

University at Albany, State University of New York

## Scholars Archive

---

Africana Studies

Honors College

---

5-2012

# The Power to Say Who's Human: Politics of Dehumanization in the Four-Hundred-Year War between the White Supremacist Caste System and Afrocentrism

Sam Chernikoff Frunkin

*University at Albany, State University of New York*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/honorscollege\\_africana](https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/honorscollege_africana)



Part of the [African Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Frunkin, Sam Chernikoff, "The Power to Say Who's Human: Politics of Dehumanization in the Four-Hundred-Year War between the White Supremacist Caste System and Afrocentrism" (2012). *Africana Studies*. 1.

[https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/honorscollege\\_africana/1](https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/honorscollege_africana/1)

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Africana Studies by an authorized administrator of Scholars Archive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@albany.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@albany.edu).

# **The Power to Say Who's Human:**

**Politics of Dehumanization in the Four-Hundred-Year War  
between the White Supremacist Caste System and Afrocentrism**

Sam Chernikoff Frumkin  
Africana Studies Department  
University at Albany  
Spring 2012

—Introduction —

Race represents an intricate paradox in modern day America. No one can dispute the extraordinary progress that was made in the fifty years between the de jure segregation of Jim Crow, and President Barack Obama's inauguration. However, it is equally absurd to refute the prominence of institutionalized racism in today's society. America remains a nation of haves and have-nots and, unfortunately, race continues to be a reliable predictor of who belongs in each category. Nevertheless, it is difficult to balance the contradictory realities of an African American President and a society filled with systematic prejudice.

This paper analyzes the prevalence of modern day racism by examining the historical precedent of institutionalized oppression in America. Instead of discussing how Europeans have systematically oppressed multiple ethnic groups throughout history, I focus upon the relationship between white power holders and citizens of African heritage. First, this paper examines how European colonizers systematically dehumanized African slaves, a phenomenon which I define as the white supremacist caste system. Second, I examine how this caste system reinvented itself following the Civil War, refuting the myth that blacks were truly liberated by the Emancipation Proclamation. Finally, this paper examines the paradoxical nature in which the Civil Rights Movement was and was not successful in deconstructing institutionalized racism. This section discusses whether the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960's truly liberated blacks from their dehumanized, subordinate role within America's white supremacy caste system.

This examination also discusses the influence of black leaders who spread the ideology of Afrocentrism. Throughout the eras of Slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights there were

Afrocentric leaders who challenged the racial caste system by affirming the full humanity of blacks, effectively refuting the omnipresent dogma of white supremacy. The more successful these leaders were in promoting Afrocentrism, the greater the response was from the white supremacist power structure. Throughout history these leaders have consistently been neutralized through incarceration, assassination, and other tactics of repression. Most importantly, the Afrocentric message of these leaders has been suppressed in the process, leaving analyses of Eurocentrism and white supremacy to be few and far between. Although this paper does not undermine the extraordinary racial progress that has been achieved since the Civil Rights Movement, it offers a broad perspective on how America continues to be plagued by its racial caste system.

## I How was the original white supremacy caste system (WSCS) created during the slavery era?

The ideology of white supremacy arrived in the United States with the first European colonizers in 1492. This doctrine was a guiding force as Europeans conquered the native inhabitants of North, South, and Central America. In order to claim territories occupied by natives, the Europeans claimed that these were not equally dignified human beings. Rather, they were savages.<sup>1 2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New, 2010. Print. Page 23,

<sup>2</sup> Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States: 1492-present*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003. Print. Page 25.

At first these European colonies were relatively small. However, as the farming of tobacco, cotton, and other products increased so did the demand for additional land and labor. After conquering additional Native territory, the modest population of indentured servants became insufficient and the Europeans searched for additional sources of free labor. Native Americans were generally well organized and familiar with the land, making them poor candidates for slave labor. The European indentured servants were also incapable of meeting the labor demand, as they were in too short of a supply, and, more importantly, would not continue to voluntarily migrate to the New World if they were powerless slaves.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the European plantation owners identified Africans as the ideal source for slave labor.

Although these African slaves were the most disenfranchised group on these plantations, the social status of European servants was not much better.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the majority of free Europeans were also severely impoverished. In general, it was only the small population of plantation owners that prospered above the African and European workers.<sup>5</sup> A laborer's skin color had yet to become the all-important dictator of one's social status.

In the late 1600's the elite power holders began to utilize the concept of race as a tool for maintaining their elite status. The most significant event that caused this shift was Bacon's Rebellion. In 1675 Nathaniel Bacon, a European property owner in Jamestown, VA, organized African slaves, European servants, and impoverished whites to overthrow the wealthy plantation owners. Although Bacon's Rebellion was exterminated by the ruling class, its legacy spread by

---

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, Op Cit., 24

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 24

word of mouth throughout the colonies. As similar rebellions followed, it became clear that a multi-racial alliance between indentured servants and enslaved Africans posed a great threat to the prosperity of plantation owners.

In order to protect their economic and social position, the white elite adopted a strategy known as the “racial bribe.”<sup>6</sup> They deliberately granted additional privileges to poor whites in order to divide them from black slaves. These privileges included granting white servants to police blacks through slave patrols and militias, and guaranteeing that their labor would not be jeopardized by the supply of slave labor.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this racial bribe, impoverished whites now benefited from this race-based slavery system, persuading them to protect this caste system rather than to participate in an alliance to destroy it. White supremacy had already been the catalyst for terrorizing indigenous populations and transporting African prisoners to the New World. Now this ideology was being embraced and defended by the large population of middle and lower class whites. Whites rationalized that the enslavement of blacks was due to their racial inferiority. One Alabama plantation owner epitomized this doctrine stating that: “We have the power to pass stringent police laws to govern the Negroes—this is a blessing—for they must be controlled in some way or white people cannot live among them.”<sup>8</sup> Through this racial bribe, blacks became systematically dehumanized by elite and working class whites.

This white supremacy caste system (WSCS) was thoroughly entwined with the founding of the United States. First and foremost, a large percentage of the Founding Fathers were

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 25

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 25

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 28

beneficiaries of slavery. Of the twenty three most prominent Founding Fathers, fifteen were slaveholders, including Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington.<sup>9</sup>

Like most slave holders, these Founding Fathers used the ideology of white supremacy to rationalize their ownership of African slaves. The best example of the Founding Fathers' white supremacist ideology is Thomas Jefferson's writings about the inferiority of Africans. Published in 1781, Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* display his commentary on the differences between the white and black race. The former President commented on the supposed inferiority that Africans displayed in reasoning, in perceiving the nuances of the world, and in articulating these aspects of their environment.<sup>10</sup> Jefferson concluded that, "Whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."<sup>11</sup> For Jefferson and other Founding Fathers, the dehumanization of black slaves was second nature.

Six years after publishing *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson and the other fifty-four delegates signed the Constitution of the United States. Delegates from Southern colonies had achieved their goal of institutionalizing the white supremacist caste system into this foundation of American society. Under Article One, Section Nine of the Constitution, Slavery would be

---

<sup>9</sup> "The Founding Fathers and Slavery." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 22 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1269536/The-Founding-Fathers-and-Slavery>>.

<sup>10</sup> "Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h490t.html>>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

fully protected as a legal institution until 1808, with the Federal Government permitted to tax ten dollars for each slave imported to the US.<sup>12</sup> One of the most revealing aspects of the U.S. Constitution was its stance on whether blacks would be counted as persons in the census, and therefore represented by additional state delegates in Congress. Serving as a bargaining chip between northern and southern states, the Constitutional Delegates would eventually compromise that, for congressional representation, blacks would be counted as three-fifths of a human being.<sup>13</sup> With African slaves being officially viewed as inferior to whites, it's clear that the founders of the United States did not envision a future where Blacks would live freely as equal citizens among whites.

One of the most significant developments of the WSCS was the Supreme Court decision of *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. The court case judged whether Dred Scott, born into slavery in Missouri, was free as a result of traveling to the northern state of Illinois where slavery was illegal.<sup>14</sup> The Supreme Court ruled against Dred Scott. Seventy-nine-year-old Chief Justice Roger Taney declared that blacks Americans did not have any rights and:

*Had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order; and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior*

---

<sup>12</sup> "U.S. Constitution." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Article one, section two, clause three

<sup>14</sup> "Scott v. Sandford." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0060\\_0393\\_ZO.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0060_0393_ZO.html)>.



*that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.*<sup>15</sup>

Although the *Dred Scott* decision would spark much controversy and help instigate the Civil War, it clearly described the white supremacist dogma of the south, which would continue to reinvent itself for generations.

