The Black Organic Intellectual Tradition and the Challenges of Educating and Developing Organic Intellectuals in the 21st Century

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Abstract: By summarizing the legacy of the first and second wave Black working class organic intellectuals in North America in the 20th century, I will use this as a backdrop to discuss my efforts in the first decade of the 21st century to develop a third wave of organic intellectuals in the hip hop generation. I will offer a case study of the Freedom Cipher Program at the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC), and discuss the implications of this experience for organizing oppressed Black working class and underclass youth into organic intellectuals today in this age of neo-liberal capitalism and globalization. I hope this paper will contribute to the work of the revolutionary party-building Left, and youth movements concerned with organizing the hip hop generations of the 20th century (born 1965-1984) and 21st century (born 1985-2004) into a new socialist hegemonic project.

Keywords: Black organic intellectual tradition, Communist Part of the United States of America, Black Power Movement

Introduction

In this paper I will further explore the under-theorized organic intellectual tradition of Black communist radicalism and militant anti-imperialism in North American communist parties in the 1920s and 1930s. In this regard, we will see that as opposed to the conservative Black nationalist ideology of Marcus Garvey that advocated racial separatism and Black capitalism, Black working class communists in the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), an autonomous revolutionary-nationalist organization inspired by Lenin and the Russian Revolution, unified with the Communist Party of the United States of America (CP USA) to advance the revolutionary process in the U.S. The alliance of Black and white communists in the CP USA was initiated by forward-thinking Black revolutionaries at a time when racism and white chauvinism were entrenched in the Party.1 The early history of Blacks in the CP USA was not the liberal integrationist project that became hegemonic in the civil rights movement a generation later. Instead, I argue that this historic alliance was a classic Gramscian project that created a multinational racially united front in the tens of thousands against U.S. monopoly capitalism during the Great Depression. Gramsci’s (1971) theory of working class organic intellectuals, hegemony, and the war of position in civil society to win proletarian hegemony in fascist Italy during the 1920s could be applied to understand the experience of Black communists in the CP USA.

1 While not oriented exclusively to the communist tradition, additional information on the challenges of racism and white chauvinism in North America historically can be seen in Palmer (2004) and Sawchuk (2009).
The second wave of Black working class organic intellectuals led the development of the most influential U.S. Black Power organizations of the 1960s. These Black Power organic intellectuals were educated through informal inter-generational relations in the absence of a revolutionary party. During this period, the CP USA did not support the development of U.S. Black Power due to its liquidation in 1944 by General Secretary Earl Browder into a revisionist social-democratic party that abandoned its support for African-American self-determination. Close examination of available (auto) biographical materials shows that, consequently, the U.S. Black Power leadership’s ideological development as organic intellectuals was largely the result of inter-generational and often informal learning relations created by elder civil rights organic intellectuals Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, Grace and James Lee Boggs, to politicize Black student organizations in the left-wing of the civil rights movement.

By summarizing the legacy of the first and second wave Black working class organic intellectuals in North America in the 20th century, I will use this as a backdrop to discuss my efforts in the first decade of the 21st century to develop a third wave of organic intellectuals in the hip hop generation. I will offer a case study of the Freedom Cipher Program at the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC), and discuss the implications of this experience for organizing oppressed Black working class and underclass youth into organic intellectuals today in this age of neo-liberal capitalism and globalization. I hope this paper will contribute to the work of the revolutionary party-building Left, and youth movements concerned with organizing the hip hop generations of the 20th century (born 1965-1984) and 21st century (born 1985-2004) into a new socialist hegemonic project.

**Leninism, Gramscism, and the Black Organic Intellectual Tradition**

According to Harry Haywood, Lenin was the first to theorize about African-American liberation in the International Communist movement. Lenin’s *Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Question at the Second Congress of the Communist International* was based on his study of Black national oppression in America in the early 20th century. In “New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture,” based on the U.S. Census of 1910, Lenin compared the Black peasantry in the southern U.S. to the semi-feudal serfs in the agrarian centers of Russia, arguing these semi-slaves and sharecroppers were victims of an incomplete agrarian and bourgeois democratic revolution. In “Statistics and Sociology,” Lenin contended that African-Americans constituted an oppressed nation because they did not win equal rights when the civil war ended. In addition, the accelerated development of monopoly capitalism in the late 19th century created vast national differences between the oppressed and oppressor nations within the U.S. and a particularly harsh form of national oppression for African-Americans to endure.

Lenin’s experience leading the Bolshevik revolution taught him the significance of the national question for advancing the revolutionary process in the U.S. So he critically advised...
White American Communists and used his influence to seek to transform the newly formed party into an anti-racist vanguard that would eventually recruit Blacks en masse. When it was brought to his attention at the Second Comintern Congress, the Party was not recruiting Blacks. Lenin wrote the CP USA in 1921; encouraging them to prioritize work for this oppressed nation, Lenin was aware of the national chauvinism in the Party that prevented white communists from understanding the strategic importance of the African-American liberation movement as an ally of the revolutionary proletariat in the struggle for socialism. It was through such efforts that, eventually, Black communists were recruited by the CP USA under Comintern directives to do research and policy work on the African-American national question at leading party schools in the USSR to advance communist strategy in the U.S. Once these directives came from the 6th Comintern Congress, White chauvinists were forced to organize Black revolutionaries into the Party despite the reality that most of them had a negative view of Black nationalism.

Despite the rich history of Blacks in the CP USA, some scholars suggest the relationship between Blacks and communism is incompatible. To give an example, the ideological tensions between cultural nationalists George Padmore and Harold Cruse and the CP USA have been used to argue that the interests of the Black radical intelligentsia and American communism are contradictory. Perhaps even more important in terms of classic sociological theory on this question, Robinson contends in Black Marxism that W.E.B. Dubois, C.L.R. James, and Richard Wright are not Black Marxist intellectuals, but rather pioneers of an anti-Marxist “Black Radical Tradition” that transcends the Eurocentric limitations of Marxism to increase our understanding of Black radicalism in the Americas. Robinson dismisses Marxism as a theory based on a “violence-prone Western metaphysic” embedded in European civilization, and argues the Black Radical Tradition, is instead rooted in an anti-materialist metaphysical epistemology whose essence is the absence of mass violence. Robinson contends the Black Radical Tradition is the antithesis of Eurocentric Marxism because the two ideologies are mutually exclusive at the ontological level rooted in pre-capitalist forms of racism and white supremacy. Since the Black Radical Tradition is fundamentally rooted in African culture, resistance to both slavery and racial capitalism takes the form of African spirituality, such as Obeah, Voodoo, and Black Christianity. According to Robinson, from the first slave revolts in the Americas to the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, these revolutionary struggles were ideologically rooted in African cultural traditions and civilization. Thus, revolutionary Black consciousness is the practice of African spirituality, not a Europeanized version of “Black” working class consciousness and anti-capitalist struggle. Consequently, Black communists are not “real” Black revolutionaries because they are a product of Marx’s European radicalism. Robinson concludes the primary contradiction between the Black radical tradition and Marxism is that the latter is rooted in materiality while the former,

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6 Haywood 1978.
8 Meyerson 2000: 3.
9 McClendon 2007: 3.
African spirituality.

In *Black Marxism*, Robinson attempted to resolve the ideological divide in the African-American Liberation movement, most clearly expressed in the Marxist/Nationalist debates responsible for the decline of the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) in the U.S. and Canada in the mid-1970s. However, despite Robinson’s critique of Marxism as a Eurocentric product of Western civilization, the ideology of *Black Marxism* was also inspired by the anti-authoritarian European libertarian socialist tradition, that is also rooted in Europe. Robinson’s *Black Marxism* is the most sophisticated defense of the Nationalist position in the Marxist/Nationalist debate in Black intellectual circles during the 1970s and 1980s over which of the two ideologies is most suitable to guide the struggle for African liberation. McClendon proves the ideology of *Black Marxism* is Marxist in name but anti-Marxist in content. “Black” Marxism is a disguised form of bourgeois-nationalism opposed to the Marxist notion of common class interests as the basis of Black and White working class unity, class solidarity, and proletarian internationalism, which Robinson does not view as a viable strategy for African-American liberation.

In a similar vein, others contend that there are limitations in the application of Gramsci to the study of race. Hall argues that Gramsci does not offer a general social science that can be applied to the analysis of social phenomena across a wide range of comparative societies. As such, Hall cautions the use of Gramsci’s theory to the study of Black Radical movements because his ideas on the Italian working class movement “cannot be simply transferred wholesale” to a colonial context:

…in relation specifically to racism, his original contribution cannot be simply transferred wholesale from the existing context of his work. Gramsci did not write about race, ethnicity or racism in their contemporary meanings or manifestations. Nor did he analyse in depth the colonial experience or imperialism, out of which so many of the characteristic ‘racist’ experiences and relationships in the modern world have developed. His principal preoccupation was with his native Italy; and behind that, the problems of socialist construction in Western and Eastern Europe, the failure of revolutions to occur in the developed capitalist societies of the ‘West,’ the threat posed by the rise of fascism in the inter-war period, the role of the party in the construction of hegemony.

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12 Ibid., 12.
16 Ibid., 3.
17 Hall 1986; Wilderson 2005.
18 Hall 1986: 5.
19 Ibid., 9.
Hall therefore cautions on the perils of substituting Gramsci’s class concepts and analysis of revolutionary working-class politics in post-war Italy for critical studies of race.

In contrast, I show that Gramsci’s theory of working-class organic intellectuals is, in both the historical and contemporary context, useful for understanding the experience of Black communists struggling for liberation and proletarian hegemony in America. Specifically, such struggles represented a broader revolutionary project of hegemonic alliances to construct a new historic bloc between oppressed nationalities and the revolutionary White working-class movement in the 20th century in virtually the precise way that Gramsci outlined. Gramsci developed a theory of organic intellectuals to refer in part to activists and intellectuals who were either responsible for winning the hegemony of the working class or maintaining the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in Western industrialized capitalist nations. Gramsci argued there were two types of intellectuals: 1) traditional intellectuals such as teachers, administrators, or priests who performed the same autonomous functions in capitalist society across many generations; and 2) organic intellectuals who organized the political and economic interests of a given class.20 Gramsci saw bourgeois organic intellectuals as the “qualified political intellectuals, leaders and organizers” who organized mass consent for the ruling class to exercise leadership and direction over the state, political economy, and civic, cultural, and educational institutions of civil society.21 Gramsci saw working class organic intellectuals as the professional revolutionaries from working class or oppressed subaltern communities, who have an organic link to their community through family, community, social, and cultural networks. Working class organic intellectuals are also traditional middle-class professionals or bourgeois intellectuals who commit what Cabral referred to as class suicide and betrayed their class interests, to become an organic component of the revolutionary working class movement.22 Understood in this context, in this paper, I seek to demonstrate the compatibility of Marxism and Black radicalism by exploring the history of Blacks in the American communist movement: a phenomenon that I will refer to as the Black Organic Intellectual Tradition.

Gramsci developed his theory of hegemony in the 1920s specifically as a response to the failure of socialism to develop in the western industrialized nations.23 The result was an expansion of Lenin’s theory of state hegemony (coercive power) to encompass a broader ideological struggle over the state and civil society. In the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci developed his theory of hegemony and war of position as a party “strategy and tactics much more complex and long range than those used by the Bolsheviks between March and November 1917.”24 This was necessary because bourgeois cultural hegemony in the working class organizations of civil society was a huge barrier to the development of the revolutionary movement in the West:

In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and

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22 Cabral 1969: 89.
24 Quoted in Hamrin 1975: 77.
civil society, and when the State trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks…25

Due to the highly developed nature of industrialized capitalist nations, the organizations of civil society were ideological “fortresses” and “earthworks” that held consensual control over the masses and defeated revolutionary movements even in times of great economic crises. As a result, for Gramsci, the war of position must be waged through mass socialist cultural and educational activity in the “superstructures” of civil society, which he likened to “the trench-systems of modern warfare.”26 While the war of movement is concerned with conquering state power, the war of position is a long-term preparatory phase of struggle in the “trenches” of civil society to defeat these “massive structures” of bourgeois liberal democracies:

war of movement increasingly becomes war of position, and it can be said that a State will win a war in so far as it prepares for it minutely and technically in peacetime. The massive structures of the modern democracies, both as State organizations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the ‘trenches’ and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely ‘partial’ the element of movement which before used to be ‘the whole’ of war, etc.27

According to Gramsci, a long protracted war of position consisting of workers’ class struggles, multi-national alliances of subaltern classes and ethnic groups, popular education, mass mobilization, and mass socialist cultural production to defeat bourgeois hegemony in the institutions of civil society, was necessary to win the “war of movement,” a frontal assault on the state. Bourgeois hegemony is the capitalist elite’s consensual control of the oppressed classes—exercised through the social, cultural, religious, labor, communications (mass media/social media) and educational institutions of civil society which appear to be autonomous but nevertheless serve the political interests of the ruling class by propagating and legitimating bourgeois ideology in all areas of life. The war of position is a long-term strategy that required “enormous sacrifice from infinite masses of people” and “exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness” if the revolutionary party was to become successful in defeating capitalist culture, values, and other manifestations of bourgeois ideology in civil society.28 Once the working class organic intellectuals attained proletarian hegemony in civil society through mass socialist education, cultural production, and organization, the dictatorship of the proletariat could be realized.

Gramsci’s war of position is often viewed as a communist strategy to strengthen the

26 Ibid., 235.
27 Ibid., 243.
28 Ibid., 238-239.
worker-peasant alliance in Fascist Italy, but there is an under-theorized anti-racist dimension to his theory of proletarian hegemony. Carley’s study of ideological contention in Sardinian worker, peasant, and communist movements in post-war Italy (1917-1920), argues Gramsci’s Sardinian ethnic group was of mixed Italian, African, and Arabic ancestry, and racialized as biologically inferior by the Italian bourgeoisie. Since all Southern Italians were comprised of mixed race ancestry, the scientific racist discourse of 19th century criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso (1876) argued they were racially inferior to the European population in the North. Lombroso’s scientific racism was influential among the ruling classes and helped shape the country’s national identity during this period of modernization and industrialization, by accounting for why Italy fell behind other advanced capitalist nations in Western Europe. Carley contends Gramsci’s “Some Aspects of the Southern Question” challenged Italy’s racist political discourse, which was hegemonic during that period, when he critically analyzed how Southern Italians were portrayed by the Italian bourgeoisie:

> It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North, by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly, the Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny. If the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric.\(^{29}\)

In this essay, Gramsci claimed that even “The Socialist Party was in great part the vehicle of this bourgeois ideology. . .”\(^{30}\) Thus, anti-racism education is an under-theorized element of Gramsci’s war of position, equally as important as educating workers about Marxism, to dispel the negative myths of racialized ethnic groups propagated in the bourgeois press to divide them from European workers infected with White chauvinism.

In this paper, I highlight the leading Black working-class organic intellectuals of each generation, Gramsci would have referred to as the “principal cohesive element” or revolutionary party leadership, with the capacity to construct a hegemonic project and move this project forward in the bourgeois state and civil society. Gramsci’s conceptualization of the revolutionary party contained the following three types of working class organic intellectuals: 1) a mass element whose membership was based on “discipline and loyalty” rather than “creative spirit or organizational ability;” 2) a principal cohesive element with the “power of innovation,” the ability to provide ideological direction, and the “centralizing and disciplinary powers” necessary to unify oppressed peoples movements into a national “complex of forces which left to themselves would count for little or nothing;” and 3) an intermediate element that maintains contact between the mass and principal cohesive elements and overall party unity “not only physically but also morally and

\(^{29}\) Gramsci 1978: 443-444.

