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**African American Intellectuals And  
Black Cultural Nationalism Between  
1965 And 1975: THE CASE OF AMIRI BARAKA**

Thesis submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Master Degree in Civilization and Literature

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## **DEDICATIONS**

I dedicate this modest work to :

My beloved grand mother for her great love and affection.

My beloved parents for their support and love.

My dearest uncle for her kindness with me.

My dearest brothers and sisters.

All my friends.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I start firstly with a great thank to my parents, brothers and sister for their sympathy and motivation.

With special thanks to my teachers of Moulay Taher University Who granted me a chance to carry on my studies in this fruitful branch of Literature and Anglo-Saxon Studies, especially my Supervisor Dr.SELLAM.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis examines the impact of African American intellectuals on black cultural nationalism with particular inclination to Imamu Amiri Baraka as a political activist in the 1960s and 1970s. This research examines the transformation Le Roi Jones from a provocative literary artist to Imamu Baraka ,a controversial intellectual activist the thesis considers Baraka's prospect of America's racial struggle in that era of unrest . Too little critical attention is focused on the controversy concerning Baraka's adeptness in his dual role as artist and politician. He still remains one of the least understood currents in American history. While a number of studies focused on his literary competence, until now few have considered his comprehensive connection with electoral politics, protests, and community development projects. Conditioned by the political dynamics of black cultural nationalism, Baraka's mutation caused the rise and demise of his leadership. The several happenings would participate in the formation of Baraka's intellectual activism at both local and national levels. Priority and consideration are given to his intellectual activism which was influenced by African political leaders whose countries, newly independent, were still struggling against the negative heritage of European colonialism. His radicalization followed a course similar to other black radicals whose political maturation was framed by domestic conformity, black urbanization, the civil rights movement, and third world decolonization. Therefore, the work's contribution to American historiography rests on efforts to broaden discussion on the complex relationship between Baraka and black cultural nationalism beyond its presently narrow understanding and interpretation and suggests an approach which will open a new path of inquiry in the concerned field.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<b>ABB</b>	African Blood Brotherhood
<b>ACS</b>	American colonisation society
<b>ALSC</b>	African Liberation Support Commitee
<b>ANLC</b>	American Negro Labor Congress
<b>BSCP</b>	Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
<b>BWUF</b>	Black Women's United Front
<b>CAP</b>	Congress of African People
<b>LSNR</b>	League of Struggle for Negro Rights
<b>MSTM</b>	Moorish Science Temple Movement
<b>NAACP</b>	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
<b>NBA</b>	National Black Assembly
<b>NBCM</b>	National Black Convention Movement
<b>NNC</b>	National Negro Congress
<b>SNNC</b>	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
<b>SOBU</b>	Student Organization for Black Unity
<b>TANU</b>	Tanzanian African Nationalist Union
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNIA</b>	Universal Negro Improvement Association

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# General introduction

## **General Introduction**

Among American domestic issues that shape controversy in American history is cultural nationalism. The present thesis examines the influence of African American intellectuals on African American cultural nationalism with particular interest in Imamu Amiri Baraka, formerly known Le Roi Jones, as a political activist. There are several constituents of black cultural nationalism but from one standpoint, Baraka is a vivid sample. From another, he is the perfect example of black activism in America in that period.

The aim of the present work is to call attention to the complexities and nuances of Amiri Baraka's involvement in black cultural nationalism between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. The complex relation between Baraka and black cultural nationalism is the marker value of his period's accomplishments and deficiencies, its cleavages and its effects on the form and content of Baraka's nationalist vision.

To understand Baraka's role as a radical intellectual, it is necessary to scrutinize the ambiguities and ambivalences of a period that continues to capture the political and cultural imagination of many American and non-American scholars.

The choice in this research is therefore made on a defying and controversial personality of Amiri Baraka because his intellectual activism made several contributions to a greater understanding of the ways black cultural nationalism had contested prevalent concepts of artistic manifestation, racial identity, and black authorization. Baraka's distinct intellectualism provides tangible and persuasive examples of the larger themes concerning the dynamics of cultural nationalism.

The problematics of black cultural nationalism and its dynamics are central to this thesis and help clear up common suppositions about black intellectualism and the role of audiences in sustaining these arguments.

Historical reconstruction and analysis are absolutely an essential methodology to follow if we are to understand this complex figure and its effective role in the dynamics of black cultural nationalism. The used methodology then initiates a sustained critical examination of the political rise and fall of Baraka as a political figure. Moreover, historical reconstruction is deemed necessary to uncover the issues concerning Baraka.

These issues mattered and tracked those concerns which were transformed in the face of the historical, social, and ideological shifts that shaped Baraka's intellectual activist life.

However, the major concern of the thesis is not only to analyze the thought of one black man and where to situate him. Despite formidable handicaps, the rise of a number of African American intellectuals led to the dynamics of cultural nationalism which were basically part of a traditional feeling that had been shaped by continually painful circumstances. The relationship between black intellectuals and their various reactions towards the events that affected their whole community was a serious indicator of the political dynamics of black cultural nationalism. This element leads to a profound exploration of the origins of the role of these intellectuals in the concerned field. Such intellectuals are too numerous to cite. The list may be limited to figures like Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, Langston Hughes, Malcolm X, Martin L. King, Jr., Paul Robeson, Angela Davis, Richard Wright, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Maulana Karenga, and Amiri Baraka.

The thesis is composed of three chapters. The task addressed in chapter one, is to expose and explain the historical events show the development of black nationalism and its impact on African Americans whether intellectuals or grassroots. The emphasis on exposing Black Nationalism and its dynamic in detail is fundamental to the understanding of the African American intellectual position toward the crises which affected the black mind all along that period.

The second chapter is about the aftermath period of Booker T Washington, and treats the ideas of WEB Du Bois through showing his literary responses to what happened in the 1920's. In the last chapter I was interested in raising the idea of going back to Africa. And after all that I conclude with whether the integration idea was one of the intentions of the leading black intellectuals of the time.

This work follows the historical descriptive analytical approach. This dissertation is based on several books that treat the same subject, or parts of my work. Some of these works, the book written by David Levering Lewis named W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963*. Another work written as a biography of Booker T. Washington named: *Booker T. Washington Wizard of the Tuskegee* by Louis R. Harlan, and other many primary sources, and secondary sources with a careful use of web sites.

# Chapter One

## Black Nationalism

## **1.1/Introduction**

In a more simplistic consideration, Black Nationalism mirrored a political and social movement which was striking in the 1960s and early 1970s among African Americans.

The movement's supporter was Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of the 1920s. Its objective was to acquire economic power and to instill among blacks, "at home and abroad", a sense of community and group feeling. Many champions of Black Nationalism envisioned at that time the eventual creation of a separate black nation by African Americans. As an alternative to being integrated within the American nation, which was and still is predominantly white, they sought to maintain and promote their separate identity as a people of black descent. With such slogans as "Black Power" and Black is Beautiful," they also attempted to inculcate a sense of pride among blacks.

Black Nationalism remains therefore a complex set of beliefs stressing the need for cultural, political, and economic autonomy of African Americans.

## **1.2/The Roots of Black Nationalism**

Although some post-civil war black leaders believed that the American dream could and would incorporate the African Americans, especially the poor, were suspicious. Expecting that African Americans could never be permitted to become equals either economically or politically in the partial political and social environment of the United States, they embraced racial nationalism rather than integration. These “race first” defenders became known as black nationalists.

Black Nationalism philosophically is a distinct body of concepts. Its ideas have flowed throughout the African American experience. Overall, it rests on the belief that African Americans possess a collective history and identity developed during slavery<sup>1</sup>.

In this work, the emergency, keeping an eye on Marable, Scholarly dark dissident and student of history, characterizes Black Nationalism as a political and social custom that incorporates certain particular qualities: To begin with, the backing of Black social pride and the uprightness of the gathering verifiably or expressly dismiss racial reconciliation. Second, the promotion of broad contacts between Africans abroad and at home is vital in the recognizable proof with the picture of Africa. Black Patriots demand connection between African Americans, individuals of African drop in the Caribbean, and Africans on the landmass of Africa itself. Third, Black Nationalism is translated as the production of all black social administrations, for example, instructive foundations, self improvement offices, and religious association.

In addition, support for group economic advancement is essential. It is concretized through black cooperatives, buy black campaigns for the sake of promoting capital formation within the African American community .

In sum, Marable interprets Black Nationalism as political independence from the white-dominant political system and support for the development of black protest political organizations and formations. In Amiri Baraka , Lloyd Brown views black nationalism as a system of beliefs and practices epitomizing African Americans as “a distinct people with a distinct historical personality” who sought to “build political frameworks that would enable them to define , defend , and develop their interests as a people”(Helan and Oliveira 72)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Most manifestations of black nationalism advocated the building and maintenance of autonomous institutions as in the black town movement of the late 1800s. See Clarence Lang in *Against the Current*. Vol. XVI, N°II # 92: May-June 2001.

In its broadest definition, the term describes anything from the most basic expressions of black group consciousness to the most elaborate appeals for black emigration, Pan- African alliances and Black Power.

Expressions of nationalist ideas in the United States originated in the eighteenth century. Since that time, this movement has matured in types that are at once various, complicated, and often at odds with each other. Black Nationalism is based on social movements, political theories, and cultural practices that remain greatly influential in the contemporary period (Runcie 192)<sup>1</sup>.

This chapter studied. Some of these developments, with particular attention to the ideological frameworks and historical perspectives underlying different leaders and organizations that have shaped Black Nationalism throughout its African American history. Much of black history has encompassed the struggle for overcoming negative social forces manifested in both a pre-and post-slave society. Throughout most of this history, laws, social mores and folkways compelled African Americans to look for various ways which would allow them to realize their potential by seeking opportunities for intellectual, economic, political self determination and independence (Karenga 28)<sup>2</sup>.

Black scholars generally focus on two tendencies of African Americans to realize their full potential in society. The first tendency concerns the longing for integration by emphasizing complete participation as American citizens. The second tendency appeals to a kind of nationalism where blacks physically, culturally and psychologically feel autonomous from white society, articulating common action of African Americans that is based on shared heritage and collective concerns (Ladun 44)<sup>3</sup>.

It is then necessary to analyze Black Nationalism and discuss essential African American advocates of this ideology as an expression to attempt to obliterate societal racism.

Although black nationalism does not have a common definition or understanding among scholars and historians, there is a shared ground that it is one of the most complex movements in the United States. It is also one of the major foundations in the black political landscape. Scholars agree that the beginning of the black nationalist era is not of

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<sup>1</sup> Helan, E., and France D. Oliveira. "African-American Cultural Nationalism."

<sup>2</sup> - Runcie, John. "The Black Culture Movement and the Black Community." *Journal of American Studies* 10 (2) (1976): 185-214.

<sup>3</sup> - Karenga, Maulana Ron. "Black Cultural Nationalism." *Negro Digest* 13 (3) (1968): 5-33.

<sup>3</sup> - Ladun, Anise. "Cultural Revolution and National Liberation." *The Black Scholar* 6(7) (1975): 43-49.

<sup>2</sup> - Dawson, Michael C. *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies*. New York: NY University Press, 2001.

recent happening. This kind of nationalism mirrors an “authentic sentiment of the overwhelming majority of black people in the United States”(Dawson 125)<sup>1</sup>.

In many respects , black nationalism dominated contemporary black thought and developed various aspects of African American culture , religion , politics ,and economics.

The inception of Black Nationalism in the nineteenth century is perceived in the colonization movement which advocated black emigration from the United States to Africa and Latin America ,However , a black’s desire for emigration was to gain political freedom which seemed unrealizable by black as a minority group. Martin Delany, the father of black nationalism and reprehensive of the separatist philosophy, summed up the major theme in the black nationalist creed when he wrote every people should be the originators of their own designs, the projector of their own schemes , and creators of the events that lead to their destiny, the consummation of their designs. Black advocates of nationalist ideology firmly stood against those who were in favor of an integrationist approach (McCartney16)<sup>2</sup>.

They believed that black people were an important segment of the United States and had a stake in securing their freedom and staying in the United States (Bracey,et al 172)<sup>3</sup>. Black historians paid attention to the contradictory position of pro-slavery Southerners who had been “in favor of “black migration. As a result , black and white abolitionists were not convinced of the Southern endorsement of emigration as an accomplishable alternative to ending slavery . Southerners held this position to erode the national influence of anti-slavery forces and get rid of free blacks in the South.

Although Black Nationalism included in the debate on emigration in the early nineteenth century was neither financially feasible nor widely accepted by black people, it provided an ideological perspective on black political thought which would come out again in the twentieth century with Marcus Garvey’s movement(Brown and shaw36)<sup>4</sup>.

Using a more conventional definition, nationalism is a state-mind among citizens which promotes a sense of loyalty to a particular nation –state(Snyder 246 )<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> - McCartney, J. Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African American Political Thought. Philadelphia, PA.: Temple University Press, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> - Bracey, John H., Jr., August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick. Black Nationalism in America. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970.

<sup>1</sup> - Brown, Robert, and Todd Shaw. “Separate Nations: Two Attitudinal Dimensions of Black Nationalism.” The Journal of Politics 16 (1) (2002): 22-44.

<sup>2</sup>- Snyder, Louis L. Encyclopedia of Nationalism. New York: Paragon House, 1990.

<sup>3</sup>- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities. London: Verso, 1983.



This loyalty combines the abstract nature of one's national identity with the reality of their geographical environment. For blacks, nationalism involves negotiating the conflicting considerations of African ancestry and American citizenship. In other words, could blacks embrace one identity without downplaying the other? On the one hand, blacks acknowledge the fact that they are Americans (Anderson 42)<sup>1</sup>.