### Suppressing Afrocentrism during the Slavery Era

In the midst of the WSCS existed black leaders who comprehended the rigidity of this caste system. These leaders advocated for the full acknowledgement of their humanity, their right to defend themselves, and the importance of education. One of the earliest examples of such a leader was David Walker, a free Black man and abolitionist. In 1827 the thirty-one-year-old Walker moved to Boston and became heavily involved in the city's growing abolition movement.<sup>16</sup> He was active within several black organizations that protested discrimination among free blacks, criticized colonialism, and called for the destruction of slavery.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Walker became a bold leader who presented public speeches lobbying against white supremacy and slavery. In 1829 Walker published his book, *David Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*.<sup>18</sup> Through his *Appeal*, Walker diagnosed the symptoms of the WSCS, argued for the righteousness of abolition and self-determination, and prescribed the path to liberation.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Gates, Henry Louis., and Nellie Y. McKay. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton &, 1996. Print. Page 227

<sup>17</sup> Ibid 227

<sup>18</sup> Ibid 227

First, Walker charged America's white supremacists: "for murdering our fathers and mothers ...keeping us in slavery, and beating us nearly or quite to death to make us work in ignorance and miseries to support them and their families."<sup>19</sup> Second, he articulated the hypocrisy of America's creed that all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Walker wrote: "See your declaration Americans...compare your own language above, extracted from your Declaration of Independence, with your cruelties and murders inflicted by your cruel and unmerciful fathers and yourselves on our fathers and on us -- men who have never given your fathers or you the least provocation."<sup>20</sup> Walker continued by addressing the white supremacist ideology of Thomas Jefferson and its significance to the nation: "Have we souls in our bodies? Are we men who have any spirits at all? Unless we try to refute Mr. Jefferson's arguments respecting us, we will only establish them."<sup>21</sup>

Not only was his *Appeal* revolutionary in condemning white supremacy and chattel slavery, Walker was one of the first Black leaders to argue for self-determination. His *Appeal* told the Black masses that they must strive not only to be emancipated from slavery, but also to govern themselves.<sup>22</sup> Walker argued that America belonged to blacks more than it did to whites, because they had enriched its soil with blood and tears.<sup>23</sup> His *Appeal* urged slaves to rebel against their masters, arguing that, "it is no more harm for you to kill a man who is trying to kill

---

<sup>19</sup> "David Walker's Appeal." PBS. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931t.html>>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty."<sup>24</sup> Walker understood that the greatest tool for mobilizing resistance and building a self-reliant Black community would be education. His *Appeal* stated that: "The bare name of educating the colored people scares our cruel oppressors almost to death" and urged black citizens to: "Let the aim of your labors among your brethren, and particularly the youths, be the dissemination of education."<sup>25</sup>

One of the most fascinating aspects of Walker's appeal is that, in spite of its passionate condemnation of the WSCS, it does not preach hatred towards the white perpetrators of slavery. Rather, his *Appeal* projects hatred towards oppression, proclaiming to whites that: "while you keep us and our children in bondage, and treat us like brutes, to make us support you and your families, we cannot be your friends. Treat us then like men, and we will be your friends."<sup>26</sup>

After its publishing in 1829, Walker's appeal was spread far and wide throughout the United States.<sup>27</sup> In turn, Southern officials tried desperately to prevent the *Appeal* from reaching its residents. The governments of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana declared that the *Appeal* was treasonable and they imposed harsh penalties for its possession and distribution.<sup>28</sup> Georgia promoted an award of \$10,000 to anyone who could capture and present

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Crockett, Hasan. "The Incendiary Pamphlet: David Walker's Appeal in Georgia." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), pp. 305-318

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 313

Walker alive and \$1,000 to anyone who would murder him.<sup>29</sup> In 1830—one year after publishing his *Appeal*—Walker died in Boston. Although historians are not certain, most of the evidence suggests that the abolitionist was poisoned.<sup>30</sup> Regardless of what caused his death, white supremacists breathed a sigh of relief since Walker could no longer mobilize blacks with the ideology of Afrocentrism.

## II How did the WSCS reinvent itself during the Jim Crow Era?

Along with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, arrived laws that promised to destroy the WSCS. In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment liberated Blacks from slavery. One year later, the United States Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which guaranteed all Americans the same rights: "Without distinction of race or color, or previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude."<sup>31</sup> Between 1865 and 1867, each of the Confederate States enacted Black Codes, provoking the Federal Government to intervene with a series of laws that would become known as Reconstruction. The First Reconstruction Act of 1867 divided the South into five military districts consisting of Northern troops protecting the freedom of Southern blacks.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Reconstruction delivered Federal Laws protecting the rights of black citizens. Passed in 1868,

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 313

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 313

<sup>31</sup> "Black Legislatures: Primary Sources." PBS. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/ps\\_1866.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/ps_1866.html)>

<sup>32</sup> Franklin, John Hope. "Public Welfare in the South during the Reconstruction Era, 1865-80",

*Social Service Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Dec., 1970), pp. 379-392

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30021737>>

the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed citizenship to all individuals born within the United States, granting blacks and other races the legal protection enjoyed by white citizens.<sup>33</sup>

Reconstruction represents a fascinating chapter in American history, as it provided blacks with temporary relief from the oppressive forces of the WSCS. The most extraordinary aspect of Reconstruction was the emergence of black political leaders. During the first ten years of Reconstruction, 1,465 Black men held political office as Lieutenant Governors, representatives in the United States Senate and House of Representatives, representatives in State Senates and Assemblies, State Supreme Court Justices, State Superintendents, Mayors, Sheriffs, and Coroners.<sup>34</sup> Nearly a century and a half later, the United States has yet to achieve a comparable representation of non-white minorities.

Although slavery had been legally abolished, the concept of race had become deeply engrained into the nation's psyche. Historian Michelle Alexander notes that: "The notion of racial difference—specifically the notion of white supremacy—proved far more durable than the institution that gave birth to it."<sup>35</sup> White supremacists comprehended this tremendous threat to their racial caste system. Southern whites armed themselves with guns and began killing black politicians and Republican voters throughout the South. By the mid-1870's the, Klu Klux Klan (KKK) and other white supremacist militias were effectively nullifying the progress of

---

<sup>33</sup>"14th Amendment." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiv>>.

<sup>34</sup> Hine, Darlene Clark., Stanley Harrold, and William C. Hine. *African Americans: A Concise History*. Upper Saddle River (N.J.): Prentice Hall, 2004. Print. Page 216

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 216

Reconstruction. Between 1868 and 1875 white militias assassinated dozens of black politicians in courtrooms, jailhouses, trains, and other public settings.<sup>36</sup>

As the demand for Federal protection grew, white Republicans in the north lost interest in defending the rights of Southern blacks. An economic crisis in 1873 helped conservative Democrats achieve a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, recapturing their congressional control for the first time since the Civil War.<sup>37</sup> By 1877, conservative Democrats had reestablished control over every Southern State.<sup>38</sup>

The death of Reconstruction became inevitable. As racial violence increased and public safety deteriorated, outnumbered Southern Republicans begged the Federal Government for assistance. In 1855 President Ulysses Grant refused, stating: "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South...and are ready now to condemn any interference on the part of the Government."<sup>39</sup> The downfall of Reconstruction finally occurred as a result of the Presidential Election of 1876. Both Democratic and Republican candidates had claimed to have won in the decisive contests in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.<sup>40</sup> A compromise was eventually reached in which Republican candidate Rutherford Hayes took office on the condition that he would withdraw all federal troops from the south.<sup>41</sup> Following The

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 224 & 227

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 225

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 227

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 227

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 227

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 227

Compromise of 1877, Henry Adams, a prominent Black leader in Louisiana, described the failure of Reconstruction: "The whole South—every state in the South had got into the hands of the very men that held us as slaves."<sup>42</sup> White supremacists had defeated attacks of military occupations, black politicians, and Federal legislation, and were poised to reinstate their racial caste system. Once again, the systematic dehumanization of blacks would be the status quo of the south.

Prior to the turn of the century, two major Supreme Court decisions strengthened the WSCS. In 1883 the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment protected black Americans from discrimination by states but not by private businesses or individuals.<sup>43</sup> Historian Douglas Blackman described this ruling as: "A de facto acceptance that white southerners could do as they wished with the black people in their midst."<sup>44</sup> In 1896, the Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* concerned the critical question of whether the Equal Protection Clause permitted Louisiana to maintain racially segregated train cars. The Court ruled that this did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment because although public facilities were separate, they were not unequal.<sup>45</sup> This ruling enabled Southern states and cities to enact hundreds of laws that instituted a widespread system of racial apartheid known as Jim Crow.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 229

<sup>43</sup> "Supreme Court Decision of 1883." The University of North Carolina. Web.

