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The Pursuit of Audacious Power: Rebel Reformers and Neighborhood Politics in Baltimore, 1966–1968

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On February 27, 1966, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell spoke at a Fourth District Democratic Organization's $15-a-plate fundraiser held in the ballroom of the Lord Baltimore Hotel. The black organization was a major political club in west Baltimore's predominantly black Fourth District. Alongside criticizing middle-class black people for being more concerned with cotillions, sipping martinis in suburban homes, and distancing themselves from their "deprived black brothers and sisters," the black New York congressman told the 1,000 attendees at the posh affair, "If there is one thing in which I believe, it is the pursuit of audacious power. . . . I would urge black people in America to pursue audacious power—the power to make decisions which control the affairs of your city and your state."[1] Dressed in a blue suit and chain-smoking, Powell continued, "All my life I have pursued audacious power . . . and it has upset many of my good white friends . . . you see, very few white people can accept us when we move out of our prisons of shoe-shuffling, head-bowed, Uncle Tomism."[2]

At another political event four months later in July, black grassroots activists descended upon Broadway and Gay streets in east Baltimore. There, at Knox Presbyterian Church, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) held its twenty-third annual conference—just one month after civil rights workers "marched along inhospitable Mississippi highways . . . chanting 'black power.' "[3] From July 1 through July 4, CORE conventioneers celebrated the achievements of "Freedom Now" and outlined its next objective—"black power" or "self-sufficiency and an end to dependence on the white community."[4]

At the east Baltimore church—as in the downtown Baltimore hotel and on the Mississippi highways—melding "black" and "power" together drew public attention and provoked debates.[5] Black freedom activists, politicians, and the media

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questioned CORE's change of policy specifically and the new direction of black liberation struggles broadly. In their coverage of the conference, local newspapers printed articles and editorials under headlines such as "Black Power Top Issue," "Black Power," and "C.O.R.E.'s New Policy"—presciently, but likely unknowingly, anticipating scholarly discussions about the definitions, cadences, manifestations, and effectiveness of the slogan.[6] An editorial in the *Baltimore Morning Sun* on July 6 suggested that black power "at heart seems simply to be a fresh dedication to a classical course followed by many other ethnic groups in this country in their rise upward from poverty."[7] On the same day, a *Baltimore Evening Sun* editorial that referred to black power and "defensive 'violence'" read:

> The fact remains . . . that the definitions are something less than clear and exact and the slogans are capable of being given different meanings in different contexts. In the long run the important thing will be how they are understood and how they are applied in specific circumstances.[8]

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Clearly, black power in Baltimore, as throughout the country, evoked excitement, trepidation, uncertainty, and criticism from within and outside black activist circles and black communities.

The CORE conference set off another barrage of definitional questions and pragmatic concerns. "What is black power? What is non-non-violence? Whatever they are, are they good or bad?"[9] Was black power the organizing "of the poor, both black and white, so they can participate in the democratic process of this country," as maintained by Robert Curvin, a vice-president of CORE and Newark activist? Was it black government, which is "the only honest government that could come to power in the future," as held by George Raymond Jr., the director of Mississippi CORE? Was it the hiring of "black policemen, black landlords and black judges," as Jesse Gray, the Harlem rent strike leader, ventured? Could it incorporate the vision of a guaranteed annual income, as Richard Cloward, a professor of social work at Columbia University, tried to discuss with conference delegates, half of whom walked out before his speech began?[10] Did black power "mean 'self-determination by men of color in their own areas'"?[11] Was nonviolence in a violent society "unmanly"?[12]

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This chapter explores how black power shaped neighborhood politics and activism in Baltimore from 1966 to 1968. In 1966 CORE not only held its national convention there, but in shifting its battle lines to black inner cities, CORE designated Baltimore its first "target."[13] This time period, from 1966 when Baltimore became a Target City to 1968 when that target erupted in riots after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, were crucial years in the development of a multivocal black power politics that "inflected the political context in which people lived and organized."[14] Black power meant shoring up black manhood, advocating self-defense, seeking self-determination, exercising political power, attacking discrimination in education, employment, housing, and welfare, challenging entrenched white and black leaders, and mobilizing poor black people to transform society. Underneath black power's multiplicity of meanings, debates, formations, and alliances was an evocation of community—whether defined by race,

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gender, economics, geography, or ideology—that served as a basis for challenging unjust and unequal power relationships. Understanding these community struggles for power requires unveiling how the politics of place and the character of local politics have shaped cities, neighborhoods, and residents' lives.[15] Documenting which "Black Power" materialized when and to what end exposes how its multifaceted character emerged out of, as well as reflected, local people's creative responses to inequality and oppression.

Way Up-South

The northernmost border city below the Mason-Dixon Line, Baltimore became a staging ground, like many inner cities, for the competing politics of more militant black activists, white segregationists, municipal and state officials, and establishment civil rights leaders. But Baltimore, at least according to Herbert O. Edwards, was tame. "Baltimore's Negroes are less likely to resort to violence," claimed the executive secretary of the Maryland Interracial Commission, and in his view that is probably why national CORE chose Baltimore as its Target City.[16] Why did he think this? Edwards maintained that "compared with Chicago, New York, Cleveland and Los Angeles, there is probably more apathy among the Negro leadership [in Baltimore] and it goes down to the Negro masses."[17] "Fewer transients" and black middle-class aspirations in this southern border city known for its racial parochialism, Edwards argued, had moderated the potential for militancy and racial conflagrations. Although Baltimore's geographical location and political culture arguably may have thwarted fiery conflicts and physical melees similar to those occurring in other cities, Baltimore did experience its share of racial unrest well before exploding in April 1968.

