationalist thought among Black radicals, providing a valuable (and understudied) case study of revolutionary nationalist organizing stretching from the late 1960s to today. Discussions of the RNA to date have been minimal and fragmentary. But without a broader focus on the RNA's attempts to establish an independent nation in the U.S. South as part of a Pan-African revolutionary movement, one could limit discussion to the group's early Detroit presence or dismiss the phenomenon by saying that "a group of RNA activists moved to Mississippi, declared the new nation, and defended their turf against local police, [but] they ultimately had little success."[4] Such a description elides the distinct contributions that the RNA made to sustaining Black Power and Pan-Africanist politics. It also overlooks the RNA's defining characteristic: in the context of pervasive Black nationalism, the Republic of New Afrika was the most explicit attempt to articulate and organize a visible and viable national liberation struggle among Black people in the United States, an attempt that refocused Black radical attention on the South and made the struggle for reparations a foundational point of concern.

Building a Nation

The RNA was hardly the only current in the Black freedom struggle declaring itself a movement for national liberation.[5] Radicals at the 1967 Black Power conference had debated whether they should seize five, seven, or thirteen states for an independent Black Nation. At the following year's conference, many argued that an underground Black army would take over towns throughout the United States as part of liberating territory.[6] Thousands at the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana—a multi-tendency conference aiming to unite

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the Black liberation movement in a shared program—embraced "Nation Time!" as their cry.[7] Emerging from both entrenched and burgeoning traditions of revolutionary nationalism, the RNA was an attempt to operationalize Black Power as a project of independence. Amidst such widespread nationalist fervour, RNA finance minister Raymond Willis told the *Los Angeles Times* that the Republic offered "an alternative to chaos" in a country that "is in a state of revolution."[8] Black Power was an elastic concept, allowing for everything from Black capitalism and electoral politics to Pan-Africanist revolutionary socialism. The RNA provided an alternative strategy, neither emigrationist nor assimilationist, to the widespread Black critique of U.S. nationalism, state structures, and political economy.

The Republic moved quickly and boldly in setting up the apparatus of an independent nation: the founding conference defined the five states of the Black Belt South (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) as national territory. Upon its founding, the RNA "established consulates in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Washington, D.C." and began meeting with foreign governments, including the Soviet Union, Tanzania, Sudan, and China.[9]

It also elected officials to lead the Republic and developed a creed outlining its principles for self-determination. The first president was Robert Williams, then in exile for his organizing and armed self-defence as head of the Monroe, North Carolina, chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Since his departure from the United States, Williams had developed his commitment to Black nationalism by building relationships with revolutionary movements from around the globe. His example, like that of Malcolm X, articulated a revolutionary nationalist politics firmly rooted in anti-imperialist internationalism. From Tanzania, the RNA president-elect issued a statement calling the Republic "one of self-determination for an oppressed people" rooted in Black nationalism, grassroots democracy, and a socialist economics.[10] Williams's high profile attracted additional attention to the RNA upon its founding, though he resigned as president in the fall of 1969 after returning to the United States following a decade-long absence.[11]

Although it declared the five Southern states its national territory, the RNA was based in Detroit for its first two years and retained a strong presence there for several years to come.[12] Founding members Richard and Milton Henry, who renamed themselves Imari and Gaidi Obadele, respectively, each had impressive track records as organizers in the Motor City. Prior to organizing the Black Government Conference, both men had already participated as key leaders of numerous groups. The pair helped start the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL) in 1962, the Michigan Freedom Now Party (FNP) in 1963, the Malcolm X Society in 1967, and then the RNA in 1968. Their political history and mentors

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are a veritable who's who of the postwar Black radical left, including Albert Cleage (whose church sponsored the RNA's founding conference), James and Grace Lee Boggs, Muhammad Ahmad—even Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.[13] But it was Malcolm X who had the greatest impact. Three of Malcolm's most influential speeches—"Message to the Grassroots," "The Ballot or the Bullet," and his February 14, 1965, talk—were given at GOAL-sponsored events in Detroit.[14] Imari Obadele dedicated his 1966 pamphlet *War in America: The Malcolm X Doctrine* to "the Malcolmites," and an early draft of the RNA's New Afrikan creed staked its authority "by the grace of Malcolm."[15]

