

6 Rethinking African-American Political Thought in the Post-Revolutionary Era

Clayborne Carson

I

On 25 March 1957, C. L. R. James, the idiosyncratic West Indian socialist activist and writer, wrote to friends about his recent meeting in London with Martin Luther King Jr. By the time of this meeting, King was already widely known. *Time* magazine had just featured him on its cover, and the articulate, young (he was 28) Baptist preacher had already become an internationally known protest leader. The Montgomery bus boycott received almost unanimous support from Montgomery's black residents, who refused to ride buses for more than a year before the United States Supreme Court in December 1956 declared Montgomery's segregation policy unconstitutional. James, whose own writings had often stressed the radical implications of mass movements, could scarcely contain his enthusiasm and proclaimed the Montgomery mass movement to be of major historical importance. 'It was one of the most astonishing events of endurance by a whole population that I have ever heard of', he gushed in his letter.

James went on to compare King's non-violent campaign to the independence struggle in Ghana led by Kwame Nkrumah. Both movements, he argued, demonstrated the 'unsuspected power of the mass movement', a power that, according to James, radical political leaders often failed to recognize. James described both Nkrumah and King as leaders who themselves only gradually came to recognize the untapped potential of mass action. He added that Nkrumah's programme of 'Positive Action' and King's Gandhian non-violence were both spontaneous responses to masses already in motion rather than carefully developed ideologies capable of stimulating mass struggle. He concluded that the examples of Ghana and Montgomery demonstrated that Leon Trotsky and other marxist theories had been wrong in their belief that 'the proletariat needs a long experience and its cadres a long period in which they can get to understand one another and to appreciate the intricacies of politics.' Instead, James argued, the mass movements in Ghana and Montgomery serve as 'a warning to all revolutionaries not to under estimate the readiness of modern people *everywhere* to overthrow the old regime.'

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particular, he insisted that Marxists needed to recognize that the use of Gandhian tactics by Nkrumah and King represented 'a technique of revolutionary struggle characteristic of our age.' James wrote that those who considered themselves to be revolutionaries would 'be making a fundamental mistake' to ignore 'the tremendous boldness, the strategic grasp and the tactical inventiveness, all these fundamentally revolutionary' that was displayed in the movements in Ghana and Montgomery.¹

James's comments provide a useful starting point for a reassessment of Martin Luther King and African-American political militancy of the 1950s and 1960s. They remind us that the Montgomery movement was an abrupt departure in terms of mass activism from the quiescent political climate of Cold War America. Indeed, the boycott movement marked the beginning of a decade of African-American struggles throughout the southern states that were unprecedented and are still unreplicated in scale and duration.

Historical interpretations of African-American politics during the period from 1955 to 1965 have tended to emphasize the extent to which black activism of the period developed within the ideological boundaries of post-war liberalism. King, in particular, is seen as unwilling during this period to venture beyond the ideological framework of his liberal supporters. The civil rights activists of the early 1960s are depicted as far less militant than the black nationalists of the latter half of the decade. The standard narrative of the evolution of African-American politics during the 1960s portrays the black struggle as moving towards greater and greater degrees of radicalization and King as being increasingly challenged by black radicals and revolutionaries. African-American political thought, according to this widely accepted narrative, moves from the reformist, integrationist orientation of King to the revolutionary black nationalism of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and the Black Panther Party. Non-violent civil rights protests gave way, it is said, to mass movements toward black liberation. Indeed, just ten years after James wrote his letter, King found himself on the defensive, under attack from black power firebrands who saw him not as a fellow radical or revolutionary but as a devotee of out-of-date policies of non-violence and integrationism.

Yet, given the rapid decline of mass insurgencies in black communities after 1968 and the continuing decline of the living conditions of African-Americans in central cities, it is time to rethink this standard interpretation. James was prescient in recognizing the radical implications of the mass black movements of the 1950s and early 1960s. The standard interpretation errs in viewing the black power movement as a revolutionary departure. To be sure, the non-violent civil rights campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s *were* seeking to bring about reform, and there *were* some black nationalist revolutionaries on the scene during the late 1960s, but the early civil rights campaigns also contained the seeds of the most significant mass movements of subsequent decades. In

readily suppressed or transformed into forms that did not threaten to dominate political and economic elites.