The border city of Baltimore has had many nicknames, including the Charm City. However charming Baltimore might have been to some, when it came to race and community relations, charm did not quite fully capture Baltimore's character. Other descriptions convey the fraught politics of the place better—descriptions such as progressive *and* conservative, good *and* bad, schizophrenic, complicated, and a racist backwater. As early as the 1920s, the black poet Countee Cullen depicted Baltimore as a place where white children at very early ages were readily socialized in racist rhetoric and manners. In his poem entitled "Incident," Cullen wrote: "Once riding in old Baltimore,/ Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,/ I saw a Baltimorean/ Keep looking straight at me." The second verse continued: "Now I was eight and very small,/ And he was no whit bigger,/ And I smiled, but he poked out/ His tongue, and called me, 'Nigger.'"[18]

Baltimore's native son Thurgood Marshall, a U.S. solicitor general who became a U.S. Supreme Court justice, once described Baltimore as "Way-up South," meaning it was "decent and even occasionally progressive in many of the official forms of race relations in the last 20 years, but patrician and aloof in their substance."[19] Walter P. Carter, a Baltimore CORE activist who later became director of the community organization staff for Baltimore's Model Cities Agency in 1968, described the city as complicated. "It's not like New York. Here, you can

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have the Ku Klux Klan in full regalia on one corner and the same guy on another corner in a gray flannel suit. You have to get the feel of this town."[20] Credited by one biographer with insinuating Gandhian "nonviolence into the heart of the black freedom struggle," Bayard Rustin harbored a dislike for the complicated, way-up South, Charm City.[21] Carter continued, "Bayard Rustin used to say when he came here, 'Take me back to de bus station.' You got to be militant but you got to be smart. You got to operate on soul feeling. Your goal's got to be liberation, not integration."[22] When asked in April 1966 during CORE's announcement of Baltimore as its target city whether the city had the worst civil rights record, national CORE director Floyd B. McKissick responded, "If it's not the worst, it is very close to it."[23] Other national CORE members were not so diplomatic in their assessments; Baltimore was CORE's target, because the city was "a segregationist, racist backwater."[24]

In June 1966, *Baltimore Afro-American* columnist George W. Collins agreed—at least to a degree. Collins portrayed Baltimore and its political culture as schizophrenic, having a split personality, and clinging to the past and "unworkable customs" while on occasion "making an honest effort to address itself to the critical issue of the closing half of the 20th century."[25] This split personality naturally affected race relations. In his column entitled "Baltimore Civil Rights," Collins continued:

> While in some areas of the city attitudes toward such matters as equality of employment opportunity, public accommodations, equal education, fair housing, etc., are as modern as today's space exploits, in other areas these subjects trigger reactions comparable to those in the most backward areas of the Deep South.[26]

Collins explained how the white racially liberal Republican Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin "often found himself locked in a bitter struggle with the reactionary wing of the City Council, which is impowered [*sic*] to give life and essence to the mayor's government's philosophy in the area of human relations."[27] While recognizing the lasting problems, Collins argued, "No objective analysis of the triumphs and failures of civil rights in Baltimore can be attempted without the admission that progress has been made."[28]

From the 1930s through mid-1966, Baltimore's black civil rights organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), had pushed for equal teacher salaries, engaged in Don't Buy Where You Can't Work campaigns, targeted segregation in public accommodations, challenged restrictive covenants, fought for low-income black housing, and successfully fought to integrate the University of Maryland Law School. In 1942, 2,000 people marched to Annapolis to protest police brutality. In the early to mid-1950s, the NAACP also led campaigns that resulted in the integration, for instance, of municipal parks and swimming pools. In other words, local black civil rights leaders did have numerous successes in their efforts to legally dismantle Jim Crow. They secured jobs, access to public accommodations, as well as government appointments in the 1950s under then Governor (and in 1966 Mayor) McKeldin. Baltimore CORE activists also held antisegregation protests long before the idea of something called a Target City emerged; the Baltimore

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CORE chapter formed in 1953. Between then and the early 1960s, local CORE activists challenged Jim Crow by participating in the early 1960s' Freedom Rides and desegregation efforts along Interstate Route 40.[29]

Undoubtedly and unsurprisingly, racial and economic oppression still existed after the demise of legal segregation and the achievement of civil and voting rights. While desegregation came to Baltimore's public schools officially in 1954, "freedom of choice" policies and residential segregation meant that a majority of students still attended all-white or all-black schools. Poor police relations, employment discrimination, and fair housing continued to be volatile issues in the Charm City. In fact, the city council's refusal to pass an open occupancy ordinance three times in two years provided CORE with a sound rationale for targeting Baltimore and ultimately holding its convention there to publicize ongoing segregation and inequalities.[30] Desiring to achieve economic and political power in black ghettoes and envisioning black power as a reckoning against entrenched white or black "power structures," more militant local and national CORE leaders joined together. In April 1966 Baltimore CORE chair James Griffin joined McKissick in New York City for the Target City announcement.[31]

However, other local black leaders, particularly those of more moderate civil rights organizations, seemed flustered by the Target City announcement. They should not have been. In January 1966, local CORE leaders, including Walter Carter and James Griffin, had publicly criticized established civil rights organizations as well as professional black people for their lack of financial support for the "public fight" CORE waged against inequality. Promising a new militancy, Baltimore CORE leaders charged the "colored middle class" with "trying to escape the reality of the rampant segregation" through "the illusory comforts of private success."[32] Despite this early criticism, however, established civil rights leaders disputed what they deemed national CORE leaders' dismissal of civil rights advances in Baltimore as well as "their disregard of 'protocol' in coming into Baltimore without contacting the established organizations."[33] For instance, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, president of the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP, maintained, "You know, you can be militant with humility. You can use a 'loving' nonviolence—and it doesn't mean you have to be an Uncle Tom."[34] In addition to "marked legislative progress," Mitchell argued that Baltimore "has had its history of militancy—and in days when it was most unpopular."[35] Eventually, local black civil rights leaders agreed to cooperate—or at least not interfere—with CORE's Target City efforts after attending a local "summit" in Baltimore weeks preceding CORE's national convention there. The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA) proffered its support, as long as the alliance agreed with CORE's plans. An IMA leader, the Rev. Marion C. Bascom even maintained "if it means going to jail I stand ready to go to jail with them."[36] Ultimately, this cooperation, uneasy at times, provides an example of the concrete links between civil rights and black power politics and local efforts and national campaigns in Baltimore.