<<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/turnerbd/turner.html>>.

<sup>44</sup> Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Doubleday, 2008. Print. Page 93

<sup>45</sup> "Plessy v Ferguson." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

In the early 1900's, racial violence, the convict lease system, and sharecropping forced Southern blacks back into their subordinate status in the WSCS. Prior to emancipation, white slave owners depended upon the labor and livelihood of their black workers and, as a result, usually did not punish them with murder. However, during the Jim Crow era there was an epidemic of blacks being killed. Between 1882 and 1968, an estimated 4,742 blacks met their deaths at the hands of lynch mobs.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, the criminal justice systems of incarceration and convict leasing recaptured tens of thousands of Southern blacks to a condition of chattel slavery.<sup>47</sup> Following Reconstruction, Southern states deliberately enacted laws to target emancipated blacks.<sup>48</sup> These laws allowed for blacks to be arbitrarily arrested, charged with fines that they were unable to pay, incarcerated, and, finally, sold as forced laborers to coal mines, lumber yards, brick factories, railroads, and plantations.<sup>49</sup> Decades after the Emancipation Proclamation, armies of "free" black men worked as uncompensated slave labor, were repeatedly bought and sold, and endured the physical torture of their new masters. This system of neo-slavery would dominate until World War II.<sup>50</sup>

---

<[http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0163\\_0537\\_ZS.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0163_0537_ZS.html)>.

<sup>46</sup> Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe I. Bourgois. *Violence in War and Peace*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004. Print. Page 125.

<sup>47</sup> Blackmon, Op Cit.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Ibid



Following emancipation, many blacks became trapped within the southern institution of sharecropping. As a result of having few employment opportunities, many black citizens were once again forced to work for white plantation owners. Not only were sharecroppers unable to earn respectable wages, due to illiteracy these blacks were systematically deceived and exploited by their white employers.<sup>51</sup>

Through lynch mobs, the convict-lease system, and sharecropping, Southern white supremacists had reinstated their racial caste system. Furthermore, whites had proudly recaptured Southern states and boasted their white supremacist ideology. Educator and racial theorist Thomas Pearce Bailey was one of the prominent southern leaders of white supremacy during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1913, Bailey published the following summary of the widespread racial creed among white supremacists:

1. *Blood will tell.*
2. *The white race must dominate.*
3. *The Teutonic peoples stand for race purity.*
4. *The Negro is inferior and will remain so.*
5. *This is a white man's country.*
6. *No social equality.*
7. *No political equality.*
8. *In matters of civil rights and legal adjustments give the white man, as opposed to the colored man, the benefit of the doubt; and under no circumstances interfere with the prestige of the white race.*
9. *In educational policy let the Negro have the crumbs that fall from the white man's table.*

---

<sup>51</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 248

10. *Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will best fit him to serve the white man.*
11. *Only Southerners understand the Negro question.*
12. *Let the South settle the Negro question.*
13. *The status of peasantry is all the Negro may hope for, if the races are to live together in peace.*
14. *Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest Negro.*
15. *The above statements indicate the leadings of Providence.*<sup>52</sup>

One of the most fascinating elements of this doctrine is its emphasis of how “the lowest white man” maintained a higher status than any black man. This social doctrine demonstrates the continuation of the “racial bribe” that was implemented following Bacon’s Rebellion. Impoverished whites were still being used as pawns during the Jim Crow era.

#### Suppressing Afrocentrism during the Jim Crow Era

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a foreigner became America’s most prominent leader for black liberation and Afrocentrism. Between 1916 and 1925 Marcus Garvey and his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, mobilized and educated blacks towards resisting the WSCS. Born in 1887 in the British colony of Jamaica, as a young man Garvey became an influential labor organizer and social activist.<sup>53</sup> At the age of twenty, Garvey traveled throughout Central and South America, gaining an advanced comprehension of colonialism’s systematic

---

<sup>52</sup> Woodward, Comer Vann., and Wendell Holmes. Stephenson. *Origins of the New South: 1877-1913*. [Baton Rouge, La.]: Louisiana State University., 1967. Print. Page 355

<sup>53</sup> Gates, Op Cit., Page 996

exploitation and dehumanization of blacks.<sup>54</sup> In 1916, Garvey brought his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to Harlem, NY. It was in Harlem that Garvey transformed the UNIA from an organization into an Afrocentric movement.

By 1917, Harlem's Chapter of the UNIA flourished, as the organization's weekly newspaper, *Negro World*, rapidly spread Garvey's Afrocentric ideology. Through its newspaper, the UNIA spread the philosophy of black pride. One issue of *Negro World* stated:

*Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters in art, science and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men, who it was said, were like the gods...Black men, you were once great; you shall be great again. Lose not courage, lose not faith, go forward. The thing to do is to get organized; keep separated and you will be exploited, you will be robbed, you will be killed. Get organized, and you will compel the world to respect you.*<sup>55</sup>

The most dangerous aspect of the UNIA was its ability to translate Afrocentrism into concrete political and economic initiatives. After three years in the U.S., Garvey and the UNIA headed black owned and black operated organizations such as a newspaper printing plant, grocery stores, restaurants, and a clothing factory that produced UNIA uniforms.<sup>56</sup> Through this socio-economic model, Garvey was proving that the racial caste system's white supremacist ideology was false. One *Negro World* article made this exact argument by declaring that the

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 996

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1002

<sup>56</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 318

UNIA: “Employs thousands of black girls and black boys. Girls who could only be washer women in your homes, we made clerks and stenographers.”<sup>57</sup>

By 1920 Garvey had a base of nearly a quarter-million readers and had organized the largest Black following in America.<sup>58</sup> Fueled by this extraordinary momentum, Garvey called for blacks around the world to organize themselves and create an Afrocentric nation of their own:

*We are calling upon the four hundred million Negroes of the world to take a decided stand, a determined stand, that we shall occupy a firm position; that position shall be an emancipated race and a free nation of our own. We are determined that we shall have a free country; we are determined that we shall have a flag; we are determined that we shall have a government second to none in the world.*<sup>59</sup>

Members of the UNIA were given a plan to fulfill this idea. In 1919, Garvey established a steamship company called the Black Star Line.<sup>60</sup> Participants in the UNIA could purchase stock in the steamship company for five dollars a share.<sup>61</sup> With its booming membership and influx of stock money, the UNIA purchased the first of what would later become three ships.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, Garvey and the UNIA petitioned the League of Nations to grant their organization control of

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 318

<sup>58</sup> Gates, Op Cit., Page 996

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 1002

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 996

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 996

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 996

various colonial territories in Africa.<sup>63</sup> Blacks across the U.S. were captivated by this man's vision to create self-determination and black prosperity both in the United States and in a new state in Africa. UNIA members anticipated the arrival of this glorious future, and would end their meetings by chanting: "Up, you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will!"<sup>64</sup> With hundreds of thousands of members,<sup>65</sup> Marcus Garvey was poised to transform his organization into a massive movement of blacks reclaiming their full humanity.

As the UNIA continued to grow, Garvey and his organization became a prominent target of the United States Bureau of Investigation (BOI), the predecessor to the FBI. The establishing of the Black Star Line convinced the BOI that Garvey was capable of transforming his Harlem-based organization into an explosive movement for Afrocentrism. In 1919, BOI Director J. Edgar Hoover issued a memorandum concerning the Bureau's attempt to neutralize Garvey. The memo stated that unfortunately Garvey had not broken any law that would validate his arrest and deportation.<sup>66</sup> However, Hoover suggested that BOI agents search for: "Fraud in connection with his Black Star Line propaganda."<sup>67</sup> After enlisting the assistance of the U.S. Post Office and Attorney General, Hoover's plan was successful.<sup>68</sup> In 1922, Marcus Garvey was indicted for mail

---

<sup>63</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 318

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 319

<sup>65</sup> Churchill, Ward, and Wall Jim. Vander. *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Domestic Dissent*. Boston, MA: South End, 1990. Print. Page 94

<sup>66</sup> "Primary Sources: FBI Memo." *Marcus Garvey*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/filmmore/ps\\_fbi.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/filmmore/ps_fbi.html)>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Churchill, Op Cit., Page 94

fraud charges in reference to his promotion of the Black Star Line.<sup>69</sup> In 1923, Garvey was sentenced to five years in federal prison.<sup>70</sup> Without its leader, membership and activities of the UNIA faltered.<sup>71</sup> In 1927 President Calvin Coolidge ordered Garvey's deportation to Jamaica. Due to the activities of the Bureau of Investigation and their colleagues in the Federal Government, Garvey's ability to mobilize an Afrocentric movement had been completely neutralized.