Setting itself up to govern an internal colony, the RNA rallied around a demand to "Free the Land." And that is what it tried to do, especially after the organization moved to Mississippi in 1970. The decision to organize in the rural South was as much for defence as ideology: based on his analysis of how ghetto rebellions were crushed in the mid-1960s, Obadele had long argued that Northern cities were strategically untenable. Even if majority Black, the cities of the urban North were surrounded by white people, making them easy to repress.[16] The post-1960s growth of suburbs only exacerbated this process of racially inflected spatial separation.[17] In the South, Obadele argued, the sizable Black rural population would provide useful cover. His position won out in a contentious struggle among the RNA top leadership. Of particular interest to the Republic was what it called "Kush," the twenty-five counties in the 15,000 square feet along the Mississippi River from Memphis to Louisiana. Kush was a prized territory in both size and historical significance. It was valued for its resources and as the only place in the United States in 1970 where Black people still constituted a majority of the population. It was therefore a strategic component of RNA plans to secure the broader Republic.[18] The Republic established its national headquarters and presidential residence near Jackson, Mississippi, in the heart of Kush.

The RNA's Southern specificity but broader U.S. and global focus distinguish the group from other revolutionary attempts. (Because the RNA still exists under a similar platform, I refer to enduring political tenets in the present tense.) As RNA organizers pushed for their own nation, they argued for the necessity of change within the current U.S. context. The organization's ongoing work around reparations and its support for U.S. political prisoners continue to call into question racial and economic injustice in the form of "national oppression." While interrogating the U.S. nation-state overall, the RNA has carved out a particular space for emphasizing the historical and strategic significance of the U.S. South; but its attention to the United States overall distinguishes the RNA's Black Belt focus from that of the Communist Party in the 1930s. Unlike the CP, the RNA defined all Black people in America as colonized, with the five states a viable solution to such colonization. Chokwe Lumumba said the five states were the

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"heart of the Black nation," but not its entirety.[19] For the RNA, the slave trade and continuing racial oppression created the Black Nation; the five Southern states provided a *solution* to the colonization that all Africans in North American faced. It was an effort to leverage the political, social, and spatial power of New Afrikans in contesting the power of the U.S. government. But the Black Nation was a salient ideological home, found wherever Black people resided.

The RNA unveiled its Anti-Depression Program in 1972, with legislative actions for securing independence. The program made three basic demands of the U.S. government: that it cede land and sovereignty to the RNA "in areas where blacks vote for independence" via plebiscite; that it pay $300 billion in reparations "for slavery and unjust war against the black nation"; and establish a negotiations procedure to determine a reparations payment.[20] This program, it was hoped, would help "end poverty, dependence, and crime," "raise self-esteem, achievement, and creativity, and ... promote inter-racial peace." Within months of its release, the program was presented to the Black Political Convention in Gary, submitted to the U.S. Congress, and approved by the NAACP-headed Mississippi Loyalist Democrats.[21]

The Anti-Depression Program was the most developed policy statement that the Republic had released to that time. Its wide circulation and sizable support among Black professional and political circles—including Michigan Senator John Conyers and comedian Dick Gregory—highlight the RNA's organizing savvy. Such petitions and programs to city councils, state governments, and the federal government expressed a serious willingness to achieve a plebiscite and cession of land non-violently. To be sure, RNA members did not hide their support of armed self-defence, guerrilla war, or sabotage, and military training was deemed compulsory for all citizens.[22] Yet the RNA never engaged in open war with the United States. Rather, the RNA has tried to establish itself under the rubric of international law.[23] As Obadele wrote from a Mississippi jail while awaiting trial, "Every step taken by the Republic of New Africa has been plotted to stay within limits generated by *their* laws and constitution."[24]