McKeldin, too, initially took umbrage at descriptions of Baltimore as a racist backwater with a woeful civil rights record, but he also made peace with the presence of CORE Target City organizers, though not the concept of black

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power. McKeldin told a *Baltimore Evening Sun* reporter in words that revealed hurt and a hint of paternalism, "I don't know why we should be the target . . . why we should be picked on. We've been battling for these things before these people were born. It's an unusual way to treat your friends."[37] McKeldin continued, "The situation's bad all over the country. . . . We've done every possible thing. If anyone has fought harder for the interests of Negroes than I—I've been vilified because of my interest in them."[38] Despite being perturbed at the outset, McKeldin decided to work with CORE in his effort to prevent a long, hot summer of unrest. At CORE's July convention, where the call for black power gained strength, McKeldin gave the organization a $30 donation, the key to the city, the city and state flags, and a copy of his book *No Mean City*. While acknowledging the need to address black people's political exclusion as well as their disparate, often desperate, material conditions, McKeldin preferred a politics of moderation, negotiation, and amelioration that favored measured steps to achieve racial progress—definitely not militant or potentially incendiary confrontations. During these hot years, McKeldin aimed to manage potential racial crises, and in that vein, he expressed surety—or maybe it was closer to hope—that, if CORE activists and city officials worked together, they would not only "achieve some of the goals we have been working toward," but also keep Baltimore "the safest city in the United States this summer."[39]

Non-nonviolence and Riotous Behavior

The Target City announcement generated more media coverage about urban and racial inequality in Baltimore. Just as national CORE was shining its light on the city, Baltimore CORE's drives for open housing intensified—and so did white segregationists' counter-responses. In May 1966 the *Baltimore Afro-American* reported that "For the first time in recent history Klansmen and Klanswomen, in full regalia, came to town Sunday to counter-picket CORE."[40] For three Sundays, starting April 17, 1966, local CORE members demonstrated outside of Horizon House at Calvert and Chase streets to challenge the luxury apartment building's whites-only residential policy.[41] On Sunday, May 1, approximately twenty-five Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members, with German Shepherd dogs, yelled racial epithets at seventy CORE demonstrators and promised to return in greater numbers the next Sunday.[42]

Walter Brooks, the thirty-three-year-old Target City project director, vowed to "do our utmost to maintain order," arguing that "when actions are taken against civil rights people, we have been successful in maintaining our coolness with violent people."[43] Even so, Baltimore CORE director James Griffin "warned Mayor McKeldin of potential violence caused by the presence" of white segregationists and asked that the mayor's office assert pressure "so that regrettable incidents may be avoided."[44] Baltimore state attorney Charles E. Moylan Jr. and acting police commissioner Major General George M. Gelston promised to investigate whether having dogs and yelling epithets at rallies constituted incitement of rioting and violated existing statutes. Almost two weeks after that demonstration,

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Baltimore Supreme Bench judge, Charles D. Harris, signed an injunction prohibiting CORE from picketing on weekdays. CORE and its supporters protested the injunction, while KKK spokesperson, Lahton C. Braun Sr., putting on his "red Klan hood with a green lining and blue tassle on the peak" in court, praised the injunction as "wise and just."[45] By the end of May, the picketing protests would result in McKeldin and Gelston calling a meeting at city hall with owners of nine luxury apartment buildings; that meeting led to an agreement by owners to rent to black tenants.[46]

In the same May 7 issue of the *Baltimore Afro-American* that reported on the escalating tensions at Horizon House, news articles documented two other incidents that similarly revealed the growth of black militancy, as well as attempts to navigate potential racial violence, in the border city of Baltimore. On Monday, May 2, 1966, at Morgan State College, a panel on the "Negro Revolution" featured several speakers including Walter Brooks and Julius W. Hobson, a former chair of D.C.'s CORE who was expelled in 1964 because of his growing militancy and belief that "white participation and funds…bred a moderate, meeker stance in the fight against discrimination."[47] The founder of Association Community Teams (ACT), a militant black nationalist group in D.C. "left of CORE," Hobson threatened racial upheaval, saying, "We will pepper this land with Wattses. There are going to have to be some riots and violence, and we are going to have to get nasty."[48] Walter Brooks of Baltimore's Target City, however, maintained that "Those who talk the most about violence and revolution are always the least likely to do anything about it."[49] Brooks urged such rhetoricians to stop making "beautiful speeches" and engage in what he deemed real revolution—"put your bodies on the front line" with neighborhood residents to organize for social change and political strength.[50] Interestingly, at the time, Hobson was doing more than talking; ACT was engaged in a federal lawsuit to depose the entire D.C. school board. As Morgan's student government president, Warren Howe, who moderated the panel, maintained in his summation—a summation clearly applicable to the broader palette of black power politics—"there certainly has not been a meeting of the minds tonight."[51]