On the other, they cannot deny their unique experiences as African – Americans. Their emphasis on what Gary Gristle, a professor of American history, calls 'racial 'over civic' identity lies at the heart of black nationalism. American nationalism represents a mix of a "civic traditions" that attempts to realize ideals of liberty, equality, citizen rights and democracy, and a hostile "racial" line that persistently tries to make second-class citizens out of African .Blacks have something of a dual identity , a "double consciousness" (Du Bois 157 )<sup>2</sup>.

Because they are caught between a self-conception as an American and as a person of African ancestry, and black nationalism allows them to embrace their status as members of a nation within a nation.

As an ideology, black nationalism falls into four general types : religious, cultural, economic, and revolutionary. Each type of thought proposes a specific agenda for addressing racial inequality (Essien-Udom 288)<sup>3</sup>.

These Various lines of Nationalism advance a variety of strategies. Generally, these strategies are employed so that blacks unite, gain power, and liberate themselves. Specifically, they include separating from white society by gaining political self-determination, becoming economically self - sufficient, promoting racial solidarity and self - reliance, winning control by blacks over their communities, and viewing racism as the most serious crisis in the United States.

In a more simplistic consideration, Black Nationalism mirrored a political and social movement which was striking in the 1960s and early 1970s among African Americans. the movement's supporter was Marcus Garvey's universal Negro Improvements Association of the 1920s.its objective was to acquire economic power and to instill among blacks , "at home and abroad", a sense of community and group feeling Many champions of black

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<sup>2</sup> - Du Bois, W. E. B. Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

<sup>5</sup> - Essien-Udom, E.U. Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

nationalism envisioned at that time the eventual creation of a separate black nation by African Americans (Kinfe32)<sup>1</sup>.

As an alternative to being integrated within the American nation, which was and still is predominantly white, they sought to maintain and promote their separate identity as a people of black descent. With such slogans as “black power” and “black is beautiful”, they also attempted to inculcate a sense of pride among blacks(Carmichael and Hamilton 15)<sup>2</sup>.

Black Nationalism remains therefore a complex set of beliefs stressing the need for cultural, political, and economic autonomy of African Americans.

Under the system of slavery, the pre-literate, pre-modern Africans, with their sacred world view, were culturally alienated into the secular American society into which they were thrust (L.Levine 53)<sup>3</sup>.

They were also completely refused access to the ideology which formed the heart of the consciousness of other Americans .They were compelled to fall back upon their cultural structures of reference that made any sense to them and gave them any feeling to fragile security .The shaping of a common culture under these circumstances of racial bondage was facilitated by the ethnic diversity of their West African ancestors.

These early African Americans shared an important concept toward their origins, existence, and aspirations. Their common means of cultural expression could well have constituted the basis for a sense of common identity and world view capable of resisting the vicissitudes of slavery (Rocker 64)<sup>4</sup>.

That strong African American foundation brought into existence a unique sense of nationality that expanded into the free black communities which moved up to the North. The contours of nationality development were proposed by a variety of expressions of identity and solidarity in black conventions (L.Levine 70)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Kinfe, Abraham. *Politics of Black Nationalism: From Harlem to Soweto*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> - Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles Hamilton. *Black Power, White Power, and the Negro Intellectual*. New York: Random House, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> - Levine, Lawrence W. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

<sup>1</sup>- Rocker, Rudolf. *Nationalism and Culture*. Black Rose Books, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> - Levine, Rhonda F. *Class Struggle and the New Deal: Industrial Labor, Industrial Capital, and the State*. University Press of Kansas, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> - Aptheker, Herbert, ed. *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. Vol. 1. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1951.

These feeling proved that African Americans viewed themselves as a persecuted nation, deviated from its historical way by the insurmountable obstacles of the Atlantic slave trade, slavery, and white racism.

Generations of African American leadership articulated their sense of nationality and group identity in the expressive politics of the nineteenth-century convention movements and in the twentieth-century freedom movements. The conventions started locally at least as early as 1817 in Richmond, Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Aptheker 69)<sup>1</sup>.

Called together by Bishop Richard Allen , Reverend Absalom Jones and entrepreneur James Forten , about 3,000 African Americans assembled in Philadelphia at Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church in January 1817 to discuss the suggestions of the American colonization society(ACS). Privately, James Forten favored black settlement in Africa. He felt that the African Americans would never become a nation until they “come out from amongst the white people”. It was the same national feeling expressed later by John Mercer Langston, a black abolitionist and Congressman, who declared that African Americans should have a nationality before they could become anybody (cheek and cheek365). Nevertheless, the great majority at that black convention strongly opposed and denounced the projects of the ACS to send free blacks for permanent settlement in Liberia.

Moderate Republicans argued that the black presence in the political arena was absolutely vital to make the Southern states loyal members of the Union. When the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment granted blacks the US citizenship, the “three-fifths of a man” clause on representation was made null and void. The south was ultimately supposed to receive an unprecedented number of new congressional seats through that nullification. Black voting in favor of Republicans in the South was necessary to secure national power of their party. Without black votes, the Republicans would have won the war only to lose both the White House and Congress.

### **1.3/Black Nationalism in the post-civil war Era**

The Reconstruction’s program objective of bringing the South back into the Union revolved on black participation at national level, mainly in elections. In this sense, the prospects for African Americans incorporation into the American nation were for the first time promising. Finally, the most fundamental reason that the absolute colonization plans

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<sup>4</sup> - Cheek, William, and Aimee Lee Cheek. John Mercer Langston and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1829-1865. University of Illinois Press, 1996.

were rejected is that black labor was the basis for the development of the Southern economy. Not only was slavery regarded as a system of racial domination, but as an economic channel of production as well. Black labor became essential to reconstructing the war – torn Southern economy.

Many black nationalists were now overwhelmed by the new situation and started losing their bearings on the unexplored terrain created by the Civil War and Reconstruction .As African Americans were swept into the political arena by the Fifteenth Amendment, black nationalists encountered unprecedented competition for the loyalties of black people at the end of the Civil War. The Republican Party, the party of Lincoln, established hegemony over the black vote during Reconstruction. In some countries in the South, blacks enjoyed considerable social and economic advantages from black political control. For example, in Beaufort, South Carolina, black rice labor struck for better wages and adequate living conditions. In the light of black political power in that state, Governor Chamberlain rejected the rice planters' demand and sent in troops to crush black labor renitence (Ferrell 163)<sup>1</sup>.

The black workers were encouraged by the support of such black elected officials as Congressman Robert Smalls. A Civil War hero , Smalls was a significant reference of black power, and symbol of the revolution that had put the bottom rail on top, at least in local politics(Foner94-95)<sup>2</sup>. When twentieth-century proponents of the civil rights movement labeled their efforts Second Reconstruction, they aspired for new leadership of the political caliber of U.S. representative Robert Smalls who, from slave to politician, served five terms in Congress as the representative from South Carolina. His record as Congressman was considerable.

He struggled for equal travel facilities for African Americans and for civil and legal protection of children of mixed parentage. He became a very influential black member in the South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1895 (Miller 102)<sup>3</sup>.

He would be simply considered as one of First Reconstruction great symbols for Second Reconstruction blacks.

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<sup>1</sup> - Ferrell, Claudine L. Reconstruction. Greenhound Press, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> - Foner, Eric. Nothing but Freedom. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1983.

<sup>23</sup> - Miller, Edward A. Gullah Statesman: Robert Smalls from Slavery to Congress, 1839-1915, Columbia, SC: USC Press, 1995.

<sup>1</sup> - Miller, Edward A. Gullah Statesman: Robert Smalls from Slavery to Congress, 1839-1915, Columbia, SC: USC Press, 1995.

However, with the waning of Reconstruction, the national Republican Party left its political supporters in the south at the mercy of the planters and Klansmen. The debacle of national support for Reconstruction dramatically halted the possibilities of African American civil rights for nearly a century. As a consequence, the status was so depressing that later in 1962 when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) paid a visit the grassroots intellectual activist and outspoken advocate for civil rights, Fannie Lou Hamer, on a Mississippi plantation; they noticed that she still believed she had no right for the franchise(Raines 249)<sup>1</sup>.

Earlier historiography suggested that the demise of Reconstruction was caused by the 1876 Hayes-Tilden Compromise, known as the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” in the Washington circles which put an end to the presidential election crisis of 1876. According to this line of argument, the Republicans betrayed African Americans principally by withdrawing federal troops from the South .opening the way for a racist bloodbath and the overthrow of Republican governments in that area.

Many other factors were included in the tragic end of reconstruction. Beside the sharp decline of popular support and the growth of conservative sentiment, there was an increasing desire for reconciliation on the part of Northerners. Several combined hindrances failed to prevent the Northern conciliatory behavior to conceptualize and take place. The spread of terrorism and oppression in the South went hand in hand with the collapse of federal election enforcement .Moreover, the revival of racism in political campaigning speeded the substitution of Democratic governments in the south for Republican ones. This change helped bring about conservative victories in the North. The other indications which contributed to the Northern retreat from Reconstruction were reflected first, by the restriction on federal action imposed by judicial decision and second, by the initiation of a conservative Southern policy in1875 (Gillette xi)<sup>2</sup>.

Perhaps, the two main reasons for the end of Reconstruction are the attempt of the Republican Party to act as if a practically military situation was one of politics as usual. In addition, Northerners lacked enough engagement, Zeal and resistance necessary for a prolonged struggle for black American rights over white Southern imperviousness (Perman

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<sup>1</sup> - Raines, Howell, ed. *My Soul is Rested*. New York: Penguin, 1977.

<sup>1</sup>- Gillette, William. *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

188)<sup>1</sup>. Since any successful fight for African American equality was to be elongated, “Black Reconstruction” was a fiasco.

Being isolated, blacks found them fighting against Klan terrorism as they were forged into a separate national group during a crucial era of black nationality formation. In the 1870s, when Henry Adams, a grassroots Republican political organizer, visited the Louisiana home of his friend, he found the house burned down. His wife told him that more than fifty white terrorists had burned and killed her husband because he defended his political rights. When she asked Adams if the terrorists would be brought before the law, he was filled with sorrow to realize there was no justice for colored people. Mrs. Johnson prayed God to “help us get out of this country and get somewhere where we can live”.

Disappointed by the betrayal of the Republican Party and the uncovered terrorism of the Democratic Party, Henry Adams turned into one of the grassroots leaders who led the mass mobilization for the “Kansas Exodus” out of the Deep south in the 1870s. Adams estimated that some 98,000 people were ready to join the movement to abscond Southern fear. The mobilization to establish black colonies in the West was planned by Benjamin Singleton from Tennessee. Many blacks felt they were left behind by their elite during this tribulation. As the black establishment advised them to stay in the South, thousands of destitute African Americans adhered to the migration movement. They thought that land property was the only means to full citizenship rights. Although nearly 10,000 blacks from Kentucky and Tennessee migrated to Kansas (Grossman<sup>23</sup>)<sup>2</sup>, the greatest majority were so severely impecunious that they could not raise the resources for transmigration.

The north’s broken promise of Reconstruction encouraged the southern racists to enthrall the African American people and to firmly establish a relationship between blacks and whites that essentially came to be based on the concept of “internal colonialism (Blauner 214)”<sup>3</sup>.

After acting to give black people freedom, equality, and the franchise, it allowed the white south to demote them to a state of forced labor, to overlook their rights, and to disenfranchise them by force, intimidation, and law (Sitkoff, New Deal. 3-4)<sup>4</sup>. The combination between the national government and the two major political parties reflected a deliberate silence while white racism confined African Americans into semi-colonial

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<sup>1</sup> - Perman, Michael. *The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> - Grossman, James R. *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*. Columbia, SC: USC Press, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> - Blauner, Bob. *Racial Oppression in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> - Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

oppression. The congress refused to get involved as the South willingly deprived blacks of the right to vote. In fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century African Americans were no more congressional members. The Supreme Court seriously restrained the practice of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments .In1883 it made the Civil Rights Act of 1875 null and void and asserted that Congress did not have the power to regulate the conduct and transaction of individuals.

Since both the Republican and Democratic parties rejected the importance of black votes for national elections, the civil rights of African Americans would not figure on the national political agenda until the New Deal. The socialist labor movement worsened the situation by adhering to the white supremacy and reinforcing its rise as 3,220 black people were lynched between 1880 and 1930(Brundage42)<sup>1</sup>.It was noted that blacks could not turn with hope to the socialists. Jack London , the famous novelist repeatedly boasted he was white before being socialist. He openly exposed his racist views that non-whites and specifically blacks were an inferior race and used topics of white supremacy to receive the votes of white workers.

Most African Americans lost their voting rights with the failure of reconstruction in the South. Yet those who could still vote cast their ballots for the Republican Party until the Great Depression. On the other hand, black people did not remain desperate. During the first decades of the twentieth century, some 1.5 million African Americans migrated to the northern industrial centers in search of a better life(Lemann240)<sup>2</sup> .That immigration influx caused strategic black urban concentrations that influenced the flow of national politics, and in the process shaped a new black consciousness. Before long, a number of former opponents, especially the communists, the labor unions, and the Democratic Party, welcomed the adherence and support of African Americans in the industrial and political arenas. Liberalism, communism, and trade unionism forcibly became the principal ideological contenders of Black Nationalism in the twentieth century.

#### **1.4/ Black Nationalism in the Twentieth Century**

At the turn of the century, there was a resumption of Black Nationalism as African American nationality formation entered a new period marked by class development, remarkable ghetto formation, rapid urbanization, and anti-colonial stand. Although the

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1 - Brundage, W. Fitzhugh. Lynching in the New South. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> - Lemann, Nicholas. The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and how it Changed America. New York: MacMillan, 1991.