II

Although the ideas that emerged from the African-American activism of the 1950s and early 1960s are often seen as precursors to the black power and New Left radicalism of the late 1960s, they can best be understood as the outgrowth of efforts by King, by youthful organizers of the SNCC, and other civil rights activists to create radical alternatives to both traditional black nationalism and Marxism. Once Rosa Parks's defiance of southern segregation thrust King into a leadership role, he and other activists began formulating a strategy of social change that departed from mainstream liberalism and from the two main ideological traditions of militant African-American struggle – that is, black nationalism and Marxism.

King's alternative radicalism was constructed, first of all, on the foundation of social gospel Christianity, especially the African-American variant of this tradition to which his father and grandfather had contributed. Reviving this tradition of prophetic dissent, King publicly criticized Cold War liberalism and capitalist materialism while also rejecting communism. Acknowledging in *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* that the works of Karl Marx had reinforced his long-held concern 'about the gulf between superfluous wealth and abject poverty', King charged that capitalist materialism was 'always in danger of inspiring men to be more concerned about making a living than making a life.'² His version of social gospel Christianity also incorporated socialist ideas as well as anti-colonial sentiments spurred by the African independence movements.

In short, King made an important contribution to what later became known as liberation theology, which has enabled activists around the world to redefine widely held spiritual beliefs that are often used as supports for the status quo. As the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci pointed out earlier in this century, rebels against the established social order who ignore the cultural dimension of insurgent struggles do so at their own peril. King understood that Christianity could serve either as a basis for African-American accommodation or for resistance. As a privileged insider within the largest African-American denomination, he fought an uphill struggle to transform the black church into an institutional foundation for racial struggles.

King also continued the efforts of Howard Thurman, James Farmer, Benjamin Mays, James Lawson and others to combine social gospel Christianity with Gandhian ideas of non-violent struggle. 'Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals **The Martin Luther King, Jr Papers Project** on a large scale', King

wrote in *Stride*. 'I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.'³ Under the guidance of more experienced Gandhians, such as Bayard Rustin, Glenn Smiley and Lawson, King came to recognize that Gandhian non-violence represented more than simply a tactical option for oppressed people. He became increasingly aware of the potential power of non-violent tactics when used by militant, disciplined practitioners in close association with mass movements. Moreover, he discerned the importance of the ethos of non-violence as a cohesive force within the black struggle and as a spiritual foundation for what Gandhians called the Beloved Community.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the activists associated with SNCC were more willing than King to explore the radical implications of social gospel Christianity and Gandhism. At the time of SNCC's founding, however, many young black activists were drawn more to Lawson than to King. Having tutored Nashville student activists in Gandhian principles, Lawson encouraged SNCC activists to transform the lunch-counter sit-ins into a 'non-violent revolution' to destroy 'segregation slavery, serfdom, paternalism', and 'industrialization which preserves cheap labour and racial discrimination.'⁴ Although some SNCC activists later abandoned Lawson's idealism in favour of instrumental rather than philosophical rationales for non-violence, those in the group continued to see themselves as involved in a freedom struggle rather than simply in an effort to achieve civil rights reforms. Several of the graduates of Lawson's Nashville workshop – especially Diane Nash, James Bevel and John Lewis – were more tactically audacious than was King, who often backed away from confrontations that lacked federal legal sanction or were likely to result in violence.

Moreover, SNCC workers quickly moved from conventional liberalism toward their own distinctive radicalism, which was more secular and innovative than King's Christian Gandhianism. SNCC field secretaries, especially those working with Bob Moses in Mississippi, resisted ideological conformity and derived their evolving worldview from their experiences as community organizers in the deep South. SNCC developed a distinctive style of community organizing that self-consciously avoided the creation of new dependent relationships to replace the traditional racial dependencies of southern blacks. SNCC organizers were inspired by the example of Ella Baker, a woman who abhorred the elitism she had encountered as a field secretary of the NAACP and as the executive director of King's hierarchically organized SCLC. Rejecting King's charismatic leadership style, Baker encouraged the development of 'group-centered leaders' rather than leader-centred groups.⁵ SNCC's notion of organizing emphasized the development of grassroots leaders. SNCC organizers often stated, and some of them actually believed, that their job was to work themselves out of a job and that organizers should never seek leadership.