The *Baltimore Afro-American* also reported on another event later that week. Three days later, on Thursday, May 5, police ousted Charles Luthardt, a white segregationist and self-proclaimed gubernatorial candidate, from a school board meeting. Police escorted Luthardt from Eastern High School's auditorium when he began lashing out against racial intermingling. Raging against integrated schools, Luthardt suggested a replacement plan—the "Luthardt Plan." He proclaimed, "White children and colored children (would not be) forced to dine, swim, shower and engage in bodily contact sports."[52] Obviously upset at being expelled from the meeting, Luthardt grumbled on his way up the aisle and out of the building, "You try to talk and they turn your juice off. Now look, I'm going to charge police brutality."[53]

While city officials and mainstream media expressed concern about CORE's calls for black power, its willingness to use violence in self-defense, and the increased number of rallies and demonstrations, the immediate threat to public civility and safety did not come from black power activists. Reflecting the reality

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of Walter P. Carter's description of Baltimore as "not like New York," imminent trouble came from white supremacist leaders—some in the KKK, but just as many, if not more, self-described segregationists and white hate-mongers in suits and ties from Maryland and elsewhere.

In late July, just weeks after CORE's convention in Baltimore and after CORE began implementing plans to attack unemployment, low wages, poor housing, inadequate education, and other forms of discrimination, segregationist organizers responded. This time, the National States Rights Party (NSRP) held three rallies in four days at Patterson Park and made plans for a fourth rally at Riverside Park.[54] After the second rally on July 27, Mayor McKeldin held a press conference at which he condemned the racist remarks and "disclosed that Patterson Park residents bombarded him with phone calls" to urge the prevention of future meetings. According to a *Baltimore Evening Sun* news article, McKeldin explained that the mostly white residents who called "are not in favor of integration, but they are opposed to this kind of meeting. I am a thousand percent free speech, but we have to re-examine this whole thing."[55]

At the third rally held on Thursday, July 28 at 7 p.m., NSRP leaders tossed around the word "nigger" and other anti-black and anti-Jewish obscenities wantonly and freely. Described by NSRP fliers as "America's most exciting racist speaker," fifty-three-year-old Charles Conley "Connie" Lynch talked for 11 minutes to over 1,000 mostly young white people.[56] Lynch was born in Clarksville, Texas, one of ten children of a poor cotton farmer. With a ninth grade education and no seminary education, Lynch was ordained a minister by the General Assembly of Jesus Christ in California where he lived. Alongside the plentiful epithets and critiques of Baltimore's mayor at the rally, Lynch denied inciting the crowd to violence, saying instead he was "inciting" them "to victory."[57] The NSRP Maryland coordinator, Richard Berry Norton, shouted, "If a riot comes, you all have guns" and, at some point that evening, he even thrust a clenched fist in the air—a sign that seemed to threaten white violence in contrast to Baltimore CORE's and CORE Target City's public avowal of self-defense.[58]

While not all white Baltimoreans rallied around such extremism, several gangs of white male youth, obviously invigorated by the racist diatribes, left the rally that night, drove through east Baltimore black neighborhoods, and heckled and attacked black people they saw on the streets. They called black residents who sat on their steps "niggers" and even cornered a sixteen-year-old black boy in an alley. Aware of the melee, police officers outfitted in riot gear intervened to halt and arrest white teenagers and prevent an all-out riot.[59] After all, unlike other major cities, including Watts which local officials were quite aware of, Baltimore had escaped the full-scale rebellions of the early and mid-1960s.

That Thursday night, some black residents did react to the roving white gangs, but compared to other cities what happened in Baltimore represented a skirmish. Black citizens rained bottles on cars driven by white interlopers. According to one news article, "It was more than an hour before a special squad of Negro plainclothesmen could talk the residents out of their anger."[60] While ostensibly the black police officers succeeded, this did not ensure that black residents would not retaliate if white gangs reappeared. The next day, civil rights activists

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even warned city officials "that white forays into Negro neighborhoods could easily incite counter violence by Negroes, some of whom, they said, are arming themselves."[61]

City officials responded. Under Gelston, who was praised by the Maryland Interracial Commission for his efforts to improve police-community relations, the police moved quickly to maintain law and order.[62] City council president and future mayor, Thomas D'Alesandro III lauded the police and asked the public "not 'to panic'."[63] Deputy city solicitor, Ambrose T. Hartman, announced the revocation of the NSRP's permit for the fourth rally; a Circuit Court judge enjoined the party from further rallies in public parks and streets; and a grand jury indicted several NSRP party leaders, including Lynch, Norton, and Joseph Carroll, on riot charges.[64] Carroll, a nineteen-year-old white youth leader for the Maryland NSRP, thought that segregating black people was simply not enough; instead he dreamed of seeing "every nigger hang from a lamp post."[65] In November, Carroll, Lynch, and Norton, an advertising writer who had attended William and Mary College and the University of Maryland, received two years imprisonment and a fine of $1,000 on riot charges.[66]

Preventing major disturbances in Baltimore had been a preoccupation of city officials since 1964. Now with CORE's Target City and its call to militancy and black power, and the counter-response it elicited, city officials committed themselves anew. In June 1966, Mayor McKeldin established the Task Force on Civil Rights to develop plans and programs to deal with racial inequality and discrimination. McKeldin counseled city officials to take citizenry complaints seriously, and not as insults. He also counseled listening and responding justly and quickly to legitimate concerns, as he himself did in 1967 when he provided hundreds of summer jobs in response to civil rights leaders' demands. McKeldin continued to view his measured political approach as the most effective way to avoid urban turmoil and would reiterate this in his October 1967 testimony before the presidential commission on civil disorders, more popularly known as the Kerner Commission. McKeldin maintained (mirroring his own shift) that while black militancy can cause offense, "you cannot allow yourself to be insulted.... These people have legitimate complaint, and you must hear them out. You must accept their cause as your cause."[67]