Berlin Conference of 1884 marked the European disarray for Africa, that imperialist contest helped brand the concept of “Africa for Africans”.

In his historical and cultural efforts to absolve the image of Africa, Edward Wilmot Blyden, the Liberian intellectual, forged the idea of the “African Personality”(Lynch 211)<sup>1</sup>. He drew conclusions from his research in Africa that Africans had constructed the Great Pyramids , Islam had been more positive for Africans than Christianity , African culture and civilization were promoting , and the African people contributed a distinct spirituality to world civilization that was manifest in their culture , customs ,and concepts(Redkey189)<sup>2</sup>.

In 1903 W.E.B. Du Bois made a noteworthy contribution to African American identity, black nationality formation, and Pan-Africanism with his publication of the souls of Black Folk. Contributing to the concept of the African Personality, Du Bois explored the definite psychology of black folk and argued that the precious legacy of black culture was evident in the spirituals. In collaboration with Henry Sylvester Williams, Du Bois launched the earliest pan-African summits at the turn of the century, beginning with the one in London in July 1900 and followed by five international pan-African summits between 1919 and 1945. the first pan-African Congress was held in Paris in February 1919, the second took place in London, Brussels, and Paris in September 1921,the third was organized in London, Lisbon and Paris in 1923 , the fourth occurred in New York City in 1927 , and finally , the fifth was held in Manchester, England , in 1945.Among all these summits , however , it was the fifth Pan-African Congress that fostered Pan-Africanism and applied it to decolonizing Africa.

Black radicals including nationalists and socialists were encouraged to stick to African nationality as they witnessed uprisings in Egypt ,Iraq ,Turkey ,Mongolia, China ,Russia ,and Ireland du in the First World War .This was the conception of revolt expressed by the pioneer of black radicalism ,Hubert Harrison was one among142,868 West Indian immigrants who settled in the United States between 1899 and 1932.Nearly half of those black immigrants lived in the State of New York(Gaines121)<sup>3</sup>. If there were an early possibility of combining Black Nationalism and socialism, that prospect would be

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<sup>1</sup> - Lynch, Hollis R., ed. Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912.

<sup>2</sup> - Redkey, Edwin S. Black Exodus: Nationalists and Back-to-Africa Movement, 1890-1910. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> - Gaines, Kevin K. Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996.



well-represented by Harrison .He spread his political activities between the black struggle and the socialist movement. He was self-educated and socialist intellectual who developed into a nationalist. He deserted the Socialist Party because the white radicals refused to fight racism (Sekayi58)<sup>1</sup>. He was convinced that it was essential for blacks to adapt their own politics. Deceived by a racially divided labor market, he deduced that black workers had interests that were distinct from those of white workers. Men like Harrison started the Harlem street corner oratorical tradition, which was to be institutionalized by the time Malcolm X emerged. The ascending sense of black nationality was enforced by the gathering of thousands of black migrants in urban enclaves. The political agitators took opportunity to appeal to this new sense of black nationality.

There was a real development of black enterprise after the 1890s. This enterprise gave birth to a new black middle class which grew thanks to the concentration of black people in the ghetto where nationality formation was taking place too. The new black middle class established commercial relations with its community. Booker T. Washington was among the leading supporters of racial consciousness that was necessary for the economic solidarity and business foundation of that newly emerging middle class (Meier73)<sup>2</sup>.and the African American community further stimulated nationality formation. While Booker T.Washington was supporting political abandonment for black people under the banner of accommodations, W. E.B. Du Bois and the Niagara Movement antagonized the founder of Tuskegee school and were determined to defend the civil rights of African Americans in 1905.

Marcus Garvey learned a lot about the colonial liberation movements when he was studying African history and anti – colonial nationalism in London under the teachings of Duse Mohammed Ali ,the Egyptian intellectual and editor of the Africa Times and Orient Review ,Garvey migrated to the united States in the 1916,a time when Harlem was developing into Mecca of black culture and African American remonstrance .That metropolis was shaping a great concentration of forefront intellectuals , journalists, and civil rights leadership . The circumstances that made Harlem and New York appear practicable metropolises of black cultural, intellectual, and political life, were in part the fruit of the large mobility of gifted blacks to the city in the years before the war (Huggins18)<sup>3</sup>. Yet, more interesting, what characterized Harlem from the other flourishing

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<sup>1</sup> - Sekayi, Dia N. R. African American Intellectual-Activists: Legacies in the Struggle. Garland Publishing, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> - Meier, August. Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> - Huggins, Nathan. Harlem Renaissance. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

black centers were changes, seemingly concentrated in Harlem, in the character of Negro behavior and agitation.

Harlem became the hub of famed black personalities to play an important role in their respective organizations and movements: W.E.B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Charles S. Johnson in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the radical newspaper. Briggs in the combative African Blood Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), and the radical newspaper. Briggs in the combative African Blood Brotherhood and its newspaper. Briggs in the combative African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) and its newspaper, the Crusader (Kusmer 234)<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, Cyril Briggs's Crusader served as the elatedness for the militant Robert F. Williams's newspaper which adopted the same name in the 1960s.

The growing black population in Harlem became part of a significant national urban prodigy. The Great Migration of almost 1.5 million black people from the South to Northern and Western urban areas had a profound national impact on black consciousness (Trotter 96)<sup>2</sup>. This considerable number of African Americans reflected the basis for the black ghettos which from that time on became a major characteristic of urban American life. One consequence of this new black urban situation in the ghetto "was the sense of common destiny prevalent to some extent in all socio-economic classes in the black community" (Hill xxx)<sup>3</sup>. As the course of African American nationality consciousness expanded in urban areas with heavy concentrations of African American population, that new sense of black consciousness was the basis for the popular spread of the Garvey Movement and door the development of Black Nationalism.

In that context, Marcus Garvey advocated the issue of black nationalism and self-determination so vigorously that it swept him to center stage in the rising African American ghetto (Haywood, Black Bolshevik... 77)<sup>4</sup>. Garvey articulated the vision of anti-colonial resistance in his own original way, linking the future of the urban black migrants with the destiny of the colonial subjects, and that attracted the attention of those colored people even outside the United States. One of the greatest political protestors of the twentieth century, Garvey asked "where is the black man's government?" His Universal

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<sup>1</sup> - Kusmer, Kenneth. *A Ghetto Takes Shape*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> - Trotter, Joe W., ed. *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender*. Boston: South End Press, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> - Hill, Robert. *The Crusader*. New York: Garland, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> - Haywood, Harry. *Black Bolshevik*. Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978.

Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) expanded its branches in thirty-eight US states as well as in forty-one countries (Smith-Irvin65)<sup>1</sup>.

In his early years, Garvey carried out a broad-based black united front, including both the Moorish Science Temple Movement (MSTM) and the African Blood Brotherhood .After the heyday and decline of the Garvey movement, Black Nationalism faced astounding competition for allegiance of black workers, and the Communist Party was compelled to make concessions to nationality consciousness. Without that flexibility the communists would have made no furtherance among African Americans. In1930, radical groups like the League of Struggle for Negro Rights (LSNR), headed by Harry Haywood and Langston Hughes gave priority to the demands for equality of black workers, women, youth, soldiers, writer's clerks, small business people, and nurses. Besides equal rights, it articulated decent housing, jobs, education, and culture the league was convinced of the black continual struggle for real and effective freedom which was supposed to have justly been gained after the Civil War.

One of the most significant black united fronts in the twentieth century was the National Negro Congress, founded in Chicago in 1936.The NNC helped establish the foundation for a black and labor consolidation, stressing black organizers to employ African American labor into the steel workers union drive in Chicago. Not less than 8,000people, both blacks and whites, assembled to endorse the promotion of an agenda for black equality (Harris84)<sup>2</sup>. The NNC's full commitment is demonstrated by its alliance with anti-fascist movements in Europe and anti-colonial struggles in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. The gathering of the NNC received great support. The NNC formed a large movement which recognized that although African Americans had many organizations with different agendas and stratagems, what was urgent was a united front to strive for a minimum program of unity.

The American communist movement made a strong mistake in interfering with the independent political development of the NNC on foreign policy issues. While the NNC opposed fascism around the world, under the influence of Stalin, the American communists inside it lined up that black organization with the Hitler-Stalin accord. A. Philip Randolph resigned in protest accusing the American Communist Party of having gone against the organizational independence of the NNC .Randolph warned in his resignation speech

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<sup>1</sup> - Smith-Irvin, Jeanette. Marcus Garvey's Foot Soldiers of the U.N.I.A. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> - Harris, William J. The Harder we Run. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

African Americans of the imperilments of relying on whites for the financial backing of their leading organizations.

A .Philip Randolph initiated the March on Washington Committee during the Second World War, warning that unless President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order outlawing discrimination in hiring by unions and employers and ending segregation in the military services. The new kind of Black Nationalist consciousness represented a serious impact on the growth of the ghetto and increased awareness of race which accompanied the migration from rural to urban areas. In South Omaha where African Americans were scattered, the sense of black community was generated by the church. Comparable to the 10,315 black people of Omaha in 1920, Chicago where he got involved into the Garvey movement had 109,458 African Americans .It became one of the most significant concentrations of people of African descent in the world. Black Nationalism's accent on racial unity appealed to many urban blacks who were, for the first time, living in a social environment that resembled, even if on a rather small scale, an all-black nation. In the "first" ghettos had a spectacular impression on black consciousness, the "second" ghetto was an even stronger social constitution for Black Nationalist sentiments. One aspects of African American existence that would survive the decade of the twenties was the sense of common fate regnant in all socio-economic classes in the black community as a result of the fortification of the ghetto. In the twenties this new racial consciousness engendered both the Harlem Renaissance and the Garvey movement. Four decades later, in a much more explosive setting, it would end in black revolutionaries and cultural nationalists with more combativeness than Garvey.

At the outset of the Black Power phenomenon, SNCC activists raised several key organizing issues for radicals. Too often, scholars forger how ambiguous the issues looked in 1966 and they neglect the original concerns that remained unanswered at the time. Vanguard activists wanted to know if the concept of Black Power, which had grown out of their political work in rural Mississippi and Alabama, was actually relevant to mobilizing and organizing in northern black ghettos (Carson178)<sup>1</sup>. They wondered what would be the value of the black vote in urban areas and around which issues African Americans could be organized. They also asked if African Americans would try to develop alternative or parallel political structures in urban areas as the SNCC had done with the MFDP and the

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<sup>1</sup> - Carson, Clayborne. In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s.

Lowndes Country Freedom Organization in the rural South. Moreover, the SNCC wanted to identify the “levers of power for poor blacks”(Sellers187)<sup>1</sup>.

The expansion of Black Nationalism, therefore, was based on the gaining of freedom from racism, class oppression, political disenfranchisement, exploitation, and repression. It fundamentally started as a debate between black leadership in the mid 1800’s as to what should be the social agenda of Africans in the United States (Payne186)<sup>2</sup>.

Black Nationalism as a solution to assimilation goes back to over one hundred years, as black leader’s explored alternative political and social ideology to crush racial discrimination against African Americans in the United States (Weisbort162)<sup>3</sup>.

Many grassroots organizations used nationalist philosophy to correct problems of racial discrimination and poverty, and to take ownership of their communities through collective social action. Yet the organizations and movements of that periods emerged thanks to the political motivation and their leaders ‘political maturation which few through multiple experiences, whether personal or collective. With different philosophies , doctrines ,approaches ,and stratagems to fight a common foe: white oppression and exploitation despite the so-called socio-economic improvements , black intellectual activists -- including Amiri Baraka—were going to play a crucial role in developing the sense of self-determination, self-respect and black nationality formation. The next chapter will eventually look into Baraka’s political maturation as an important paradigm for the dynamics of black cultural nationalism and how his maturation would contribute to shaping a more severe opposition to a progressing white backlash against which African Americans were going to struggle by employing any means necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> - Sellers, Cleveland. *The River of no Return*. New York: William Morrow, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> - Payne, Charles M. *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> - Weisbort, Robert. *Freedom Bound*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

## **1.5/Conclusion**

In a very broad sense, Black Nationalism and Black Power are not uniquely American phenomena. South Africa and more recently Brazil are other countries where activists have pushed for a consciousness about (black) identity as a way to catalyze and organize for social change. However, a proper understanding of Black Nationalism in any context requires special attention to the specificity of a given political and historical context. Simple analogies between movements that emphasize black or African identity invariably miss crucial differences. When scholars, who revisit the Black Power era in the United States, or Black Consciousness in South Africa, focus on what activists did as well as what they said, the significance of local context becomes clear. Analogies to anticolonial struggle, or Pan-African solidarity, or black pride do not change the fact that black nationalists ultimately face the challenge of building social movements within national boundaries.

# Chapter 2

## **Booker T. Washington and the integration question**

## **2.1/Introduction**

The beginning of the twentieth century was a critical time in African-American history. Segregation and discrimination were on the rise. Two seminal African American figures began to debate on ways to combat racial problems. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois developed different strategies for racial uplift as they actively competed for the support of the black community. In the process, Washington and Du Bois made a permanent mark on the debate over how blacks should achieve equality in America. Although other books address the Washington Du Bois conflict, this text provides a detailed overview of the issues in a brief yet thorough narrative, giving students a clear understanding of these two influential leaders. Jacqueline Moore incorporates the latest scholarship as she examines the motivations of Washington and Du Bois and the political issues surrounding their positions. Accompanying documents allow students to see actual evidence on the issues. Moore contextualizes the debate in the broader terms of radical versus accommodationist strategies of racial uplift. Washington an accommodationist believed economic independence was most important to racial equality. W.E.B. Du Bois adopted more radical strategies, arguing that social and political equality not just economic opportunity was essential to racial uplift. This book traces the argument between these two men, which became public in 1903 when Du Bois published *The Souls of Black Folk*, which included an attack on Washington, his association with Tuskegee Institute's industrial education program, and accommodationism. The clash between Du Bois and Washington escalated over the next 12 years. Du Bois was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an organization that often opposed Washington's gradualist approach. Although the NAACP became the major civil rights organization after Washington's death in 1915, the same issues Washington and DuBois debated surfaced in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, and the debate raged once again between accommodationists and radicals. In time, both men's ideals faded until the same issues surfaced again in the 1960s, and the debate raged once again between accommodationists and radicals within the Civil Rights Movement. Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift is an excellent resource for courses in African American history, race relations, and minority and ethnic politics."