Intellectually.”31 Gramsci generally recognized all party members to be organic intellectuals,32 because they had a “directive and organizational” function in the struggle for proletarian hegemony which was “educative.”33 However, his political-education was particularly concerned with developing the principal cohesive element because they were capable of the highest degree of specialization and innovation:

One speaks of generals without an army, but in reality it is easier to form an army than to form generals. So much is this true that an already existing army is destroyed if it loses its generals, while the existence of a united group of generals who agree among themselves and have common aims soon creates an army even where none exists.34

It is the principal cohesive element that is responsible for organizing “all the activities and functions” in civil and political society (the state) that are necessary for the proletariat to become the new hegemonic class.35 The initial Black Communist leadership in the CP USA is credited with forming a historic alliance between the Black liberation movement and the revolutionary working class movement, despite the reality that racism existed in all ranks of the Party, as was the case in U.S. political and civil society. At a time when Marcus Garvey led the largest Black-Nationalist movement in U.S. history, advocating racial separatism and Black capitalism, a small group of Black working class organic intellectuals who comprised the Black leadership in the CP USA made ideological, political, and organizational contributions to the development of a genuine socialist hegemonic project in the U.S. which organized tens of thousands of Black and White workers and sharecroppers into a multi-national anti-capitalist movement during the Depression.36

The First Wave: Black Working-Class Organic Intellectuals in the CP USA

Exploring the available literature on the topic, we find that a diverse range of formal and informal educational relations in the Socialist Party of America (SPA) and the CP USA were responsible for educating the first generation of Black working-class organic intellectuals. The first Blacks to join the CP USA developed through collective learning in an SPA party club and public forum in Harlem.

First wave Black communists participated in organized Marxist-Leninist political education in advanced party schools in the US and USSR, and consequently made pioneering theoretical contributions to advance party policy and movement-building efforts among Black workers in the northern cities and the Black proletariat and peasantry in the Black Belt

32 Ibid., 9.
33 Ibid.,16.
34 Ibid., 153.
35 Ibid.,16.
South. Harry Haywood was trained in organized communist schools in the USSR to become a Marxist-Leninist theoretician on the African-American national question. ³⁷ Black feminist pioneer Claudia Jones developed as a youth in party schools and the upper echelons of the CP USA’s Young Communist League. ³⁸ Through her party education, Jones developed an organic Black feminist praxis using Marxism-Leninism as a framework to understand Black working women’s oppression under capitalism. Ultimately, first wave Black communists were educated, trained and developed into organic intellectuals in ways that depended to a significant degree on organized Party schools and cells in North America and the USSR.

The African Blood Brotherhood (ABB)

Before joining the CP USA, the first Black Communists developed as organic intellectuals in the SPA through their own revolutionary praxis that entailed self-directed learning, a collective group study, and the organization of a socialist educational forum. Beginning in the summer of 1918 and as members of the Harlem Socialist Club, Cyril Briggs and a small group of Black socialists organized the Peoples Educational Forum (PEF), a series of public forums on Sunday afternoons in the Lafayette Hall at 7th Avenue and 131st Street. The PEF consisted of a speaker’s presentation, debate, and discussion. ³⁹

The Harlem communists also used the forums to win over traditional intellectuals to their movement. The PEF featured such well-known speakers as W.E.B. Du Bois and Hubert H. Harrison, and the forum often-erupted into heated debates in which democratic socialists battled communists in line struggle. ⁴⁰ In 1917, the Harlem Socialist Club split into two camps as a result of the Second (Communist) International’s split during the First World War. The club’s founders, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, and their supporters separated from the Black communist faction led by Briggs, because the latter supported the Russian Revolution. Inspired by the recent victory of the Bolsheviks in 1917, Briggs’ faction left the SPA, organized the ABB in 1919, and joined the CP USA to embrace the anti-imperialist politics of Lenin and the Third International. On the other hand, Randolph and Owen sided with the social democrats that remained in the SPA and the social-democratic remnants of the Second International. ⁴¹ The first Black working class communists in the ABB to join the CP USA were

³⁷ Haywood 1978.
³⁸ Davies 2008.
³⁹ Ibid., 29.
⁴⁰ Ibid., 30.
Otto Huiswoud, a dock worker; Cyril Briggs, an editor; Richard Moore, a professional

First-wave organic intellectual Otto Huiswoud was introduced to socialism in the SPA. In 1918, Huiswoud took a summer job on a pleasure boat on the Fall River Line while studying at Cornell University. The International Seamen’s Union was not interested in either unionizing or protecting the ship’s black crew members who, under Huiswoud’s leadership, walked off the vessel in Boston and stood with folded arms on the pier—until the fully booked shipping company was pressured to negotiate for higher pay and better working conditions. At the end of the summer, Huiswoud did not return to Cornell. The SPA had heard about his strike leadership and offered him a one-year scholarship to attend the Rand School in New York (Solomon 1998:10). There he encountered the future Comintern official Sen Katayama, who became a life-long friend. Assigned by the Socialists to Harlem’s 21st Assembly District, he met activists A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, and joined the editorial board of the Black radical newspaper The Messenger. At the founding convention of the CP USA’s aboveground Workers Party in December 1921, Huiswoud was elected to chair its Negro Commission (Ibid., 11). With the Brotherhood’s approval, Huiswoud was assigned by the Party to work in the ABB, where he soon became a member of the Brotherhood’s Supreme Council and was named national organizing secretary of the ABB after his return from the Fourth Comintern Congress in 1922 (Ibid). During the early 1920s, his activities veered between organizing tours for the ABB and participating in the deliberations of the Comintern. That intersection would lead him to play a pivotal role in the early Black-Communist relationship.

Cyril Briggs was born on the Caribbean island of Nevis on May 28, 1888 and became one of the most influential communists in Harlem during the 1920s. Briggs moved to Harlem in 1905 and began his writing career with Amsterdam News in 1912. He moved on to become the editor during the First World War until his anti-war stand got him dismissed in 1917 (Naison 1983:5). In 1918, Briggs organized The Crusader, a revolutionary-nationalist paper that became the organ of the ABB (Ibid). Briggs had a large readership for The Crusader in several U.S. cities, and the support of the West Indian community in Harlem. In the early issues of The Crusader, Briggs’ editorials proved him to be a militant nationalist, along the lines of Marcus Garvey, always promoting African Liberation (Ibid., 6). However, by 1920, Briggs was encouraging Blacks to make alliances with White liberals and radicals and played a leading role in bringing the ABB into the CP USA (Ibid).

Richard Moore was born in Barbados in 1893, Moore immigrated to New York in 1909 and worked as an elevator operator until he received a job as a raw silk clerk in 1913, which he kept for the next decade (Turner and Turner 1988:24). When not working, Moore spent his time in newly emerging black-owned bookstores or on street corners listening to soapbox speakers who advocated radical socialism (Ibid., 26). Deeply influenced by the likes of Randolph, Owen, and Hubert Harrison he had been listening to since 1916, by 1917 Moore was up on the soapbox educating Harlem audiences about radical politics (Ibid). As a result of his involvement in Harlem’s stepladder speaking tradition, Moore became a labor activist in the 1920s, engaged in both the CP’s International Labor Defense and the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC). He also led the Harlem Tenants League in which he organized rent strikes against White and Black landlords that halted rental increases and improved housing conditions (Ibid., 106). Richard B. Moore belonged to the ABB leadership and the CP USA in the early 1920s. In 1919, Moore helped Briggs found the ABB. In 1920, Moore launched The Emancipator with W.A. Domingo, a weekly, which only lasted 10 issues with regular contributed editorships from Owen, Randolph, and Briggs (Ibid., 32). By the mid-1920s, Moore moved on to become the editor of the Negro Champion, the ANLC newspaper, which propagated the CP USA’s position on the ‘Negro Question’ (Solomon 1998:56).
The ABB was the first independent black Marxist organization of the 20th century. Founded in 1919 by Briggs and based in New York with branches throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean, the ABB’s program called for an international federation of organizations, in which it ascribed itself the position of vanguard in the African Revolution. As a ‘secret revolutionary order’ which emphasized self-defense, race pride, and self-determination, the ABB was inspired by the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist politics of Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution which commanded their attention—not the CP USA, which at the time was racist with White national chauvinism prevalent in all ranks of the party. In colonial islands, it proposed to build an army of Pan-African revolutionaries; in the U.S., it encouraged blacks to organize independent trade unions and cooperative economic business enterprises. In the South, the ABB advocated democratic rights for Blacks and armed self-defense against Southern terror. The ABB gained notoriety in the early summer of 1921, when the bourgeois press linked the organization to a riot that destroyed the Black community of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Three days after the riots, the New York Times printed a front-page report that portrayed the riot as a conspiracy by ABB organizers. By 1922, the ABB dissolved into the CP USA since all of its membership was devoted communists (Ibid). The ABB leadership formed a strategic alliance with the CP USA in order to build a mass movement of Black and White workers that would form the basis of a socialist revolution in the U.S. Importantly, the ABB leadership did not assimilate into or tail behind the CP USA because they sought integration, but rather incorporated their militant anti-racism into the Party’s mandate and worked with them despite the prevalence of White chauvinism because they understood the CP USA represented the most progressive forces within the labor movement during that period.

The first wave Black Communists in the ABB leadership engaged in a number of political and educational activities in the international communist movement. In February 1927, Moore represented the ANLC in Brussels at the International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism. The Congress consisted of 174 delegates from 21 countries, representing a

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45 Grace Campbell came from Jamaica in 1912 to study at the Tuskegee Institute, a historic all-black college in Alabama. Soon after, she became an associate of Briggs and joined his cadre of radical Black working class organic intellectuals in Harlem. As the only female founding member of the ABB, Campbell engaged in a wide range of community activism, which included using money from her salary as a parole officer to start up the Harlem’s Empire Friendly Shelter, a home for poor single mothers (Watkins-Owens 1996: 103). She was also a pioneer of Harlem’s “Soap Box” street corner speaking tradition, along with other Caribbean immigrant “step-ladder” speakers, such as Moore, Domingo, Black-Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey, and native migrants Randolph and Owen (Ibid., 92). Campbell was the first Caribbean woman to join the CP USA in its early years.

46 Lovett Fort-Whiteman was an aspiring actor and writer who initially joined the SPA’s interracial Harlem Socialist Club, but by the Fall of 1925 was the national organizer of the CP-sponsored ANLC (Ibid., 58).

47 Naison 1983: 5.

48 Ibid., 5.
large cross-section of internationalists opposed to colonialism and imperialist aggression. Moore was a member of the committee on the Negro question and played a major role in drafting its resolution.\textsuperscript{49} In 1924, Fort-Whiteman participated in the 5th Comintern Congress that dealt with further development of their policy on the national and colonial question.\textsuperscript{50} Shortly after his return from eight months of travel and study in the Soviet Union, Fort-Whiteman wrote “The Racial Question in Soviet Russia” for the May 7, 1925 issue of \textit{The Daily Worker}, in which he compares pre-Soviet Tsarist oppression to racial oppression in America; and draws parallels between the oppression of Blacks in America to the Jews in Russia, and colonial peoples under imperialism by exposing the arrogance and notions of racial superiority typical of the dominant white working classes of Europe and North America.\textsuperscript{51} As the head of the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), Fort-Whiteman moved to the USSR to participate in the 6th Comintern Congress and teach political science at the Cercerin Institute near Moscow, where he remained until his death shortly before the Second World War.\textsuperscript{52}

**Harry Haywood**

Harry Haywood was one of the first Blacks in the CP USA recruited by the Party to do advanced theoretical studies in the USSR. Due to the high level of national chauvinism within the party, Haywood initially joined the ABB in 1921, and eventually became a member by the end of the year when racial tensions simmered. Haywood developed as an organic intellectual when the party recruited him to study abroad at Moscow’s University of the Toilers of the East (KUTVA) in 1925 with students from Palestine, Algeria, China, Ireland, South Africa, and Korea.\textsuperscript{53} Bill Patterson, another African-American who studied alongside Haywood at KUTVA, recalled how this foreign instruction abroad advanced their ideological development as communists:

\begin{quote}
KUTVA was fascinating…Everyone there was seeking to break with an ideology that had kept him tied to colonial oppression. Combined with formal study there was practical experience. Students traveled throughout the Soviet Union to see the national development at many levels. They studied and observed the problems of the colonial peoples who had been held in the tsar’s ‘prison of nations’ and how they were solving them in the ‘family of nations’ for which the Revolution had laid the foundation.\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

KUTVA was a Comintern communist school that trained Third World anti-colonial activists and African-Americans like Haywood, to lead national liberation movements in their

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 59.

\textsuperscript{50} Solomon, 1998: 48.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 95.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 58.

\textsuperscript{53} Haywood 1978: 149.

\textsuperscript{54} Patterson 1971: 105-106.
native countries. Lenin and the USSR recognized the strategic importance of training organic intellectuals from the African-American nation to become professional revolutionaries in the CP USA, who could in turn lead their national liberation movement into a united front with the communist party against U.S. monopoly capitalism and imperialism. KUTVA combined formal study with practical experience, allowing Haywood dual membership in the CP USA and Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to tour the USSR and study how former colonial nations were resolving their problems of historic underdevelopment as Socialist Republics.  

In 1927, Haywood was assigned to study a 3-year course for advanced Party cadre at the Lenin School, where he received instruction in the following core subjects of Marxist-Leninist theory to advance a policy on the African-American national question: political economy, historical and dialectical materialism, Leninism, and the History of the CPSU. In preparation for the 6th Comintern Congress, during the winter of 1928, Haywood joined a sub-committee on the Negro Question to prepare a draft resolution for the Negro Commission at the Congress. With the assistance of his KUTVA and Lenin School comrades, Haywood developed the theory that African-Americans were an oppressed nation dominated by U.S. Imperialism, and the Black-Nationalist movement in America (formerly Garvey’s UNIA) was a legitimate national liberation movement for self-determination, independent of the struggle of the revolutionary White working class for socialism.

After Haywood’s studies in the USSR, he sat on the Party’s Central Committee and waged an ideological struggle against white chauvinists in the leadership who dismissed the African-American movement for liberation as a counter-revolutionary “bourgeois-nationalist” tendency that divided White and Black workers. Haywood’s thesis, “Self-Determination for the Black Belt Nation,” was adopted by the 6th Comintern and soon after by the CP USA. This successful war of position within the Party consolidated a new alliance between revolutionary-nationalism and White American communism during the Depression. These efforts began to lay the foundation of the anti-racist organizing and mass protests which eventually came to fruition two decades later in the civil rights movement of the 1950s.

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 207-209.
57 Ibid., 228.
58 In his autobiography, Black Bolshevik Haywood summarized it as follows:
This new line established that the Black freedom struggle is a revolutionary movement in its own right, directed against the very foundations of U.S. imperialism, with its own dynamic pace and momentum, resulting from the unfinished democratic and land revolutions in the South. It places the black liberation movement and the class struggle of U.S. workers in their proper relationship as two aspects of the fight against the common enemy—U.S. capitalism. It elevates the black movement to a position of equality in that battle. The new theory destroys forever the white racist theory traditional among class-conscious White workers which had relegated the struggle of Blacks to a subsidiary position in the revolutionary movement. Race is defined as a device of national oppression, a smokescreen thrown up by the class enemy, to hide the underlying economic and social conditions involved in Black oppression and to maintain the division of the working class. The new theory was to sensitize the Party to the revolutionary significance of the Black liberation struggle (234).
Claudia Jones

The CP USA was also responsible for the first wave of revolutionary Black Feminism in the U.S. by fostering the ideological development of Claudia Jones when they recruited her to the youth leadership and party press. Jones was a working class Trinidadian immigrant who grew up in Harlem in the 20s and joined the CP USA's youth movement at the age of 21 in 1936, where she became an important organizer in the Scottsboro Boys Campaign in Harlem, the Party’s main anti-racist effort at that time.°9 Jones quickly rose to the highest ranks of the Young Communist League (YCL) in the late 1930s and developed as an organic intellectual by attending conferences and organizing Black youth into the Party. Initially, Jones began writing a column called “Claudia’s Comments” for a Black newspaper that was the ideological organ of the Federated Youth Clubs of Harlem. Soon after joining, Jones became editor of the Party’s Weekly Review, and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the YCL in Harlem. In 1937, Jones attended the Party’s six-month National Training Institute, and by the following year she was the New York State Chair and National Council member of the YCL.°0

As a Black communist journalist for the Party press, Jones went on to become a leading theorist of Black Feminism a quarter century before first-wave Black Feminism emerged as a critique of Second Wave Feminism and Black Power in the late 1960s.°1 In “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women,” Jones analyzed the historic super-exploitation of Black working women in terms of their wages and labor as domestics, which she argued explained the militancy of Black women, a force that remained unorganized by both the Communist left and White Feminists due to male chauvinism and racism.°2 In this article, Jones proposed that unionizing Black domestic workers would advance the class struggle and anti-imperialism in the U.S. by organizing them around their economic issues. In “We Seek Equality for Women,” Jones pioneered the theory of interlocking race, gender, and class oppression in the lives of Black working women, arguing that the struggle for the political, economic, and social equality of Black women was in the interest of the struggle for White women’s equality and the White working class movement more generally.°3 In other words, through her formal party education and leadership of the YCL, Jones became an ideological authority on the question of Black working class women’s oppression in the U.S. communist movement, twenty years before the “introduction” of Black feminist theory in the late 1960s.