### III How did the WSCS reinvent itself during the Civil Rights Era?

Dr. Martin Luther King and his colleagues did not frame their movement as a battle for "civil rights." Rather, they were continuing their ancestors' struggle for freedom from the WSCS. As Jim Crow terrorism continued in the south and institutionalized racism persisted throughout the nation, tension mounted for the next wave of resistance against the WSCS.

By the 1940's the momentum for the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) was already growing. During WWII black newspapers had developed a widespread "Double V" campaign, vowing to achieve: "Victory over fascism abroad and over racism at home."<sup>72</sup> In the spirit of this Double V operation, black leader A. Philip Randolph led a movement for loyal black Americans to affirm their right to work and fight for their country by demanding the abolition of racial

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 94

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 94

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 94

<sup>72</sup> "The Pittsburgh Courier." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news\\_bios/courier.html](http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news_bios/courier.html)>.

discrimination in government agencies and the armed forces.<sup>73</sup> In 1941, Randolph began organizing tens of thousands of blacks to fight for these demands by marching on the National Mall in Washington, DC.<sup>74</sup> Weary that such an event would jeopardize the United States' image of democracy, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met Randolph's demands in exchange for the cancellation of the march. FDR's Executive Order #8802 stated: "There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in the defense industry or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin."<sup>75</sup> Regardless of whether Randolph could have produced the supposed hundred thousand marchers, the President's actions had given black Americans a small, yet significant victory against systematic racism. Randolph had successfully opened the door for the Civil Rights battle against the WSCS.

Meanwhile by the 1940's, the NAACP had begun its national campaign to challenge the constitutionality of school segregation and the separate but equal doctrine. In 1954, the NAACP brought a *composite* case to the United States Supreme Court under the name of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Pressured by President Harry Truman's memo emphasizing the need to appear democratic and non-racist during the Cold War<sup>76</sup>, in May of 1954, the conservative

---

<sup>73</sup> "Proposed March on Washington (1941)." *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*. PBS. Web. 02 May 2012.

<[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_events\\_march.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_march.html)>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> "Executive Order 8802." *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum*. Marist College. Web. 02 May 2012. <<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od8802t.html>>.

<sup>76</sup> Bell, Derrick A. *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.

Warren Court produced a unanimous vote against the doctrine of separate but equal, proclaiming that: "In the field of public education...separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."<sup>77</sup>

A year later, the Warren Court issued its ruling over *Brown II*, the Court's deliberation over the practical implementation of their first verdict. The Supreme Court adopted a vague plan of action, declaring that school desegregation would occur with "all deliberate speed."<sup>78</sup> Despite the elusive language of the *Brown* decision, the white supremacist southern politicians became more extreme and mobilized massive resistance. In March of 1956, ninety-six Southern congressmen issued a "Southern Manifesto" pledging to preserve segregation and the "southern way of life."<sup>79</sup> In effect, these politicians vowed to uphold the WSCS in which blacks were uncompromisingly dehumanized.

With the momentum of the *Brown* victory, blacks across the south were poised to break down the walls of segregation and racial discrimination. In 1956, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., and blacks in Montgomery, Alabama gained victory in their year-long boycott of the city's segregated bus system. In November of 1956, the US Supreme Court overturned the legacy of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, ruling that segregated transportation was unconstitutional.<sup>80</sup> In September of 1957, America watched seven black students in Little Rock, Arkansas desegregate the city's all

---

<sup>77</sup> "Brown v. Board of Education." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0347\\_0483\\_ZS.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0347_0483_ZS.html)>.

<sup>78</sup>Hine, Op Cit., Page 408

<sup>79</sup> "Primary Sources: Southern Manifesto on Integration." *Expanding Civil Rights*. PBS. Web. 02 March 2012.

<[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/sources\\_document2.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/sources_document2.html)>.

<sup>80</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 03*. Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.



white high school. In the first federal action taken to implement the *Brown* ruling, President Eisenhower was forced to use 1,100 paratroopers from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne to protect these students from angry mobs.<sup>81</sup> Not only had black Americans begun their war against white supremacy, citizens across the country were following the action on television.

Across North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, in 1960 black college students participated in sit ins at segregated lunch counters.<sup>82</sup> In May of 1961, an interracial group of men and women tested the Supreme Court's ruling against segregated transportation by traveling through Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.<sup>83</sup> These "Freedom Riders" encountered racial mob violence along the way, most notably in Birmingham, Alabama, where Governor George Wallace instructed the Klu Klux Klan to brutalize this interracial group of "agitators."<sup>84</sup> More warfare erupted in Birmingham in April of 1963 when Dr. King and other Civil Rights leaders targeted Birmingham's vicious Police Chief "Bull" Connor. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> "Bull" Connor's police were ordered to attack non-violent black marchers with dogs and fire hoses, forcing President John F. Kennedy to intervene.<sup>85</sup> On May 10<sup>th</sup> an agreement was reached ensuring integrated downtown facilities and job opportunities for blacks.<sup>86</sup> Not only were these protests across the south achieving tangible

---

<sup>81</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 02: "Fighting Back."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>82</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 03: "Ain't Scared of Your Jails."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>83</sup> "Retracing the Rides." *Freedom Riders*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/rides>>.

<sup>84</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 03: Ain't Scared of Your Jails."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

results, they were dramatizing the brutality of white supremacist militias, a legacy that dated back to the era of Slavery. Liberals in the north followed this southern terrorism through newspapers and black and white television reports.

Three months after the confrontation in Birmingham, the Civil Rights Movement reached its climax in Washington, DC. Several Civil Rights organizations collaborated to organize the March on Washington that A. Philip Randolph had begun planning a generation earlier. On August 28, 1963, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was under the national spotlight. Over 250,000 individuals participated in support of President Kennedy's pending Civil Rights legislation and for the Civil Rights Movement at large.<sup>87</sup> The march was a tremendous success, representing the extraordinary progress that had been achieved by fearless leaders and participants in the CRM. Following the assassination of JFK, in July of 1964 President Lyndon Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the strongest legislation to date which established that: "Legally mandated racial separation was now dead."<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, the movement remained steadfast in pushing for further progress. During the summer of 1964, the movement's attention had shifted to a massive effort to mobilize black voter registration throughout Mississippi. Known as the "Freedom Summer", this ultimately succeeded by dramatizing white supremacist acts of terrorism against blacks and liberal whites and compelling the Federal Government to intervene. In March of 1965, Dr. King and various Civil Rights groups organized a voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. It wasn't until the march's third attempt that they were able to overcome the resistance of extreme

---

<sup>87</sup>*Eyes on the Prize: Episode 04: "No Easy Walk."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>88</sup>*Eyes on the Prize: Episode 05: "Mississippi: Is this America?"* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

racial violence.<sup>89</sup> As a result of the Freedom Summer and march in Alabama, President Johnson passed the Voter Rights Act in August 1965.<sup>90</sup> Since Dr. King's victory in Montgomery eight years earlier, the non-violent Civil Rights Movement had succeeded in destroying the laws that protected America's WSCS. They had not asserted their humanity through physical attacks against the perpetrators of white supremacy. Instead, they had non-violently held their ground against the unjust practices of Jim Crow, and let the consciences of Northern liberals watch as whites attempted to dehumanize them with police dogs, fire hoses, and burning crosses.

### Suppressing Afrocentrism during the Civil Rights Era

One of the most important black leaders of the Civil Rights Era is never referenced in textbooks or encyclopedias. Robert Williams was born in 1925 in the Klu Klux Klan dominated town of Monroe, North Carolina.<sup>91</sup> After serving overseas in the Marines, Williams returned to his hometown and became the leader of the local NAACP chapter in 1956. As a result of relentless attacks from the KKK, Monroe's NAACP membership consisted of six residents.<sup>92</sup> Over the next five years Williams would increase the membership to over two hundred.<sup>93</sup>

Robert Williams dissented from the non-violent philosophy of the NAACP and the CRM as a whole. Williams had an extraordinary comprehension of the white supremacist history that

---

<sup>89</sup>*Eyes on the Prize: Episode 06: "Bridge to Freedom."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> *Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams.* Dir. Sandra Dickinson and Churchill Roberts. California Newsreel, 2005.