## **2.2/ The Black American in the 1900's (context)**

The United States of America faced a difficult post WWI period. In the spring and summer of 1919, soldiers were going back home from Europe, they had come home to prohibition, inflation, labor unrest and fear of Bolshevism. At the close of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson ended price and profit controls. During that period prices rose very quickly. At the end of 1919 price tripled what it had been in 1916. With the decline in production of arms, factories dismissed workers. Strikes occurred in the coal, steel, railway and textile industries. And in the Pacific Northwest, a labor movement called the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or the Wobblies, were participating in strikes and looking forward to the establishment of one big union and the creation of a democracy led by workers. A major grievance among workers across the nations was the length of the workweek. Many were working twelve hours a day, and some were working seven days a week. In the U.S., anarchist activities helped fuel fears and animosity toward all radicals and labor unionists - with many Americans failing to see a distinction between Marxists, anarchists and organized labor. Anarchists sent bombs in the mail. In April, 1919, a bomb arrived at the home of the mayor of Seattle. A similar package went to the home of a former senator from Georgia, which blew off the hands of his maid. Sixteen unexploded bombs were found, then eighteen more which were timed for May Day, the day of celebration for labor - one of the bombs targeted for John D. Rockefeller. On June 2, within one hour, a series of bombs went off in eight different cities, one of the bombs surprising the home of the U.S. Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer. And in newspapers were headlines about the bombings and descriptions of Bolshevik secret plans around the world and Communist attempts at revolution in Germany. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> - Harlem Renaissance."Britannica Student Library .Encyclopedia Britannica2007 Ultimate Reference Suite .Chicago : Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002

During the same period the U.S. especially Blacks faced a new threat, the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK is a secret American militant organization. The purpose of the organization is to preserve white supremacy.

The first Klan was founded in 1865 by Tennessee veterans of the Confederate Army. Groups spread throughout the South. Its purpose was to restore white supremacy in the aftermath of the American Civil War. In 1915, the second Klan was founded in response to urbanization and industrialization, massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe, the Great Migration of African Americans to the North, and the migration of African Americans and whites from rural areas to Southern cities. It grew rapidly in a period of postwar social tensions, where industrialization in the North attracted numerous waves of immigrants from southern and Eastern Europe and the Great Migration of Southern blacks and whites. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the lynching of Black people in the Southern and Border States became an institutionalized method used by whites to terrorize Blacks and maintain white supremacy. In the South, in the period from 1880 to 1940, there was deep-rooted and well spread hatred and fear of the Negro which led white mobs to turn to lynch law as a means of social control. Lynching seems to have been an American invention. In *Lynch-Law*, the first scholarly investigation of lynching, written in 1905, author James E. Cutler stated that —lynching is a criminal practice which is strong to the United States.‖ (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002)<sup>1</sup>

Most of the lynchings were by hanging or shooting, or both. However, many were of a very ugly way such as burning at the stake, injuring, cutting into pieces, castration, and other brutal methods of physical torture. Lynching therefore was a cruel combination of racism and sadism, which was utilized primarily to sustain the class system in the South. Many white people believed that Negroes could only be controlled by fear. To them, lynching was seen as the most effective means of control.

Some suggest several background factors and underlying causes for the prevalence of lynching in rural areas by lower class whites: poverty, economic and social fear of the Negro, low level of education, and the isolation, the dullness of everyday life and the general boredom of rural and small town life. However, the fundamental cause of lynching was fear of the Negro—the basis of racism and discrimination. Many whites, after Reconstruction and during the first four decades of the twentieth century, feared that the Negro was getting out of his place and that the white man's social status was threatened and was in need of protection. Lynching was seen as the method to defend white

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<sup>1</sup> -Black Nationalism. « Encyclopedia Britannica. »Encyclopedia.

domination and keep the Negroes from becoming very important. Therefore, lynching was more the expression of white American fear of Black social and economic advancement than of Negro crime. W. E. B. Du Bois was correct when he stated: '...the white South feared more than Negro dishonesty, ignorance and incompetence, Negro honesty, knowledge, and efficiency.' (Encyclopedia Britannica)<sup>1</sup>.

### **2.3/Booker T.Washington leaders of his people**

The great majority of black freedmen remained in rural South, exchanged slavery for another exploitative system of sharecropping, and most of them had to mortgage their share of crops to a merchant who would furnish them the necessities until the harvest. Some even fell into involuntary servitude for debt. Just as Booker T.Washington was establishing his rule over this empire of poverty, southern whites in the 1890's began a movement to take back the rights that the Civil War and Reconstruction had established for blacks. Southern Whites took away the voting rights of most blacks, extended segregation to virtually every walk of life, justified this by a verbal assault that denied human status and dignity to blacks, and interrupted these changes by lynching and race riots. Northern whites also adopted white supremacy, particularly by occupational and residential segregation. Washington did not give any importance for these developments, and spoke for the group of blacks who gathered strength through education, economic struggle, and black solidarity as a surer foundation for progress.

Washington had started the debate over black leadership in 1892, when he called the black clergy unfit to lead and proposed objective goals regardless to religion or spiritual matters and leadership. In 1895 he proposed his own Atlanta

Compromise with whites that, he promised, would allow blacks to progress through self-improvement and economic means. Most blacks accepted at first, and then a group of critics murmured and grew louder. By 1903 Washington faced a bitter challenge to his leadership. (Harlan, 149).<sup>2</sup>

The way that his critics faced him in 1903 and the way he responded to them polarized black leadership into warring factions during a time when white aggressions were sweeping away what remained of the human rights of blacks. The deep factional division continued until Washington's death more than a decade later. Washington would continue to be the dominant figure in black America, ruling as a monarch or political boss.

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<sup>1</sup> -Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite , Chicago :Encyclopedia Britannica , 2002.

<sup>2</sup> - Harlan, Louis R. Booker T. Washington the Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915. Volume II.

His fear of losing his power, however, made him concentrate on loyalty above talent, and forced him to rely heavily on white advisers and black yes-men. He used hard and cruel means against black critics, accepted too readily the promises of white men, and grasped at every straw to justify his public optimism about the success of his own methods for black progress. Some features of this behavior had appeared earlier, but events of 1903, the rebellion of the Tuskegee students, fixed and exaggerated them.

In an elaborate metaphor comparing the race to a ship in stormy weather, Washington offered himself the role of the cool-headed captain with whom all on board must cooperate. He met every criticism of industrial education, his economic emphasis, and even his compromises with whites, saying of the latter that he practiced the charity that Christ taught and symbolized, and that he denounced as strongly as anyone the black man who cringed or debased himself in order to gain the favor of a white man. A friendly newspaper reported that the audience responded with a rapturous applause which followed every significant utterance and punctuated every paragraph. Washington frequently had to fight with the ghost of Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave, abolitionist orator, self-taught intellectual, Reconstruction leader, and champion of political and civil rights had died in 1895. whose life and doctrines had symbolized the preceding half-century of black experience. During that year they have seen a succession of different eras that one of Douglass's which was a political era, and that of Washington which was a commercial one. Washington praised his doctrine of economic priority and said that it was more appropriate, and the black businessman was the logical arbiter. "There was a call for a New Negro for a new century" Washington's stated. (Harlan, 34)<sup>1</sup>

Washington was ready to forget about the past and draw his own ideal on the new age, but there was continuity of Douglass's tradition and nostalgia for his leadership. Harry C. Smith of *Cleveland Gazette* said that Douglass had been unanswerable because he told the truth, whereas Washington seemed to have the whole world to command but "teaches subordination of his own race to another." Washington's Northern white admirers believed absolutely in the statesmanship of his doctrines, and when they occasionally heard black critics characterize him otherwise, they dismissed these persons as aliens. (Harlan, 50)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> -<sup>2</sup>- Harlem Background.

Behind the mask of self-confidence, however, Washington knew that a small but growing group of people who shared the same ideas of college-bred blacks was scoring points against him. He feared this group the more because he did not understand it, did not always follow the work of its ideas. The center of this opposition was a new black weekly newspaper, the *Boston Guardian*, founded in 1901 as his personal mouthpiece by William Monroe Trotter, Washington's most relentless Boston critic. A recent Harvard graduate, Trotter built his career around the defense of black civil and political rights and the unchangeable act of criticizing particularly of Booker T. Washington but also of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and anyone else that fell short of his expectations, including most of his friends. George Washington was invited to dine at the White House with the president Roosevelt; the thing that Trotter did not like. Trotter's objection to the dinner at the White House was simply that the President had invited the wrong Negro, one who 'advised his race to keep out of politics and... criticized what use they made of the franchise'. (*The Guardian of Boston*, P29)<sup>1</sup>.

Trotter's criticism of Washington, however, extended to his too willing to obey whites, his silence before racial injustice, his advocacy of second-class education for second-class citizens, his repression of dissent, his southern news, and his personality. Trotter developed a network of opposition to Washington, centering in the famous newspaper the *Guardian* but spreading out in Boston and elsewhere in New England. He and others organized the Boston Literary and Historical Association as a forum of racial militancy, and soon afterward the Massachusetts Racial Protective Association, which put him in touch with anti-Washington sentiment all over the state. Other black newspapers also took up the great protest against Washington's leadership, notably the *Washington Bee*, the *Chicago Conservator*, and the *Cleveland Gazette*. None of the others, however, pursued him with the continuous, obsessive passion of the *Guardian*. The Trotterites sent forth a missionary, William H. Ferris, a recent Yale graduate who lived intermittently in Boston and New Haven. Early in 1903 he spoke at the Bethel Literary and Historical Association in the capital on "The Boston Negro's Idea of Booker Washington." Ferris aped Trotter in attacking Washington personally as well as his program, but the main burden of Ferris's criticism was that Washington's promotion of industrial education and his ridicule of the black college man was schooling the race for subordination and blunting its higher aspirations. Washington's admirer wrote "The interesting feature of the occasion, to me was the evidence of a number of people here who, from their applause, indicated a

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<sup>1</sup> - *The Guardian of Boston*: William Monroe Trotter. New York, 1971. P29.

feeling of hostility to Mr. W. In studying these malcontents I felt that I could account for each of them by reason of interest in rival institutions, Howard, Atlanta, and the others under the not very elegant term of 'sore-heads' who have succeeded wonderfully in doing nothing themselves and hence have a grievance against any man who is doing something." (Calloway, 4-5.)<sup>1</sup>

The annual meeting of the Afro-American Council seemed to the Trotterites the logical place to confront Washington. It was the only national meeting place of all the elements of Afro-American leadership, and its very reason for being was civil and political rights. And yet, ever since its revival in 1898 out of the ashes of the earlier Afro-American League, Washington and his followers had dominated the meetings, even though he himself was a member. Washington's adherents held most of the offices, and consequently the council resolutions were seldom the ringing declarations of protest that the age of white supremacy should have called forth. The Afro-American Council mirrored the divided mind of the race.

An effort to criticize Washington in the 1899 council meeting failed. In 1902 Washington's critics made a more concerted effort to take control of the council from him and his friends. One of his Boston lieutenants warned him that "the 'Guardian' folks are going to use every effort to have the Afro-American Council denounce you." (Peter, 492.)<sup>2</sup>

A friend in St. Paul, where the meeting was to be held, advised that "there will probably be some effort made to have some expression go forth from the Council with respect to your position as given in your speeches and lectures, it had been claimed that it is harmful and detrimental to the race." (Frederick L. McGhee to BTW, June 27, 1902.)

Washington's lieutenants promised to stop the criticism, but he decided to attend the meeting himself. The Washington Bee, Washington newspaper, sourly spoke about the wizard dominance of the audience: "The 'Wizard of Tuskegee was there... His satellites were in the saddle.... They trotted and pranced as he pulled the reins and his ticket was elected and his namby-pamby policy... was incorporated into the address, which was nothing more than a pronouncement of his nibs, the boss of Negro beggars." (Washington Bee, 505n.)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> - Thomas J. Calloway to E. J. Scott, Jan. 12, 1903, BTW Papers, VII, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> - Peter J. Smith to BTW, July 3, 1902, BTW Papers, VI, 492.

<sup>3</sup> - Washington Bee, July 26, 1902, quoted in Thornbrough, \_The National Afro-American League\_, 505n.

To cap Washington's victory, Fortune replaced Bishop Walters as president, and the militant Ida B. Wells-Barnett was removed as secretary. Trotter said in the Guardian that "Fortune is only a 'me too' to whatever Washington aspires to do. These two men have long since formed themselves into one twain in their dealings with the Negro race, Fortune furnishing whatever brain the combination needs, and Washington the boodle." Trotter laid part of the blame for his failure at St. Paul at the unlikely door of W. E. B. Du Bois of Atlanta University. "We might have expected Prof. Du Bois to have trying to get into the band wagon of the Tuskegee an; he is no longer to be relied upon."