°9 In Alabama, March 1931, nine African-American boys were taken off a crowded freight train from Chattanooga to Tennessee, and charged with raping two White women riding on the same train. The Scottsboro boys were tried and as a result of the mass mobilizations of the Communist left, all nine lives were saved, although it took 20 years before the last defendant was freed from prison. See Carter, D.T. Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979; and Foner, P.S. and H. Shapiro (eds.). American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1930-1934. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.
°0 Davies 2008: xxiv.
°1 Ibid., 18.
°2 Ibid., 37-38.
°3 Ibid., 39-40.
The Second Wave: Black Power Organic Intellectuals in the U.S. Black Power Movement

The second generation of principal cohesive Black working class organic intellectuals, were responsible for the development of the ideology, programs, and leading organizations of the U.S. Black Power movement in the 1960s. Huey P. Newton of the Black Panther Party (BPP), General Baker of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), and Marian Kramer (LRBW) were all key leaders who contributed to the expansion of a new war of position against U.S. capitalist imperialism during that period. Newton is generally credited with being the first Black Power organic intellectual to introduce Marxism-Leninism into the movement by organizing a Maoist-inspired vanguard party and advocating revolutionary-nationalist struggle against the contradictions of internal colonialism. Newton revised Marxist-Leninist theory to organize the U.S. Black lumpen-proletariat into the leadership and rank-and-file of a vanguard party. League founders, General Baker and Marian Kramer organized Black rank-and-file auto workers against a type of double exploitation they endured at the point of production in auto plants as well as within the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in Detroit itself.\textsuperscript{64} The LRBW was a Marxist-Leninist Black workers movement at the point of production in the Detroit auto industry, with the view that Black workers were the vanguard of the Black liberation movement.

Huey Newton

While a student in college in early 1960s in Oakland, California, Huey P. Newton developed his intellectual capacities through intense self-directed studies of Marxism and the Chinese Revolution. In his autobiography, Newton recalled making the difficult transition from Black-Nationalism to revolutionary internationalism during the civil rights years by studying the experience of Third World revolutionaries. Newton drafted the Panther program to build a revolutionary party by studying all four volumes of Mao’s \textit{Selected Writings}, Che Guevara’s \textit{Guerilla Warfare}, Frantz Fanon’s \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, and Williams \textit{Negroes with Guns}. This program of study enabled him to develop a radical perspective on the colonial oppression of African-Americans in the U.S. Disillusioned with the sectarianism and dogmatism of the White socialist left, Newton immersed himself in the study of Maoism which he believed provided a sounder ideological framework to build a national liberation movement in the U.S.:

\textsuperscript{64} Historically, in the U.S. and Canadian labor movement, there was a long history of racism in White-dominated unions which excluded Black workers they saw as lower-wage competitors who were a threat to their job security. In the 1960s, Black autoworkers were over-represented in unskilled and semi-skilled positions where they faced racism from the UAW union that maintained the racial division of labor in the factories, and heightened class exploitation by the auto companies who forced Black auto workers to perform twice the work of White workers. For more information on the double oppression of Black auto workers in Detroit, see Tripp (complete name of author). Also see Ahmad, 1968-1971: The League of Revolutionary Black Workers (A Historical Study) (1979). http://interferencearchive.org/wp-content/uploads/ahmad-the-league-of-revolutionary-black-workers.pdf
It was my studying and reading in college that led me to become a socialist. The transformation from a nationalist to a socialist was a slow one, although I was around a lot of Marxists...I read more of the works of Socialists and began to see strong similarities between my beliefs and theirs. My conversion was complete when I read four volumes of Mao Tse Tung to learn more about the Chinese Revolution.\(^{65}\)

Through intense study, Newton became a revolutionary intellectual who co-wrote the Panther program with Bobby Seale and built the initial party organization in Oakland.

Malcolm X also had a tremendous inter-generational influence on Newton when he was a student activist in the Afro-American Association at Merritt College in Oakland, California. Newton heard Malcolm speak at McClymonds High School and was impressed by his ability to politicize Black working class students by combining his street wisdom with a coherent revolutionary-nationalist ideology.\(^{66}\) Malcolm appealed to Newton because he, like other militant Black youth, was disillusioned by the liberal reformism of the civil rights movement. Newton was also inspired by Malcolm’s call in the mid-1960s to organize a revolutionary party for African-American liberation. In his autobiography *Revolutionary Suicide*, Newton explained how the BPP was organized in 1966 to fulfill Malcolm’s legacy after his death. In his biography of Newton, Hilliard quotes him at length to demonstrate the extent to which Malcolm’s example influenced him to organize the party:

A new militant spirit was born when Malcolm died. It was born of outrage and a unified Black consciousness, out of the sense of a task left undone...The Black Panther Party had been formed in the spirit of Malcolm; we strove for the goals he had set for himself...\(^{67}\)

Ahmad contends that the BPP’s formation in 1966 was in response to Malcolm’s “Ballot or Bullet” speaking tour in April 1964, which called for a Black Nationalist party-building conference to be held in August of that year, but was never realized because he was touring Africa at the time.\(^{68}\) Malcolm was only 39 years-old but he was still a civil rights elder, because he played an inter-generational educational role in Newton’s ideological development. Thus, it is not surprising that Newton organized according to Malcolm’s vision of an independent Black revolutionary party when he died.

Through his Maoist praxis, Newton became a leading Black Power organic intellectual who organized the most influential revolutionary party in the U.S. during the 1960s. As a student activist at Merritt College, Newton was disillusioned with the armchair revolutionary tendency in the Afro-American Association and the Soul Students Advisory Council, a RAM front organization, so he set out to create a Black Power organization that was more effective

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\(^{65}\) Newton 1973: 69-70.


\(^{67}\) Quoted in Hilliard 2006: 88; Newton 1973: 184.

\(^{68}\) Ahmad 2007: 28.
in applying revolutionary-nationalism to transform colonial relations in the Black community. Inspired by radical civil rights leader, Robert Williams armed self-defense units, Newton wanted to create an action-oriented group that would go beyond the passivity and militant rhetoric typical of many Black student groups, and actually mobilize the community against the bourgeois capitalist state. At the War on Poverty Office where fellow Panther Bobby Seale worked as a community liaison, Newton drafted the Panther Ten-Point Program and studied law to find a legal loophole that would allow Blacks to arm themselves to defend the community against the violent police repression they endured. Ahmad credits Newton’s Panther program with developing the national question further than any other group of the period by recognizing that U.S. Blacks in urban ghettos were an internal colony struggling for self-determination:

Huey Newton developed revolutionary nationalism to a higher level with the BPP ten-point program. The ten-point program raises the question of power and self-determination of the African-American national community. The Black Panther Program advanced the line that African-Americans were a kind of colony, which are oppressed for racist and economic reasons by the U.S. government.

For Newton specifically, it was through critical reflection on his failed experience in the Black student movement combined with studies of Maoism and Third World revolutionaries, that he was introduced to Marxism-Leninism and the necessity of organizing a vanguard party.

The BPP under Newton’s leadership utilized The Black Panther newspaper and organized political education classes, protests, and campaigns to educate and train party members to become organic intellectuals. The Oakland chapter created a six-week political education class for party members divided into three groups: community, leadership, and cadre. The following texts were required reading: Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth, Mao Tse Tung’s Little Red Book, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, and Kwame Nkrumah’s I Speak of Freedom. Party members learned the material by reading and discussing paragraphs from each book. Some members developed ideologically by writing essays, reports on local Black anti-racist organizing, and poetry for the party newspaper. Panthers also read and discussed articles from local newspapers and The Black Panther about local, national, and international anti-racist struggles against police brutality, racism, Black workers’ struggles, and Third World Revolutions. The newspaper explained the party’s policies and ideological positions in an accessible language that appealed to a wide audience in the Black community. All of the local chapters organized political education

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69 Hilliard 2006: 22-23.
70 Ibid., 27-28.
72 Ahmad 2007: 188.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Conway and Stevenson 2011: 39.
around *The Little Red Book*.\(^{76}\) Thousands of Panthers organized and participated in “Free Huey” demonstrations across the U.S. when Newton was arrested for the death of Oakland police officer John Frey, killed on October 28, 1967 in a Panther shootout with Oakland Police.\(^{77}\) When the Free Huey Movement developed into a grassroots mass movement overnight, many Panthers became politicized fundraising for Huey’s legal defense, speaking on college campuses, and organizing forums and rallies in Black communities throughout the country.

**General Baker**

Similar to Newton, LRBW leader General Baker also developed as an organic intellectual through inter-generational learning relations with veteran civil rights radicals. In 1963, Baker played a leading role in building UHURU\(^{78}\) at Wayne State University. While in UHURU, Baker was mentored by James and Grace Lee Boggs, elder civil rights organic intellectuals in the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL), a Black socialist organization in Detroit. GOAL’s leadership consisted of Reverend Albert Cleage, a radical Black Nationalist and Black liberation theologian, and the Boggses, two former students of C.L.R. James’s Autonomous Marxist study group, Facing Reality. Throughout 1963, the Boggses mentored UHURU members in their home, where they provided them with insight on the concepts, goals, strategy, and tactics of revolutionary socialism. For Baker, GOAL bridged the gap between Detroit Black working class radicalism of the 1940s and 1950s and the emerging 1960s Black Power Movement, then in its embryonic form as tiny Black student organizations like UHURU.

Baker was also influenced by Malcolm’s revolutionary-nationalism when he heard him speak in Detroit during the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement. In November 1963, for example, GOAL organized the Grassroots Leadership Conference, where keynote speaker Malcolm X delivered what many describe as one of his most influential speeches, “A Message to the Grassroots,” at King Solomon’s Church. Baker and UHURU attended this event and he became deeply inspired to more militant action. In a 2004 interview, Baker said Malcolm’s speech was a call-to-arms that really inspired him to devote his life to the struggle:

‘Message to the Grassroots’…was kind of a life changing speech. When Malcolm would come to town it was something to hear him ‘cause he not only was a good speaker, but he inspired you to do something… Right after that speech I went downtown the next morning, and chartered me a Fox and Wilson Rifle Club, and we came back and built us a rifle club based on the inspiration we got from Malcolm… That was a material inspiration that I had and we transformed that into a material form of organization…what I’m trying to express to

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 42.

\(^{77}\) Ahmad 2007: 192.

\(^{78}\) UHURU means “Freedom” in Swahili and the group’s membership consisted of the following Wayne State students who later became the future leadership of the LRBW: General Baker, Luke Tripp, John Watson, and Charles Johnson.
you is how he inspired people to get up off your butt and go and do something. Just don’t do the same old thing.\textsuperscript{79}

Malcolm’s contribution to Baker’s ideological development as a Black Power organic intellectual was his emphasis on the necessity of learning through revolutionary praxis, as opposed to learning within the reformism that typically characterized the Civil Rights Movement. Malcolm encouraged listeners to become increasingly militant and steer the movement away from the bourgeois liberal leadership that advocated peace and non-violence as opposed to armed self-defense against racist White terror.

Similarly, by studying the radical civil rights leader Robert F. Williams’ writings and listening to his radio program alongside UHURU, Baker furthered his understanding of revolutionary-nationalism. Williams \textit{Negroes with Guns}, written in exile in Cuba, was mandatory reading for Baker and UHURU members and it influenced his thinking in the debate over civil disobedience versus armed self-defense in the civil rights movement. The book is Williams’ own account of his leadership of the Monroe, South Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that successfully resisted White Ku Klux Klan Terror in the 1950s. Black Power organic intellectuals embraced Williams because, in Baker’s view, he gave the clearest analysis of the necessity of revolutionary violence in the struggle for African-American Liberation up to that period.\textsuperscript{80} Baker was also politicized by subscribing to Williams’ \textit{Crusader}, an independent newspaper he published in exile from Cuba.

Baker and UHURU also gathered on a weekly basis to hear Williams’ short-wave radio show broadcast live from Havana, Cuba. Throughout 1963, \textit{Free Radio Dixie} was broadcast live every Friday night at 11 PM, played the latest Jazz, soul, and rock ‘n’ roll, and offered news coverage of the most recent developments in the movement.\textsuperscript{81} In the early 1960s, Williams fled to Cuba because his revolutionary activism in the civil rights movement threatened the American ruling class to the point where they brought him up on trumped up murder charges.\textsuperscript{82} Baker recalls how \textit{Radio Free Dixie} was another significant cultural artifact that mediated the learning of UHURU:

\begin{quote}
As a student, we would get together in my little apartment and listen to Robert Williams broadcast from the radio every Friday night and it was just uplifting. This was back in ’63 now remember this. He would come with the latest songs from the states-side, the Miracles stuff ‘I got a lover way over there and I know that’s where I should be.’ And then he’d come on blowin’ ‘White man’s nigger no more’ and ‘Truth crushed to the earth shall rise again.’ And it was just really an uplifting experience. I don’t know if you can really think back to how uplifting that kind of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{79} Baker 2004: 3-4
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 306.
\textsuperscript{81} Tyson 1999: 285.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
word and that kind of message on the radio was back in that day. By broadcasting *Radio Free Dixie* live to air from Cuba each week, Williams educated Baker and UHURU about the politics of revolutionary-nationalism and inspired them to action against U.S. Imperialism.

In 1964, Baker and UHURU traveled to Cuba to defy the travel ban imposed by U.S. policies reflecting its imperialist orientations that sought to prevent Americans from traveling to socialist countries. In Cuba, Baker met Robert F. Williams then in exile, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the African Marxist theorist and activist Muhammad Babu. Baker recalls how the trip enabled him to make an ideological leap as a communist who began to better understand the practical application of Marxism-Leninism in revolutionary movements. While in Cuba, Baker also met with a variety of revolutionary activists and national liberation fighters from throughout the colonial world whose activities were guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. On the question of UHURU’s collective informal educational development in Cuba, Baker recalls a series of non-formal learning engagements with various Asian, African, and Latin-American communists, who expanded his past informal lifelong learning experiences or events up until then:

And when I got to Cuba, it was a brand new day for a couple of reasons. I was fortunate enough to have a chance to play baseball with Fidel Castro. Fortunate enough to meet with Che Guevara while he was still alive. The more important thing I thought for me though in a lot of ways was Robert F. Williams living in Cuba then...when I got to Cuba, Cuba was a revolutionary laboratory. And I got a chance to meet revolutionaries from all over the globe. I met fighters from Vietnam, fighters from Zimbabwe, South Africa, some who’d been wounded were down there. Fighters from the West Indies and all over Latin America, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, people struggling in Europe, the Albanians, it was a real revolutionary upheaval for me and a real laboratory. So I think that’s the thing that really hit me was all this revolutionary fervor. On the U.S. passport at that time, the purpose we took the trip, was to break the travel ban. The United States government had just put Cuba as one of the countries on the passport that you could not travel to. And we were going down to defy that travel ban. It’s interesting to note, if you look at U.S. passports in that day, they had five countries you couldn’t go to; you couldn’t go to China; you couldn’t go to Korea; you couldn’t go to Vietnam; and you couldn’t go to a little country called Albania; and they had just added Cuba. So you know with my youthful logic, I was 22 years old; when I got to Cuba and start seeing what

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83 Baker 2004: 4
84 Ahmad 2007: 137
was what, I thought I should go see the people from each one of these embassies, ‘cause if they say they’re bad there must be something good about them, you know. So I made the rounds to each one, I didn’t know nothing about Albania. Went into this Albanian embassy, and these people come in here, and they tell me they been fighting imperialism since Julius Caeser. I said ‘Damn,’ and fell over (laughs). I said “listen, my goodness…” But anyway I’m just tryin’ to let you understand the kind of uplifting stuff I had. So I thought that the trip to Cuba, the Malcolm speeches all adds up, the King marches, all that combined to make me take the stand I took when I opposed the draft.  