DVD.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

was being reflected by the local KKK, and he unapologetically advocated for the possession of weapons as a means of self-defense. Williams applied for a charter from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and formed the Black Guard, an armed group dedicated to protecting Monroe's black residents.<sup>94</sup> Members received weapons and physical training from Williams to prepare them to defend themselves and assist black citizens, who were rarely protected by Monroe's racist police force.<sup>95</sup> With guns to defend themselves from the KKK, Williams demanded the integration of public facilities and publicized the conditions of the Jim Crow south to national and international news sources.<sup>96</sup>

In 1959 a Monroe jury acquitted a white man for his attempted rape of a black woman. Williams fought back by proclaiming the following statement to reporters:

*If the United States Constitution cannot be enforced in this social jungle called Dixie, it is time that Negroes must defend themselves even if it is necessary to resort to violence...there is no law here, there is no need to take the white attackers to the courts because they will go free and the federal government is not coming to the aid of people who are oppressed, and it is time for Negro men to stand up and be men and if it is necessary for us to die we must be willing to die. If it is necessary for us to kill we must be willing to kill.*<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

The validity of this statement was overshadowed by its radical sentiment. Within the context of the non-violent Civil Rights Movement, blacks were supposed to appeal to the hearts of Northern liberals and Williams' unyielding assertion for self defense had to be discredited. The NAACP's national office immediately suspended Williams for advocating for violence.<sup>98</sup>

Two years later the Freedom Riders came to Monroe. After being met by an overwhelming mob of Klansmen and Klan supporters, the Freedom Riders called upon Williams and his Black Guard for help.<sup>99</sup> Chaos ensued between the KKK and an opposing mob of blacks. In order to protect two whites from the aggravated mob of blacks, Williams sheltered the white couple into his home.<sup>100</sup> Williams would later be accused of kidnapping them. As state and local police attempted to charge Williams with kidnapping and enraged Klansmen mobilized an attempt on his life, Williams and his family fled Monroe.<sup>101</sup> Williams and his family spent the next eight years living under political asylum in Cuba and China. Despite returning to the U.S. in 1969, Robert Williams's career of activism did not continue.<sup>102</sup>

### The Federal Government's Failure to Deconstruct the WSCS

Despite the extraordinary efforts of the Civil Rights Movement, the non-violent movement had not succeeded in restructuring the foundation of America's WSCS. Most notably,

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Nelson, Truman. *People with Strength in Monroe, North Carolina*. Monroe, NC: Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants, 1963. Print.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Negroes with Guns., Op Cit.

the poverty in the black slums of America's largest cities had not changed. In 1965, 29.1% of black families lived below the poverty line, compared to 7.8% of white families.<sup>103</sup> Half of non-white families lived in "sub-standard" housing compared to 18% of white Americans.<sup>104</sup> Across all age groups, black unemployment rates were double those of whites.<sup>105</sup> In 1967, the famous black psychologist Kenneth Clark declared that: "The masses of Negroes are now starkly aware of the fact that recent civil rights victories benefitted a very small percentage of middle-class Negroes while their predicament remained the same or worsened."<sup>106</sup>

With the ongoing oppression of institutionalized racism building more and more tension within oppressed black communities, several northern cities exploded into inner-city rebellions. The first major rebellion occurred in the summer of 1965 in Los Angeles' all black community of Watts. A full week of riots erupted following the police's arrest of a black man who was allegedly driving under the influence.<sup>107</sup> Following seven days of arson and civil unrest, four thousand residents had been arrested, nine hundred had been injured, and thirty-four had been killed.<sup>108</sup> By the time that the National Guard attempted to restore order, the neighborhood was

---

<sup>103</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 439

<sup>104</sup> Ibid 439

<sup>105</sup> Ibid 439

<sup>106</sup> Ibid 439

<sup>107</sup> "Watts Riots." *Civil Rights Digital Library*. University System of Georgia. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://crdl.usg.edu/events/watts\\_riots/?Welcome](http://crdl.usg.edu/events/watts_riots/?Welcome)>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

already destroyed. Rubble and ashes filled the streets as hundreds of millions of dollars of property was destroyed.<sup>109</sup>

Several smaller riots occurred during the summer of 1966. However, it wasn't until the following summer that the massive rebellion in Watts was reenacted. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1967, an altercation between police and black residents occurred in Newark, New Jersey.<sup>110</sup> Pressure had been mounting in Newark for years, as the city's black men suffered from the worst unemployment rate in the nation.<sup>111</sup> On this day, police brutality provoked black residents to erupt into four days of rioting. The National Guard was deployed into Newark. Collaborating with the local police, they would kill twenty-five black residents.<sup>112</sup> Similar to Watts, tens of millions of dollars in property damage was ruined by looting and arson.<sup>113</sup>

The worst riot of the 1960's occurred less than a week after the inner city rebellion in Newark. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, chaos exploded in Detroit, Michigan. Although the event was triggered by the police's raid of an after-hours bar, John Conyers, a black congressional representative of Michigan proclaimed that the riots represented something much deeper: "People were letting feelings out that had never been let out before, that had been bottled up. It really wasn't that they were that mad about an after-hours place being raided...It was the whole desperate situation of

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> "A Walk Through Newark." *WNET*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.thirteen.org/newark/history3.html>>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

being black in Detroit.”<sup>114</sup> Forty-three blacks were killed over the next four days, with most of them being fatally shot by troops from the National Guard.<sup>115</sup> However, along with 200 state police officers and 600 city police, the National Guard was unable to restore order. As a result, President Lyndon Johnson was forced to send in 4,700 troops from the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne units.<sup>116</sup>

Following these urban rebellions, Dr. King described a similar sentiment to that of Representative Conyers:

*There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society that feel that they have no stake in it, that feel that there is nothing to lose. When people have a stake in their society, they protect that society but when they don't have a stake in the society they unconsciously want to destroy it.*<sup>117</sup>

Dr. King predicted that as long as human dignity was being suppressed within black communities, through rebellions or some other means, blacks would continue to find some way to express their humanity.

A few days after the inner-city rebellions in Newark and Detroit, President Johnson initiated a federal response. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, the President formed the National Advisory

---

<sup>114</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 441

<sup>115</sup> "The Detroit Riots of 1967." Rutgers University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/d\\_index.htm](http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/d_index.htm)>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup> Ibid



Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission.<sup>118</sup> In a national press conference Johnson declared that the Kerner Commission's mission was to answer three questions about the riots: "What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again and again?"<sup>119</sup> <sup>120</sup> As the eleven members of the Kerner Commission began their investigation, civil unrest continued to rage across the nation. Ultimately, fifty-nine separate inner city rebellions occurred in black communities during the summer of 1967.<sup>121</sup> Seven months later, the commission presented their conclusions in the four-hundred-page Kerner Report. The report largely stated the obvious: institutionalized racism—especially police brutality—was the major catalyst for these inner-city rebellions.<sup>122</sup> The Committee also declared that the riots resulted from the severe oppression of the WSCS, declaring that, "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, and one white— separate and unequal."<sup>123</sup>

The Kerner Report urged the Federal Government to follow through with President Johnson's War on Poverty in order to reform the WSCS that was causing riots and, more important, systematic oppression. The report specifically insisted that the Federal Government

---

<sup>118</sup> "Lyndon B. Johnson." *The American Presidency Project*. UC Santa Barbara. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28369>>.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>120</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 08: "Two Societies."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>121</sup> Hine, Op Cit., Page 441

<sup>122</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 08: "Two Societies."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>123</sup> "Excerpts from the Kerner Report." *History Matters*. George Mason University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6545/>>.

eradicate the slums that existed throughout urban black communities, and provide employment opportunities to impoverished blacks.<sup>124</sup> In short, the committee asserted that black Americans needed to receive the same human rights as white citizens. Not only did the President reject the Report's recommendations, Johnson refused to have the Committee present their findings to him.<sup>125</sup> Similar to President's Grant's failure to provide assistance during Reconstruction, Johnson declined to go to war against the WSCS.

### Dr. King's Final Battle for Black Liberation

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967,—exactly one year before he would be assassinated—Dr. King broke his ties with President Lyndon Johnson. On this day, Dr. King delivered his “Beyond Vietnam” speech, firmly criticizing the United States as: “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.”<sup>126</sup> This speech effectively ended Dr. King's ten year effort to reform the WSCS through collaboration with the Federal Government. In May of 1967, King would emphasize the need for this transition, declaring in a public speech that: “We have been in a reform movement... but after Selma and the voting rights bill, we moved into a new era, which must be the era of revolution.”<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 08: “Two Societies.”* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>126</sup> “Beyond Vietnam.” *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc\\_beyond\\_vietnam/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/)>.

<sup>127</sup> “Putting Our House in Order: Dr. King's Call for Economic and Social Rights in the United States.” *NESRI*

*Media Center*. National Economic and Social Rights Initiative. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.nesri.org/news/2012/01/putting-our-house-in-order-dr-king%E2%80%99s-call-for-economic-and-social-rights-in-the-united-states>>.