## **2.4/ Baraka's Political Maturation**

A striking narrative account of psycho-get together profoundly denoted the improvement of Amiri Baraka's persona as an intellectual nationalist. Indeed , Baraka's involvement in black nationalism symbolized the ideological conformities numerous blacks were normal to follow during the 1960s and 1970s. His political maturity reflected the challenge faced by black intellectuals who looked to express viewpoints and grasp social attitudes saturated with Afro centric racial consciousness and cultural pride. The intricacies attending this challenge to redefine social identity and to liberate it from the impacts of white cultural assimilation are clear while looking at the setting also, plan of Baraka's own entrance into the black cultural revolution.

In the 1970s, Baraka supported a much more radical stand of the part of the black intellectual. His experience was formed by unfavorable circumstances which forced him to search ways out from the permanently existing marginalization of the black community. Most of the time, the sought – out alternatives were misinterpreted, and at that point rejected by an extremely racist encompassing. Baraka's involvement in scholarly activism demonstrated an African American cultural tradition which was believed to be an urgent necessity for activists like him, during a period of unrest, became the outspoken intellectual of this tradition that was formed by African American who had gone before him. This fashioned convention was produced by appropriate understanding and through the circumstances of his time.

Amiri Baraka is viewed one of the most productive and influential African – American literary figures. He is a generally published poet, essayist, playwright, fictionalist, journalist and painter. His power on African American literature is considerable. Plays, poems, novels, essays, short stories, jazz operas and music criticism are all present in his works, and all serve as a bridge for his candid social and political

commentary. He is a multifaceted personality which shifts with such amazing speed that critics define him as “one who is no longer there , while his admirers have been challenged to readjust themselves to his new position” (Banks 120)<sup>1</sup>

By all indications, he and his art were in 1970s part of a continually developing political process and a long these lines stood squarely in the forefront for the creation of the black revolutionary tradition in African American literature and culture.

Baraka was an outstanding student , succeeding with distinction from Barringer high school and won scholarship to Rutgers University in 1951. Scholarly before enrolling in college in 1952, he started using his first name in its Frenchified spelling, Le Roi. But a growing sense of cultural displacement obliged him to transfer in 1952 to Howard University (a traditionally African American institution ) at Washington, where he studied with the distinguished black scholars ( Hudson 97 )<sup>2</sup>.

But despite his direct attack , Baraka’s years at Howard were of great benefit to him. He studied philosophy , religion and literature , and was exposed to the ideas of notable black poets, music critics , and scholars (Holloway 124 ) . Baraka admitted that few of his guides provided him with an important background in European classics as well as black American culture. He particularly studied the blues with Sterling A. Brown , a poet of the Harlem Renaissance who wrote in black vernacular (Benston , Imamu...124 )<sup>3</sup>

Profoundly adulated by Baraka , every one of the three left a changeless effect on his scholarly on his intellectual and artistic formation . Highly praised by Baraka , all three left a permanent impact on his intellectual and artistic formation.

Baraka left Howard in 1954 without completing his bachelor’s degree. He returned to his native city, Newark, to enroll in the U.S. Air Force where he obtained the rank of sergeant. It was in the army that he resumed his education. While in that service, he started his intellectual and artistic instruction in sincere intent by writing poetry and reading excessively (Hudson 186)<sup>4</sup>. Baraka was the base librarian when his contingent was positioned in Puerto Rico. The library proved very positive to him because it became a place where he and other colleagues would cultivate themselves with the available interesting books ranging from Thomas Hardy to Proust to Kafka.

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<sup>1</sup> - Banks, William M. *Black Intellectuals: Race and Responsibility in American Life*. 1996. Norton: WW and Company, Inc. 1998.

<sup>2</sup> - Hudson, Theodore. *From LeRoi Jones to Amiri Baraka*. Duke University Press, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> - Benston, Kimberly. *Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones): A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> - Hudson, Theodore. *From LeRoi Jones to Amiri Baraka*. Duke University Press, 1973.



He was simultaneously attempting to publish his poems in magazines such as Kenyon---Review and The New Yorker. Suspecting him to be a communist, he was dismissed from the army in 1957 and returned to civilian life. He recognized while invoking the incident that “someone said I was a Communist. As it turned out now it’s true “ (Publishers Weekly)”<sup>1</sup> .

Although Baraka remained in Greenwich Village, he became increasingly involved in the social life of Harlem. During the early 1960s, He seemed to regard himself as an intermediary between the black and white worlds. He wrote two significant works of fiction at that time, *The System of Dante’s Hell* and *Tales*. Both showed his determination to pull away from Greenwich village. He confessed to Kimberly Benston in *Boundary 2*, “I was really writing defensively .I was trying to get away from the influence of people like Robert Creeley and Charles Olson. I was living in New York then and the whole Creeley-Olson influence was beginning to beat me up. I was in a closed circle...and I left the need to break out”( in Benston, *Imamu...213* )<sup>2</sup>. Still, he continued to work closely with Beat writers. He and poet Diane Di Prima founded the magazine, *Floating Bear* in 1961. The two were also instrumental in organizing the American Theatre for Poets. Baraka scorned the notion of a separate black society in his essay “Black Is a Country”, insisting that America was as much a black country as a white one. “The lives and destinies of the white American are bound up inseparably with those of the black American,” he added “despite the fact that the last has been forced for hundreds of years to inhabit the lonely nation of black,”(*home85*)<sup>3</sup>. He was briefly appended to his belief in a world free of color lines even as he sought to establish for himself a more grounded ethnic personality.

Baraka had completely disavowed the cultural and political values of the Beats by mid-1964 and had begun verbally attacking his Greenwich village friends, white liberals , white liberals, and the white community in general. His hostile to middle class state of mind had been modified into an activist black nationalism motivated by Malcom X (W. Harris39)<sup>4</sup>. An integrated society was not only impossible, he now believed, but also objectionable. Ironically, Baraka’s fulminations against the white world elevated his popularity even further. He was for a period overpowered by invitations to hip, white, New

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<sup>1</sup> - Publishers Weekly. 5 January 2000.

<sup>2</sup> - Benston, Kimberly. *Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones): A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> - Home: *Social Essays*. New York : Ecco, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> - Harris, William J. *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1991.

York City high – society parties. In any case, he implied what he said about turning his back on that world.(Reilly72 )<sup>1</sup> .

By the end of 1965 he had ended his marriage to Hettie Cohen, broken his ties with the white the white literary establishment, and settled in Harlem. Yet, it cannot be denied that Baraka's direction toward black nationalism went through the Beat poetry, and jazz sessions of Greenwich village. His early development in Greenwich village and in addition his increasing desires for black identity and for what Amilcar Cabral , the Guinean revolutionary leader, once called "a return to the source" (Smith 175 )<sup>2</sup> are the components of the nationalist pattern.

There are well - justified reasons which got Baraka to leadership in the mid-1960s and the end of 1970s too. From one perspective , the African American deception and dissatisfaction at the winding down of American vision in the late sixties, the mixing of white repercussion in national empowerment in America during the heyday of the civil rights movement , the permanent entanglement of many African Americans in poverty and second-class citizenship, a resumption of interest and pride in African heritage, the rise of black arts movement, and ultimately the failure of traditional assimilations politics all yielded a more forceful struggle to put an end to the threatening discriminatory practices (Sollors 86)<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the Egression of a generation of African post-colonial leaders who adopted Marxian another variants of socialism proposed options to the western capitalist system. Many of those energies found expression in Amiri Baraka whose personality and established organization, the Congress of African People (CAP), became positively affected by what is sociologically, culturally, and politically known as the dynamics of black cultural nationalism. This type of nationalism proved essential for the creation of the MBCM.

The impact of the CAP was so important that it allured a variety of intellectuals. Its supporters were a formidable score of writers, artists, and political activists. This attraction can be expalined by the longing of these CAP adherents for new programs, organization and leadership to achieve black freedom (Baraka, African... 45)<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the CAP's birth represented a golden opportunity for the black national community to unite. The

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<sup>1</sup> - Reilly, Charlie, ed. Conversations with Amiri Baraka. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> - Smith, Anthony D. "'Ideas' and 'Structure' in the Formation of Independence Ideals." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 19-39.

<sup>3</sup> - Sollors, Werner. Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones: The Quest for a "Populist Modernism." New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> - Baraka Amiri, ed. African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan- African Congress. New York: William Morrow, 1973.

MBCM found itself well-positioned in an era of an exceptional awakening of black consciousness and self-determination. It was also important because it epitomized a particular moment of black anger in American history.

The critical turning point in Baraka's life was the assassination of Malcolm X on February 21, 1965 (Harper 387)<sup>1</sup>. After Malcolm's death, Baraka favored the black revolution. Further in his identity transformation, he married the black actress and dancer, Sylvia Robinson of Newark, New Jersey. Symbolizing the depth of his transformation, Hajj Heesham Jaaber, the Islamic minister who buried Malcolm X, changed Baraka's first name, Le Roi Jones, to Ameer Barakat, "Blessed prince" in Arabic. Subsequently, Maulana Karenga, a leading cultural nationalist from Los Angeles and the founder of US Organization, Africanized the name Ameer Barakat making it "Amiri Baraka" in Swahili, and gave Baraka the distinctive title "Imamu," meaning spiritual leader. Amiri Baraka reported that Sylvia was named Amina (faithful) after one of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wives (Karenga 19)<sup>2</sup>. Later, under Karenga's influence, he adopted the name Amiri, Swahilizing the first name.

As Baraka's inspiration of leadership was a mix of African American models, the most important one could probably be associated with the relatively short but significant activist path of Malcolm X who had the great tribute to the establishment of the Black Power movement. Malcolm offered guidance to grassroots militancy by spreading his philosophy which was based on self-determination, self-defense, and self-respect. His contribution to the Black Nationalist tradition was to link that tradition with the mass movements of his time (Marable 138)<sup>3</sup>. Given the cultural aggression and degradation which blacks suffered from within a hostile white society, he believed that the liberation of his people had to begin with a healthy appreciation of self .

Amiri Baraka represented the right pattern for self-transformation. Considered as the father of the Black Arts Movement, his longing for identity, purpose, and direction caught the imagination of a generation of African American readers. To varying degrees, this generation shared a strong sense of racial consciousness and enunciated a mood of alienation and despair (Banks 259)<sup>4</sup>. The disillusionment of Baraka and his generation eroded the hopes of the future generation and hit it quite hard. It served to increase the

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<sup>1</sup> - Harper, Phillip Brian. "Nationalism and Social Division in Black Arts of the 1960s." *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 234-55.

<sup>2</sup> - Karenga, Maulana Ron. "Black Cultural Nationalism." *Negro Digest* 13 (3) (1968): 5-9.

<sup>3</sup> - Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X*. New York: Minorities, Inc., 1992.

<sup>4</sup> - Banks, William M. *Black Intellectuals: Race and Responsibility in American Life*. 1996. Norton: WW and Company, Inc. 1998.

level of bitterness in the Afro- American community as a whole. Although the American dream was believed to include African Americans, thousands of them, especially among the lower classes, were extremely doubtful.

Baraka's political maturation was developed in light of the particular challenges facing black intellectuals in the second half of the twentieth century and the struggle to balance political and artistic aims. Baraka's role as the chief spokesman for the Black Arts Movement began with his immersion into the predominantly white world of the Beats which provided him with an early and receptive audience for his work (N. Harris 25-26)<sup>1</sup>. It was during this period that Baraka created some of his most complex artistic work. His articulation of black rage, as voiced by his characters, was, in many ways, a breakthrough (Cleaver 21)<sup>2</sup>.

Influenced by the philosophies of Third World, mainly Africans, Baraka increasingly distanced himself from the white circle and adopted a greater political tone, creating works that affirmed the assertive militancy of black people (Steigerwald 314)<sup>3</sup>. Baraka's various facets of his career - artistic Sensibilities, political concerns, and creation of the Black Arts Movement - suggested an attempt to expose his full commitment. He belonged to a group of activist artists who used their work to evoke political change.

As scholars acknowledged, Baraka was not an easy black intellectual to categorize. Often associated with the Black Arts Movement, his works were fiercely political. For Baraka, ethics and aesthetics were inextricably linked and that black art had to be politically focused and community-oriented. His message was one of the hallmarks of the movement because it was a radical call for the black community to nurture itself and to recognize its own self-worth through change which was interpreted as a dynamic: "If we are Black, let's stretch our hands across the waters, stretch our hands together and say, 'from this day forward I will live my life for the Black man and when I can no longer live my life for the Black man, I will give my life for the Black man'" (Baraka, African... 55)<sup>4</sup>.

Although provocative, if not controversial, Amiri Baraka reflected a comprehensive and trenchant analysis of the activist's career and the black intellectual's role in cultural nationalism. Baraka's emergence in the 1960s and his continued influence in the mid-

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<sup>1</sup> - Harris, Norman, "Larry Neal." Dictionary of Literary Biography. Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1985

<sup>2</sup> - Cleaver, Kathleen N. "And the Beat Goes on: Challenges Facing Black Intellectuals." Souls. Vol. 4 N° 2 (March 1, 2002): 15-27.

<sup>3</sup> - Steigerwald, David. The Sixties and the End of Modern America. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> - Baraka Amiri, ed. African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan- African Congress. New York: William Morrow, 1973.

1970s can also be read as a general commentary on the condition of black intellectuals during that time.

As a focal point for a broader analysis, Baraka's case illustrates the link between his intellectual life and that of other well-known blacks who tried to concretize concepts which focused on the black crisis.

However, Baraka's activist journey became more interesting to investigate and his move to Newark is considered another serious step which would closely contribute to forming a politically committed intellectual and an ardent black supporter of self-determination and self-identity. To interweave Baraka's art and political activism, it is necessary to know that from his early immersion in the New York scene through the most dynamic period in his life and work, he had to be situated within the various worlds through which he traveled from Beat Bohemia to full involvement in black nationalism.