Central to the Anti-Depression plan was the development of "New Communities" in RNA territory, especially Mississippi. These communities, according to the plan, would be based on the Tanzanian socialist model of *ujamaa* and give life to the Republic's territorial claims through development and emigration. They would demonstrate New Afrikan sovereignty amidst grave repression, providing a rear base and free state for the embattled Black masses. Together with reparations, the New Communities would provide the infrastructure so that Black people who had left the South out of economic necessity or political terror could move back. Viewing these community efforts as a crucial step towards self-determination, Republic officials started the Society for the Development of

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New Communities (SDNC), a non-profit corporation to raise money for Black economic development.[25]

Although SDNC was the primary grassroots fundraising mechanism, reparations remained a key strategy for developing the Republic—and for securing racial justice for all Black people in the United States. The reparations demand was not a fundraising strategy; instead, it was a strategic point of organizing that could serve as a unified rallying cry. RNA workers proved themselves quite adept at doing just that. In March 1974 the RNA held an election in thirty counties across Mississippi, where nearly 5,000 people voted for reparations and elected Obadele president of the Mississippi Black Assembly. The election was monitored by the Election Commission of the Black Political Scientists.[26] That fall the National Black Political Convention unanimously approved a resolution calling for the National Black Assembly to join the RNA and the Mississippi Black Assembly in calling for $300 billion in reparations.

An Internationalist State

Central to the RNA's goals was to strive for international representation, as Malcolm X had encouraged towards the end of his life. This global focus was both political and strategic: RNA co-founder Imari Obadele wrote that this approach would ensure that "attacks upon us [Malcolmites] by the United States become international matters threatening world peace, and *thereby* within reach of the United Nations, *thereby* within reach of our friends in Africa and Asia who would help us." Only when Black people had clearly rejected U.S. citizenship and its civil rights paradigm, Obadele argued, could such international support blossom.[27] The RNA joined such a global framework with Malcolm's insistence on land and self-defence as key to nation-building. With the help and advice of former Communist and ex-Garveyite Queen Mother Audley Moore, this paradigm achieved practical expression through the RNA's call for reparations and for control of the five Southern states.[28] The two went together: reparations were to pay for bulking up the Black Nation's territory, similar to the way in which, Obadele argued, German reparations did for Israel.[29]

Using international law provisions against colonialism, the RNA planned to organize a plebiscite for people of African descent in the United States to determine their status. RNA officials advanced this argument as part of settling what they saw as a long-neglected aspect of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The amendment, according to the Republic, *offers* but does not *grant* citizenship. Black people have never been given a chance to choose whether they *want* the citizenship that has been forced upon them. The *obligations* of it were bestowed while the *rights* have never been guaranteed. The plebiscite aimed

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to settle these questions—and move ever closer to establishing an independent, internationally recognized nation with the full consent of the governed.[30] The RNA was not the first to call for such a measure; in its Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, the Black Panther Party had also called for a U.N.-supervised plebiscite to determine whether Black people were citizens of the United States.[31] The two groups differed not on the demand but on the timing. As Huey Newton elucidated in a September 1969 letter to the RNA, the Panther leadership did not advocate a plebiscite until "[we] wipe out once and for all the oppressive structure of America," which would not be possible without a sizable coalition. Although he deemed the RNA "perfectly justified in demanding and declaring the right to secede from the nation," Newton feared that implementing the RNA's plans at the time would be dangerously and unnecessarily isolating.[32] The RNA, meanwhile, viewed this plebiscite both as a way of settling historical injustices and as an organizing campaign, and began working for it almost immediately. The plebiscite, argued the RNA, was fundamental to establishing an independent, internationally recognized nation—and a vital step towards securing the consent of those subjecting themselves to rule by the Republic of New Afrika rather than by the United States of America.