During 1966 and 1967, Baltimore's moderate black civil rights leaders, such as Juanita Jackson Mitchell, Baltimore Urban League executive director Dr. Furman L. Templeton, and even more militant local and national CORE organizers, lauded McKeldin's willingness to listen, dialogue, and act. But, they all emphatically stated that Baltimore was not immune to riots. If the city was to remain riot free, especially in the wake of the rising expectations of the black masses and increased community organizing, substantive advances had to be made.[68]

During the summer of 1966, Baltimore city officials and established leaders were simply relieved that they had managed to prevent a potentially explosive situation. But Baltimore liberals did express trepidation, particularly in the wake of explicit demands for race-based power. The Rev. Marlin Ballard, pastor of Universal Christian Church, passed out a leaflet in the Riverside Park area where the fourth rally had been scheduled. It said, "This saiith [*sic*] the Lord—Not

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black power, not white power, but God's power."[69] The leaflet echoed the stance of Mayor McKeldin who, while welcoming CORE and its potential positive effect on keeping Baltimore calm and improving race relations, had told conventioneers in July "that their cause would not be won by 'black power' or 'white power,' but 'it's going to be saved not by any power except by the power of God.'"[70]

Black Power Approaches

Who had power, however, was clearly an issue. And quite frankly, black power had its allure as a potential antidote not simply against the terror of white extremists, but also mainstream segregationists and even elected officials who privileged caution over confronting inequality. After all, Baltimore City Council's willful refusal to pass an open occupancy ordinance had ostensibly legitimized white intransigence, including that of homeowners, the real estate industry, and landlords of rental property like Horizon House.[71] Whether they wanted to or not, now city officials and leaders, black and white, would have to navigate the "new direction" of more militant black activists and Baltimore's emboldened inner-city residents.

In the aftermath of CORE's convention, some local black organizations publicly debated the black power slogan, wrangled over its meaning, and even accepted it in principle as a good thing—as long as it did not devolve into a politics of hatred and violence. For instance, on July 7, three days after the convention ended, the IMA vowed to continue its support of CORE despite "reservations about the concept of 'Black Power' and the new attitude towards non-violence."[72] The IMA's caution illustrates how black civil rights leaders mediated and moderated black power politics in Baltimore. Expressing concern about how people on the street would interpret "black power," the alliance, which supported CORE financially as well as from the pulpit, made its position clear: "Black Power which advocates black supremacy or black nationalism is as totally objectionable as is the power which supports white supremacy." A powerful network of black churches, the alliance even met with CORE representatives to discuss what was meant by black power, according to Rev. Bascom, pastor of Douglas Memorial Community Church on Lafayette and Madison avenues, but "they are as ambiguous as we are." Even so, the Rev. Frank L. Williams, alliance president and pastor of Metropolitan Methodist Church, revealed that many of his parishioners who asked him about both CORE and black power "seemed favorably impressed by the concept." Williams continued, "For many this idea has filled a vacuum created by the death of Malcolm X.... CORE has done a good thing by bringing these ideas out in the open.... The grassroots people are talking about them."[73]

Organizing around the daily concerns and igniting the political passions of everyday people, particularly the most forgotten and demonized, were critical goals of activists who harnessed black power politics. These particular activists adopted militant civil rights approaches that viewed black power in terms of equal access to housing, jobs, and public institutions, recognized the ballot as a source of political strength, and refused to disavow violence if needed to

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counterattack belligerence and aggression. They were what Robert Allen might call "rebels-for-reform" in that they did not accept the social structure as it was, but they also did not call for its complete dismantling and creation anew.[74] For instance, in May 1966—after CORE announced Baltimore as its Target City and before its convention publicly announcing their "new 'black power' approach to civil rights"—black male activists focused on integrating neighborhood taverns as well as the more upscale adult bars on "the Block, a street of B-girls, prostitutes, pimps and exotic nite clubs."[75] Although Baltimore had public accommodations laws that desegregated restaurants, bars and taverns were exempted if over half their profits came from the sale of alcohol.[76] In this case, the integration of whites-only businesses operating in black communities was a necessary precursor to achieving self-determination.

On July 11, 1966, another local civil rights organization, the Civic Interest Group (CIG), publicly endorsed black power and "announced it would no longer avoid violence in cases of 'self-defense'."[77] While CIG leadership acknowledged that black power might turn white liberals away from civil rights causes, "they denied that it should be equated with 'black supremacy'."[78] Initially founded at Morgan State College in 1960 and involved with integrating public accommodations including a shopping center, restaurants, department stores, and movie houses in Baltimore, CIG members had shifted their primary focus to forcing slum landlords to address housing code violations in west Baltimore. Now CIG sought to use the block clubs, established to fight slum housing, to promote voter registration and increase black electoral power, including among the most down-and-out residents of the city. At its press conference at St. Peter Claver's Catholic Church, CIG also "announced it would start a voter drive and disclosed plans to organize Pennsylvania Avenue's 'junkies'."[79] Vernon Conway, CIG director, believed that "narcotics addicts are voters and human beings"—a statement echoed about two weeks later in congressional hearings that featured discussions about urban problems and inner-city living.[80] At those hearings, Arthur Dunmeyer, a friend of Claude Brown (the black author of the 1965 fictionalized autobiography *Manchild in the Promised Land*), "proposed that the government find 'all the numbers runners and dope peddlers and use them, see what they had to offer to society.'"[81]

Black power organizers of this ilk envisioned such integrationist and voter registration campaigns as a means to an end—arousing poor inner-city residents and transforming their weakness into political strength. They wanted to establish viable centers of insurgency and power. While such efforts between May and December 1966 garnered organizers significant publicity, they also provoked criticism from white officials and moderate black civil rights leaders, who viewed such protests as episodic, if not misguided. While CORE organizers publicly recognized that sometimes such neighborhood protests did not rile the masses to sustained action as they had hoped, they argued that organizing residents required more time and persistence.