SNCC's radicalism was greatly influenced by the example of activists of earlier generations. Although SNCC workers generally avoided Marxian sectarianism, they borrowed tactics and rhetoric from the dedicated Communist Party organizers who had played significant roles in southern black movements of the pre-1960 era. SNCC also borrowed from Miles Horton and Septima Clark at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee and from the Students for a Democratic Society, although SDS was more influenced by SNCC than vice versa. Finally, during the period after 1963, SNCC borrowed ideas from Malcolm X and the black nationalist tradition, most notably concepts of consciousness-raising and institution-building.

During the first half of the 1960s, King and the college-student organizers in SNCC were, in their different ways, responsible for mobilizations of large masses of black people willing to confront white authority on a scale unequalled during the last half of the decade. These militant mobilizations compelled a reluctant federal government to enact civil rights legislation, and they established a foundation for a fundamental restructuring of African-American participation in the electoral politics of the United States.

Nevertheless, by the mid 1960s, many SNCC activists, recognizing the need to move beyond civil rights reform to address issues of poverty and political powerlessness, adopted the black power slogan. Initially, the slogan represented an extension of SNCC's organizing efforts in the deep South, but after it became popularized by Stokely Carmichael the slogan came to symbolize a sharp break with SNCC's past. Rather than continuing to develop the radicalism of the early 1960s, many black power advocates abandoned the radical perspectives that grew out of the civil rights movement in favour of racial separatist ideologies. Veterans of SNCC's earlier organizing efforts, such as Carmichael, were embittered by their experiences and abandoned interracialism and non-violence as guiding principles. As the black power proponents pursued the mirage of a successful black nationalist revolution, they also abandoned many of the valuable insights that SNCC had acquired during its years of growth.

III

The key individual in this transformation of African-American political thought was Malcolm X. Malcolm's ideological contribution to the black power era would consist largely of his bitter critique of the non-violent civil rights movement; yet ironically, at the time of his assassination in February 1965, he was seeking to forge ties with King and SNCC organizers. While a member of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, Malcolm had supported his group's policy of non-violence, which he had learned from King in any

protest activity. Even as he fiercely attacked King's strategy of non-violent resistance, however, Malcolm increasingly recognized that the Nation offered no real alternative to black people facing vicious white racists in the South. Unlike many of his posthumous followers, Malcolm realized that the militant-racial rhetoric of his years in the Nation of Islam obscured the group's accommodationism. Indeed, he knew that the Nation of Islam was not above making deals with white people when it served the leaders' interests. Malcolm later admitted that in 1961, even while he criticized civil rights activists for working with white liberals, his own organization sent him to Atlanta to negotiate a mutual non-interference agreement with the Ku Klux Klan.⁶ Like early black nationalists, such as Martin Delany in the 1870s and Marcus Garvey in the 1920s, Elijah Muhammad's insistence that all whites were devils made it possible for him to reach accommodations dealing with the worst of them.

After his break with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm publicly acknowledged the radical potential of what he called the grassroots forces of the civil rights movement. Rather than attempting to supplant the radical ideas that were emerging from the grassroots, Malcolm saw the need for a convergence of those ideas and his own version of revolutionary nationalism. Malcolm's ideological transformation during the last year of his life can be traced in the remarkable range of his activities during that year. In March 1964, after leaving the Nation of Islam and establishing his own Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), he immediately began reaching out to civil rights leaders he had once harshly criticized. At the press conference announcing his break with Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm announced that he was 'not out to fight other Negro leaders or organizations.' He insisted, 'we must find a common approach, a common solution, to a common problem.' Unlike many of his followers who called for unity while viciously attacking their black political opponents, Malcolm was eager to salve old wounds: 'I've forgotten everything bad that the other leaders have said about me, and I pray they can also forget the many bad things I've said about them.'

Soon afterwards, in his 'Ballot or the Bullet' speech delivered in April 1964, Malcolm sought to erase the ideological boundaries that had previously separated him from the civil rights organizations: 'The political philosophy of black nationalism is being taught in the Christian church... in the NAACP... in CORE meetings... in SNCC... It's being taught everywhere.'⁷ Malcolm broadened his own political perspective as a result of his tour of several African nations, including Nigeria and Ghana, following the *Hajj* to Mecca. After forming the OAAU, he sent telegrams to civil rights leaders offering to send his followers to participate in southern civil rights campaigns and 'give the Ku Klux Klan a taste of their own medicine.' During a second trip to Africa during 1964, Malcolm met with the leaders of Egypt, Tanzania, and Uganda, and attended a