The principle of carving out a "Black Power state"[33] from the Southern United States emerged from what is perhaps the RNA's most interesting ideological contribution, the creation of a new political subject. At a time when national discourse was only just beginning to shift from Negro to Black or Afro-American, the 1968 Black Government Conference introduced a new political designation: the New Afrikan,[34] a Pan-African identity forged by the generations of shared oppression, language, and culture of the many African nations enslaved in the United States. It is an identity constructed through the history of slavery, rooted in the Black Belt South that slaves had built and that has always been home to a disproportionate number of people of African descent. It is an identity that carries with it a pledge of allegiance to a new and amalgamated form of social arrangements.[35] From the beginning the Republic of New Afrika did not describe an organization as much as an idea and a demand—for reparations, for independence, and for land. Since 1968 there has been an organized entity in the RNA, crafted as a state in exile and complete with elected officials. The Republic, meanwhile, defines the national territory of Black America—a vision of and a bold proposal for self-determination. Citizenship is voluntary and available to any Black person who declares it. (Yuri Kochiyama, the Japanese-American activist and stalwart comrade of Malcolm X, has been the notable exception to the RNA's African-descent citizenship policies.)[36] To distinguish between the Black Nation as a concept and its governmental apparatus, the RNA ultimately established a formal ruling body—the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika

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(PG-RNA). Although accepting citizenship in the Republic signified an affinity with the PG-RNA, it primarily affirmed commitment to a self-described New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM). For all its territorial ambitions, the RNA saw citizenship as constituting an ideological position of Pan-Africanist connection among Black people—an orientation to overturning the settler colonialism and global imperialism of the U.S. Empire.

Its focus on the (rural) South at a time when many saw Black Power as a phenomenon of the (urban) North was an attempted solution to the colonized position of all Blacks in the United States, an attempt to stitch together urban and rural resistance through the development of New Communities in Mississippi and consulates throughout the United States from which the RNA could conduct political education and organize for reparations and on behalf of U.S. political prisoners. The RNA was a call to empower the Third World within North America. Its declaration of independence defined a nation as shared culture (which it described as a way of life), shared land, and a shared government.[37] Like many other revolutionary nationalists, then, the proponents of RNA politics disaggregated nation from state: "nation" characterized the position of all Black people in the United States; "state" was a demand, consistent with the developmentalist approach of Third World liberation struggles at the time.[38]

While its demand for state power exposed the limitations of this approach—including, in the RNA's founding years, sanctioned polygamy, frontier ideology, and identity essentialism—the consecration of a new political identity located an anticolonial subjectivity while simultaneously identifying colonized territory.[39] This combination elevated the Black liberation movement's opposition to U.S. imperialism as part of a radical internationalist project. In providing a poignant interlocution of the U.S. narrative and structure, the RNA equipped the Black Power movement and its sympathizers with an ideological and physical apparatus that generated a detailed, if not widely held, vision for liberating the internal colony. The RNA's existence and its program called into question the U.S. state form itself as a legitimate political border. Nikhil Singh's description of the Black Panther Party seems especially apt in describing the RNA: it was a "projection of sovereignty" that attempted to decolonize the United States from within by asserting self-determination.[40] Establishing the apparatus of national liberation was essential to securing it. This plan called for simultaneously confronting the existing U.S. state while developing alternative institutions to replace the current social arrangements.

Formed amidst the height of state repression against Black revolutionaries, the RNA was an effort to move the Black Power struggle to a place in which it could operate on its own terms rather than from within the U.S. framework. New Afrika was the parallel to the unfolding struggle for a united, socialist Africa.

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Thus it was not just the Black Power state but also the Pan-African state in North America. As such the New Afrikan was a transnational identity, making the Republic an effort in creating a diasporic Black state. Imari Obadele made an explicit connection to African national liberation movements: "For no less than they have We [sic] boldly shed the nationality of our colonizer and gone to contest for independent land."[41]

The Republic of New Afrika offered a clear program to the overarching impulse towards nationalism then characterizing many Black communities. Its strategy mirrored other stateless national liberation struggles, where establishing national identification and governmental apparatus was of primary importance. As actress and RNA organizer Colia LaFayette put it, "The Vietnamese and the Palestinians have well demonstrated to the world that even subjugated peoples can and should elect their own provisional governments. There are certain aspects of the freedom struggle that can only properly be carried out by such a popularly elected provisional government."[42]