CORE also opened Freedom Schools, picketed discriminatory landlords, and initiated boycotts of stores and employers that upheld policies of racial inequality. Target City and Baltimore CORE organizers worked with working-class

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black women who had established the Maryland Freedom Union (MFU) months before they affiliated with the civil rights black power group. Former nursing home workers who walked off their jobs in February 1966 to protest poor wages and working conditions, Vivian Jones and Ola Mae Johnson served as president and secretary, respectively. Ola Mae Johnson and ten other women, who worked at the Lincoln Nursing Home at 27 North Carey Street walked out when their employer fired some employees, arguing he could not afford to pay them the $1 minimum wage passed by the city council. Vivian Jones, a nurse's aide at the Bolton Hill Nursing Home on Lafayette Avenue and John Street, said while she knew about "the Movement" and "it was a fine thing what they were doing," she had to overcome her fear "of the violence, of people getting smashed and being killed. I was scared of the power structure."[82]

After affiliating with national CORE workers who were in town making preparations for its summer Target City effort, the union expanded its base to include retail workers and replaced its strike tactics with boycotts and picketing of employers to secure bargaining rights and better job contracts.[83] Assigned to MFU, Michael Flug, a white twenty-one-year-old majoring in anthropology at Columbia University in New York, advised the group, which focused on unorganized workers making poverty wages. National CORE's shift to an official black power stance did not result in the immediate expulsion of white people from its ranks; it took a little more time in Baltimore. Neither did the call for economic power result in a revolutionary anticapitalist agenda. Instead activists sought to change the labor and business practices that marginalized and excluded black working-class and poor people.

Conflict emerged quickly as a result of MFU's campaigns. MFU's attempts to mobilize the power of the black working poor upset employers and established unions, such as the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization's (AFL-CIO) mostly white Retail Clerks union. MFU members assured the Retail Clerks union that they had no interest in raiding their membership and argued that mostly black organizers would do a better job organizing black workers along Pennsylvania Avenue, a main shopping hub of black west Baltimore.[84] MFU's picketing campaigns, unlike strikes, allowed low-wage workers to preserve their jobs, while activists, union members, and consumers did the work. Such demonstrations, which included black consumers and activists from CORE, CIG, and MFU, were successful, according to Flug, because "the civil rights movement has built up a momentum over the past five or six years. Now is the time to use that momentum, use that black power to win something."[85] MFU activists saw economic justice and the struggle for jobs as central to their vision of black power.

Despite early successes, black power did not win over everyone. Reservations still abounded. Some local black middle-class leaders, particularly those members of more traditional national organizations, distanced themselves from the new slogan and rejected black power activity as unproductive or noninfluential. In response to national CORE director Floyd McKissick's claim that black power helped to defeat a racist white gubernatorial candidate in Maryland, local

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NAACP leaders, including the state president Juanita Jackson Mitchell and her mother, Lillian Carroll Jackson, president of Baltimore's NAACP, disavowed any link between "Black Power" and the defeat of George P. Mahoney, who had firmly rejected open occupancy. Instead, Spiro T. Agnew, a political conservative and a racial liberal compared to Mahoney, won the election. The two Mitchells, along with other signatories, sent telegrams to U.S. senators Abraham Ribicoff and Robert F. Kennedy "to correct the wrong and misleading assertion made by Floyd McKissick before your sub-committee and the nation that CORE's 'black power' activity was responsible for the Nov. 8 defeat of George Mahoney." They distinguished their efforts from those of the new black militants and in the process reasserted their belief in racial liberalism: "The truth is that the colored voters of Maryland, under-girded by the clergy, the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers, and the NAACP, repeated the mature performance they gave in May, 1964, when they combined with fair minded white citizens" to defeat presidential candidate George Wallace in Maryland's primary in 1964.[86]

As 1966 came to a close, numerous city officials continued to express empathy for CORE's activities and praised it for helping to defuse potential violence. D'Alesandro III, then city council president, described the group as a "catalytic agent" that "refresh[ed] the minds of public officials, like myself, with their constant calls for help in the areas of housing, public accommodations and fair employment that have been made to us over the years by our own civil rights groups." He continued, "It's a shame we couldn't have listened to our local leaders. They have acted responsibly."[87] McKeldin also remained positive and complimentary. He credited CORE and its Target City with achieving integration in public accommodations, spurring the appointment of 200 citizens to local task forces, and "helping to avert a violent reaction during the period when our city was invaded by elements bent upon spreading hate" rather than being the source of disorder as initially feared.[88]

Nevertheless, public officials remained worried about the unpredictability of white segregationist groups and activists—NSRP, Luthardt's Fighting American Nationalists (FAN), the Maryland branch of the United Klans of America, and the splinter Interstate KKK. On December 26, 1966, a small group of representatives from the Maryland Klan including Carroll, NSRP, FAN, and the Ad Hoc Committee for Sound Government picketed the potential integration of a white public-housing complex, O'Donnell Heights, in southeast Baltimore.[89] On December 29, 1966, the Interstate KKK, clearly responding to CORE's activities, named Baltimore its "target city." The Imperial Wizard, Frances Xavier Edwards announced the movement of KKK's headquarters from southern Maryland to Ellicott City and "warned the civil rights organizations to leave the State."[90]