## **2.5/ Conclusion**

In conclusion, I believe that Booker T. Washington's ideas were the best for helping African Americans seek acceptance and equality in society. There was much prejudice and fear throughout the country and black people demanding political and social equality could not help them reach their goals. Washington's ideas appealed to both white people and African Americans and he predicted that by building economic security black people could win white acceptance.

# Chapter 3

## Crisis of African American Intellectuals

### **3.1/Introduction**

The response of the Black Left to Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* reflected, in many ways, the uncertainty facing many Black intellectuals in 1967. Confronted with "white backlash", the rise of Black Power, the retreat of liberalism, and the dilemma of Vietnam, Black intellectuals (especially those on the Left) found

themselves trying to grapple with a future full of both potential and serious pitfalls. However, Cruse's work, which was quite personal in attacking many Black intellectuals who still held serious influence on the Black Left, elicited a variety of responses. While it would be a mistake to assume they were all positive or (more believable to assume) all negative, the reviews of Cruse's book in *Freedom ways*, *Motive*, and other organs for Black intellectuals showcased a diversity of thought influenced by then-contemporary crises in ideology and vision.

### **3.2/Crisis of African American Intellectuals**

The ideas of one particular class of Negroes on questions as race, color, politics, economics, art, or interracial relations are pretty superficial. These ideas are expressed in many different ways but, because of the fact that American Negro exists under the



dominating persuasion of the Great American Ideal, the philosophy of these Negroes has not been allowed to get the acceptance as an ethnic conception of reality.

Nonetheless, this stratum persists in its own way of what might be called the Afro-American ethnic group consciousness in a society whose legal constitution recognizes the rights, privileges and aspirations of the individual, but whose political institutions recognize the reality of ethnic groups only during election contests. (Harlem Background, 16) <sup>1</sup>Every four years the great fiction of the assimilated American ideal is put aside to deal with the pluralistic reality of the American vote, of which the largest is the Negro-American. But since the Supreme Court decisions of 1954 on public school integration, the Negro-American has been catapulted into the role of being the mover and shaker of modern America while putting the Great American Ideal to the most crucial test of its last hundred years. (Britannica Student Library)<sup>2</sup> America which idealizes the rights of the individual above everything else, is in reality, a nation dominated by the social power of groups, classes, In-groups and Cliques-both ethnic and religious individual in America has few rights that are not backed up by the political economic and social power of one group or another.

Hence, the individual Negro has, proportionately, very few rights because his ethnic group has very little political, economic or social power to use. Thus it can be seen that those Negroes, and there are very many of them, who have accepted the full essence of the Great American Ideal of Individualism are in serious trouble trying to function in America.

Very understandably, these people want to be full-fledged Americans, without regard to race, creed, or color. They do not stop to realize that this —social animal is a creation of the American imagination and has never really existed except in rare cases. They cite the American Constitution as the legal and moral authority in their search for fully integrated status and find it necessary to avoid that stratum.

Although three main power groups- Protestants, Catholics and Jews- neither want nor need to become integrated with each other. The existence of a great body of homogenized, inter assimilated white Americans is the basis for racial integration. Thus the Negro integrationist runs a foul of reality in the pursuit of an illusion, the dream of the

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<sup>1</sup>- Harlem Background.

<sup>2</sup> - Harlem Renaissance." Britannica Student Library. Encyclopædia Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2002.

—open-society. Which group or subgroup leaves its door wide open for the outsider? None, really. But we cannot point out one sub societal exception to this state of affairs between groups which, for our purposes, it is important to note very attentively: —The only substantial exception to this picture of ethnic separation is the compartment marked intellectuals and artists, Gordon suggested.

Gordon goes on to explain this stratum saying that, it would be sufficient here to point out that in the situation of men and women coming together because of an overriding common interest in ideas, the creative arts, and mutual professional concerns, we find the classic sociological enemy of ethnic parochialism. In other words, in the detached social world of intellectuals, a considerable amount of racial integration and ethnic intermingling does take on a social level. While the Negro intellectual is not fully integrated into the intellectual class stratum, he is, in the main, socially detached from his own Negro ethnic world. Gordon Points out that there is evidence that the outflow of intellectuals from religio-ethnic groups of America, their previous separation from the life of there groups, and the resultant block in communication between the ethnic sub society and the intellectual might have dysfunctional consequences.

In Negro life the cultural spheres appear to many as being rather remote, intangible and hardly related to what is called the more practical aspect of race relations. However, the truth is that the more practical sides of the Negro problem in America are bogged down precisely because of cultural confusion and disorientation on the part of most Negroes. Thus it is only through a cultural analysis of the Negro approach to group politics that the errors, weaknesses and goal failures can strongly be analyzed and positively worked out. The American moral ideas are irritated with history and cares deeply only about today, and possibly about tomorrow. History is valid for the American only when it can be used as a facile justification for what is half-heartedly pursued today in defense of pragmatic —Americanism<sup>11</sup>. Negroes are no different in this respect; thus even those who glory in certain black antecedents learn very little from their past. James Weldon Johnson's wrote *Black Manhattan*, a cultural history.

From sociological point of view, Johnson was correct in his choice of cultural analysis as a method, yet the cultural aspects of Harlem developments had economic determinants and political consequences. In economic terms, the origins of Harlem black community are to be found in the rise of black economic nationalism.

At the turn of this century Harlem was a predominantly white community that had been —overbuilt with new apartment houses. It was far uptown, and the only rapid

transportation was the elevated running up Eighth Avenue- the Lenox Avenue Subway had not yet been built... So landlords were finding it hard to fill their houses. However, the Harlem whites organized to use all means-legal, persuasive, and conspiratorial- to stem the Negro influx which assumed mass proportions around 1905.

The spirit behind this influx was economic nationalism. The economic organization behind this nationalism was the Afro-American Realty Company, a group of Negro leaders, business men, and politicians of whom the leading voices were Philip A. Payton, a real estate man, and Charles W. Anderson, a Republican Party stalwart who, in 1905, was appointed collector of internal revenue in New York by Theodore Roosevelt. Behind these men stood T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the New York Age, the oldest and most influential Negro newspaper in New York. But behind them all stood the guiding mind of Booker T. Washington and his National Negro Business League founded in 1900. All of the personalities in or around the Afro-American Realty Company were protégés of Washington and members of his business league.

They were, thus, representatives of Washington's Tuskegee Machine, the bane of the civil rights radicals led by W.E.B. Du Bois in his Niagara Movement of 1905. By this time nationalism had become aggressive and assertive in economics but conservative in civil rights politics, hence the clash over program was between Washington and Du Bois's new civil rights radicalism.

The operations of the Afro-American Realty Company led the growth of black Harlem by either leasing or buying apartment homes that could not be rented and renting them to Negroes. In many cases whites voluntarily abandoned houses, in other cases whites were forced to leave and replaced by Negroes. The whole movement, in the eyes of the whites, took on the aspect of an invasion; they became panic-stricken, and began fleeing as from a plague. Philip A. Payton organized the Afro-American Realty Company to counter the thrust of the Hudson Realty Company, a white group, formed to stop and turn back the black influx after it had begun to spread west of the Lenox Avenue line of demarcation. Payton's group then attempted to incorporate with a capitalization of \$500,000 at ten dollars per share with the aim of expanding operations to include building apartments. For a long period the New York Age carried an appealing for buyers of shares. From 1905 to the beginning of IWW, a legal and financial struggle went on in Harlem between black and white realty interests, during which time Negroes gained a solid foothold. The dominant thinking of the times was reflected in the remarks of several of the leading minds behind the organization of the Afro-American Realty Company. Speaking to

an audience of farmers at the fourteenth annual session of the Tuskegee Negro conference, Washington was quoted by the New York Age as saying —when race gets Bank Book, its Troubles will cease. (Washington, He further advised Negroes —Get some property...Get a home of your own. W.E.B. Du Bois was unhappy over the way Washington emphasized his gospel of —Work and Money. Speaking at a celebration of Lincoln's birthday to the Professional and Business Men's group, Philip A. Payton discussed the Afro- American Realty Company's operations and aims, stating —there is strength in financial combination. In pleading for more race support, he declared: —how often do we see because of this lack of race confidence a competent Afro- American lawyer or doctor hardly able to exist from want of patronage from his race. (Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> - Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002.

The Afro-American Realty Company lasted about five years, and then collapsed. Harlem became what historian; James Weldon Johnson called —the intellectual and artistic capital of the Negro world for a very good reason- because New York City was the intellectual and cultural capital of the white world in America. This is of historical and cultural importance in more ways than one. By understanding this, it is then possible to see that the emergence and growth of Negro Harlem took place within the framework of Negro-white relations, both in New York and elsewhere. Manhattan real estate interests the relations of various national groups, southern Negro migrations, war economics, etc made Harlem a new Promised Land for the black worker and former peasant from both the South and the West Indies. But Harlem also helped in developing something else which has not been adequately dealt with in the history books- a cultural movement and a creative intelligentsia.

That this occurred was not at all strange in terms of the Negro's native artistic gifts.

What was unique; however, was that this Negro cultural movement ran almost parallel to, and in interaction with, a white American cultural resurgence. Again the historical motif of the Negro dynamic, acting and reacting within the contest of Negro-white relations, was demonstrated on the cultural plane. Thus it is more than coincidence that Negro Harlem, which began as a trickle of black settlers quickly, grew into a city within a city, and the fact that in 1912, a group of white creative intellectuals came together in the —salon of Rabel Drage in Greenwich Village to launch the American literary and cultural renaissance that reached its Zenith in the 1920's.

James Weldon Johnson concluded unsatisfactory as they were vaguely indicated where the Harlem movement might have led: —Harlem is still in the process of making. It is still new and mixed; so mixed that one may get many different views- which is all right so long as one view is not taken to be the whole picture this many- sided aspect. However, makes it one of the most interesting communities in America. But Harlem is more than a community; it is a large scale laboratory experiment in the race problem and from it a good many facts have been found...Through his artistic efforts the Negro is smashing [an] immemorial stereotype faster than he has ever done through any method he has been able to use... He is impressing upon the national mind the conviction that he is a creator as well as a creature; that he has given as well as received; that his gift have been not only obvious and material, but also spiritual and aesthetic; that he is a contributor to the nation's common cultural store; in fine, he is helping to form American Civilization.' Johnson had said —American Civilization because he wanted to point out that the Harlem Renaissance

was paying a high price for being allowed to contribute to the nation's common cultural store and to from American Civilization. The price was that in exchange for the patronage gained from Carl Van Vechten and others among the downtown white creative intellectual movement, the Negro's courage determination and aesthetic materials were taken over by many white artist; who used them allegedly to advance the Negro artistically but actually more for their own self-glorification.

As a consequence, a most intense and unfair competition was engendered between white and Negro writers; the whites, from their vantage point of superior social and economic advantages, naturally won out. For instance, from 1917 to 1930, no less than 50 white play-wrights presented works in Broadway dealing with Negro themes, on the side of Negroes; only 5 plays were produced of which four were serious. LINCOLN STEFFEN'S 1919 effusion about the future at work had done a great deal to make it almost mandatory by the mid-twenties for intellectuals to visit the Soviet Union. Convoys of British Fabians had followed hard on the tracks of Steffens, an enthusiastic H. G. Wells and a repelled Bertrand Russell among them. Granted an hour's interview alone with Lenin in May 1920, Russell had been impressed by the Bolshevik leader's self-assurance but he found the regime loathsome, that there was less liberty in modern Russia than ever existed anywhere before.' Uncritical readers of his quick book, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevis*, would have been inclined to abandon all travel plans to see Bolshevism being practiced. Two years after Russell's visit, *The Liberator's* Max Eastman had come to St. Petersburg to attend the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, accompanied by a temporarily excited Claude McKay.

Eastman, who had bitterly assailed Russell as a naïf person of Menshevik propaganda, became an impassioned champion of Leon Trotsky and fell in love with the sister of the minister of justice, whom he married.

McKay, who enjoyed the special distinction of addressing the world body of communism on the unique racial circumstances confronting the American Communist Party, wrote *Negry v. Amerike*, a small book on the subject that would become required reading among the Soviet hierarchy. The poet recalled being feted like a "black ikon in the flesh," much to the surprise of the African Blood Brotherhood's light complexioned Otto Huiswood, who had been cast by the American Communist Party delegates as the black representative of class solidarity. But both McKay and Eastman, like the undefeatable Emma Goldman, had soon become disappointed with the Soviet system, Eastman's explosive *Since Lenin died* appearing two years after Goldman's, *My Disillusionment in*

Russia and only a year before Du Bois embarked to see the future for himself. The editor was familiar with the literature inspired by the Soviet Union's growing stream of political tourists, and it is clear from his writings during the early twenties that he resolved not to prejudge the Russian experiment. He refused to be moved either by the "superficial omniscience of Wells or the reports in the New York Times." When the *Liberator* charged in summer of 1921 that he had no respect for the Revolution, Du Bois had responded to McKay, an enthusiastic supporter of the Bolsheviks, with the "Negro and Radical Thought," a *Crisis* think piece denying scorn but asserting a right to skepticism. How could one dismiss a movement whose paramount duty was not only to unite the European working class, but, as the Comintern now proclaimed, to achieve the unity "of all colors: white, yellow, and black-the toilers of the world"? He asked. The marvelous set of phenomena known as the Russian Revolution might well be all that McKay, Asa Randolph, Hubert Harrison, Cyril Briggs, and others prophesied- "the greatest achievement of the twentieth century," in Randolph's words- but Du Bois had urged an inquiring patience. "Russia is incredibly vast, and the happenings there in the last five years have been intricate to a degree that must make any student pause." Even though he had sanctioned the blood-soaked antislavery crusade of John Brown in the biography, Du Bois made it clear that he was deeply disturbed by the violent transfer of power in Russia. "We do not believe in revolution," he had announced in "The Class Struggle," another provocative *Crisis* editorial in summer 1921.