For this reason, distinctions between "territorial" and "revolutionary" nationalism prove insufficient metrics for analyzing the RNA.[43] Beginning in a time when even detached academics described Black people in America as a colonized population, the RNA contributed to this perspective a strategic view that saw independent land as the missing ingredient for securing self-determination. Following Malcolm X, the RNA saw land and a governmental apparatus as the basis of sovereignty.[44] Its territorial claims are inseparable from the revolutionary orientation inscribed in its founding declaration of independence, which pledged New Afrika's commitment to "wage the world revolution until all people everywhere are so free." Given the declaration's support for sexual equality, collective distribution of state-owned production, and opposition to class discrimination, as well as the establishment of Mississippi communities modelled on the principles of *ujamaa*, the RNA also calls into question the corollary juxtaposition imposed between nationalism and socialism.[45]

Just as it is often positioned against socialism, nationalism is often defined as contrary to feminism—a critique with ample historical evidence. Although it is outside the scope of this article, a detailed analysis of the RNA's gender politics would be a valuable endeavour. The group's initial leaders and publicly identifiable theorists were men, though Queen Mother Moore's involvement provided a strong example of women's political and intellectual leadership. From the beginning the RNA upheld gender equality as part of its revolutionary program, which is something even the Panthers failed to enshrine in their program. As with other nationalist projects, the RNA's gender politics prized respect and equality, though saying nothing about gender roles or sexuality, presuming a heteronormative standard of relationships that still defined women as wife and mother, if also

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soldier and citizen. Further study of the RNA, especially in the form of oral histories, is needed to understand these and other dynamics.

Self-Determination and the Sixties

The U.S. government did not look kindly on the RNA's efforts. The group witnessed major waves of attack in Detroit (1969), Mississippi (1971, 1981), and New York (1981). As with the Panthers, the state viewed the RNA's projection of sovereignty as a threat to its own fragile hold on hegemonic power. The RNA faced repeated battles with the U.S. state, in both Detroit and Mississippi, during an array of armed confrontations and legal challenges.[46] Such fights generated several political prisoners for the RNA throughout the 1970s. Organizing for their release, again through appeals to international law, offered another chance for the RNA to question the legitimacy of U.S. democracy by rejecting the criminalization of Black insurgency.[47]

Yet such heavy losses and legal hurdles did not shut down the Republic. The dream of New Afrika inspired ongoing action for independence, which continues to animate RNA actions. Despite its enormous setbacks, the Republic has continued organizing for reparations, against repression, and for official status. In frightening all levels of government, the RNA brought to light continuing white supremacist tensions in the Deep South. It connected Detroit's militant legacy with a strategic emphasis on the South, exposing the deep-seated hostility to Black self-determination. The RNA also placed reparations squarely on the agenda of a radical movement in the United States and as part of global Pan-African resistance. In contesting naturalized categories of nation, state, and governance, the Republic of New Afrika forces us to rethink the basic units of American political practice in the sixties and beyond.

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(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

17 See, in particular, Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in America, 1900–1932* (New York: Verso, 1997).

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1 The militant unionism and revolutionary nationalism characterizing Detroit's political landscape in the mid-twentieth century are well documented. The city was home to a slew of revolutionary figures, including James and General Baker, Grace Lee Boggs, Albert Cleage, Mike Hamlin, Luke Tripp, Max Stanford, and the Henry brothers. See, for instance, Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying. A Study in Urban Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: South End Press, 1998); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006); and Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

2 Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour*, pp.168–69, 184.

3 After a trip to Africa in 1964, Ali told reporters, "I'm not an American; I'm a black man." Quoted in Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.92. At that time the boxer had been a member of the Nation of Islam.

4 Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.122.

5 At the convention and for several years after, the group spelled Africa with a "c," as is traditionally done in English. It ultimately switched to spelling it with a "k," as done here. Former Black Panther Sundiata Acoli explained the difference in an essay: "We of the New Afrikan Independence Movement spell 'Afrikan' with a 'k' as an indicator of our cultural identification with the Afrikan continent and because Afrikan linguists originally used 'k' to indicate the [hard] 'c' sound in the English language." See Sundiata Acoli, "An Updated History of the New Afrikan Prison Struggle," in *Imprisoned Intellectuals: America's Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation, and Rebellion*, ed. Joy James (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p.138. Because this paper discusses the RNA and the self-proclaimed New Afrikan Independence Movement it helped launch—political formations that still command numerous adherents—I use the current spelling throughout, unless direct quotations use an alternate spelling.