Cairo meeting of the OAU; and, during a day-long meeting in Nairobi with leaders of the SNCC, promised to work closely with the youthful activists.⁸

Returning to the United States, Malcolm established increasingly close links with the southern black struggle. In December 1964 he invited Fannie Lou Hamer and the SNCC Freedom Singers to be guests of honour at an OAAU meeting in Harlem. He also hosted a delegation of 37 teenage activists from the McComb, Mississippi movement. On 1 February 1965, he sent a telegram to the head of the American Nazi Party, warning, 'I am no longer held in check from fighting white supremacists by Elijah Muhammad's separatist Black Muslim movement, and if your present racist agitation of our people there in Alabama causes physical harm to Reverend King or any other Black Americans . . . you and your KKK friends will be met with maximum physical retaliation. . . .' Malcolm also sought to make amends for his previous harsh personal criticisms of Martin Luther King Jr. A few weeks before his assassination, while in Selma, Alabama, to lend support to the ongoing voting rights struggle, he met Coretta Scott King and made clear that he did not want to make her husband's job more difficult, explaining that, if whites knew that Malcolm was the alternative, 'it might be easier for them to accept Martin's proposals.'⁹

Despite Malcolm's effort to achieve an alliance of black nationalism and the civil rights movement, black power militancy after Malcolm's death was often characterized by hostility toward any black leader who advocated non-violent tactics and racial integration. Malcolm's call for liberation 'by any means necessary' became a rationale for the abandonment of militant Gandhian tactics, despite the fact that Malcolm himself came to realize the necessity of non-violent tactics as part of any sustained mass struggle. Serious ideological conflicts within the African-American political community undermined the unity Malcolm was attempting to achieve. This disunity culminated in violent clashes between militant blacks, such as the one that took place in January 1969, at UCLA, when members of Maulana Karenga's US group shot and killed two Black Panthers in the campus dining-hall. By the end of the 1960s, the rhetorical violence of many self-proclaimed black revolutionaries had been transformed into self-destructive violence that ravaged the fabric of black communities. Initially the Panthers advised blacks to 'pick up the gun', but the drug dealers of the 1970s were far better armed and more ruthless than were the black revolutionaries of the 1960s.

The decline of black militant politics during the 1970s marked the end of an era of illusory revolutionary rhetoric that obscured the simultaneous upsurge of the conservative power in American politics and of multinational capitalism as a world economic system. Although black power advocates presented themselves as revolutionaries, only the Black Panther Party was taken seriously—and then only for a brief period. The Party was threatened by the national government of the United States. Despite their bravado, or perhaps

because of it, the Panthers and other self-styled black revolutionaries were brutally suppressed through covert and often illegal FBI 'counterintelligence' programmes and deadly raids by local police forces.

Ultimately, the black power movement of the last half of the 1960s promised more than the civil rights movement but delivered less. Black Power militants talked of power yet exercised only transitory power within black communities and none outside those communities. They proclaimed that they acted on behalf of African Americans whose needs had been ignored by the civil rights leaders, but black power militancy did not prevent a rapid deterioration in the economic status of the black masses during more than two decades since the late 1960s. Black power militants talked of revolution but the veterans of the black power movement have generally found ways of accommodating to the existing white-dominated social order. After Malcolm's assassination in 1965, the black power movement adopted many of his ideas, but the lasting contributions of the black power period were more significant in the intellectual and cultural rather than the political arena. Black power militancy survives not as insurgencies but as unthreatening expressions of Afrocentrism.

While failing to produce greater power for black people, black power militancy actually led to a decline in the ability of African-Americans to affect the course of American politics. The emergence of Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown as nationally known black advocates of black power prompted more effective repression once J. Edgar Hoover's FBI recognized that the black struggle could be crippled through the elimination of a few leaders. Moreover, the rhetorical violence and racism of some black militants spurred the increasing popularity among whites of 'law and order' politics. Brown, in fact, helped to create the conditions that made it possible for Spiro Agnew to transform himself from a minor Maryland politician to Vice-President within little more than a year. In the larger context of American politics, the black power controversy encouraged a conservative political trend which has led to a Republican ascendancy in national electoral politics.