Utilizing 'Concentration Camps' in 1967

On January 16, 1967, at the invitation of Union for Jobs or Income Now (U-JOIN), SNCC national chair Stokely Carmichael delivered a speech before

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a crowd of 1,400 at Rev. Williams's church in Baltimore. Earlier in the day, Carmichael, renowned for raising the chant of "Black Power" in Greenwood, Mississippi, in 1966, had addressed 1,400 students at Morgan State College to much applause and joyous laughter.[91] At the church, two local black women activists preceded him at the podium—both of them directors of U-JOIN-affiliated organizations—Irene Lee of Tenants for Justice and Margaret McCarty of Rescuers from Poverty. U-JOIN had a hybrid philosophical and organizational strategy of "responsible radicalism" that drew on civil rights, New Left, and black power politics.[92] Committed to grassroots activism and black women's leadership, U-JOIN helped mothers on welfare to organize Rescuers from Poverty, the city's first welfare rights group, and started Tenants for Justice, which fought against slum landlords and pushed for rent escrow legislation. Walter Lively served as its director. After Lee and McCarty urged political unity and the maximization of the black vote, Carmichael took the stage.

In his excited and lilting clip, Carmichael told black listeners perched in the church pews that they must establish new institutions and a new political party. He lambasted black powerbrokers—or those middle-class black leaders deemed part of the power structure—such as Morgan State College's president, Dr. Martin D. Jenkins, for attacking black power as "stupid," "poor psychology," "black racism," and violent, while "he encourages institutionalized violence by compulsory R.O.T.C."[93] And tapping into the recent history of Germany's and the United States' sordid corralling of minorities (Jewish and Japanese people, respectively) during World War II, Carmichael urged the audience to beware the white power brokers: "They're setting up concentration camps for black people all over the country."[94] With rhetorical flourish, then, Carmichael attacked the existence and seeming maintenance of black ghettoes as internal colonies suffering under the weight of poverty, police brutality, and political marginalization. After his lectures, Carmichael left Baltimore, according to a staff member, because "this is a hostile town."[95]

Although it is impossible to chart a direct path, it is clear that some local Baltimore activists deployed idioms that mimicked those of more strident and nationally known black power activists such as Stokely Carmichael whose fiery speeches unsettled conservative and liberal white officials as well as numerous black civil rights leaders. Describing the urgency of black struggle in late 1960s' Baltimore, the local Target City director Danny Gant maintained, "It's no longer a thing of wrong and right—it's black and white. We're talking about the whites got it and the black got to get some."[96] Gant continued, "Ten years ago we were good little boys. Now we're angry black men. We're not asking. We're demanding.... A revolutionary force is growing. Those concentration camps are gonna be utilized."[97]

Becoming assertive men was a frequent refrain of numerous national and local male black power activists. In 1967, Baltimore Target City organizers established a youth training program at an east Baltimore gas station with a $121,000 U.S. Department of Labor grant, and they envisioned male leadership as central to this "centerpiece for progress."[98] Milton L. Holmes, the project director,

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maintained, "The 'Negro male . . . is still a developing concept among these ghetto youths. For that reason all nine project staff workers are Negroes, and all, except for one secretary, are male. We want them to respond to male leadership . . . and be males themselves."[99]

Similarly, in a CORE Target City newsletter, *Black Dispatch*, the editor Norman Carroll stated a critical "aim"—"upgrading the image of the black man in unity."[100] The issue's lead editorial, titled "Genocide (Mass Murder) American Style" and written by Carroll, targeted the Vietnam War and family planning centers as methods of "whitey and his power structure . . . to exterminate the Black people."[101] Talking to "Black Sisters," Carroll wrote, "Your main funtion [*sic*] in Life, is to mate with the male of your choosing . . . as the fruit of the seed bears child, whose future, have no boundaries. They will represent you, your family, centuries after you are dead physically, but your richly inspired traditions as a Black Mother, will forever live on."[102] On another page, the *Black Dispatch* asked "brothers and sisters"—"Are you ready?"—and then listed a series of "To . . . " responses.[103] They included the following: "To . . . TAKE YOUR PLACE AS MEN AMONG MEN?"; "To . . . respect your women as precious BLACK PEARLS?" and "To . . . our Sisters, inspiring your mates to total achievments [*sic*]?"[104] The kicker phrase at the end of the list, which also encouraged harnessing black "pride and dignity," "solidarity and unity," and "gainful econmics [*sic*]," was "Black Power."[105] At least in this iteration of black power politics authored by CORE Target City, black women, while seen as integral, did not escape the traditionally conceived familial, reproductive, and organizational roles gendered female.

Assertions of black manhood and male leadership represented only part of Baltimore's black power politics—and only for some organizations and activists. Of course, respect and dignity were critical goals for black female grassroots organizers, such as Rescuers from Poverty, but mating and bearing babies were neither articulated as the main function in their lives, nor as a primary item on their welfare rights activist agenda.[106] Other grassroots advocates vigorously promoted consolidating the black vote as a way of mobilizing inner cities—or urban concentration camps—to secure greater representation at the municipal and state level. In 1967, Clarence Davis, a twenty-four-year-old Morgan State College law student who was running as a Second District council candidate, removed himself from the political race to avoid ticket-splitting. The president of the east Baltimore Action Association, a group of college students, and co-chair of CORE-affiliated Northeast Community Project, Davis envisioned black power "not [as] the violence described in newspapers," but as the only way to achieve full equality and economic and political power. Nor did he view a hatred of whites as inherent to black power, saying "he has 'nothing against whites except the conditions I live under.' "[107]

Economic opportunities and fair housing remained hot button issues. The city council faced the introduction of a fourth open occupancy bill, the welfare department's rent subsidy program, the antipoverty agency's self-help housing program, and a parks and recreation bill that sought to include taverns in the public accommodations law.