6 Robert Sherill, "Birth of a Black Nation," *Esquire*, January 1969, pp.70–78.

7 Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour,* pp. 276–83.

8 Quoted in "Black Group Explains 5-State Nation Dream," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1968, p.A7.

9 Donald Cunnigen, "The Republic of New Africa in Mississippi," in *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, ed. Judson L. Jeffries (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p.98. The RNA was not the only entity at the time to attempt establishing international relations; both the Black Panthers and the Yippies did as well, particularly in relation to the war in Vietnam.

10 Williams's statement is printed as a sidebar to Sherrill's 1969 *Esquire* story, "Birth of a Black Nation," p.73. For more on Williams, see Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio-Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), or Cynthia A. Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), pp.18–53.

11 Although Williams's departure was partially over political differences, it was also logistical: the legal battles he fled a decade

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prior awaited him upon returning. The RNA helped make possible his homecoming. New Afrikan politics appealed to a much broader cross-section of the Black liberation movement than just Williams. Other early RNA officials included Muhammad Ahmad and Herman Ferguson of the Revolutionary Action Movement; Maulana Karenga of US (before he was expelled after members of US killed two Black Panthers at UCLA in 1969); Amiri Baraka, then of the Committee for a Unified Newark; H. Rap Brown of SNCC; and Malcolm X's widow, Betty Shabazz. The goal of an independent Republic also appealed to many in the Black Panther Party: Vietnam veteran turned Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga helped the RNA build its ministry of defense, and many of the defendants of the Panther 21 conspiracy case acknowledged by 1971 that they considered themselves citizens of the Republic. Other ex-Panthers aligned themselves with the RNA or what became known as the New Afrikan Independence Movement more generally, including many political prisoners associated with clandestine outgrowths of the Panthers. The revolutionary nationalism of the RNA also appealed to a range of prisoners incarcerated for non-political and not-necessarily-political offences, especially as the Panthers collapsed. The most famous of these was "Monster" Kody Scott, a leader of the Los Angeles Crips incarcerated after a slew of brutal crimes. See Geronimo ji Jaga, "Every Nation Struggling to Be Free Has a Right to Struggle, a Duty to Struggle," in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, ed. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (New York: Routledge, 2001); Chokwe Lumumba, *The Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement* (Jackson, Ms.: New Afrikan Productions, n.d. [circa 1983]); and Kody Scott, *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member* (New York: Grove Press, 1993).

12 Even after the move South, the RNA publishing house, House of Songhay, was based in Detroit for several years.

13 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*, p.9. The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) also proved to be ideological mentors, with its strong focus on armed self-defence and the politics of internal colonialism. Milton Henry was elected RAM treasurer upon its 1964 founding, and the dissolution of RAM brought new members to both the PG-RNA and Black Panther Party. See Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960–1975* (Chicago: Charles Kerr Publishers, 2007). By the time he passed away in September 2006, Milton Henry had become a Presbyterian reverend and had gone back to using his birth name.

14 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*, p.9. See also Angela D. Dillard, "Religion and Radicalism: The Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr., and the Rise of Black Christian Nationalism in Detroit," in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980*, ed. Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour*, pp.51–57.

15 Brother Imari, *War in America: The Malcolm X Doctrine* (Chicago: Ujamaa Distributors, 1968). The creed is reprinted in Imari Abubakari Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation* (Detroit: House of Songhay Publishers, 1975), p.153.

16 Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation,* p.11. As Huey Newton's criticism of the RNA's plebiscite approach suggests, the Republic's Southern strategy had its own shortcomings relative to the ability of a numerical minority to stand off against the state on their own.