IV

The Black revolution, in short, did not happen. It is no closer to reality in the contemporary United States than is the working-class revolution Marx predicted would occur in the advanced capitalist societies. The failure of black power militants and black nationalists to bring about a revolution coincided with the general decline of the revolutionary enthusiasm that seemed so strong just twenty-five years ago. Moreover, the Cold War is now over. The West will not be the arena of a new struggle between the forces of capi-

talism are trumpeting their victory and some enthusiasts even proclaim not only that communism has been overcome, not only that resistance to capitalism has become unproductive, but that such resistance has become unthinkable, that history as we have known it during the past two centuries has ended, for the future will bring no revolutionary transformations, that we now live in the best of all possible worlds. In 1968, militant activists throughout the world saw themselves as part of a series of revolutionary movements that would overthrow Western capitalism and bring about a new world order. They could not have expected that the new world order would merely be a consolidation of the old.

Given the eclipse of communism and the general decline of movements of resistance to world capitalism, the leaders of the major capitalist states now look upon a world in which they face neither significant internal nor external threats. Such a circumstance could not have been predicted just twenty-five years ago. In 1968, the Soviet Union represented only the most serious of many challenges to the world-wide dominance of Western capitalism. After the Tet offensive of February of that year, the anti-colonial struggle in Vietnam would conclude in a decisive victory over the military forces of the United States. Africa was experiencing its final wave of anti-colonial struggles and throughout the Third World there were insurgent movements against colonization and neo-colonialism. Moreover, many of the leading capitalist states faced significant internal challenges – from class-conscious movements usually under the banner of a dynamic New Left and from various separatist movements of racial and ethnic minorities.

Although few observers might have imagined it then, 1968 marked the culmination of an era of revolutionary enthusiasm that extended back to the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. For two centuries, militant political dissent had involved the mobilization of oppressed groups into mass movements consisting of particular classes, races and ethnicities. Revolutionaries believed that mass movements could become sufficiently powerful to capture control of a modern state, which then could be taken over by, administered by, and used for the benefit of non-elite groups – workers, the masses or, more simply, 'the people'. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Marxian vision of a working-class revolutionary movement exerted considerable influence among insurgent organizers and intellectuals but racial and ethnic nationalism had even greater popular appeal among the discontented masses. Working-class revolutions did not succeed in the advanced capitalist states that Marx had seen as most vulnerable but, when Marxian and nationalist ideas converged during the twentieth century in less developed nations and in European colonies, their popular appeal was often inexorable.

For two centuries, therefore, this apocalyptic revolutionary vision had captured the imaginations of political activists seeking to overthrow oppressive

and unjust political systems. African-American or black nationalist and Pan-African versions of the revolutionary vision were similarly based on the assumption that African slaves and the descendants of those slaves constituted a potentially revolutionary force, that black people in white-dominated societies could unite in a decisive struggle against white racial domination, that racial identity was a more powerful political force than national identity as citizens of the United States.

Revolutionary mass movements of the working class or of racial minorities can now be seen as part of a revolutionary era that has concluded, never to be repeated. Yet, although we have entered a new political era, there are still reasons to hope that insights that emerged from the African-American struggle still remain relevant.

While other social movements – most notably the modern women's liberation movement – have built upon the radical ideas of the black struggles of the 1955–65 period, contemporary African-American political militancy has remained separated from the radicalism of the early 1960s. Instead, contemporary black activists seeking to challenge the status quo generally trace their ideological roots to the black consciousness movement of the late 1960s. To be sure, that movement left behind valuable insights. Malcolm and many others who identified themselves as black nationalists responded to the need for African-Americans to take pride in their history, to develop and control their community institutions and to define their own destiny. One of the limitations of the modern civil rights movement was its failure to address the need to strengthen the community institutions that were essential to its long-term success. Even so, such efforts to build strong economic, religious and social institutions should never have been the exclusive prerogative of black nationalists who combined this message with the fantasy of black separatism. The black nationalist tradition offered a rhetorical means of expressing the anger and frustration of many African-Americans but it provided no viable political strategy.

If Marxian thought no longer inspires the faith it once did and the national liberation movements of this century have exhausted themselves, what alternatives exist for the oppressed and discontented people of the world? I have suggested that African-American political movements of the modern era have provided some alternatives, but these movements have been diverse, sometimes offering radical options but also reverting to reformist civil rights efforts and atavistic cultural nationalism.

The radical options that remain dynamic or at least viable at the end of the twentieth century are not solely the product of African-American movements but are instead a combination of aspects of many different movements that have challenged European cultural domination and modern industrial capitalism from diverse perspectives. Radical and reformist civil rights movements have retained the ability to inspire young people during an era when

the revolutionary faith of the past two centuries has disintegrated. No insurgent movement now seems likely to overthrow a modern capitalist state but some significant elements of popular dissent and rebellion continue to thrive in the midst of the capitalist victory celebrations.