After the Cuba trip, UHURU disbanded and re-emerged as the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM). The major campaign Baker worked on was the “September 10th Movement.” Upon receiving his draft notice, Baker and the ASM organized a mass rally to protest his induction into the Vietnam Draft, set for September 10, 1965. Baker protested by writing an anti-imperialist letter to the draft board denouncing U.S., European, and South African imperialist aggression against national liberation movements in South-East Asia and Africa. The ASM responded by circulating leaflets and threatening the draft board with a press announcement stating that 50,000 Blacks would show up at the Wayne County Induction Center on Baker’s induction date to protest the U.S. Army. Although the ASM only mobilized eight demonstrators on that day, the threat of mass protest resulted in the U.S. Army acquitting him from service on the grounds that he was an ‘unsuitable’ candidate. Baker was the first African-American to defy the Vietnam draft, and the September 10th Movement signified the new militancy among Black students in the civil rights movement who directly challenged U.S. imperialism at home by demonstrating their solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution abroad.

In 1967 Baker participated in the creation of Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement’s (DRUM) newsletter, the *Inner City Voice*, which exemplified the heightened national consciousness of Black workers in the aftermath of the Detroit rebellion. Baker’s comrades, Mike Hamlin, John Watson, and Ken Cockrel, studied Lenin’s *What is to be Done?*, debated revolutionary tactics, and resolved to organize a vanguard newspaper to enhance the socialist consciousness of Detroit’s Black working class. Baker used the *Inner City Voice* to do agitation in the plants and this was successful because it expressed Black workers’ grievances and called them to action in their own language. By printing the *Inner City Voice* in 1967, Baker developed as an organic intellectual

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86 Baker 2004: 4-5
89 Ibid.: 24.
90 One of the largest rebellions of the civil rights movement, the 1967 Detroit Rebellion consisted of five days of rioting, 43 deaths, 1,189 injuries, and 7,000 arrests. The origins of the rebellion are attributed to police brutality, lack of affordable housing, racial and economic inequality, and the rising influence of Black militancy from the civil rights movement. See Detroit Riots 1967 online at www.67riots.rutgers.edu/d_events.htm.
91 Ibid., 245-246.
through in-plant agitation for better working conditions as an autoworker and effective and inclusive union representation. The *Inner City Voice* was circulated at the Dodge Plant to educate Black workers about individual cases of racism in the workplace, and encouraged them to participate in different forms of direct action against Chrysler and UAW Local 3, which included rallies, demonstrations, and wildcat strikes that shutdown production in the plants. By the time the LRBW was organized in 1969, Baker had nearly a decade’s experience organizing in the left-wing of Detroit’s civil rights movement.

**Marian Kramer**

The transformation of DRUM into the LRBW is credited to Black Feminist organic intellectual Marion Kramer. Initially, Kramer was an anti-poverty activist in the Welfare Rights Organization recruited by DRUM in 1967 to type and edit the *Inner City Voice*. BPP leaders Bobby Seale and Fred Hampton requested that Kramer, as a DRUM organizer, help organize the Detroit chapter of the party. After working extensively alongside other women typing the newsletter, doing leafleting and agitation to organize community support, and participating in demonstrations, Kramer criticized the Black patriarchy in the movement, whereby the male leadership delegated most of the ‘mundane’ work to the women. Consequently, the LRBW was organized out of Kramer’s internal Black Feminist organizing within DRUM to resolve the tendency of women doing all the work and receiving none of the credit from the male leadership. Kramer took the lead in pressuring the central committee to establish an organization that would off-load some of the printing and administrative work from DRUM women to men in the half-dozen Revolutionary Union Movements (RUMs) that emerged spontaneously throughout Detroit:

> The women…were constantly pumping those things (leaflets) out… (and) laying out the *Inner City Voice*, it was us that was doing a lot of that. So women…noticed some problems that were creeping up in the League and we had some uneasiness too because we were getting more and more of the work on us. And we said, look we got to have some kind of organization to bring together all these entities. And so through some of the fighting we were doing, it lay the groundwork for the League of Revolutionary Black Workers to come together…

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92 Tripp 1994: 8-10.
93 Ibid., 255.
94 In an interview with Marian Kramer on February 24, 2004, she recalled that in the late 1960s DRUM and the BPP had a temporary alliance despite their ideological differences, which resulted in the Panther leadership’s request that she help organize the Detroit chapter of the party: See now we were in the Panthers. One thing that had happened during that period of time, Bobby Seale, who else? Fred Hampton, they came to us about helping them to organize here in Detroit. So part of our organization were assigned to go and help build the Panthers, and I became a part of the central committee, and all that type of stuff. So through the League, through the RUM movement I’m talking about, we helped build the Panther party (Kramer 2004: 3).
women were very instrumental in developing that organization.\footnote{Kramer 2004: 1-2.}

Through the organizing efforts of Kramer and other women in DRUM’s Black Women’s Committee, they called a meeting on January 21, 1969 with over 100 in attendance to air their grievances and the LRBW was founded on that day.\footnote{Ibid., 258-259.}

**The History of the Black Organic Intellectual Tradition in Canada**

The first Black Canadian who joined the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) in Toronto was Lenny Johnston, and the party provided him with an informal communist education that advanced his own revolutionary praxis as an organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union.\footnote{Brand and Bhaggiyadatta 1986.} In 1918 Leonard Johnston was born in Toronto to Jamaican immigrants and grew up experiencing racism on a regular basis because he was unable to find work except as a porter on the railways in the late 1930s.\footnote{From the 1920s to 1960s, working as a porter with no room for advancement or upward mobility to become a conductor was the unfortunate reality for most Black men in Canada who were victims of racial discrimination in the workforce (See Braithwaite and Joseph 1998: 42).} He would eventually emerge as a key Black working class communist who became a leading Black labor organizer during that period.\footnote{There is very little written on the experience of African-Canadian organic intellectuals in the Canadian communist movement. One exception is Brand and Bhaggiyadatta’s (1986) Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots: Speaking on Racism, an anthology of oral histories on leading anti-racist activists of color in Toronto in the 1980s. In the book, there is an interview with Leonard Johnston where he speaks on his experience as one of the first Blacks in the Communist Party of Canada (CPC).} In 1939, Johnston began organizing the Canadian branch of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP),\footnote{The BSCP was the first all-Black union to protect Black porters who were discriminated against on the basis of race and unable to join the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees.} the first all-Black union in Canada, and became a card-carrying member of the CPC.\footnote{Brand and Bhaggiyadatta 1986: 150.} In 1942, Johnston organized Black porters into the BSCP, a formally recognized union. In the late 1960s, Johnston reemerged as a leading first wave Black Communist organic intellectual in Toronto’s Black community. For Johnston, the party was a revolutionary school that taught him the politics of class struggle, advanced his socialist consciousness, and prepared him to organize Black workers in the railway industry.

Canadian Black Power was influenced by U.S. activists who came to live in Canada during the 1960s. In 1967, African-American Black Power activist Norman “Otis” Richmond came to Toronto to protest his induction into the Vietnam Draft at the age of 21, and worked alongside local Black radical youth and elders to organize Canada’s first Black Power organization. Prior to his arrival, Richmond recalls studying and organizing a Maoist Study Group with future
Panther leaders Bunchy Carter and Masai Hewitt, as a student in Los Angeles that same year:

As a native of California, I studied at the Los Angeles City College in 1967. I went to school with Bunchy Carter. At that time I joined a Maoist study group, and we had close relations with Bunchy who brought Eldridge Cleaver to speak to us at a local community centre when he had just got out of prison. There was also Masai Hewitt, who joined our study group but soon after became a leading Panther as well...When our group merged with the Panthers by the end of 1967, Bunchy became Minister of Defense, and Masai, the Minister of Information.102

In Toronto, Richmond helped found the Afro-American Progressive Association (AAPA) with Jose Garcia, an Arubian Trotskyist in the Communist League, and other revolutionary-nationalists from the U.S. The organization was called “Afro-American” because the leadership adopted Malcolm X’s view that all people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere were the descendants of enslaved Africans in the Americas.103 During that early period, Richmond met elder and Toronto Black left pioneer Lenny Johnston, who joined the AAPA a year after its formation. When the AAPA was formed, Johnston worked at the CPC’s bookstore and co-founded Third World Books and Crafts in 1968 at the age of 50 with his wife Gwen. Soon after the AAPA was formed, Johnston left the CPC to join the organization because of the Party’s refusal to recognize the national oppression suffered by Blacks in Canada. Third World Books was Toronto’s first independent Black bookstore and the headquarters of the AAPA from 1968 until the latter’s demise in 1971. It was also a popular meeting place for Black Power organic intellectuals and others in the Black community to form study groups and discuss the politics of anti-colonialism in Canada, Marxism, African History, and participate in local grassroots organizing.104

Another influential first wave elder significant to Richmond’s ideological development was Black Communist organic intellectual Harry Haywood. While active in Toronto’s AAPA, Richmond was also a leader of the LRBW and brought the influence to Toronto’s Black Power movement. Richmond lived with Haywood in Detroit while organizing as a Central Committee member of the LRBW, and travelling back and forth from Toronto in the early 1970s. Haywood was recruited to Detroit by the LRBW to provide them with advanced theoretical training in the study of Marxism from an African-American working class standpoint. While living at League leader John Watson’s house with Haywood and others, Richmond remembers his lifelong learning experiences and the important role ideological debates and learning about first wave Black communist struggles, played in his development as an organic intellectual:

I lived with Harry Haywood in Detroit. He lived at John Watson’s

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102 Richmond 2007: 5.
103 Ibid., 2.
104 Harris 2005: 60.
house so I actually learned off of the Black Bolshevik who was once in the Communist Party, and he was writing his book Black Bolshevik when I lived in the same house with him. For quite a while...and me and him used to have all these debates...You know, he wanted to talk about Marxism and I wanted to watch the Temptations, and... he used to fight with me about being so sectarian...And I remember he used to tell me these stories about Marcus Garvey and Cyril Briggs, who was the head of the African Blood Brotherhood.\textsuperscript{105}

Despite minor quarrels which existed due to the generation gap between the two, the experience of living in the same household with Haywood expanded Richmond's informal education to include inter-generational learning. The presence of first wave elder organic intellectuals in the movement was critical to the spontaneous education of Black Power organic intellectuals in their early stages of development because there was very little literature written about past Black working class movements. Thus, storytelling, intellectual debate, and study facilitated informally by elder organic intellectuals aided the Black Power generation develop a Marxist perspective. Critical lessons from past struggles in the African Liberation project enabled emerging activists to refine their praxis by learning from the mistakes of the past; in this case tensions between Blacks Communists in the CP USA and UNIA leader Garvey, who represented two different ideological poles in the African-American nationalist movement of the 1920s. In a Black working class non-formal learning context, Haywood instructed Richmond about the detrimental effects of anti-white sectarianism and black national chauvinism for the Black working class movement that ultimately requires multi-national unity to become hegemonic. Haywood, who had been in the struggle for decades, was ideal for teaching the current generation important lessons about Blacks in the American communist movement that could, by default, only be transmitted orally due to the relative lack of written sources in the 1960s.

The AAPA began a war of position in African-Canadian civil society by organizing rallies and international solidarity campaigns in support of U.S. Black Power, attended by hundreds in the Black community. During the 1960s and 1970s Toronto’s Black Left grew rapidly under the double influence of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the LRBW. Representatives from the Panthers and the LRBW were invited to educate African-Canadians about their struggles against U.S. imperialism and the possibilities of building a similar movement in Canada. On April 2, 1970, the AAPA sponsored a rally in Toronto featuring two Panther leaders. The meeting was attended by 200 African-Canadians who came to hear the Panthers speak about their struggle against White imperialist hegemony in America. In commenting on the success of this event to help Blacks understand the politics of African-Canadian colonization and liberation, an AAPA member observed:

\begin{quote}
As far as the Black community is concerned I think the opportunity to meet some members of the B.P.P; the opportunity to experience
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{105} Richmond 2002: 20.
two hundred beautiful Black people under one roof have reinforced the hopes of a lot of Black people who have become disheartened by the previous apparent lack of unity that was displayed in Toronto. We intend to work much harder to try to bring about an even stronger and broader base of unity among the Black community through education and we hope that our other Brothers and Sisters will do the same.106

As a revolutionary vanguard party, the Panthers played a significant role in the development of organic intellectuals in the AAPA leadership, who in turn pioneered their own model of anti-colonial education that hundreds of African-Canadians underwent during this period.

The AAPA also organized solidarity events with the LRBW to debate their ideological tensions with the Panthers. On November 13, 1970, a rally was organized featuring LRBW spokesperson Edward Cooper. At the event, Cooper spoke about the LRBW’s ideological differences with the Panthers. Although the LRBW organized the Detroit chapter of the Party in 1968, the two organizations had separated over ideology by this time. Cooper criticized the Panthers for laying too much emphasis on mobilizing the Black lumpen street elements against the police, which only brought further repression in African-American communities.107 According to Richmond, the two organizations had tactical differences over which class force should be mobilized to advance the revolutionary process in America: “While the BPP held the lumpen proletariat up as the leaders of the Black revolution, the League maintained the Black working class were the natural leaders or vanguard of that struggle.”108 Ideological tensions between the Panthers and LRBW remained unresolved during the Black Power era.

By 1969, AAPA organic intellectuals themselves were divided over the politics of Black-Nationalism. Richmond recalls how internal disputes over the direction of Canadian Black-Nationalism (i.e., Black capitalist or anti-capitalist?) split the organization into a revolutionary-nationalist (Marxist) and conservative nationalist wing:

While I was there, a struggle between people who wanted to be more Marxist and Black Nationalist, began to split the organization…and from that point on, the Nationalists formed a youth group called the Black Youth Organization (BYO). And Jan Carew, Jose Garcia, and Lenny Johnston formed a Marxist group called the Black Liberation Front.109

One concrete gain that came out of the BYO’s formation was the establishment of a united front between Left-wing and Right-wing Black Power organizations in Toronto. On July 26, 1970, BYO formed an alliance with the AAPA and Sundiata and Ebony Services. After a public debate that lasted for three hours in which the three groups tried to establish a common program, a

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united front was established to coordinate their efforts to empower local Black working class youth through: 1) the implementation of a bridging program to increase Black student enrollment at George Brown College; and 2) the formation of an African cultural community center to deliver programs to African-Canadian youth.\textsuperscript{110}

After the AAPA split, organic intellectuals in the BLFC continued to advance a Black liberation agenda in Toronto. The BLFC was launched in July 1969 with the first issue of Black Liberation News, as a Leninist vanguard organization concerned with increasing the race- and class-consciousness of African-Canadians by educating them about Third World Revolutions. The BLFC’s monthly newspaper carried articles ranging from critical coverage of the Vietnam Revolution and the struggle for Palestinian liberation, to monthly updates on the Panthers. Black Power organic intellectuals in BLFC also produced Black Liberation News to educate the Black community about the role of Canadian imperialism in exploiting the natural resources and labor of South Africa, Jamaica, Guyana, and Brazil.\textsuperscript{111}

In the summer of 1969, the BLFC implemented a summer program for working class African-Canadian youth that consisted of Black history classes, a film series, and guest speakers. They also offered tutoring for Black students to help them improve their academic performance.\textsuperscript{112} On July 25-27, 1969, the BLFC held a rally against police brutality at Rochdale College, where they organized a Citizens’ Review Board to increase police accountability and charge officers guilty of excessive use of force.\textsuperscript{113} At another rally, there were guest speakers from the LRBW, who spoke about the political-economy of racism in the U.S. and the relationship between African-American and African-Canadian liberation.\textsuperscript{114}

The Contribution of First and Second Wave Black Organic Intellectuals to the Development of the War of Position for Proletarian Hegemony

First wave Black Communist organic intellectuals contributed to the development of the first war of position for proletarian hegemony in the 1920s. This principal cohesive element in the CP USA organized the first multi-national working class alliance between Black Liberation and White Labor for socialism in the U.S. This historic multi-national alliance between oppressed and oppressor nation workers in a White settler-colonial nation, resembles Gramsci’s hegemonic project in his native Italy. Gramsci elaborated a national political strategy for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) to succeed in the unification of the Northern Turin industrial working class with the Southern peasantry to defeat the Italian bourgeoisie’s hegemonic alliance with Southern landowners and Mussolini’s Fascism. Likewise, Black working class communists in the period adopted a similar strategy in the U.S. to unify African-American liberation with the revolutionary White working class in an attempt to create a new hegemonic bloc. In “Notes on the Southern Question,” Gramsci contended that the industrial proletariat was a minority in

\textsuperscript{110} Contrast 1970, August: 4.
\textsuperscript{111} Black Liberation News July 1969.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Black Liberation News August 1969: 1.
Italy, and thus required a revolutionary communist party to transcend the limited aims of the factory council movement and mobilize the majority of the population, largely of racialized peasant origin against capitalism:

The Turin communists posed concretely the question of the ‘hegemony of the proletariat’ i.e. of the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and of the workers’ State. The proletariat can become the leading and the dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of class alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and the bourgeois state. In Italy, in the real class relations which exist there, this means to the extent that it succeeds in gaining the consent of the broad peasant masses…[by] understanding the class demands which they represent; incorporating these demands into its revolutionary transitional program; placing these demands among the objectives for which it struggles.\textsuperscript{115}

When first wave Black Communists in the ABB formed an alliance with the CP USA, the party eventually incorporated the demands of their national liberation vanguard movement into the party’s program during the Depression. Soon after the CP USA consolidated this new alliance, they sent Black communists to the Soviet Union for political education in their advanced party schools to develop party policy in the Communist International (Comintern). This international communist education and training produced the first generation of Black working class organic intellectuals who played a key role in developing the party’s hegemonic project in a racially divided America. As a result of the CP USA’s support of Black self-determination for the Black nation in the South, tens of thousands of Black workers and peasants were organized into the party in the 1930s. This revolutionary leadership in the left-wing of the Black liberation movement in the 1920s, was central to consolidating a new race and class alliance necessary for the party to win proletarian hegemony in the U.S.