Much had changed since the Civil Rights Movement had achieved its final accomplishment with 1965's Voting Rights Act. In January of 1966, Dr. King and his Civil Rights organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, shifted their focus towards eradicating the institutionalized racism that oppressed urban blacks in the north. On January 26<sup>th</sup> King, his wife, and his associate Ralph Abernathy moved into an apartment in the slums of Chicago.<sup>128</sup> King and his organization implemented their same techniques of civil disobedience and direct action, targeting most of their attention towards breaking down the de facto segregation that was strictly enforced by racist real estate practices.<sup>129</sup> However, King's supporters were confronted with extraordinary levels of resistance from Chicago's white communities, especially from the working class Irish and Italian populations.<sup>130</sup> While Civil Rights marches in the south were confronted with small, aggressive groups of white supremacists, the marches in Chicago were met with massive counter-protests full of entire families with children and elderly persons.<sup>131</sup> One of King's marches in Chicago was met with a mob of *five thousand* whites and twelve hundred police officers attempting to maintain order.<sup>132</sup> Preparing for a march through a notoriously racist neighborhood that would inevitably provoke violence,

---

<sup>128</sup> "Major Events Chronology." *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <[http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/king\\_major\\_events\\_chronology\\_1929\\_1968/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/king_major_events_chronology_1929_1968/)>.

<sup>129</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 08: "Two Societies."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*

Dr. King decided to call it off.<sup>133</sup> Less than eight months after beginning their Civil Rights campaign in the north, King and his associates accepted their defeat and retreated to the south.<sup>134</sup>

This failure in Chicago was significant for many reasons. It suggested that the Civil Rights legislation, which was directed at reforming Jim Crow segregation in the south, was inadequate for remedying widespread de facto segregation and abject poverty in northern black communities. Furthermore, as tensions began to escalate with inner-city rebellions in 1965, the failure in Chicago suggested that this non-violent movement might not possess an effective alternative approach during this new chapter of the Civil Rights Era. Dr. King comprehended the desperation being exhibited during these rebellions and sensed the urgency to shift the direction of his leadership. He knew that it was time to attack the foundation of the WSCS.

With this urgency in mind, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Dr. King publicly condemned the United States government for its immoral actions in the Vietnam War. For the first time since becoming the national figurehead of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King disregarded the need to sound politically correct and maintain a good relationship with the Federal Government. Not only did King criticize the Vietnam War as being immoral, he argued that the injustice of the war was directly connected to the injustice of domestic racism. King proclaimed that: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."<sup>135</sup> Following this speech, Dr. King lost much of his support from liberal whites. In addition to President Johnson, various publications such as Life Magazine

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

and the Washington Post criticized King for obtusely linking the war to the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>136</sup> As anticipated, his attack against the foundation of America's racial caste system was jeopardizing his public image.

Following his "Beyond Vietnam" speech, King continued to speak freely about the WSCS that continued to dehumanize blacks in America. During one speech, he proclaimed that the time had come to implement federal programs that would supplement the limitations of legal equality: "It didn't cost the nation one penny to integrate lunch counters, guarantee the right to vote. But now we are dealing with issues that cannot be solved without the nation spending billions of dollars to implement a radical redistribution of economic power."<sup>137</sup>

At the same time, Dr. King began to directly spread the ideology of Afrocentrism. In the following speech excerpt, his language reflected the ideas of Afrocentric leaders throughout American history:

*Nobody else can do this for us. No document can do this for us. No Lincolnian proclamation can do this for us; no Ken[nedy]sonian or Johnsonian civil rights bill can do this for us. If the Negro is to be free he must move down into the inner resources of his own soul and sign, with a pen and ink of self-asserted manhood, his own Emancipation Proclamation.*<sup>138</sup>

During the same speech Dr. King addressed the historical foundations of white supremacy:

*Somebody told a lie one day. They couched it in language. They made everything black ugly and evil. Look in your dictionary and see the synonyms of the word "black." It's always something*

---

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> "16 August 1967." *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/article/where\\_do\\_we\\_go\\_from\\_here/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/article/where_do_we_go_from_here/)>.

*degrading and low and sinister. Look at the word "white." It's always some pure, high and mighty. Well I want to get the language right tonight. I want to get the language so right that everybody here will cry out, "Yes I'm Black and proud of it. I'm Black and beautiful."<sup>139</sup>*

Dr. King became increasingly assertive with his condemnation of the WSCS. In March of 1968, during his "I've been to the mountaintop" address, he attacked the hypocrisy of American democracy:

*America—be true to what you said on paper. If I lived in China, Russia, or a totalitarian country, maybe I would understand the denial of certain first amendment privileges because they haven't committed themselves to that over there, but somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly, speech, press, that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights. Just as I say that we won't let any dogs or firehouses, we won't let any injunction turn us around.<sup>140</sup>*

During this time, Dr. King was planning the Poor People's Campaign, an effort to mobilize thousands of poor whites and blacks to travel to Washington, DC and demand justice from their government. As King was saying at the time: "You can't have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without wages and a job."<sup>141</sup> Not only had Dr. King abandoned his compromises with the Federal Government, he was starting a movement to make them live up to the promises of the Civil Rights legislation.

---

<sup>139</sup> "Conjuring the Radical Dr. King." The Austin Chronicle. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2010-01-15/938353/>>.

<sup>140</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 10: "The Promised Land."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

As Dr. King became increasingly radical in his fight against the WSCS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) increased their programs to monitor, control, and discredit his actions. The FBI's program to neutralize Dr. King was nothing new. It began in 1957 with an examination of whether King and the SCLC organization had been infiltrated by communism.<sup>142</sup> FBI documents show that this inquiry became a formal investigation in May of 1962.<sup>143</sup> Following his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington in 1963, Bureau memoranda's identified King as "the most dangerous and effective Negro leader in the country."<sup>144</sup>

The FBI's efforts against King escalated during the final months of 1963. Two months after the March on Washington, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover distributed a monograph titled *Communism and the Negro Movement*. In this document, Dr. King was not only linked to the Communist Movement, but his character was severely discredited.<sup>145</sup> This report was sent to the United States Attorney General, White House, CIA, State Department, and Defense Department.<sup>146</sup> However, the recipients of the monograph were outraged by this "personal attack without evidentiary support on...the moral character and person of Dr. Martin Luther King."<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence

Activities. *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Case Study*. Rep. Washington, DC: United States Senate, 1976. *COINTELPRO*. Attorney Paul Wolf. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIIb.htm>>.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

<sup>145</sup> Ibid

<sup>146</sup> Ibid

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

As a result of the negative response, the FBI recalled all of the monographs ten days after they were distributed.<sup>148</sup>

With the monograph program having failed, the FBI searched for new techniques to discredit and neutralize the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. A few weeks later, on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1963, the FBI headquarters held a nine-hour conference to discuss different techniques for destroying Dr. King's career.<sup>149</sup> Two weeks later, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1964, the Assistant Director of the FBI published a memorandum about how to replace Dr. King with a new "national Negro leader."<sup>150</sup> The memoranda stated in part:

*It should be clear to all of us that Martin Luther King must, at some propitious point in the future, be revealed to the people of this country and to his Negro followers as being what he actually is - - a fraud, demagogue and scoundrel... When this is done...The Negroes will be left without a national leader of sufficiently compelling personality to steer them in the proper direction. This is what could happen, but need not happen if the right kind of a national Negro leader could at this time be gradually developed so as to overshadow Dr. King and be in the position to assume the role of the leadership of the Negro people when King has been completely discredited.*<sup>151</sup>

Fifty years later, it remains unclear whether the FBI's slanders were based upon any evidence of Dr. King's personal flaws. However, it is very clear that regardless of whether the FBI had evidence, they were intent on neutralizing Dr. King's effective leadership for blacks. Among the

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Ibid



FBI records, most shocking was a letter that the Bureau anonymously sent to both Dr. King and the SCLC Headquarters in November of 1964.<sup>152</sup> The letter threatened to reveal Dr. King as a fraud, and implied that Dr. King's only alternative was to kill himself. The letter read:

*You know you are a complete fraud and a great liability to all of us Negroes.... You are done. Your "honorary" degrees, your Nobel Prize (what a grim farce) and other awards will not save you... King, there, is only one thing left for you to do. You know what it is. You have just 34 days in which to do it... There is but one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy, abnormal fraudulent self is bared to the nation.*<sup>153 154</sup>