The post-revolutionary radicalism that is the legacy of the black struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s therefore draws its inspiration not from any single movement but eclectically from the creative forces within various insurgent movements. Indeed, what distinguishes what could be called the radicalism of the post-revolutionary era is that it is provisional rather than systematic, universal rather than parochial.

The more enduring legacies of the radicalism of the 1960s have been those aspects that have converged with several new currents of social change activism. These include several movements that are rarely seen as radical but which in fact mobilized and altered the consciousness of large numbers of people and produced some important insights that will doubtless inform future radical movements. One of these new social movements is the human potential movement which is in truth more of a category of movements than a coherent social movement. Human potential or, as they are sometimes called, New Age movements have drawn their insights from Freud, Asian religions, religious mysticism and meditation, drug experimentation and many other sources. Although these movements are largely individualistic and usually apolitical, they have influenced many social activists who have seen them as partial answers to the failures of the movements of the 1960s.

A second major source of radical insights has been the ecology movement which is also rarely seen as truly radical in the sense of challenging existing social structures and established political power. Nevertheless, ecological understanding has informed and will continue to inform radical activism of the future: first, because it offers a critique of modern industrial capitalism that, potentially at least, can have broad popular appeal; secondly, because it provides a set of common concerns that can bring together social change efforts that cross racial, class and national lines; and thirdly, because ecological consciousness has led to important internal criticism of the limitations of ideological awareness derived from the interests of particular classes, races, or nationalities.

A final source of radical insights for the future has been the women's liberation movement of the period since the late 1960s. Again, not all elements in the modern women's liberation movement have been radical, but the feminist critique of patriarchy has profoundly informed African-American political thought as it has informed all significant movements for social change of the past twenty years. Indeed, I would argue that feminist insights are at the heart of whatever African-American radicalism has endured since the decline of black militancy after the 1960s.

African-American feminism has incorporated the general insights of the

truly radical ideas that emerged from the mass movements of the early 1960s. These include an acceptance of the notion expressed in C. L. R. James's 1957 letter that Gandhian non-violence offered a revolutionary challenge to the existing order because it provided a means for mass involvement in social change movements. Black feminist activists have also incorporated into their political understanding SNCC's approach to community organizing. The notion of organizing as the development or nurturing of the abilities of others converged with the radical feminist notion that distinctive gender-based values should be at the heart of efforts to transform society. Radical feminist political thought has also, for the most part, avoided the romanticization of revolutionary violence that stifled the development of African-American militancy during the late 1960s, offering instead the notion that political organizing involves the encouragement of enduring grassroots leadership.

What Ella Barker has called group-centred leadership avoids the egocentrism that has often distorted leader-centred, male-dominated Marxian and black nationalist politics. Such political activism is the most enduring form of political activity because it provides the best means for transmitting radical values from one generation to the next.

In conclusion, rethinking African-American political thought involves a recognition that the late 1960s did not mark the culmination of radicalism but was, rather, a brief detour that has prevented us from recognizing the true inheritors of the legacy of the black freedom struggle. Future African-American politics will no longer be strictly defined by racial identity. It will instead be defined by its ability to incorporate radical insights drawn from movements that have thrived even as black militancy has declined. Future African-American radicalism will be feminist and informed by ecological consciousness and modern insights about individual psychology; it will also draw upon older traditions of social gospel Christian and Gandhian non-violence. It will therefore be eclectic in its radicalism or it will not be radical at all.

NOTES

1. C. L. R. James to 'Friends', 25 March 1957, Martin and Jessie Glaberman Collection, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.
2. Martin Luther King, Jr, *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York, 1958), p.94.
3. King, *Stride Toward Freedom*, p. 97.
4. James Lawson, 'Eve of Nonviolent Revolution?', *Southern Patriot*, November 1961, p. 1.
5. Ella Baker, *The Martin Luther King, Jr Papers Project*, vol. 4; author's interview with Baker, 5 May 1972.

6. See, Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File* (New York, 1991), pp. 29, 203-4.
7. George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (New York, 1965), p. 38.
8. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), p. 135.
9. Coretta Scott King, *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr* (New York, 1969; revised edn, 1993), p. 238.