In 1931, the Harlem Show Trial of CP USA member and Finnish Hall caretaker August Yokinen, was a watershed event in the development of the party’s anti-racist war of position because it was the first time the party took a hard line on fighting White chauvinism in the party, thus winning the consent of thousands of African-American workers who either joined the party or one of its mass organizations because they saw the party representing their interests as a nationally oppressed group. In the early 1930s, White chauvinism was widespread in the party, as White communists discriminated against Blacks in a variety of ways. At the time, Haywood was a member of the party’s National Negro Commission, and Black workers’ grievances against racist party members was at an all-time high, jeopardizing the party’s reputation as a genuine revolutionary anti-racist vanguard. In \textit{Black Bolshevik}, Haywood recalled how the Yokinen trial was created to discipline Yokinen for a racist incident where Black workers were denied entry to a dance at the Finnish Workers Hall in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Harlem.

\textsuperscript{115} Gramsci 1978: 443.
New York, on Fifth Avenue/126th Street.\textsuperscript{116} Yokinen was a party member and caretaker at the hall who failed to intervene. This disciplinary process resulted in a renewed campaign against White chauvinism in the ranks of the party by holding a public trial to discipline Yokinen. To promote the trial, the party’s \textit{Daily Worker} published the article, “Close Ranks Against Chauvinist Influences,” a resolution of the New York District Bureau, along with other anti-racist articles in the party press (p.353). In preparation for that trial, a party committee met with Yokinen and the communist fraction of the Finnish Club to review the incident and engage in self-criticism. Although members admitted they were wrong in supporting the racist Finns at the dance instead of kicking them out and inviting the Black workers in. Yokinen defended his position, arguing Black workers should not be allowed in the pool room or public bath, so the trial was set to discipline him.

The Yokinen trial occurred on Sunday, March 1, 1931 at the new Harlem Casino at 116th Street/Lennon Avenue. The trial was promoted widely in both the bourgeois press and the independent Black press, with over 2,000 Black workers in attendance. The CP USA organized a jury with seven Blacks and seven Whites. At the trial, party member and Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) leader Alfred Wagenknecht acted as the prosecutor and exposed Yokinen’s racist actions, stating the party’s line in support of African-American liberation, and demanded Yokinen’s expulsion for the crime of White chauvinism. The prosecutor, Daily Worker editor and party leader, Clarence Hathaway stated, “Comrade Yokinen made formal acceptance of the communist principle of equal rights, but he was not willing to accept its substance.” Hathaway continued:

\begin{quote}

The view Comrade Yokinen showed, is the same view persistently put forth among the workers by capitalist. Everywhere, in church, in the press and in schools, you see this conscious effort to cultivate race prejudice. The capitalists know that if they can develop feeling against the Negro among the White workers they can oppress and exploit the Negroes and weaken the unity of Negro and White workers. The theories expressed by Comrade Yokinen play into the hands of the capitalist class and make him actually an agent of the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party is committed to abolishing all customs which prevent Negroes from enjoying full equality with White in every way.”\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

Then leading Black communist Richard B. Moore, acted as Yokinen’s defense and responded:

\begin{quote}

It is the vicious bourgeois system, the damnable capitalist system which preaches corruption and discrimination which is the real criminal. Middle class opportunism permeated the mind of Yokinen and caused him to object to Negroes using the club for fear White people would
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{116} Haywood 1978: 352.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 355.
stay away and the club would suffer economically. Let us not yell for the blood of Yokinen, but examine ourselves and see how far we have contributed to this thing which Yokinen was guilty. We must not make a paschal lamb of Yokinen. We must win him back... We must not destroy Comrade Yokinen, we must save him for the communist movement.”

At the trial Yokinen read a full confession and admitted he was influenced by White chauvinism, the ideology of U.S. imperialism. The jury found Yokinen guilty, and expelled him from the party temporarily, until he rectified the situation by engaging in anti-racist educational work at the Finnish Hall where he worked. Yokinen agreed to perform the tasks set before him and the trial ended with the audience’s fists in the air singing the “International.” The Yokinen trial was a historic event because it was the first time the CP USA demonstrated in practice, its support for African-American liberation. Yokinen went on to become a popular figure in Harlem, particularly in the mass anti-racist demonstrations to support The Scottsboro Boys campaign against Jim Crow policies in the South. The Yokinen trial increased the anti-racist consciousness of many White party members and began a new chapter in the history of the party after a long period of struggle over the line in support of African-American liberation at the 6th Comintern Congress.

When first wave Black communists in the ABB joined the CP USA, they contributed to the development of a Gramscian war of position by waging an internal party struggle against White chauvinism in the communist party and anti-Black racism in U.S. civil society. The legacy of the first wave highlights the importance of anti-racism activism within the revolutionary organizations of the settler working class, for waging broader anti-racist struggles to win proletarian hegemony in settler-colonial societies. The second war of position organized by second wave Black Power organic intellectuals demonstrated in practice, the vanguard role of the African-American national liberation movement in advancing the hegemonic project. The Black Panther Party’s war of position unified Black, Indigenous, and Latino revolutionary parties with and revolutionary settler working class and student organizations, into a genuine multi-national socialist movement. The second wave proved that it is possible to resolve the settler/colonial contradiction in the revolutionary working class movement as long as oppressed nations are the vanguard leadership.

The Panthers initiated a second war of position against U.S. capitalism and imperialism during the global revolution of the 1960s through their armed self-defense program which mobilized African-American workers, students, and lumpen elements under an alternative hegemony. Since the African-American nation was always ruled by coercion while the white working class was ruled by consent, the initial Panther strategy sought to resist police brutality through armed self-defense to resolve the contradictions of racist White police terror in America. First, the Panthers recruited their initial party membership by training and organizing Black youth to engage in armed self-defense against police brutality. Point number seven of the party platform and program calls for an end to police brutality through the self-organization

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118 Ibid., 355-356.
119 Ibid., 357.
of the community for armed self-defense: “We believe we can end police brutality in our black community by organizing self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality.”\textsuperscript{120}

In \textit{The Black Panther} newspaper, Newton problematized the everyday experiences of police brutality Black workers and lumpen youth experienced on a daily basis when he wrote: “Vicious police dogs, cattle prods, and increased patrols have become familiar sights in the Black community.”\textsuperscript{121} Newton concluded his executive mandate called “In Defense of Self-Defense,” printed in June 2, issue of \textit{The Black Panther}, that the party was created to arm the Black community against this racist White terror.\textsuperscript{122} By taking a stand against police brutality, the Panthers convinced thousands of working class Black people and street youth to question the legitimacy of the American ruling class and its political, economic, and cultural hegemony over the African-American nation—a Black internal colony within the U.S. In their newspaper which had a circulation in the hundreds of thousands, the Panthers politicized youth about racist police terror by referring to cops as “Pigs” with provocative images of them printed regularly. In the May 1967 issue of \textit{The Black Panther}, they defined racist police officers who inflict violence on the Black community in the following manner: “A pig is an ill-natured beast who has no respect for law and order, a foul traducer who’s usually found masquerading as a victim of an unprovoked attack.”\textsuperscript{123}

The Panther war of position against internal colonialism won the support of many African-Americans because they demonstrated in practice, their ability to defend the community against police brutality. In the issue of \textit{The Black Panther} dated April 25, 1967, the article, “Armed Black Brothers in Richmond Community,” described an anti-police brutality street rally in North Richmond, where 15 Panthers were armed with 12 gauge shot guns, M-1 rifles, and other arms, to demonstrate their ability and willingness to defend themselves against the police if they attacked any Black person in the community. The article stated the Panthers obeyed the laws of the state and exercised their constitutional rights: 1) to have freedom of speech, 2) to peacefully assemble, and 3) the right to bear arms for self defense.\textsuperscript{124} The article concluded the rally was a success because it demonstrated the Panther’s power to defend the community against racist White police terror: “The racist cops could only look on,” because “both the Black Brothers and the racist cops had ‘POWER.’ Then the article issued a warning to racist police who thought “their badges are a license to shoot” and kill Black people: “there are now strong Black men and women on the scene who are willing to step out front and do what is necessary to bring peace, security, and justice to a people who have been denied all of these for four hundred years.”\textsuperscript{125} Since the Panthers remained within bourgeois legality, their armed self-defense program was not a Leninist war of movement to destroy the police and struggle for state power. The armed self-defense program was a defensive war of position: a form of \textit{armed propaganda} to educate the Black

\textsuperscript{120} Hilliard 2007: 43.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Foner 1970: 14.
\textsuperscript{124} Hilliard 2007: 3.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
community about their Second Amendment right to bear arms in the U.S. Constitution, and encourage Blacks to defend themselves against racist White police terror. The U.S. government responded to the Panthers’ war of position against police brutality, by portraying them as violent thugs in the mainstream media who were a threat to the peace and security of White America. The Panthers were not intimidated by the U.S. government, and continued to utilize their armed self-defense program and newspaper as ideological weapons to undermine the hegemony of the American ruling class. Under Newton’s leadership, the Panthers began to construct a socialist cultural revolution in the Black working class ghettos of America which elevated the Black Liberation movement to new heights.

Newton’s approach to revolutionary vanguard politics attempted to re-establish what in Gramscian terms would be a war of position and war of movement—to defeat U.S. monopoly capitalist imperialism. Newton’s Panther ideology combined revolutionary Black nationalism with the politics of proletarian internationalism. Newton used The Black Panther newspaper to educate Black people about the relationship between the domestic policies of the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie that repressed, occupied Black internal colonial communities in urban centers through containment policing; and their foreign imperialist war to defeat the Vietnam Revolution. In the June 2, 1967 issue, Newton expressed his international solidarity with the Vietnamese people who, like African-Americans, also suffered from U.S. imperialist aggression: “As the aggression of the racist American government escalates in Vietnam, the police agencies of America escalate the repression of Black people through the ghettos of America.”126

It is arguable however that Newton did not succeed in an adequate application of Maoism, by confusing the relationship between above-ground mass movements and underground military structures in revolutionary vanguard parties. For example, when Newton was first released from prison, he advocated a war of movement (armed struggle) against the state:

> Our program is armed struggle. We have hooked up with people who are rising up all over the world with arms, because we feel that only with the power of the gun will the bourgeoisie be destroyed and the world transformed… I think that [the most important inspiration for the Black Panthers is] not only Fidel and Che, Ho Chi Minh and Mao and Kim Il Sung, but also all the guerilla bands that have been operating in Mozambique and Angola, and the Palestinian guerillas who are fighting for a socialist world.127

It is understandable that Newton, who taught the Panthers to practice armed self-defense against police brutality, might confuse the correct relationship between vanguard politics and mass organizing in Maoist movements. Inspired by the Third World Revolutions in China, Cuba, and Vietnam, Newton initially thought he could easily apply Maoism to U.S. conditions, without appreciating the complexity of building a national liberation movement in a class divided and racially segregated, settler-colonial capitalist imperialist nation. Newton and

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the majority of the Panther leadership and rank-and-file were Black working class students and lumpen youth in their teens and early 20’s with little or no previous radical political experience. Newton and Seale did not create the BPP to function as a military vanguard party, instead they built a revolutionary party that rapidly expanded into a mass movement, with local chapters implementing community-based survival programs and police patrols in every major U.S. city. The Panthers could not participate in armed insurrection because they engaged in above ground local organizing far removed from the conditions necessary for clandestine guerilla warfare.\(^\text{128}\) Newton’s comparison of the Panther’s armed self-defense units to guerillas in the Third World was more rhetorical than real, because the party never directly organized guerilla warfare, and would be immediately destroyed by the state if they did.\(^\text{129}\)

Newton confused different phases of the national liberation struggle, instructing the Panthers to operate as an above-ground (legal) military organization that practiced armed struggle and armed self-defense within bourgeois legality:

> The vanguard party is never underground in the beginning of its existence, because this would limit its effectiveness and educational processes. How can you teach people if the people do not know and respect you? The party must exist above ground as long as the dog power structure will allow, and hopefully when the party is forced to go underground, the message of the party will already have been put across to the people.\(^\text{130}\)

While Newton developed the most innovative model of revolutionary organization in the U.S. Black Power movement, he ultimately failed to grasp the context in which Lenin (1902) developed his proposal for an underground vanguard party. Lenin created an illegal underground party apparatus that could resist the imperialist state repression of the Russian Czar and advance the struggle for state power under difficult conditions. The Panthers in the U.S. and Canada suffered greatly because they were not able to survive U.S. and Canadian Imperialism’s COINTELPRO counter-insurgency.\(^\text{131}\)

To exemplify how effectively U.S. and Canadian Imperialism were able to disrupt the BPP on both sides of the border, I will discuss the tactics of one national security agent recruited by the RCMP to extend the FBI’s counter-insurgency in Canada. FBI agent Warren Hart, a leader and founding member of the Baltimore chapter, fled to Canada when Baltimore Panther Marshall Conway conducted a lengthy investigation and exposed him to be an agent provocateur.\(^\text{132}\) In 1969, Hart worked for the RCMP to infiltrate and subvert local Black Power organizations in

\(^{128}\) Bloom and Martin Jr.: 386.  
\(^{129}\) Ibid.  
\(^{130}\) Foner 1970: 44.  
\(^{131}\) Under the leadership of director J. Edgar Hoover in the 1960s, FBI agents illegally engaged in surveillance and infiltration of Panther chapters throughout the U.S. to criminalize the leadership and rank-and-file, disrupt the party’s daily operations, and eventually destroy the organization.  
\(^{132}\) A member of the Baltimore chapter of the Panthers, Conway was wrongly convicted in April 1970.
Hart organized an international chapter of the Panthers in Toronto, and trained 15 year-old youth gang leader Ricky Atkinson, to recruit his street gang from the Alexandra Park projects into the Toronto chapter of the BPP. Hart taught Atkinson and his crew how to organize terrorist cells, make bombs, and commit armed robberies, to support his efforts to “raise funds for Huey’s legal defense.” After a failed attempt to rob $30,000 from a Portuguese Bakery, Atkinson was jailed, and later utilized his training to become the leader of the notorious Dirty Tricks Gang, a crew that carried out the most bank robberies in Canadian history. In addition to defeating the BPP in the U.S., COINTELPRO was effective at criminalizing the Black Power movement in Canada.

Another element of the Panther war of position that is still relevant today was Newton’s ideology of *Survival Pending Revolution* which led to the formation of the party’s survival programs. The BPP organized free health care, free meal programs, and community schools, designed to meet the needs of the Black working class and lumpen elements in America’s urban ghettos. Between 1969 and 1971, the Panthers organized thirty-six breakfast for children programs throughout the nation. It was not uncommon for programs to feed parents alongside their children, and others who were hungry in the community. According to Newton, the Panther’s survival programs were necessary to raise the consciousness of the community, so oppressed Blacks could struggle to end their colonial relations in the U.S:

> All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution. We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation. So the survival programs are not answers or solutions, but they will help us to organize the community around a true analysis and understanding of their situation. When consciousness and understanding is raised to a high level, then the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot of their oppressors.

of murdering a Baltimore police officer a year before the FBI’s secret COINTELPRO counter-insurgency program was discovered. Conway was released at the age of 68 in 2014, after serving 44 years in prison on trumped up charges. See Goodman, A. Former Black Panther Eddie Conway released after serving 44 years. Rabble.ca. (2014, March 6). http://rabble.ca/columnists/2014/03/former-black-panther-eddie-conway-released-after-44-years-prison.