17 See, for example, Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

18 Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, pp.xi, 134.
19 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*, p.8.
20 The program is reprinted in Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, pp.73–106.
21 Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, p.71.
22 Milton Henry had publicly argued since 1964 that armed struggle would be a necessity in the Black struggle, and Imari had argued that political and financial support for clandestine Black insurgency through riots and sabotage was essential for all New Afrikans. See Sherill, "Birth of a Black Nation"; Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour*, pp.107–8; and Brother Imari, *War in America*.
23 The centrality of international law can be seen throughout the RNA's foundational documents, including Brother Imari, *Revolution and Nation-Building: Strategy for Building the Black Nation in America* (Detroit: House of Songhay Publishers, 1970) and Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*. Support for armed struggle among New Afrikan citizens is clear. In his pamphlet on the history of the New Afrikan independence movement, Chokwe Lumumba said the New Afrikan People's Organization is committed to a strategy of organizing toward eventual People's War. Many Black Liberation Army fighters in the late 1970s and 1980s also affirmed support to the Republic, and eight months after the Black Government Conference, someone hijacked a National Airlines flight and rerouted it to Cuba. The hijacker, whom press reports described as being dressed in the attire of a Black militant, dubbed the plane the Republic of New Africa. See UPI, "Hijacked Airliner Back from Havana," Nov. 5, 1968, p.38.
24 Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, p.120.
25 "Launch New Organization," *Chicago Defender*, Aug. 9, 1973, p.11; "New Africa Opens 1st New Site," *Chicago Defender*, March 27, 1971, p.15.
26 Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, p.132; "Reparations Plan Supported," *Chicago Defender*, March 26, 1974, p.9.
27 Brother Imari, *War in America*, p.2.
28 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*, pp.11–13. For more on Moore, see Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind*, pp.7–13. Indeed, the RNA made a splash upon its founding because reparations were the key ingredient to building the Black Nation; see Sherill, "Birth of a Black Nation." But the RNA's influence on the call for reparations manifested itself in other ways, most notably in helping found the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA). Although not exclusively focused on reparations, the RNA orbit also contributed to the founding of the New Afrikan People's Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. See Adjoa A. Aiyetoro, "The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA): Its Creation and Contribution to the Reparations Movement," in *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations*, ed. Raymond A. Winbush (New York: Amistad, 2003); Martha Biondi, "The Rise of the Reparations Movement," *Radical History Review*, 87 (January 2003); and Conrad W. Worrill, "The National Black United Front and the Reparations Movement," in *Should America Pay?* ed. Winbush. The essays collected in Michael T. Martin and Marilyn Yaquinto, eds., *Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States: On Reparations for Slavery, Jim Crow, and their Legacies* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), are also helpful in this regard.
29 Despite an articulated solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, RNA documents and rhetoric in its early years made consistent parallels to Israel and the role that German reparations played in building up that country.
30 Cunnigen, "Republic of New Africa in Mississippi," p.102. See also Brother Imari, *War in America*, and Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*.
31 The plenary document is included in G. Louis Heath, ed., *Off the Pigs! The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp.377–82.

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32 Newton, "To the Republic of New Africa," in Heath, ed., *Off the Pigs!* pp.383–86; quote p.384.

33 Brother Imari, *War in America*, p.39.

34 That the RNA advanced this term at a time when the designation of people of African descent was shifting was a strength and a weakness. On the one hand it presented a visionary approach to racial categories that was highly political and not limited by state boundaries or skin colour (prioritizing African ancestry over dark skin). On the other hand, the term has not been quick to catch on and represented an ideological commitment of its proponents rather than a commonly used designation (as Black or Afro-American were).

35 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*, pp.42–43; Acoli, "Updated History of the New Afrikan Prison Struggle," p.198.

36 See Diane C. Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Yuri Kochiyama, *Passing It On: A Memoir* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2004).

37 The declaration and the New African creed are reprinted in Martin and Yaquinto, eds., *Redress for Historical Injustices in the United States*, pp.588–91.

38 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007); Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

39 On the essentialism, frontierism, and polygamy—ostensibly sanctioned because there were more New Afrikan women than men—see Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*. On the relation of these issues to nationalist projects overall, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Community: The Birth of the Nation* (London: Verso, 1991); Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000).