As newspapers began to publicize J. Edgar Hoover's aversion towards the Civil Right leader, King and his associates arranged to meet with the FBI Director in order to call a truce. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964, King, Hoover, and their respective associates met in Washington, DC.<sup>155</sup> Attendees from the meeting all reported that King and Hoover were able to respectfully address their conflict and that the FBI Director assured Dr. King that he would cease their attacks against Dr. King's character.<sup>156</sup> The FBI memorandums show that their campaign against Dr. King and the SCLC was largely discontinued over the next two years.<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Ibid

<sup>153</sup> Ibid

<sup>154</sup> Churchill, Op Cit., Page 99

<sup>155</sup> US Senate Dr. King, Op Cit.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid

<sup>157</sup> Ibid

In April of 1967, King delivered the previously-discussed speech criticizing the Vietnam War and linking it to domestic racism and oppression. FBI memos proclaimed that this speech was proof that Dr. King "has been influenced by communist advisers," and that his statements were "a direct parallel of the communist position on Vietnam."<sup>158</sup> The FBI used his anti-war speech as an opportunity to regenerate their campaign against Dr. King's reputation. One week after the "Beyond Vietnam" speech, Hoover sent the White House and U.S. Justice Department a revised edition of the previously-discussed "King Monograph" from 1963.<sup>159</sup>

The FBI's campaign to neutralize Dr. King became most aggressive during the final weeks before his assassination. In December of 1967, Dr. King was rapidly gaining momentum for his Poor People's Campaign. In order to compromise this "Spring Project", in February of 1968, the FBI distributed a further-revised edition of the King monograph to officials in the Executive Office. Their memorandums detailed that the distribution of the monograph "prior to King's 'Washington Spring Project' should serve again to remind top-level officials in Government of the wholly disreputable character of King."<sup>160</sup>

During March—the final month before King's assassination—the FBI heightened its effort to "curtail the success of Martin Luther King's fund raising campaign for the Washington Spring Project."<sup>161</sup> One of their techniques was sending letters to Civil Rights leaders in opposition to Dr. King, declaring that his fund raising campaigns were a ruse designed for his

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid

<sup>159</sup> Ibid

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

own prosperity.<sup>162</sup> On March 29<sup>th</sup>, when Dr. King was present at a sanitation workers strike that erupted into riots, the FBI distributed negative stories through the press, declaring that, “so-called nonviolence advocated by King cannot be controlled... The same thing could happen in his planned massive civil disobedience for Washington in April.”<sup>163</sup> In reference to the same incident on March 29<sup>th</sup>, the FBI prompted another news source to publish that, “like Judas leading lambs to slaughter King led the marchers to violence, and when the violence broke out, King disappeared.”<sup>164</sup>

Six days later, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1968, thirty-nine-year-old Dr. King was assassinated. Although the fugitive James Earl Ray was convicted for King's murder, little is known concerning potential co-conspirators or provocateurs in his assassination. Nevertheless, the findings of the U.S. Senate Church Committee detail that the FBI had achieved their goal of neutralizing Dr. King's threat against the social order. Not only is this demonstrated by their campaign against King during his final days, the FBI continued with this operation following his murder.

In March 1969 the Bureau attempted to prevent the U.S. Congress' effort to make Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. And FBI memo stated that they might be able to disrupt this effort upon informing the Congressmen that “King was a scoundrel.”<sup>165</sup> A month later the FBI office in Atlanta sent a memo referencing a program that could be used “in the event the Bureau

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

<sup>163</sup> Ibid

<sup>164</sup> Ibid

<sup>165</sup> Ibid

is inclined to entertain counterintelligence action against Coretta Scott King and/or the continuous projection of the public image of Martin Luther King."<sup>166</sup>

Dr. King's murder sent shockwaves in black communities across the country. Just as King and the Kerner Report forewarned, urban rebellions occurred in more than a hundred cities following Dr. King's assassination.<sup>167</sup> The same historical message had been communicated to the black community: any viable threat against the white supremacy caste system would be neutralized through coercion or death. Afrocentric organizations understood that their efforts would have to be tailored for this ongoing war.

#### COINTELPRO and Afrocentric Extremism in the Wake of Dr. King's Assassination

The FBI's intensified campaign against Dr. King coincided with one of the Bureau's most extreme programs ever waged against Afrocentric organizations. In August of 1967, the FBI launched its Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) against so-called "Black Nationalist Hate Groups." According to a Bureau memorandum, the purpose of this new program was to: "disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black Nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters", and: "to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder."<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> Ibid

<sup>167</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 10: "The Promised Land."* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>168</sup> United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence

Activities. *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Covert Action Programs Against American Citizens*. Rep. Washington, DC: United States Senate, 1976. *COINTELPRO*. Attorney Paul Wolf. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIIa.htm>>.

Six months later the FBI expanded its program against Black Nationalism. On March 4<sup>th</sup> 1968, the Bureau headquarters issued an enhanced memorandum stating five goals for the program:

- 1. Prevent the coalition of militant Black Nationalist groups... An effective coalition of Black Nationalist groups might be the first step toward...the beginning of a true black revolution.*
- 2. Prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant Black Nationalist movement.*
- 3. Prevent violence on the part of Black Nationalist groups.*
- 4. Prevent militant Black Nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability*
- 5. Prevent the long-range growth of militant black organizations, especially among youth.<sup>169</sup>*

In reference to a potential "messiah" of the black community, the memoranda referenced Dr. King, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader, Stokely Carmichael, and Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammed. The letter stated that: "King could be a very real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed 'obedience' to 'white, liberal doctrines' (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism."<sup>170</sup>

Following Dr. King's assassination in April of 1968, COINTELPRO quickly shifted its focus towards the greatest threat to America's social order, the Black Panther Party. In 1966, the Black Panther Party originated in Oakland as a small group which studied the teachings of the aforementioned Robert Williams. In October of 1966, the Panthers published their Ten Point Program, reemphasizing much the historical ideology of Black Nationalism. In regards to

---

<sup>169</sup> US Senate COINTELPRO, Op Cit.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

autonomy from the WSCS, the Panthers declared: “We want freedom... We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our black Community... Black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny.”<sup>171</sup> Focusing upon the omnipresence of oppressive law enforcement officials, they stated: “We can end police brutality in our black community by organizing black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our black community from racist police oppression and brutality.”<sup>172</sup>

Their Ten Point Program also addressed the need for Afrocentric knowledge to inform the black community of their historic exploitation by white supremacists: “We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society... The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over 50 million black people... We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.”<sup>173</sup> Mirroring the Afrocentric leaders of past generations, the Panthers aimed to inform the black community that so-called American democracy was, in fact, infected with hypocrisy. First, they affirmed their constitutional right to defend themselves with armed weapons.<sup>174</sup> Second, they dismissed the absurdity of blacks serving in the military to: “Fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like black people, are being victimized by the white racist government of America.”<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Newton, Huey P. *To Die for the People; the Writings of Huey P. Newton*. New York: Random House, 1972.

Print. Page 2.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 3

Finally, they related their own struggle against a racist government to the United States Declaration of Independence from British rule.<sup>176</sup> In addition to organizing self defense militias and cop-watching initiatives, the Panthers quickly established free breakfast programs and free medical clinics to serve urban children in communities of abject poverty.<sup>177</sup>

Along with SNCC and other black power organizations, the Black Panther Party spread rapidly across California and various other states. The Panthers upheld a very radical and aggressive presence within the black community. They were infamous for carrying rifles in public, a privilege that was afforded to all citizens under California's State Law.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, as a result of ubiquitous police misconduct, they were constantly confronting law enforcement officials with their ideology of self-defense.

The Panthers' extremism proved to be a double edged sword. One on hand, their unyielding prescription for black power and self-determination was widely consumed by the black citizens who had watched their Afrocentric leaders such as Malcolm X and Dr. King become neutralized by the white power structure. For this reason, the Black Panther Party spread rapidly throughout California, New York, Illinois and other regions of the United States.<sup>179</sup> On the other hand, the radical presence of the Panthers allowed for Eurocentric leaders to stigmatize them as a violent criminal organization.