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133 Austin 2013: 155.
134 Atkinson 2017: 90-93.
135 Ibid., 106.
136 Bloom & Martin, Jr. 2013: 182.
137 Ibid., 185.
138 The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation 2008: 4.
The free breakfast for children programs were located in local churches and party branches that functioned as community centers. The survival programs served as a model for all oppressed communities who wanted to take concrete actions to overcome their oppression. Panther survival programs were socialist in both form and content, and threatened ruling class hegemony. By organizing a community-based breakfast programs to end child hunger, the Panthers surpassed the limited social security offered by welfare state capitalism. In the 1960s, the bourgeois state neglected the food security, health, and welfare of the Black working class which was poor, hungry, under-employed, and brutalized by racist White police on a daily basis. The Panther’s war of position combined armed-self defense with a comprehensive list of survival programs that fulfilled the food, clothing, and health needs of the community.

Since any member of the Black community could join the party as long as they were committed to the ideology and program, the Panthers were infiltrated by the FBI and within four years (1968-1971), the national organization was reduced to a single chapter in Oakland, California. Newton’s revolutionary strategy was not a war of movement but a protracted war of position that combined mass socialist programs (i.e. Free Breakfast for Children) with armed self-defense (police patrols) to protect Black working class communities from White police terror and mobilize them around the Panther’s radical program. Despite, Newton’s ideological confusion over the correct application of Maoism to the Black liberation struggle, he advanced the Panther’s ideological war of position against police state repression, and elevated the African-American liberation movement to a qualitatively new stage in the struggle against U.S. capitalist imperialism.139

Newton was the most influential principal cohesive organic intellectual of the U.S. Black Power movement. The Panther war of position extended the Black liberation movement to other oppressed communities in America who were also struggling against internal colonialism and class-based oppression. The Panthers inspired Native Americans (American Indian Movement), Puerto Ricans (Young Lords), Mexicans (Brown Berets), Chinese (Red Guards), the White anti-war student movement (Students for a Democratic Society), and poor White working class Appalachian migrant youth in Chicago (Young Patriots) to organize their own revolutionary parties and movements in solidarity with them to form a united front against U.S. capitalist imperialism. The Panthers were disaffected youth fed up with the liberal reformism and use of non-violent civil disobedience in response to violent white supremacist terror in the U.S. civil rights movement. The Panthers were also Black revolutionary internationalists who sought to extend the revolutions in Vietnam, China, Cuba, and Southern African to the U.S. While the Panthers lost their war of position against the U.S. capitalist class, they succeeded in building a mass movement which discredited U.S. capitalism on an unprecedented level, and shifted the balance of forces to the left during that turbulent period. BPP member Assata Shakur said, “One of the most important things the Party did was to make it really clear who the enemy was: not the White people, but the capitalist, imperialistic oppressors.” The Panther war of position not only won the support of the Black working class, but elevated the Panthers to the status of vanguard of the U.S. Revolution. At the height of their influence in the late 1960s, the BPP provided organizational and ideological leadership and direction to the anti-racist, indigenous, student,

139 Haywood 1978.
women’s, and gay and lesbian rights movements, that temporarily converged into a unified socialist hegemonic project in the U.S. The Panthers would not have been able to develop a multi-national anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist mass movement in the U.S. if it were not for Newton, who developed as a principal cohesive organic intellectual in the left-wing of the civil rights movement during the early 1960s.

The Challenges of Educating Third Wave Hip Hop Organic Intellectuals in the 21st Century: A Case Study of BADC’s Freedom Cipher Program

In the mid-1970s the war of position led by Black Power organic intellectuals to construct a revolutionary-nationalist movement in African-Canadian civil society went into decline due to the internal sectarianism between revolutionary and conservative nationalists in Toronto African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). Nevertheless, the Canadian Black Power movement produced a small group of Canadian Black revolutionaries who retreated from revolutionary politics to do reformist anti-racist organizing against police brutality beginning with the murders of Buddy Evans in 1978 and Albert Johnston in 1979. The transition from African Liberation politics to issue-based, social-democratic anti-racist activism against police brutality was inspired by the militancy and radicalism of Canadian Black Power, but I argue signified an ideological shift in the struggle for African-Canadian liberation. Former Black Power organic intellectuals became Black anti-racist activists who largely abandoned the goals of socialist transformation in favor of broad anti-racist movements to reform the Canadian capitalist state. In the late 1970s and 1980s, mass protests to end police murders of Black civilians under the leadership of former Black Power organic intellectuals became the primary focus of the Black left, culminating in the organization of the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC) in 1988. BADC was the leading force in the struggle against police brutality in Toronto.

Prior to the formation of BADC, from 1978 to 1992, under the leadership of Dudley Laws, Black anti-racist activists organized thousands of African-Canadians in mass protests in Toronto against the police shootings of 24 year-old Buddy Evans (1978) shot in a downtown bar; 35 year-old Albert Johnson (1979) and 44 year-old Lester Donaldson (1988) shot and killed in rooming houses; 17 year-old Michael Wade Lawson (1988) shot and killed driving a stolen car in Mississauga; 23 year-old Sophia Cooks (1989) shot and paralyzed in a stolen car incident; 17 year-old Marlon Neal (1990) shot fleeing a police radar trap in Scarborough; and 22-year-old Raymond Lawrence (1992) shot and killed just days after the Rodney King rebellion erupted in

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140 Dudley Laws is a Jamaican-Canadian civil rights activist and Executive Director of the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC). Laws was born in Jamaica on May 7, 1934 and originally immigrated to England in 1955 at the age of 19 to work as a welder and mechanic by trade. In the 1950s Laws formed the Brixton Neighborhood Association to defend the Black British community against anti-Black racism and White terror. In 1965, Laws came to Toronto, Canada and soon after became a leader of the Universal African Improvement Association, a Garveyite organization that existed in the city since the 1920s (See Cotroneo, December 19, 2003).
Los Angeles on April 29, 1992.\textsuperscript{141,142} After more than a decade of mass protests against police killings, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) was created by the province in the 1990 Police Services Act to increase police accountability in the investigation of civilian murders.\textsuperscript{143} Despite the limitations of the SIU, the reform was a victory for the Black community because it indicated the Canadian state admitted that anti-Black racism and police brutality were systemic problems that required institutional reform.\textsuperscript{144} As a result of the protracted struggle, BADC engaged in against the police, it won an important anti-racist reform that benefitted the Black working class in Toronto by reducing the number of police killings in the city.

In the aftermath of two decades of BADC struggle against police brutality, a new problem of unprecedented horizontal violence began to emerge in Toronto’s Black community from 1997-2007. The rise of horizontal violence coincided with Progressive Conservative Premiere Mike Harris’s Commons Sense Revolution (CSR) which resulted in the implementation of neoliberal economic and social policies in the province in 1995. Under Harris, the deindustrialization of Toronto which began in 1988-1989 with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by the Conservative Mulroney Government continued. The CSR implemented significant tax reductions, reducing the role of government in the economy, and the promotion of individual economic responsibility in order to significantly reduce government spending on the welfare state.\textsuperscript{145} There was a massive loss in manufacturing jobs in the city that were normally held by the Black working class, replaced by low-paying service sector jobs with little job security and no possibility of career advancement.\textsuperscript{146} The Harris Government had a devastating impact on unskilled Black youth who were economically displaced and became what Castells (1995) refers to as “excess baggage” adopting “day to day” survival strategies, which led to a sharp increase in internal violence during that period.\textsuperscript{147} Consequently, the rise in unemployment during the mid-1990s recession meant that a large number of Black youth who would have entered the working class instead went into the illegal drug economy.\textsuperscript{148}

Harris’s CSR was inspired by the neo-liberal economic platforms of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s. During that period, neoliberalism was the dominant bourgeois ideology of the U.S. ruling class to justify its


\textsuperscript{142} Jackson 1994: 219.

\textsuperscript{143} The SIU was set up to be the first organization staffed by civilians instead of police homicide investigators. However, it ended up being staffed by retired officers who were promoted by the force as the only “civilians” competent enough to investigate these incidents. See “A Short History of Community Organizing Against Police Brutality in Toronto: The History of B.A.D.C. and Beyond,” Basics, March 20, 2008. http://Basics-newsletter.blogspot.com/2008/03/short-history-of-police-brutality-in.html.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{146} Bania 2009: 101.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{148} Harris 2008: 77-78.
Passive Revolution against the African-American nation. Reagan’s War on Drugs restructured the U.S. state into a neo-colonial police state. Reagan introduced new forms of racist White police terror to re-colonize African-Americans and other oppressed nations (i.e. Puerto Rican, Mexican, Native American) through mass incarceration. Reagan’s neo-liberal passive revolution was inspired by Nixon’s initial War on Drugs and FBI COINTELPRO counter-insurgency program in the late 1960s.

In the late 1960s, Nixon perceived the U.S. Black Power movement as a threat to the internal security of the U.S. So the Nixon Administration responded to the success of the BPP with a secret Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to destroy the Panther leadership; and a War on Drugs to occupy and contain the Black working class through mass incarceration. Nixon introduced the War on Drugs in 1970 after winning the consent of the majority of the White working and middle-classes during the 1968 presidential election. Nixon’s war on drugs was created to prevent the rise of another Black liberation movement in the future. Nixon’s domestic anti-communist war of movement successfully defeated the Black Panther Party’s war of position to construct a new multi-national proletarian hegemony in America. When Harper’s Magazine journalist Dan Baum interviewed former Nixon domestic policy chief, John Ehrlicman in 1994, he finally admitted 30 years later, that the War on Drugs was a tactic to occupy and contain the Black working class, whose urban rebellions and mass movements against U.S. racism, police brutality, and capitalism posed the greatest threat to the ideological hegemony of the ruling class in the 1960s:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people…We know we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.149

When Reagan continued the war on drugs during his two-term presidency, it vastly increased the U.S. prison population through the construction of a new prison industrial complex warehousing hundreds of thousands of African-Americans and other oppressed communities in super jails throughout the country.150 By the 1990s, L.A.’s newly constructed super jails expanded into a national prison industrial complex with super jails in every state. Today, African-Americans

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149 Baum 2016.
150 The prison industrial complex expanded rapidly during the Reagan years, particularly in California. In his state of the state address in 1990, the conservative Republican California Governor George Deukmejian (1983-1989) celebrated the rapid prison expansion which occurred under his governorship: “In 1983, California had just 12 state prisons to house dangerous criminals. Since then, we have built 14 new prison facilities. That has enabled us to remove an additional 52,000 convicted felons from neighborhoods to send them to state prison” (quoted in Simon 2012:24 and in Simon 2007:158).
make up 13% of the U.S. population, but they are an astonishing 37% of the 2.2 million prisoners incarcerated in U.S. prisons, and 4.8 million on probation or parole.\textsuperscript{151} An important legacy of Reagan’s war on drugs, was that he not only created the conditions responsible for the rise of mass incarceration, but the destabilization of African-American communities to the point where they no longer have the capacity to wage national liberation struggles against U.S. imperialism.

In Canada, Harris’ CSR invested in the construction of new super jails throughout the province in the 1990s, and this eventually led to the emergence of a similar prison industrial complex in Ontario in the 21st century. Harris’ expanded police funding to over-police criminalized Black working class youth, to make the city safer for the White middle class in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Consequently, Toronto police increased their racial profiling of Black working class communities, as a part of a neo-liberal conservative “Get Tough on Crime” police reform strategy. The over-policing of Black working class and lumpen youth increased their likelihood of recidivism, and graduation to the adult prison system.

In the aftermath of Premiere Harris’ Common Sense Revolution (1995-2002), five Superjails were eventually constructed in Ontario between 2000-2014. Although crime rates were in decline for 20 years, Harper implemented a national Tough on Crime policy inspired by Mike Harris’s CSR to expand the prison industrial complex in Canada.\textsuperscript{152} From 2005-2015, the Black prison population increased by 78\% in federal prisons, while the population of White prisoners decreased by 6\%.\textsuperscript{153} In Canada, Blacks are 3\% of the population, but 9.5\% of the federal prison population.\textsuperscript{154} In recent decades, thousands of young Black men and women graduated from the youth justice system to a new prison system comprised of super jails. These modern prisons, with a capacity of 1,000 to 1,500 prison beds, began replacing traditional jails in the late 1990s, which only housed a few hundred inmates. At a time when the Obama administration began to critique mass incarceration and reform the U.S. federal prison system, Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006-2015) expanded the prison industrial complex in Canada.\textsuperscript{155}

In recent years, BADC continued its work to reduce the number of killings within the African-Canadian community by implementing the Freedom Cipher program in 2007. BADC is a grassroots organization with a thirty-year history of Black militancy against police brutality in Toronto. As a result of BADC’s legacy, I thought it was the most suitable organization to

\textsuperscript{151} Hoffman 2017: 226.
\textsuperscript{152} Mallea 2010: 8.
\textsuperscript{153} Comack et al. 2015: 3.
\textsuperscript{154} Douyon 2016.
\textsuperscript{155} To advance his conservative crime agenda, Harper commissioned and quickly adopted the Corrections Service of Canada Review Panel (2007), Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety. The panel was chaired by Rob Sampson, former Minister of Corrections under Mike Harris’s PC government in Ontario. The panel recommended the government to construct new Super Jails, regional complexes that comprise separate minimum, medium, and maximum security accommodation areas in the same structure: Maplehurst Complex in Milton to increase its capacity from 600 to 1,550 inmates, and to relocate the former Vanier Centre for Women in Brampton there; Central North Correction Centre in Penetanguishene (2001) and Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay (2003), each housing 1,184 inmates [John Howard Society of Ontario 2006:3]; the Toronto South Detention Centre in Toronto (2014); and the South West Detention Centre in Windsor (2014).
educate and train Black working class youth to become revolutionary activists because it is the only Black protest organization in Toronto with a rich tradition of mass struggle.

The Freedom Cipher was organized after the success of the independent revolutionary Hip Hop album *What Must Be Done*, released by Wasun in Toronto’s independent music scene in November 2005. As a revolutionary hip hop artist (Wasun), I utilized the album as a tool to do consciousness-raising with Blood and Crip youth gangs in the Eglinton West and Vaughan/Oakwood community where I lived and where BADC was located. The main question I took up with this album was to educate Vaughan Rd Bloods about the difference between gangbanging and the revolutionary path. In the album insert, I explained how revolutionaries are in a life-and-death struggle to liberate oppressed nations and workers from capitalism, while gangbanging is a form of African-Canadian genocide to destroy the community. *What Must Be Done* was created to do consciousness-raising with Vaughan Rd. Bloods who were at war with Eglinton West and Weston Rd Crips. On the album I promoted using revolutionary hip hop as a tool to unify youth in the community into a Black revolutionary youth movement. The popularity of this independent album among youth in my neighborhood enhanced BADC’s efforts to organize the Freedom Cipher program the following year.

From 2007 to 2009, I therefore coordinated the Freedom Cipher program: an anti-racism education initiative designed to lead the ideological development of a new generation of Black working class organic intellectuals in the 21st century. In January 2007, BADC’s Freedom Cipher was funded by the City of Toronto’s Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) with $450,000 over three years to hire a team of youth workers to organize and facilitate an employment training and mentorship program with street-involved Black youth in gangs in the Jane/Finch, Lawrence Heights, Jane/Weston, and Vaughan/Oakwood communities. The program was primarily focused on educating, employing, and training six Black working class youth to become revolutionary activists, so they could in turn organize their peers into a Black anti-racist youth movement. The Freedom Cipher module of anti-racism education consisted of the following three types of revolutionary adult learning to educate BADC youth to become Black working class organic intellectuals: 1) Informal learning through organizing a Hip Hop Music Program and Set It Off Girls Groups; 2) Inter-generational learning by producing Freedom Cipher Radio, a BADC youth news segment with former Canadian Black Power leader Norman “Otis” Richmond on CKLN, 88.1 FM; 3) organized Marxist Anti-Racism Education in the form of political education classes in Jane/Finch and Lawrence Heights community centers; and 4) a bi-weekly Intellectual Discussion Group at the BADC office. The Freedom Cipher was a genuine attempt to replicate the type of organized political education and inter-generational learning relations responsible for the formation of first and second wave Black working class organic intellectuals in North American communist parties and Black Power movements in the 20th century.