There may have been rare circumstances in history where "organized murder" was the sole option, but those occasions belonged in the past. Revolutionary changes must come "mainly through reason, human sympathy and the education of children, and not by murder," Du Bois moralized. Du Bois also concluded that the application of Marxist class analysis to people of color had limited validity. Black Americans might look and act like proletarians. Theoretically they were indeed "part of the world proletariat," he conceded in one of the earliest of what were to become significant Du Boisian revisions of scientific socialism, but, as a practical reality, they were not only unrecognized and excluded from the white world proletariat, they were victimized by the "physical oppression, social ostracism, economic exclusion, and personal hatred" of the white working class. European workers, after all, had discriminated against Asians: why, therefore, assumes on the part of suppressed white masses "a clearness of thought, a sense of human brotherhood, sadly lacking in the most educated classes?" However appealing the communist ideal, the Briggs's, McKay's, and Randolph's were mistaken to assume that we have only to

embrace the white working class program to have the working class embrace ours. Du Bois was right in saying that it would be foolish to abandon the practical program for Negro emancipation "laid down and thought out" by the NAACP "by seeking to join a revolution which they do not understand. The life-and-death question was this: How far can the colored people of the world, and particularly the Negroes of the United States, trust the white working classes? Those who skimmed the essays in *Darkwater* could easily find Du Bois's not very encouraging answers. According to McKay, who had sought to enlighten the aging editor prior to his own disillusionment, the problem of the twentieth century was far less one of race than of class. The black American refused to let himself be a member of his community because of his color, McKay explained in a lengthy letter. "In reality," black workers were discriminated against because they were "the lowest type of worker"-because they allowed themselves to be manipulated against the white working class by the capitalists. Du Bois would have heard the theme of class over race sounded very unpleasant in the *Messenger* shortly before sailing for Russia. Speaking on behalf of the recently organized Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters [BSCP], now the principal support for Randolph and Owen's magazine, the magnetic young Negro socialist, Frank W. Crosswaith, predicted the imminent founding of the Worker State soon after the BSCP and all the workers of the nation were inextricably bound up with that of every section of the working class.

In revealing contrast to the response the previous year when a subscriber had repeatedly needled the editor for ignoring Crosswaith and Randolph, whom *The Nation* and *The New Republic* found worthwhile, *The Crisis* lost no time announcing its full backing of Randolph and Owen's courageous venture into organized labor politics and its looming battle with the gargantuan Pullman Railroad Corporation.

When the Communist Party operative, Lovett Fort-Whitman, sent an invitation to participate in something called the American Negro Labor Congress [ANLC], Du Bois admitted not knowing "anything about you personally," but subsequently praised the Party's effort to mobilize black workers, although he declined to attend the ANLC's founding in Chicago in October 1925. "The Black Man and Labor," appearing in the December *Crisis*, marked a significant advance in thinking about the USSR, with Du Bois enjoining readers to "stand before the astounding effort of Soviet Russia to organize the industrial world with open and mind and listening ears." Bolshevik Russia strongly enticed Du Bois now. Intellectuals of his stature were expected to possess informed opinions about what he would soon describe as the greatest event in history since the French Revolution.



The editor thought of himself with good reason as someone who helped to set the trends of his time, yet he surely recognized that his hesitations and qualifications about the Russian Revolution and the white workers of the world had diminished his standing among many of the so-called New Negroes. At fifty-eight, he was thought of as the peerless embodiment of Negro civil rights and intellectual culture, an iconic figure after whom high schools were named in West Virginia and Illinois and whose birthday brought interracial tributes from many of America's most distinguished men and women. Yet, also and increasingly, Du Bois had come to be regarded by young militants as the superannuated representative of a magnificent past. He writes of seeing poverty "struggling on the ruins of the empire," of much oppression and disorganization that left an "unforgettable impression." It cannot be known how keenly he may have sensed the lift being given the people by the Dawes Plan which had just regularized Germany's reparations debt and provided for a massive infusion of American and British bank loans to help stabilize the mark. The Locarno Pact had ended the French army's humiliating occupation of the Ruhr, authorized the Allied evacuation of Cologne, and enabled Germany to enter the League of Nations just as Du Bois arrived. But the scene in Berlin was still one of widespread, gnawing hardship for the working classes and deepening political disaffection on the part of the middle classes. Cabaret life had begun to sizzle with an athletic decadence, but the shabby street crowds had the look of outpatients, hollow-eyed victims recovering from the disastrous inflation of 1923- 24 when people bought food with wheelbarrows filled with marks.

### **3.3/The Catalyst of Black Nationality Creation**

The 1970s represents the peak for the politics of black cultural nationalism. The birth of a national black community was significantly marked in this period by the development of the dynamics of nationality formation from the local political arena to the national political stage. It resulted in the rapid emergence of the National Black Convention Movement (NBCM) in the form of four national organizations: the Congress of African People (CAP), the Black Women's United Front (BWUF), the National Black Assembly (NBA), and the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) (Gaines, Uplifting... 14). In addition to his enduring devotion to community-based political activism, Baraka also played a significant role in national Black Power organizations. One year after the launching of the National Black Convention Movement in 1966, Baraka got involved in a Newark convention. In agreement with Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher and Michigan Congressman Charles C. Diggs Jr., Baraka organized in 1972 the National Black Political

Convention which was significant for the black freedom movement in that period (Hutchinson, *The Dynamics...* 121)<sup>1</sup>.

During that convention, The delegates agreed on the National Black Political Agenda which became known as the Gary declaration, a statement that was a major step toward creating an independent black political party (Wilson 47)<sup>2</sup>. The Gary declaration adopted seven major areas: economic, human development, communications, rural development, environmental protection, political empowerment, and international policy (Ladun 19)<sup>3</sup>.

The Gary Convention saw the birth of the National Black Political Assembly. The MBCM emerged as a national structure that embraced the growing tensions between the reality of black diversity and the calls for African American unity (Baraka, *Toward...* 89)<sup>4</sup>. The black convention constructed its own democratic process of agenda building around the principle of proportional representation, articulating the numerous viewpoints within the black community and giving each perspective due weight in decision making (Gaines, "Not Ready..." 551)<sup>5</sup>. In essence, agenda building was a counter-hegemonic strategy that meant changing the political discourse on local and national issues. Instead of black communities passively awaiting whatever political candidates might decide were the pressing issues in the next election, black assemblies took the initiative in their own hands to determine and define those issues which they felt were most important, speaking in a language that they clearly understood. Baraka proposed in these circumstances that the politics of cultural nationalism would win the fight for hegemony over the black community. Baraka became convinced through the Newark Black Power experience that African Americans would have to fashion their own ideology in order to liberate themselves from racial oppression in America (Dyson 12)<sup>6</sup>.

Emphasizing the importance of a black cultural revolution to win the minds of black people, Baraka insisted specifically on a psychological separation "away from assimilation or brainwashing or subjugation by the mind of the white nation" (Sollors 144)<sup>7</sup>. In this regard, he was concerned that too many black revolutionaries, who studied the classical

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<sup>1</sup> - Hutchinson, John, *the Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*. London: Aleen and Urwin, 1987.

<sup>2</sup>-Wilson, William J. "Revolutionary Nationalism versus Cultural Nationalism Dimensions of Black Power Movement." *Sociological Focus* 3 (1970): 43-51.

<sup>3</sup> - Ladun, Anise. "Cultural Revolution and National Liberation." *The Black Scholar* 6 (7) (1975): 43-49.

<sup>4</sup> - Baraka, Amiri, ed. *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan- African Congress*. New York: William Morrow, 1972.

<sup>5</sup> - Gaines, Kevin Kelly. "Not Ready for Nation Time." *American Quarterly*. Vol 2 N° 3 (September 2000): 546-554.

<sup>6</sup> - Dyson, Michael Eric. *Reflecting Black: African-American Cultural Criticism*. University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> - Sollors, Werner. *Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones: The Quest for a "Populist Modernism."* New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

political works of Marxism, were doing so uncritically. He charged that they were so hypnotized by these European writings that they did not keep in mind the vastly different circumstances which distinguished the situation of the European working class from that of African Americans in the United States. For Baraka, the black experience was the basis for the development of a new political ideology, and that experience had been a history of internal colonialism and of racial oppression distinct from class oppression (Marable and Greene 10)<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, he was convinced that the black revolutionary struggle in the United States was for national liberation from internal colonialism and that it was not a direct fight for socialism.

Nevertheless, Baraka increasingly in the 1970s proposed that the fight for the black freedom expanded in phases. The first phase was for national liberation, and the second phase was for social change, involving some form of socialism (Ladun 45)<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, although Baraka argued that the Black Power experiments in Newark in the struggle against internal colonialism suggested a pattern for the national movement, the international dimensions of his politics became more pronounced as he rose to leadership in the national black political arena. Baraka suggested three anti-colonial African models for the politics of cultural nationalism, combining national liberation and socialism. The first model concerns Amílcar Cabral's Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC)<sup>1</sup> which was leading the fight against Portuguese colonialism in the West African territories of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. The second model is found in Sékou Toure's Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG) <sup>1</sup> in West Africa which had led a successful radical movement against French colonialism in the 1950s. The third model was that of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's. Tanzanian African Nationalist Union (TANU) which led the independence initiative in East Africa (Cruse 24-25)<sup>3</sup>. Baraka came of age during the formative years of Third World independence, the decade between the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the 1959 Cuban revolution. These international developments left a permanent mark on Baraka's cultural nationalism.

In 1961, when Baraka was arrested at the United Nations, protesting the murder of Patrice Lumumba, African Americans actively supporting African liberation represented only a handful of the activists inspired by the independence movements in such African

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<sup>1</sup> - Marable, Manning, and Cheryl Y. Greene. "A Son of Afro-America: Talking with Amiri Baraka." *Souls* Vol 4, Issue 2 (March 2000): 1-14.

<sup>2</sup> - Ladun, Anise. "Cultural Revolution and National Liberation." *The Black Scholar* 6 (7) (1975): 43-49.

<sup>3</sup> - Cruse, Harold. "The Amílcar Cabral Politico-Cultural Model." *Black World* 24 N° 12 (October 1975): 20-27.

nations as the Congo, Egypt, Nigeria, and Guinea (Llorens, Ameer... 28)<sup>1</sup>. However, by 1970, Black Nationalism's African liberation support efforts represented the sentiments of millions of African Americans who grew up during the triumph of freedom movements from Tanganyika to Algeria. The path followed by Nyerere's TANU in Tanganyika had been peaceful, but the road taken by revolutionaries in Zanzibar and Algeria had been bloody. By the 1970s, most of the liberation movements in Africa were involved in a specific phase of armed warfare against white colonialism (Gibson 123)<sup>2</sup>.

At that time, black nationalists led a determined national community in the support of African liberation movements, targeting South African domination in South-West Africa (Namibia), Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, and white minority rule in both Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa (Franklin 148)<sup>3</sup>. These African liberation movements had defeated in 1975 Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and subdued white minority rule in Zimbabwe (Helmreich 189)<sup>4</sup>. Inspired by African ideals of nation building and liberation, the central theme of Baraka's politics of cultural nationalism became black self-determination. As 3,000 black people met in Atlanta, Georgia, on Labor Day in 1970 to establish the Congress of African People, both black self-determination and Pan-Africanism were central themes (Poinsett 66)<sup>5</sup>.

While the Atlanta Pan-African summit was aimed at black people in the African Diaspora, the gathering also embraced other oppressed peoples in the spirit of the Bandung Conference. According to Arnold Pinkney, the first Congress of African People attracted delegates from around the world, including Afro-American integrationists and separationists, peoples of African descent from the Caribbean and South America, Africans from independent nations and colonies, oppressed minorities from other continents, including Australian aborigines, and observers from the Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Japanese communities (Pinkney 132)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Llorens, David. Ameer (LeRoi Jones) Baraka. *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*. Eds John Hope Franklin and August Meier. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> - Gibson, Richard. *African Liberation Movements*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> - Franklin, Vincent Paul. *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African-American Resistance*. Lawrence Hill Books, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> - Helmreich, William B. *Afro-Americans and Africa: Black Nationalism at the Crossroads*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> - Poinsett, Alex Poinsett. "Black Political Strategies for '72'." *Ebony* 27 No 4 (1972): 66-74.

<sup>6</sup> - Pinkney, Alphonso. *Red, Black and Green: Black Nationalism in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

The purpose of the Congress was the establishment of unity among peoples of African descent throughout the world and the development of political, economic, and social institutions to liberate blacks from oppression.

The Congress of African People in Atlanta was the successor to the annual National Black Power Conferences between 1966 and 1968. The 1969 Black Power conference in Bermuda had been a disaster. The Burmese Government banned many of the militant leaders from attending the international gathering. In the aftermath of that catastrophe, a number of Black Power leaders, particularly those associated with gathering support for Baraka in the 1970 Newark election, began discussing how to rescue those annual meetings. Learning from the preceding bad experience, this group decided that one of the weaknesses of the movement was that there was no organizational structure to follow through on the radical resolutions of those summits. Establishing a broad working federation of black nationalists was one of the central goals of the Congress of African People (CAP) in Atlanta.

The CAP marked a turning point in the black revolt in several regards. This summit witnessed the introduction of the leading black nationalists into the national black political community that was just taking shape. The Atlanta Congress also represented a temporary end to the political exclusion of black nationalists from the dynamics of the national black political arena. In line with this, that first Congress represented a considerable degree of unity in the black revolt, drawing both civil rights and Black Nationalist leaders (L. Brown 258)<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the widespread unity of black nationalists at the Atlanta gathering was unprecedented. Finally, the Congress of African People established an important early step in the formation of a national black political community.