40 Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.205. Singh defines this "projection of sovereignty" as "a set of oppositional discourses and practices that exposed the hegemony of Americanism as incomplete, challenged its universality, and imagined carving up its spaces differently." Such a definition fits with the discussion of reparations and land-based struggles in Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon, 2002), pp.110–34.

41 Lumumba, *Roots of the New Afrikan Independence Movement*; Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, p.137. Contrary to traditional English grammar, most documents by RNA activists print the first-person pronoun "I" in lower case but capitalize "we" to eschew individualism and emphasize collectivity.

42 "Activists in Political Parley," *Chicago Defender*, May 5, 1975, p.30.

43 The RNA is often described as "territorial" nationalist relative to the "revolutionary" nationalism of the Panthers and similar groups. See, for instance, Cunnigen, "Republic of New Africa in Mississippi"; Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*; and William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Cunnigen uses Raymond Hall's 1970s-era five-part classification schema to define the RNA as "territorial separatist" rather than "revolutionary nationalist."

44 See, for instance, Brother Imari, *War in America*; and Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*.

45 Reprinted in Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation*, pp.151–52.

46 A 1969 conference in Detroit celebrating the first anniversary of the RNA's founding turned violent after a shootout between police and the RNA, leaving one officer dead (both sides accusing the other of having fired first). More than

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one hundred activists were arrested as a result, though a Black radical judge freed most of the defendants and a jury acquitted the others. After the group moved to Mississippi, local, state, and federal governments utilized various mechanisms to repress the RNA, including a raid on the Republic's headquarters and an affiliated residence. Police opened fire during the raid. Besieged and surprised, the RNA returned fire, killing one police officer and wounding two others. Police then arrested eleven members of the group, who served time throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Two RNA citizens were arrested at the Democratic National Convention in 1972 on spurious charges of attempting to assassinate George McGovern. Several RNA citizens were also indicted by grand juries or tried on federal conspiracy charges in relation to the clandestine Black Liberation Army in the 1980s. For an RNA perspective on this repression, see Imari Obadele, *Free the Land!* (Washington, D.C.: The House of Songhay, 1987). See also Christian Davenport, "Understanding Covert Repressive Action: The Case of the U.S. Government against the Republic of New Africa," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49,1 (2005), pp.120–40; and Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret War against Dissent in the United States* (Boston: South End Press, 1990). Several relevant legal documents are reprinted in Imari Obadele, *America the Nation-State: The Politics of the United States from a State-Building Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Baton Rouge, La.: House of Songhay, 1993), pp.357–75. For more on the 1980s repression, see Akinyele O. Umoja, "The Black Liberation Army and the Radical Legacy of the Black Panther Party," in *Black Power in the Belly of the Beast*, ed. Judson L. Jeffries (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); and Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (Oakland, Cal.: AK Press, 2006).

47 Young, *Soul Power*, p. 205.

5 The Soviet Communist Party and 1968: A Case Study

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1 Richard Reeves, *President Nixon: Alone in the White House* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p.51; Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), p.554.

2 Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp.216, 261.

3 Arthur Marwick's big book has invited criticism, but I think at least he got the subtitle correct: *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States c.1958–c.1974* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

4 Martin Wiklund, "Leninismens renässans i 1960-talets Sverige," in *Den jyske Historiker* (Aarhus), 101 (Oprud i 1960erne), July 2003, pp.95–119; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), pp.383–84; Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2002); Carlo Feltrinelli, *Senior Service* (Feltrinelli, 2001), p.401; Martin Klimke and Joachim Sharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

5 Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p.58; Boris Kagarlitsky, *The Thinking Reed: Intellectuals and the Soviet State, 1917 to the Present* (London: Verso, 1988), pp.199–200; Anne de Tinguy, US-*Soviet Relations during the Détente* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.114; Brezhnev's speech for Czech party officials, Dec. 9, 1967; his letter to Dubček, April 11, 1968; Dubček's report on Kosygin's views, March 25, 1968; *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archives Documents Reader*, ed. J. Navratíl et al. (Budapest: Central European University, 1998), pp.18, 74, 98.

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