BADC was funded to provide temporary employment training and leadership development opportunities to unemployed Black working class and lumpen youth in gangs who were being displaced by the new global economy. However, this contradictory anti-racist education project in the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) was not only developed by BADC to provide Black working class youth with employable skills like similar public sector gang-exit initiatives, but also to educate them to become organic intellectuals who could in turn lead anti-capitalist campaign
organizing, popular education, and the production and dissemination of revolutionary Hip Hop music in their neighborhoods. Despite its radical objectives, the Freedom Cipher reflects the contradictory trend in radical adult education of utilizing state funding to implement “radical” adult education projects in capitalist civil society.

The Freedom Cipher attempted to educate and remold Black working class youth and lumpen street youth in gangs into organic intellectuals who could advance a new socialist project in African-Canadian civil society to mobilize the Hip Hop generations born in the post-Civil Rights/Black Power era of neo-liberal capitalism and globalization. While Black Power arose during the global Sixties Rebellion, Hip Hop emerged during a period of neo-liberal Passive Revolution. Hip Hop refers to the music, arts, media, and culture invented by the poor, working class Black and Latino youth in New York in the mid-1970s. Neo-liberalism is a capitalist counter-revolution engineered by the neo-conservative fraction of the U.S. ruling class to dismantle the social-democratic gains of the Keynesian welfare and state which incorporated some labor, women, and racial minority interests into the state to maintain and preserve the ruling class hegemony. In this “revolution restoration” from above the welfare state was dismantled, along with its social and economic rights achieved through generations of class and national liberation struggles since the last decades of the 19th century. The U.S. and Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie’s neo-liberal passive revolution was a success, because the Hip Hop generation failed to rebuild the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements of the 1960s and suffered from decades of neoliberal policies of police occupation and containment. The dominant culture of neo-liberal capitalism is post-modernism, and hip hop is the leading post-modern identity and lifestyle cultural movement in Black working class communities since the defeat of the 1960s Rebellion. Morgan and Bennet contend hip hop is a global culture that is developing youth worldwide into Gramscian “organic intellectuals” because they are using hip hop to develop critical thinking and analytical skills they can apply to every aspect of their lives. The reading departs from Gramsci’s conception of organic intellectuals as working class communist activists who are the permanent persuaders, educators, and organizers of a socialist hegemonic project. The challenge for the Left will be to develop organic intellectuals who can engage the hip hop generations in hegemonic struggle against neo-liberal capitalist values of individualism and consumption promoted by mainstream rappers under the control of multinational corporations who own the music industry. BADC’s Freedom Cipher Program was a radical adult education project which attempted, but nevertheless failed to develop this type of hegemonic project among Black working class youth and street youth in gangs in Toronto.

The experience of BADC’s Freedom Cipher program raised a central question: is it possible to develop revolutionary communist organic intellectuals in a state-funded social democratic anti-racist organization in the NPIC? To answer this question, I will engage in a critical evaluation of the Freedom Cipher to reveal the contradictions of this failed communist education project. I agree with Ireland who maintains that utilizing a radical pedagogy for the education of organic intellectuals requires ongoing self-criticism and evaluation by a communist educator because the field of popular education largely inspired by Gramsci is full of ideological

156 Morgan & Bennett 2011: 177.
157 Ibid.
tensions that must be resolved to complete this difficult task. Perez, a U.S.-based organizer of Sisters in Action for Power (SPIRIT), experienced the same disillusionment I did after ten years of organizing in the NPIC:

As a young organizer, I was introduced to this work with the idea that it could be a career, housed in a non-profit structure and funded by foundations, and that these structures could sustain the movement. Ten years later, I think we need to re-examine the model, assess its sustainability, and determine its political direction. Foundation funding and non-profit management not only exhausts us and potentially compromises our radical edge; it also has us persuaded that we cannot do our work without their money and without their systems. Many of the problems we face in our organizing work today is derived from the model of business structures and corporate culture that now dominates the movement.

Perez thus rejects the bourgeois myth of non-profit activism for social change because the NPIC has successfully depoliticized Left organizing by keeping it within the ideological parameters of the Bourgeois state and civil society. As the following Upping the Anti editorial on the limitations of social democracy argues, the bureaucratization of radical social movements on the Canadian Left by state funding seriously undermines their ability to struggle against capitalism and imperialism:

Many social movements in Canada have sought institutional status… However, as they have maneuvered for government funding their power to mobilize has been limited by accommodation to a social democratic framework. While government support and funding can be vital to community health, social movements with radical roots have all too often jettisoned their commitments to social change in the process of becoming bureaucratized.

BADC received a $450,000 grant from the City of Toronto to do what it considers to be charitable work in the African-Canadian community, and this had led to the organization’s co-optation by the NPIC, a sphere of bourgeois civil society managed by political society (the state) to maintain the hegemony of the capitalist class. After organizing and facilitating anti-racism education programs in the NPIC for the past nine years, it was not until the final year of the Freedom Cipher, that I understood the contradiction between my subjective consciousness as

158 Gramsci 1987: 70.
159 Perez 2007: 98.
160 Thompson et. al., 2007: 42.
161 From 2001-2002, I organized an innovative program module as the Program Director of For Youth Initiative (FYI), the city’s first youth-engagement organization in the Westend and coordinated the original
a communist adult educator, and *my objective location in the NPIC as a Black petite bourgeois organic intellectual*. While I perceived my non-profit activism and communist political education as a form of organic revolutionary praxis inspired by Gramscian theory, in actuality I was performing the *organizational* function of a bourgeois organic intellectual. Gramsci defines organic intellectuals as activist-intellectuals who are either responsible for organizing the new proletarian (i.e., socialist) hegemony of the oppressed classes (i.e. workers, minority nationalities) or maintaining the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. As a Freedom Cipher coordinator, I was actually contributing to the expansion of bourgeois hegemony in African-Canadian civil society by training Black working class youth to become the next generation of Black bourgeois non-profit activists in the NPIC. Flemming warns against the post-Marxist romanticization of “radical” adult education in civil societarian social movement organizations, because it is in these same “movements” that they remolded into non-profit organizations (i.e. BADC) where the ruling class exercises its own hegemony.\(^{162}\)

Although the Freedom Cipher was revolutionary in educational form, it was reactionary in economic *content*, due to BADC’s integration into the Canadian capitalist economy as a state-funded non-profit organization in the NPIC. Gramsci understood that the ruling class hegemony was not only cultural and educational, but economic as well: “for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity.”\(^{163}\) Ireland correctly observes that in the West “where civil society is strong, a true revolutionary process must first concern itself with transforming the social relations and organizations of civil society.”\(^{164}\) However, the opposite occurred in the Freedom Cipher through its economic incorporation into the NPIC, an ever expanding layer of bourgeois civil society. As an NPIC organization, BADC actually reversed the Gramscian strategy of building proletarian hegemony in bourgeois civil society through autonomous Black working class organization, by becoming a bourgeois “non-profit” corporation employing temporary non-unionized part-time and full-time contract workers. Similar to Perez’s experience organizing with SPIRIT into the NPIC (2007:93), BADC had to supply the YCF with lengthy funding proposals, work plans, articles of incorporation, job descriptions, liability insurance, and personnel policies to qualify for funding. In recent years, the NPIC transformed BADC into a corporate entity with a board structure that more closely

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Freedom Cipher Program: a $50,000 grant from the National Crime Prevention Strategy, Community Mobilization Program, to do anti-racism in education in two TDSB alternative schools: 1) the Nighana Afro-centric Program (Eastdale C.I.); 2) the Native Learning Centre (Native Child and Family Services). In 2003, I coordinated the Scarborough Program Aimed at Reaching Employment (S.P.A.R.E.), which employed 120 at-risk youth from Malvern and Glendower to engage them in life skills and pre-employment training to re-enter school and the workforce. In 2006 I re-organized the Freedom Cipher on a voluntary basis at BADC. And from 2007-2009, I worked at BADC as the Coordinator of the Freedom Cipher Program: a three-year $450,000 youth employment gang exit strategy that combines music and healing arts therapy to engage at-risk African-Canadian youth in the production of Hip Hop music.

\(^{163}\) Gramsci 1971: 161.
\(^{164}\) Ireland 1987: 29-30.
resembled the private sector than its roots in grassroots protest; and apparently it is not the only organization. Burrowes et al. contend the NPIC has systematically undermined a number of Left organizations by economically restructuring them so they no longer create “spaces for organic community participation and collective power” independent of the state.165

If the Freedom Cipher hopes to ever fulfill its goal of organic intellectual production, it will have to become a revolutionary socialist project independent of the financial and ideological hegemony of the ruling class. Although the Freedom Cipher appears to be mobilizing at the grassroots, it is not so clear whose interests are being met. Like the Native Friendship Centres, the Freedom Cipher in its current form is actually advancing the political interests of Canadian imperialist because it too became a “façade” that appeared to be “grassroots” but was really a sophisticated colonial tool of African-Canadian colonization. The only reason BADC received state funding as a Black anti-racist organization was to co-opt their potential youth leadership into becoming state-funded Black petite bourgeois organic intellectuals positioned in African-Canadian civil society to prevent any revolutionary initiative from developing into a mass-based national liberation movement. The only way to resist bourgeois hegemony in the NPIC and its role in the colonization of African-Canadian civil society is the creation of autonomous revolutionary parties and mass organizations independent of the state that can wage a protracted ideological war of position against these colonial relations in the NPIC. In addition to communist education, strengthening the organizational capacity of the oppressed classes is a necessary precondition of building a new hegemonic force capable of challenging bourgeois hegemony.166

When BADC received a massive increase in state funding through its YCF grant, it became a successful bourgeois hegemonic project in African-Canadian civil society for the Canadian ruling class. Non-profit funding wins the consent of the African-Canadian community by misleading them to think the state is operating in their interest by investing in temporary employment opportunities for the Black working class youth. Funding the Freedom Cipher expanded bourgeois hegemony in the African-Canadian working class by co-opting BADC youth leaders and depoliticizing their activism, transforming what was once radical organizing into a bourgeois liberal profession in social services.167 Former American Indian Movement (AIM) activist Madonna Thunder Hawk warns revolutionary youth organizing in the NPIC today, that non-profit activism actually serves ruling class interests by co-opting dissent into temporary, limited contractual paid work:

When you start paying people to do activism [it can]…change those of us who are dedicated. Before we know it, we start to expect to be paid and do less unpaid work than we would have before. This way of organizing benefits the system of course, because people start seeing organizing as a career rather than as involvement in a social movement that requires sacrifice (2007:105).

165 Burrowes et al. 2007: 231.
166 Ireland 1987: 30.
167 Kivel 2007: 139.
Unfortunately, as long as the Freedom Cipher remains in the NPIC, it will continue to produce *Black petite bourgeois non-profit professional activists*—not communist organic intellectuals.

As a YCF funded program, the Freedom Cipher was a bourgeois hegemonic project, whereby the state entered into a temporary alliance with a Black social-democratic anti-racist organization to create temporary employment training opportunities for the Black working class youth in African-Canadian civil society. Gramsci warned that ruling class hegemony involved making “economic-corporate” compromises with subordinate groups so they buy into the myth that the ruling class is helping them achieve their political and economic goals (in this case Black youth employment creation) without challenging the status quo:

Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed—in other words, that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential.  

One of the main reasons the project received such a large operational budget was to create limited employment opportunities for the Black working class youth and pacify the African-Canadian community with an increase in resources for three years until the Black-on-Black murder rate declines.

If the Freedom Cipher was an independent African liberation youth program at BADC run entirely by revolutionary Black working class organic intellectuals, they would be critical of non-profits despite their obvious benefit to the community, because they are not being funded on a permanent but temporary basis to serve the interests of the imperialist state. BADC organic intellectuals would perform the function of communist adult educators who educate and mobilize the African-Canadian community against these reformist “social justice” projects (while recognizing their limited benefits) and the necessity of struggling for greater reforms in order to continue expanding the democratic rights of African-Canadians. Unlike the type of reformist anti-racist activists, BADC actually produced in the Freedom Cipher, Black working class organic intellectuals operating within a revolutionary vanguard organization would educate the community about the reality of the Freedom Cipher: it is a 3-year bourgeois state-funded project to co-opt the emerging Black youth radicalism at BADC into a social-democratic reformism, so the youth workers do not move beyond clientele colonial relations with Canadian


169 On the question of the role of limited reforms in advancing the revolutionary process whose object is to defeat social democracy, Lenin rightly affirms that:

…Marxists recognize the struggle for reforms, i.e. for measures to improve the conditions of the working people without destroying the power of the ruling class. At the same time, however, the Marxists wage a resolute struggle against the reformists, who directly or indirectly, restrict the aims and activities of the working class to the winning of reforms (Quoted in Read 2007:99; Lenin Collected Works (19):372).
imperialism and the philanthropic struggle for more resources when it shuts down in three years. The Gramscian project of organic intellectual formation will take longer than three years, and there was no sustainability plan at BADC to continue this work when the funding ended in December 2009.

**The Hood2Hood Movement: An Attempt to Educate Organic Intellectuals Outside the NPIC**

While the Freedom Cipher Program failed to produce organic intellectuals, I would like to conclude with an assessment of the Hood2Hood movement, an independent revolutionary mass campaign outside of the Non-Profit-Industrial-Complex (NPIC). As a rank-and-file communist activist in *Basics Community Newsletter*, a communist student newspaper closely allied with BADC, I formed the Hood2Hood campaign to resolve the contradiction of communist movement-building with non-profit funding from the bourgeois state. I organized Hood2Hood to transfer BADC's revolutionary political work to a communist organization independent of the NPIC. To ensure ideological autonomy from the social-democratic reformism of Freedom Cipher, all *Underground Railroad* mixtapes and Hood2Hood events organized in the second and third year of the program were financed entirely by *Basics* and revolutionary Hip Hop activists in the Black community. The Hood2Hood movement also failed to produce Black working class organic intellectuals, but succeeded in creating a model of revolutionary hip hop organizing that could be utilized to develop Black organic intellectuals in the future.

Hood2Hood was designed by Wasun and Kabir in *Basics* to organize Bloods and Crips in the Westend of Toronto into a network of revolutionary youth. The campaign was created independent of BADC to organize Freedom Cipher youth outside of the NPIC into an alternative revolutionary anti-imperialist mass organization. Hood2Hood was partly inspired by U.S. revolutionary Hip Hop group dead prez, which did similar work in African-American communities in the early 2000s. In the first year of the program, M-1 from dead prez dropped by a Freedom Cipher community BBQ in Lawrence Heights on August 11, 2007 when he was in town to perform at a concert that weekend. M-1 was brought uptown to this Toronto Community Housing project by local Hip Hop activist La Bomba and gave a free concert to demonstrate his solidarity with BADC and the Freedom Cipher youth. M-1 also vouched to return to Toronto in the fall to speak at a Hood2Hood rally to help BADC advance its peace-building work with the Bloods and Crips in West Toronto.