Considering the goal of establishing a federation of nationalists, the widespread unity of that political camp in Atlanta was encouraging. For the first time, that congress drew together such figures from the fragmented Black Nationalist camp as Malcolm X's widow, Betty Shabazz, the national representative of Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, a spokesman for Stokely Carmichael, Howard Fuller (Owusu Sadaukai) of Malcolm X Liberation University and the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU), Imari Abubakari Obadele of the Republic of New Africa, and Baraka of the CFUN (Bush 262)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> - Brown, Lloyd W. Amiri Baraka. Boston: Twayne, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> - Bush, Rod. We are not what we Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

The Atlanta Congress was also encouraging because the black nationalists had never before attracted so many black elected officials and civil rights leaders to a Pan- African summit (Melvin 110)<sup>1</sup>. The range of participants included such black elected officials and political figures as gubernatorial candidate John Cashin of the National Democratic Party of Alabama, Julian Bond of the Georgia legislature, Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, and Mayor Kenneth Gibson of Newark, New Jersey. There was also the attendance of such civil rights leaders as Rev. Jesse Jackson of People United for Self-Help, Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the SCLC, and Whitney Young, Jr. of the National Urban League (Glaude 113)<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the list of international representatives included Roosevelt Douglas of the Organization of Black People's Union, addressing the problems of black people in Canada and the West Indies, Raymond Mbala, speaking for one of the liberation groups in Angola, Evelyn Kwanza, voicing the concerns of the people of Zimbabwe fighting the Rhodesian government, and Ambassador El Hajj Abdoulaye Toure, the Guinean representative to the United States (Gomes and Williams 229)<sup>3</sup>.

In a major departure from the traditional competition and rivaling of these factions in the black revolt, the Congress of African People called for working coalitions between Black Nationalist and civil rights organizations around concrete programs for the development of the black community. The Pan-African summit elected as its first chairman a 27-year-old Harvard instructor in Afro-American studies, Heyward Henry (Chrisman 4)<sup>4</sup>. Symbolizing the pivotal role that the Congress of African People would attempt to play as a bridge between the various wings of the black freedom movement, Heyward Henry warmly greeted Minister Louis Farrakhan and Whitney Young, holding their hands aloft in a gesture of unity. This marked the beginning of a brief period of hegemony in the Black Revolt for the black cultural nationalists. During that period, the Congress of African People named the slogans, thus the banners read: "It's Nation Time".

Paradoxically, as Baraka's CFUN publicly launched the Congress of African People, secretly his organization and Maulana Karenga's US Organization had decimated their political alliance. Unfortunately, in order to lead a new phase of the Modern Black Convention Movement and to protect that black assembly from the warfare that had plunged the US Organization into the abyss, Baraka found it necessary to break with

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<sup>1</sup> - Melvin, Christian Charles. *Black Saga: The African-American Experience*. Houghton , 1995.

<sup>2</sup> - Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Is It Nation Time? Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> - Gomes, Ralph C., and Linda Faye Williams, eds. *From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Long Struggle for African American Political Power*. Greenwood Press, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> - Chrisman, Robert. "Aspects of Pan-Africanism." *Black Scholar* 4 No 10 (July-August 1973): 2-8.

Karenga (S. Brown, the US... 46)<sup>1</sup>. As much as Baraka admired Karenga, he understood that the Modern Black Convention Movement was essential to the further development of the politics of cultural nationalism. The rupture between the Congress of African People and the US Organization remains obscure.

Taking into account the development of these facts, it is important to know that during the period leading up to the founding of the Congress of African People, Karenga was increasingly estranged from the new momentum. At the same time, Baraka was receiving indications that something had gone seriously wrong with the US Organization in Los Angeles (Deburg 275)<sup>2</sup>.

There were reports that the war between the US Organization and the Black Panther Party had paralyzed the work of Karenga's group, leaving it more and more isolated from the black community. Even worse, there were stories that the strain of the constant bloodshed had impaired Karenga's judgment (S. Brown, Fighting... 134)<sup>3</sup>.

Former members of the US Organization began to arrive in Newark, declaring to Baraka that Karenga was losing his wits and that he was increasingly paranoid about police agents and was tormenting members of his own organization (Crowe "The National..." 16-17)<sup>4</sup>.

The situation became increasingly tense. On the eve of the Congress of African People, Karenga sent orders to Baraka to abandon the summit. That order put Baraka in a precarious situation. Theoretically, Maulana Karenga was the ranking leader of the national Kawaida movement, and Karenga had promoted Baraka to the rank of imamu, or spiritual leader, of that structure in Newark, just as he had designated Imamu Sukumu in San Diego, California.

However, Baraka and CFUN had in fact developed considerable autonomy at the head of the Modern Black Convention Movement in Newark. That movement had dynamics of its own, and those dynamics had conducted a new group of leaders who had no organizational allegiance to Karenga. So, Baraka had to choose between his loyalty to Karenga and his devotion to the Modern Black Convention Movement. Apparently, he did not want to make a choice. He believed in Karenga's doctrine and actively promoted the Seven Principles throughout the country, arguing that it was the ethical foundation for the

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<sup>1</sup> - Brown, Scot. *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism*. NY: New York University Press, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> - Deburg, William L. van, ed. *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*. New York University Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> - Brown, Scot. *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism*. NY: New York University Press, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> - Crowe, Charles. "Methodology and Pan-Africanism." *Black World* 24 No 3 (January 1975): 4-20.

politics of cultural nationalism .However, he disobeyed Karenga's direct order to boycott the summit meeting (Hutchinson 167)<sup>1</sup>, and that set the stage for a political and organizational break between the two foremost proponents of cultural nationalism.

At any rate, at the eve of the Congress, Karenga sent several of his men from Los Angeles to Atlanta to intimidate Baraka's leadership. Unexpectedly, Karenga's men carried briefcases apparently filled with firearms – briefcases with concealed weapons had become a wicked trademark of the US Organization (Bogues 171)<sup>2</sup>. That raised the possibility of another tragic shootout within the ranks of the Black Revolt, the probability that the chaos that had consumed the Black Power movement on the West Coast would spread to the East Coast. Fortunately, even after several confrontations, there was no bloodshed in Atlanta. Although there was no shooting, behind the scenes Baraka called CFUN to gather in Atlanta to announce the formal split between his group and the US Organization. In the rift, the BCD leadership of Balozi Zayd Muhammad and Mfudishi Maasi stood with the Congress of African People (Glaude 124). The San Diego leader Imamu Sukumu also broke with Karenga, standing with the Congress. Two years later, at the Second International Congress of African People in San Diego, once again members of the US Organization arrived at the summit to menace the new leadership .Again, there were confrontations, and bloodshed was narrowly avoided. Yet, Baraka and Karenga shifted apart.

In 1970, Maulana Karenga and two other members of US were found guilty of torturing two women<sup>1</sup> who were once members of his organization (Wolfe 166)<sup>3</sup>. To make matters worse, Karenga's wife, Haiba Karenga, testified "that she heard screams coming from the garage where her husband and the co-defendants were holding the two women hostages" (S. Brown, *The US...* 78)<sup>4</sup>. However, there were a number of inconsistencies in the testimony, including the fact that initially Deborah Jones did not name Maulana Karenga in those charges until a grand jury theft charge pending against her was dismissed. Karenga maintained his innocence, and his attorney argued that the state had encouraged Deborah Jones to make false accusations against his client (Mulshine)<sup>5</sup>. Nonetheless, such was the debacle of the US Organization in 1970. After several years in prison, Karenga made a remarkable comeback. The details of Baraka's political break with Karenga's US

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<sup>1</sup> - Hutchinson, John, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*. London: Aleen and Urwin, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> - Bogues, Anthony. *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> - Wolfe, Alan. *An Intellectual in Public*. University of Michigan press, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> - Brown, Scot. *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism*. NY: New York University Press, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> - Mulshine, Paul. "Kwanzaa – The Creation of a Deranged Racist Felon."1999. Free Republic. 13 Feb. 2000 <[http://www. Freerepublic.com](http://www.freerepublic.com)>.



Organization remained obscure until the 1980s when the poet published the first edition of his autobiography. Although this was one of the strangest developments in the Black Revolt, Baraka did not allow that awesome personal and political setback to endanger the success of the Congress of African People in Atlanta (Nagueyalti 16)<sup>1</sup>. By 1970, the CFUN had developed more baton.” Karenga was convicted and was sentenced on Sept. 17, 1971 to serve one to ten years in prison. After being released from prison in 1975, here made himself as Maulana Ron Karenga. Than enough independence, confidence, and experience to lead a national movement.

In keeping with the new collective leadership of the Congress, the Pan-African gathering held eleven workshops to determine the character of black programs for the 1970s. These sessions were led by an impressive array of black intellectuals, namely, Scholars, writers, and activists. These intellectuals coordinated the eleven workshops: religion by Rev. James Cones and Bill Land, history by John Henrik Clarke and Yosef Benjochannan, creativity by Larry Neal, education by Preston Wilcox, black technology by Ken Cave, community organization by Lou Gothard, law and justice by Raymond Brown, communications by Tony Brown and Lou House, economics by Robert S. Browne and Dunbar S. McLaurin, social organization by Bibi Amina Baraka, and political liberation by Amiri Baraka. These workshops were established as ongoing work councils, and in the national movement their leaders were charged with the implementation of key items in the resolutions which were the beginning of a “Black Agenda” for the 1970s .As the chair of the Political Liberation Work Council, Baraka began to play a new role in the development of a national black political community as a national spokesman for black nationalism.

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<sup>1</sup> - Nagueyalti, Warren. “Pan-African Cultural Movements: From Baraka to Karenga.” *Journal of Negro History* 75 No 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1990): 16-28.

### **3.4/Conclusion**

Black intellectuals can learn much from each of the three previous models, yet should not uncritically adopt any one of them. This is so because the bourgeois, Marxist, and Foucaultian models indeed relate to, but do not adequately speak to, the uniqueness of the black intellectual predicament. This uniqueness remains relatively unexplored, and will remain so until black intellectuals articulate a new "regime of truth" linked to, yet not confined by, indigenous institutional practices permeated by the kinetic orality and emotional physicality, the rhythmic syncopation, the protean improvisation, and the religious, rhetorical, and antiphonal repetition of African-American life.

# General Conclusion

By broadening historical parameters of black cultural nationalism, the thesis has explored the origins of Baraka's Intellectual activism which tried to deliver on its promise of black rights and the subsequent rise of Baraka as such. Baraka's intellectual formation moved through very distinct stages. Challenging the view that it was the inflammatory rhetoric of Black Power and the rising demands of black activists that derailed the civil rights movement, the present work has documented the efforts Black Power activists including Baraka to construct a vital and effective socio- political movement that combined black nationalism's analysis of racism's constitutive role in American society with an agenda of grassroots community organizing and empowerment.

On issues ranging from public education to welfare, Baraka's intellectual role was to remake black political landscape. In contrast to the top-down middle class leadership of traditional black intellectual groups, Baraka fundamentally altered the composition of black leadership in his community to include a new cohort of neighborhood-based working class and female black community activists. Baraka increasingly called for a "radical redistribution of political and economic power" not only in the USA but in the Third World as well.

Two important reasons held center stage in black cultural nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s: the Black Art Movement and Black Power which grounded well of a deepening African American commitment in their society. The thesis has explored two linked themes. First, the black intellectual's involvement in the dynamics of cultural nationalism and second, the relationship between the different black intellectual groups who shaped a specific image about the concerned era and Baraka's main stream cultural movement. The work has attempted to weave together local, national, and international events to offer an illuminating chronicle of the movements linked with Baraka's role demonstrating how his radicalized components both found common sense and provoked antipathies.

Starting with Booker T. Washington and his Tuskegee Machine My work is close to be a biographical study in the sense that its focus is on the complex, enigmatic figure of Washington, the most influential, powerful figure of his time. In what became known as the Atlanta Compromise Address, delivered before a southern commercial convention, he proposed a triple alliance between northern capitalists, the New South white leadership class, and blacks. Washington offered to trade black acquiescence in disfranchisement and some measure of segregation, at least for the time being, in return for a white promise to allow blacks to share in the economic growth that northern investment would bring. So I

reached the point that Washington did not give a major importance to be integrated in the American society.

Then came W.E.B Du Bois The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington's policy of racial accommodation and gradualism came in 1903 when black leader and intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois published an essay in his collection *The Souls of Black Folk* with the title —Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others.¶ Du Bois rejected Washington's willingness to avoid rocking the racial boat, calling instead for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of Negro youth. Du Bois, agreed with many of Trotter's criticism of Washington, and believed that Washington was misguided in his assertion that blacks should seek economic equality first. Du Bois instead asserted that economic security was not enough, and that blacks must become educated.

But Washington's philosophy of racial uplift was bitterly opposed by some African American intellectuals, most notably W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1903, Du Bois published the essay, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. He criticized Washington for failing to realize that without political power, economic gains were short-lived and vulnerable. Du Bois also believed that vocational education to the exclusion of the liberal arts would deprive African Americans of the well-trained leaders they sorely needed. In a time of increasing discrimination and racial violence, Du Bois argued, blacks must press for civil rights rather than accommodate inequality.

Du Bois and his *Crisis* editorial essays worked for being full fledged in the American society. He wanted full civil right and wanted his people to be full citizens and to not give up their civil rights as Booker T. Washington wanted. The two men were different in ways but they wanted the best they can offer for their people, though sometimes they wanted to impose their way in thinking. By the end of my work you will find out that the three men were seeking the best even through the Tuskegee Machine, through Back to Africa Movement, or through the fight for equal citizenship.

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