---

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>177</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 09: "Power!"* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>178</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 09: "Power!"* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

<sup>179</sup> *Eyes on the Prize: Episode 12: "A Nation of Law?"* Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

By the end of 1968, the FBI had taken notice of the Panthers' threat against the status quo. In September of 1968, a memo from J. Edgar Hoover stated that the Panthers were: "The greatest threat to the internal security of the country."<sup>180</sup> The memorandum highlighted that: "Leaders and representatives of the Black Panther Party travel extensively all over the United States preaching their gospel of hate and violence not only to ghetto residents, but to students in colleges, universities and high schools as well."<sup>181</sup> Over the next three years the Black Panthers would be the target of 233 FBI actions against black organizations, approximately eighty percent of COINTELPRO documented efforts against Black Nationalist hate groups.<sup>182</sup> The FBI sponsored assassinations of prominent Panthers such as the Chairman of the Chicago chapter, Fred Hampton, and the leaders of the Los Angeles branch, Bunchy Carter and John Huggins.<sup>183</sup> In addition to provoking assassinations, the FBI successfully neutralized the Black Panther Party through provoking rivalries with other Afrocentric organizations, creating internal dissent within the Panther leadership, and incarcerating prominent Panther leaders.<sup>184</sup> By 1972, the FBI had accomplished their goal of destroying the Black Panthers and their ability to spread Afrocentrism.<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> US Senate COINTELPRO, Op Cit.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid

<sup>182</sup> Ibid

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> Ibid

<sup>185</sup> Ibid



Overall, the Civil Rights Era represented a paradox for how to deconstruct the WSCS. While civil disobedience was able to stir the nation's conscience and instigate Civil Rights legislation, this reform approach proved unsuccessful in earning respectable housing and employment opportunities for the black community. However, Dr. King's final year demonstrated that America was not going to permit a prominent leader to bring Afrocentrism into the national spotlight. Finally, despite being well received by the black community, black extremists such as the Panthers were also unable to persevere. Unlike the Civil Rights Movement's protestors who were publicly attacked by white supremacist law officials, America's white majority did not cry out when the Panthers were condemned, incarcerated, and assassinated.

### —Conclusion—

The history of the white supremacy caste system illustrates an invaluable truth. In contrast to the creed of the American dream, four hundred years of dehumanization under the WSCS is the dominant cause for disproportional poverty rates among black Americans. Blacks do not reside in repressive living conditions, attend underfunded schools, or suffer from unemployment as a result of inferior talent or willpower. They have been submerged under a Eurocentric social system that entraps them within a subordinate caste. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that this Afrocentric perspective has been suppressed within our nation's Eurocentric paradigm. Throughout the eras of Slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights, Afrocentrism was systematically neutralized in order to maintain the dominance of the white supremacy caste system.

This examination of the white supremacy caste system would benefit from a detailed analysis of how this system continues to haunt our nation. Historian Michelle Alexander has charted much of this through her 2010 book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Alexander clearly outlines how America's prison system has reinstated many of the oppressive tactics utilized during the eras of Slavery and Jim Crow. The key difference is that housing discrimination, educational disenfranchisement, and voter disqualification are legally sanctioned against "criminals", similar to how these policies were deliberately used against blacks throughout history. However, it is not only the physical dehumanization of the prison industrial complex that remains from the WSCS. I believe that a comprehensive examination of our Eurocentric media images, school curriculum, and legal system would reveal an omnipresence of the white supremacist ideology.

In summary, the legacy of the white supremacy caste system implores our society to make a decision. It is clear that this caste system has persevered since Slavery by transforming itself within different social institutions. There is little doubt that the beneficiaries of the WSCS will continue to protect this system. It is also clear that as long as we are ignorant to the characteristics of this caste system we will be unable to deconstruct it. Therefore, our choice is whether or not we are going to educate ourselves about the WSCS and how it dehumanizes blacks in order to maintain political, social, and economic control for whites.

This will undoubtedly require blacks to become informed about this system and how it has suppressed Afrocentrism. However, it will also require white Americans to acknowledge and forfeit their white privilege. Just as blacks must overcome their inferior social status, whites must leave behind their superior position in society. As the racial bribe has demonstrated throughout

history, the benefits of being a working class white citizen within the racial caste system are not worth cementing an institution that is inherently unjust.

#### Works Cited

"14th Amendment." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxiv>>.

"16 August 1967." *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <[http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/article/where\\_do\\_we\\_go\\_from\\_here/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/article/where_do_we_go_from_here/)>.

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New, 2010. Print.

Bell, Derrick A. *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.

"Beyond Vietnam." *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <[http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc\\_beyond\\_vietnam/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/)>.

"Black Legislatures: Primary Sources." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/ps\\_1866.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/activism/ps_1866.html)>.

Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Doubleday, 2008. Print.

"Brown v. Board of Education." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.

<[http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0347\\_0483\\_ZS.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0347_0483_ZS.html)>.

United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to

Intelligence Activities. *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Case Study*. Rep. Washington, DC: United States Senate, 1976. *COINTELPRO*. Attorney Paul Wolf. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIIb.htm>>.

United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to

Intelligence Activities. *The FBI's Covert Action Programs Against American Citizens*. Rep. Washington, DC: United States Senate, 1976. *COINTELPRO*. Attorney Paul Wolf. Web. 2 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIIa.htm>>.

Churchill, Ward, and Wall Jim. Vander. *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Domestic Dissent*. Boston, MA: South End, 1990. Print.

"Conjuring the Radical Dr. King." *The Austin Chronicle*. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2010-01-15/938353/>>.

Crockett, Hasan. "The Incendiary Pamphlet: David Walker's Appeal in Georgia." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (Summer, 2001), pp. 305-318

"David Walker's Appeal." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931t.html>>.

"The Detroit Riots of 1967." Rutgers University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <[http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/d\\_index.htm](http://www.67riots.rutgers.edu/d_index.htm)>.

"Excerpts from the Kerner Report." *History Matters*. George Mason University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6545/>>.

"Executive Order 8802." *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum*. Marist College. Web. 02 May 2012. <<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od8802t.html>>.

*Eyes on the Prize*. Prod. Henry Hampton. PBS, 1987. DVD.

"The Founding Fathers and Slavery." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 22 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1269536/The-Founding-Fathers-and-Slavery>>.

Gates, Henry Louis., and Nellie Y. McKay. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton &, 1996. Print.

Glick, Brian. *War at Home: Covert Action against U.S. Activists and What We Can Do about It*. Boston, MA: South End, 1989. Print.

Hine, Darlene Clark., Stanley Harrold, and William C. Hine. *African Americans: A Concise History*. Upper Saddle River (N.J.): Prentice Hall, 2004. Print.

"Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h490t.html>>.

"Lyndon B. Johnson." *The American Presidency Project*. UC Santa Barbara. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28369>>.

"Major Events Chronology." *King Institute*. Stanford University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://mlkpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/king\\_major\\_events\\_chronology\\_1929\\_1968/](http://mlkpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/king_major_events_chronology_1929_1968/)>.

*Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams*. Dir. Sandra Dickinson and Churchill Roberts. California Newsreel, 2005. DVD.

Nelson, Truman. *People with Strength in Monroe, North Carolina*. Monroe, NC: Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants, 1963. Print.

Newton, Huey P. *To Die for the People; the Writings of Huey P. Newton*. New York: Random House, 1972. Print.

"The Pittsburgh Courier." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news\\_bios/courier.html](http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news_bios/courier.html)>.

"Primary Sources: FBI Memo." *Marcus Garvey*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/filmmore/ps\\_fbi.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/filmmore/ps_fbi.html)>.

"Primary Sources: Southern Manifesto on Integration." *Expanding Civil Rights*. PBS. Web. 02 May 2012. <[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/sources\\_document2.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/sources_document2.html)>.

"Proposed March on Washington (1941)." *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*. PBS. Web. 02 May 2012. <[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_events\\_march.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_march.html)>.

"Putting Our House in Order: Dr. King's Call for Economic and Social Rights in the United States." *NESRI Media Center*. National Economic and Social Rights Initiative. Web. 02 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.nesri.org/news/2012/01/putting-our-house-in-order-dr-king%E2%80%99s-call-for-economic-and-social-rights-in-the-united-states>>.

"Retracing the Rides." *Freedom Riders*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/rides>>.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe I. Bourgois. *Violence in War and Peace*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004. Print.

"Scott v. Sandford." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0060\\_0393\\_ZO.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0060_0393_ZO.html)>.

"Supreme Court Decision of 1883." The University of North Carolina. Web.  
<<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/turnerbd/turner.html>>.

"U.S. Constitution." Cornell University. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/>>.

"A Walk Through Newark." *WNET*. PBS. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<<http://www.thirteen.org/newark/history3.html>>.

"Watts Riots." *Civil Rights Digital Library*. University System of Georgia. Web. 02 Mar. 2012.  
<[http://crdl.usg.edu/events/watts\\_riots/?Welcome](http://crdl.usg.edu/events/watts_riots/?Welcome)>.

Woodward, Comer Vann., and Wendell Holmes. Stephenson. *Origins of the New South: 1877-1913*. [Baton Rouge, La.]: Louisiana State Univ. [u.a., 1967. Print.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States: 1492-present*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003. Print.