The Hood2Hood movement spread by recruiting revolutionary Black working class hip hop artists and reactionary lumpen youth in gangs, to record hip hop mixtapes and hand them out for free to politicize the youth in the community. Launched in July 2008, the *Underground Railroad* Mixtape series was created to organize a collective of revolutionary Hip Hop artists, some of whom were former Blood and Crips in the 1990s, to promote neighborhood unity among the current generation of youth gang banging in the Westend in the 2000s. On Friday (July 13, 2008), *The Underground Railroad Vol. 1* was launched at the Six Nations Youth Rally (held on July 13-15, 2008) organized by the local youth movement, Young Onkwehonwe United, at Chiefswood Park. Hood2Hood rappers Wasun, Lameck, Shing Shing Regime, and School of
Thought, a group of revolutionary White working class youth from Barrie, Ontario, performed to demonstrate their solidarity with the Six Nations youth. Over thirty free copies of the mixtape were handed out to Six Nations youth to politicize them about BADC’s Hood2Hood organizing in Toronto. Sixteen-year-old Vaughan Rd Blood Quanche recorded the song “Robbed” after he traveled to the reserve to learn about the history of Six Nations anti-colonial struggle against Canadian Imperialism:

I’m talking about Europeans, English and French  
Who came to this land, found man made friend  
And then snaked them took advantage of trust and they raped ‘em  
Oh Canada, the land stolen from the Natives  
And First Nations, People driven to starvation  
They kidnapped their children and put them into placements  
Forced assimilation, it’s like slave rakin’  
Now ‘nough of them are sniffin’ glue or stayin’ wasted  
Just another race erased more recent…

This song reveals the extent of the solidarity relations between Toronto Black working class and lumpen class youth in gangs and Six Nations revolutionary youth on the reserve. The mixtape also educated the Six Nations youth about the struggles of Black working class and lumpen youth in Toronto. The revolutionary Hip Hop tracks on *The Underground Railroad, Vol. 1* were compiled by Hood2Hood leader Wasun to educate the Black working class youth about the war on drugs, guns, and gangs created by the bourgeois state to re-colonize African-Canadian youth through the expansion of the prison industrial complex in Ontario. The politically charged lyrics of Southside Jane rapper Reason on the track “You’re Not alone,” illustrates the extent to which the music captured the experience of African-Canadian colonization in Westend Toronto Housing communities:

Little Keisha growing up without a father/ The buzz gets media coverage, male gunned down possible drug or gang crime/ News brief: Chief of Police working overtime…/ See Commissioner Gordon got orders from the Warden/ To fill vacancies in his Hotel, a Hell/ While we snoring they make a living off of Black male soaring incarceration rates can’t you tell?…/ Crime puts food on the plate of these judges/ While niggas just sit in the box and bake/ The correctional facilities…more being built/ While our seeds feed off of breast milk/ You see the Beast [police] gets an annual budget of $900 million/ To play a game

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170 Quanche 2010.
of cops and robbers…/It’s 60 Gs a year they paid to cage you.\textsuperscript{171}

Not coincidentally, Reason’s father (Tidy Francis) was a former U.S. Black Power organic intellectual in the 1960s, and BADC leader in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, my grandmother, Gloria Harris-Riley was a Black Panther in the Detroit chapter of the party. My grandfather, Vietnam veteran Emanuel Cosby was shot and killed by Detroit police at the age of 26 for stealing groceries from an N&T Market during the 1967 Rebellion. Our music in Hood2Hood continues the legacy of the Black Power generation by providing an anti-imperialist ideological response to the war on drugs against the African-Canadian youth. The Underground Railroad, Vol. 1 was also created to become an organizing tool to train the rappers on the mixtape to become cultural leaders in their neighborhoods and organize local unemployed youth in gangs into the Hood2Hood campaign.

When the BADC Hood2Hood youth attended the Convergence Peace and Friendship Gathering at Six Nations on August 22-23, 2008, a left activist conference outside of the NPIC, they debated the program, strategy, and tactics of the Hood2Hood campaign formulated by Wasun in June 2008. The following Hood2Hood program was approved at this historic gathering:

1) \textit{We want to end mass unemployment in the Black community and the inability of the new economy to provide jobs for the hood.} Many Black youth selling drugs are unemployed or underemployed workers who are being pushed out of the new economy. With the loss of tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs in the past decade, replaced by new temporary, part-time minimum wage jobs with little or no job security, a number of unemployed Black youth are turning to the drug trade as a survival strategy in capitalist society.

2) \textit{We want an end to the War on Drugs, Guns, and Gangs.} This policy was implemented by Toronto Police following the example of the U.S., to over-police and incarcerate the Black youth who are labeled as gang members, drug dealers, and guns runners by the state. The War on Drugs, Guns and Gangs has allowed the police to become an occupying force in the Black community.

3) \textit{We want to end gangbanging in the Westend.} Gangs are not a problem: they are street organizations that could potentially perform a revolutionary function in the Black community (i.e. Black Panther Party). Gangbanging is a problem because it is a form of African genocide that is destroying the community whenever youth bang out on each other. We want to end gangbanging because it is being used by the state as a rational for advancing the War on Drugs, Guns, and Gangs to incarcerate a generation of Black youth. Instead, we want to bang out against capitalism because that is the real enemy.

4) \textit{We want to end the construction of new prisons to expand the Prison Industrial

\textsuperscript{171} Underground Railroad 2008: 1.
Complex in Canada. The Provincial Government is spending $81 million to build a youth super jail in Brampton to warehouse Black young offenders. We agree with the 81 Reasons campaign (prisonjustice.ca) that our taxpayers’ dollars would be better spent on jobs for youth, new community centers, and alternative programs that prevent incarceration.

5) We want community-control of Black-Focused Schools. Black inner-city high schools are colonial schools that colonize the minds of the youth. Black-focused schools under the control of the TDSB will be neo-colonial schools because they will be run by Black teachers but controlled by white school administrators who are outside of our community. We want community control of Black-focused schools so they can become liberation schools independent of the Canadian imperialist state.172

The main objective of Basics’ Hood2Hood campaign was to organize Black revolutionary youth in the Bloods and Crips in Jane/Finch, Lawrence Heights, and Vaughan/Oakwood, into a communist mass organization: a grassroots network that could agitate local gangs to resist the war on drugs, guns, and gangs targeting the Black community by abstaining from the gang conflicts in these neighborhoods. At the Convergence conference in Six Nations, Wasun organized a group of BADC youth workers and volunteers into a Hood2Hood Basics collective that continually met on a biweekly basis from September to November 2008 to develop a revolutionary mass organization independent of BADC. However, the group fell apart after three months of meetings, due to a lack of sustained interest in the project. Quanche was absent from these meetings because he left Hood2Hood in January of that year to focus on pursuing his music career. On December 10, 2008, he collaborated with the Freedom Cipher’s Set It Off to organize a Hood2Hood event at the d’AnitAfrika Dub Theatre (62 Fraser Ave.). The event was attended by 80 youth and began as a political rally with speakers from Hood2Hood, Set It Off, and Basics No Cops campaign. During the rally, the Hood2Hood youth politicized the Lawrence Heights, Jane/Finch, and Vaughan/Oakwood youth in attendance by educating them about the campaign, the weekly Black women’s empowerment workshops in the Set It Off girls groups at Sir Sanford Fleming Collegiate and Westview Secondary School, and Basics introduced their “No Cops” campaign struggling to remove Toronto police from inner-city high schools with a significant Black student population deemed unsafe by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The rest of the evening consisted of a community dinner, and revolutionary Hip Hop concert featuring headline performer Quanche and up-and-coming rappers, singers, and dancers. On February 20, 2009, Hood2Hood organized a live Hip Hop event at Ellington’s Jazz Café (805 St. Clair West) in solidarity with CKLN’s Saturday Morning Live that was canceled in December 2008. Hood2Hood organized the event to build support for Canadian Black Power elder Norman “Otis” Richmond because he had played an important role in the ideological development of Quanche and other BADC youth by co-hosting Freedom Cipher Radio with them. At this event, the youth who hosted Freedom Cipher Radio were afforded the opportunity

172 C. Harris, Personal Communication August 23, 2008.
to give speeches, and they performed revolutionary Hip Hop music to build community support and get the show back on-air.

The Hood2Hood movement was successful in its efforts to engage the Black working class and lumpen youth in Blood and Crip gangs in mass education through the dissemination of revolutionary hip hop music in the community. However, it failed to develop more advanced political education to educate and train principal cohesive Black working class organic intellectuals. It would take many years to develop the “intellectual leadership” of the Black working class in particular, because Gramsci understood that “The proletariat, as a class, is poor in organizing elements and does not have its own stratum of intellectuals,” so it “can only create one, very slowly, very painfully.”173

In reflecting on my own ideological development as an organic intellectual, it took nine years (2000-2009) of spontaneous organizing on the Toronto Black Left and educating the youth in the NPIC, combined with varying degrees of mentorship from former Canadian and U.S. Black Power organic intellectuals Norman Richmond, General Baker, Marian Kramer, and Owen Sankara, to complete my own ideological development as a Black working class organic intellectual. Ultimately, a Canadian Black revolutionary organization would systematize the political education of Black working class cadres more effectively than I was able to do at BADC, so they could be educated more sustainably than my spontaneous informal educational development which did not occur under any vanguard organizational leadership. If the Freedom Cipher hopes to ever fulfill its goal of organic intellectual production, it will have to become a revolutionary socialist project independent of the financial and ideological hegemony of the ruling class.

Conclusion

This article traced the Black Organic Intellectual Tradition in North America during the 20th century. The first wave of organic intellectuals was Black Communists in the CP USA and CPC educated through vanguard informal and organized communist education within the party to become communist leaders of the revolutionary Black working class in the 1920s and 1930s. In the absence of a revolutionary communist party during the civil rights era, the second wave of organic intellectuals in the U.S. and Canadian Black Power movement were educated largely through spontaneous informal and inter-generational learning relations on the left-wing of the civil rights movement during the early 1960s.

In this paper, I argued that the formal and informal learning processes that led to the formation of Black working class organic intellectuals must be organized by revolutionary vanguard parties because they are the only institutions capable of organizing comprehensive communist schooling, and opportunities for radical informal learning through dialogical and popular educational relations with communist adult educators, as well as learning through praxis by engaging in anti-capitalist mass struggles. Once they are educated by the vanguard educational relations of the communist left, working class organic intellectuals are qualified to wage a war of position against the ruling class in bourgeois civil society to organize alliances

between workers, First Nations, and oppressed nationalities, and innovate socialist cultural traditions such as revolutionary Hip Hop music to discredit the dominant culture and values that prevail under late capitalism.

The organization of Freedom Justice Academy (FJA) in 2015 was an attempt to transcend the ideological limitations of the Freedom Cipher and create a genuine Gramscian organization that can contribute to the education and leadership training of Black, White, and Native American Hip Hop organic intellectuals in the second decade of the 21st century. FJA is an independent radical adult education institute completely self-financed, launched in June 2015 with a *Hip Hop for Social Justice Program*. This program creates artist development opportunities for indigenous youth and adult artists from Six Nations Reserve to produce revolutionary hip hop movement in support of indigenous self-determination. The former Six Nations rap group Tru- Rez that participated in the Freedom Cipher, formed a new group called 6 Bronx Zoo that is currently a member of FJA’s Hip Hop for Social Justice, recording music with Wasun promoting Indigenous and African-Canadian solidarity in the struggle against Canadian Imperialism. The 6 Bronx Zoo and Wasun released their first revolutionary hip hop mixtape in February 2018 to much critical acclaim on their reserve. Second, FJA implemented an anti-neo-liberal social justice education course called “Global Citizenship for Peace, Equity, and Social Justice” at the Centre for Community Learning and Development (CCL&D). Third, FJA’s *Prisoner Healing, Mentorship, and Leadership Training (HMLT)* Program engages former Black and Native prisoners in provincial prisons and federal penitentiaries in mentorship and leadership training when they return home from prison. Fourth, FJA played a leadership role in organizing the 4 Directions Festival in Toronto, June 16-21, 2017 (see www.fourdirectionsfestival.wordpress.com). The 4 Directions was organized in partnership with the Restorative Relations Working Group at Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, to protest Canada’s 150 years celebration on July 1, 2017, with an indigenous multi-national performing arts festival to honor indigenous residential school survivors like keynote speaker, Michael Cheena. The 4 Directions educated the Canadian settlers about the history of First Nations genocide in Canada, and featured federal Native prisoner Charles Abbotsbury, who spoke on the colonial conditions of indigenous men and women’s over-representation in Canadian prisons due to the legacy of residential schools which continues with the hip hop generations, who are inter-generational survivors.

In addition to movement-building projects, like the Hood2Hood movement, Freedom Justice Academy and other Black Left organizations will have to organize communist schools to complete the education of the Black working class organic intellectuals. Since the task of rebuilding a multi-national communist party in Canada is going to take years to achieve, an alternative communist school under the leadership of party-building mass organizations will have to be created to educate and train Black working class organic intellectuals on the Black Left. Let us not forget that Gramsci originally constructed his theory of working class organic intellectuals to advance his own party-building efforts in the 1920s in Italy.

In order to successfully produce principal cohesive organic intellectuals through organized communist education, the school will have to develop the type of comprehensive communist schooling, as examined by Boughton in his study of the different levels of political
education within the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) in the 1940s. The Marx Schools were coordinating centers of all of the CPA's educational activity, and became the model whereby party members conducted communist education in the trade unions and social movement organizations that ranged from the anti-fascist and women's movement, to immigrant workers and the anti-colonial struggles of indigenous people. The Marx Schools educated and trained party members through a number of stages. There were introductory *Sunday night lectures* that consisted of public forums open to all members and supporters led by experienced party lecturers and public speakers (often party leaders and central committee members) who presented a communist view on topics of interest, or broader historical and theoretical questions. Then, the first level of internal party education for new members was *elementary courses*, offered within factory or locality branches based on a syllabus prepared by party educators who were trained in a tutor’s school. There were night courses offered at the central Marx School to party members who completed their elementary courses on specific topics of interest. Once these basic courses were completed, the second level of training followed, which includes two-week ‘advanced’ schools run centrally within the Marx Schools, and wherein training party members take on more leadership roles in their local, factory, union, or social movement organization.

I find this extensive political education and training offered at the Marx Schools as a type of radical adult education that is necessary to produce organic intellectuals.

In order to succeed in the principal cohesive organic intellectual project, a communist school must also incorporate a revolutionary Hip Hop pedagogy based on the best practices of the Hood2Hood model. Its limitations will also have to be considered, so as to distinguish revolutionary adult education from “social justice” modules of the Freedom Cipher variant that had radical musical content; however the programs were divorced from communist movements (i.e. *Basics*) outside of the NPIC. As a former Black Panther and political prisoner, Wahad warns, hip hop culture cannot be used to develop a liberation pedagogy if it is disconnected from revolutionary movements. Wahad is skeptical of the claims of post-modern cultural theorists who argue that rap music is a post-modernist cultural revolution, and warns that it is useless as a cultural tool in the African liberation project if it is not practiced within the context of a revolutionary organization:

The culture that evolves from the underclass has the potential to speak to the underclass in ways that other cultural forms cannot...so rap music in a sense has the potential, like all other art forms, to serve a revolutionary purpose, but it doesn’t mean that in and of itself it’s revolutionary. There are some people who try to say that rap music is revolutionary in and of itself. I would have disagreement with that... But it does have the potential to be revolutionary. If we develop a

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175 Ibid., 8.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid., 9.
liberation movement in this country that speaks to the needs of Black people, one of the ways that we can communicate is through cultural forms. But you have to have a movement...organized in a way in which these cultural forms express their struggle.

If Hip Hop is going to be used as a liberation pedagogy for the education of the Black working class organic intellectuals, it must be directed by a communist organization. Unlike Bowling and Washington, who offer a post-modernist interpretation of rappers as organic intellectuals, I am not trying to suggest that the Black working class Hip Hop artists with an organic relation to the Black working class due to their membership and residence in the community, are automatically qualified to become organic intellectuals because they spontaneously utilize knowledge as a tool for “empowering.” Instead, revolutionary Gramscian Hip Hop activists could develop the common sense of the Black working class youth into good sense by waging an ideological struggle against capitalist values at the foundation of mainstream Hip Hop, particularly gangsta rap.

A number of challenges confront the Canadian Black Left in the 21st century, which has not managed to rebuild a single revolutionary organization since the decline of Canadian Black Power in the 1970s. In order for the African-Canadian Left to become more successful in the education of organic intellectuals, it must develop a more sophisticated political strategy than BADC’s resource mobilization in the NPIC. I suggest, in the future, the work of this ongoing mass campaign contribute to the development of a Gramscian communist school. An independent Black working class education center under the leadership of a group of communist adult educators is necessary to succeed in educating the Black working class organic intellectuals. A formal communist school could also facilitate the development of a revolutionary-nationalist African-Canadian mass organization that is part of a broader multi-national working class movement to advance the socialist project for proletarian hegemony in Canadian civil society. Instead of improving bourgeois civil society by extending the NPIC in the African-Canadian community, a communist school would function as an alternative to the NPIC that prepares the Black working class youth and adults to struggle against bourgeois hegemony in all of the spheres of African-Canadian civil society—from the family, local church and community center, to Toronto District School Board public schools. It is my hope this article will makes an important contribution to our understanding of the conditions central to the formation of organic intellectuals on the African-Canadian Left in 21st century by reclaiming Gramsci’s revolutionary theory and proving its relevance for rebuilding the Black Left in Toronto.

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