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Seeking Power in Model Cities

Black power influenced activist organizing around government programs as well. Local strife over leadership and control over the programs of the Demonstration-Model Cities Agency provides a prime example of how black power demands, particularly for community control, shaped efforts at restructuring neighborhoods and city spaces. The Model Cities program was passed in 1966—after much wrangling at the federal level. White conservative politicians feared the program would be used to dismantle racial segregation in schools and neighborhoods, but were appeased when Congress in passing the law "specifically forbade Weaver from using [Model Cities] to promote integration."[108] Liberal politicians also questioned the program, claiming it would not do enough because it was woefully underfunded. In fact, Senator Robert F. Kennedy described the Model Cities program as "just a drop in the bucket for what we really need."[109] But for black community activists, this "drop in the bucket" program was worth fighting over in cities confronting poverty, a disintegrating infrastructure, and substandard housing and schools. Echoing the sentiment of maximum feasible participation and community control, these local black leaders demanded leadership roles in government programs administered in cities and control over desperately needed resources.

In an effort to secure a Model Cities planning grant, Baltimore officials began preparing a proposal to submit to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the program's federal sponsor. The HUD program emphasized the "social, economic and physical renewal of blighted neighborhoods," and according to Robert C. Weaver, the black secretary of HUD, an attempt "not to patch up the community but to uncover and deal with the root causes of its deficiencies."[110] Baltimore officials focused their attention on the central city areas of east and west Baltimore, which incorporated 103,000 people (45 percent of whom received public assistance), and boasted a 10 percent unemployment rate, a crime rate double that of the entire city's, as well as disproportionate substandard housing, infant mortality, and premature birth rates.[111]

Poor people and their representatives in U-JOIN quickly and publicly demanded a substantive say—or "policy power"—in structuring Baltimore's Demonstration-Model Cities proposal. In March 1967, U-JOIN director, Walter Lively told a *Baltimore Afro-American* reporter, "The group has had its fill of programs 'twisted by local politicians' until they bring nothing but more 'frustration to people who had been disappointed so many times in the past.'"[112] In a U-JOIN letter, activists expressed fear that the lack of representation by poor people would result in "nothing more than a junk heap of shattered hopes, broken promises and another grab bag for governmental big shots and traditional government agencies."[113] McCarty of Rescuers from Poverty declared that if poor people's ideas were not incorporated, they did not want the program. They also demanded that the Baltimore demonstration program include a formal mayoral and city council promise to abolish segregation in housing, employment, education, and public facilities, and a focus on employment and welfare alongside housing.[114] Nine months later, in November 1967, with the newly elected

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mayor Thomas D'Alesandro III in office, Baltimore became one of 63 cities (out of an original 193) to receive a Model Cities planning grant (worth $204,000 to Baltimore), and city officials announced that poor people would be involved in the process—"a marked shift from the committee of city officials which prepared Baltimore's application for the Federal funds."[115]

What role poor people would play exactly and how much control they would have in the Demonstration-Model Cities program remained a point of contention in Baltimore and elsewhere, including St. Louis and Rochester, New York.[116] In February 1968, a HUD report criticized Baltimore officials "for failing to meet standards for citizen participation."[117] Within ten days of learning about the report, a newly established coalition of about twenty civil rights, black power, and neighborhood organizations formed a "take-over" committee and demanded control of the local Model Cities Agency. It was not simply a matter of race—the director, Edgar M. Ewing, was black—but of class, representation, and neighborhood control. The coalition included U-JOIN, Activists for Fair Housing Inc., Rescuers from Poverty, SNCC, and CORE—all predominantly black organizations, many of which advocated poor and working-class people's interests in inner city neighborhoods.[118] Two former Baltimore CORE members, Walter P. Carter and Sampson Green, started Activists Inc. to press for fair and affordable housing. Green chaired the coalition's takeover committee.

The coalition held three meetings in three days with the mayor at the CORE Target City office on North Gay Street, located in the Model Cities program area. At the second meeting, coalition representatives demanded that D'Alesandro give the group "complete control over the appointment of salaried officials, the naming of community representatives and the establishment of all policy."[119] They warned that if the mayor denied their requests, the member groups would withhold their support and participation—a necessary requirement of HUD. When D'Alesandro refused to accept the coalition's terms and forty-five minutes turned into a ninety-minute meeting, CORE Target City director Danny Gant stormed out of the building, got into his car, yelled "we don't want it; we're going to destroy the program," and then threatened to go to Washington, D.C. to meet with HUD officials. An unidentified woman echoing the desire for poor black people to take control said to a white reporter in attendance, "We've tried it your way 400 years."[120]

The next day, D'Alesandro met with coalition leaders for the third time. By the end of this meeting, the parties reached an acceptable compromise. The mayor agreed to allow representatives of the poor to hire crucial personnel and to let the Baltimore coalition control the agency's community organizing division. D'Alesandro also proposed the formation of a policy steering board made up of representatives of Model Cities' neighborhood residents, community organizations, and city officials. This policy steering board would approve the agency's plans before submitting them to HUD. D'Alesandro stated, "I want to emphasize that the committee is to strive for the maximum participation of the poor at every phase in the planning of the Model Cities program."[121] Not quite a month later, Edgar Ewing even endorsed black power before a student audience at Johns Hopkins University in east Baltimore, but only so long as it "separate[s] itself

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from violence and separatism."[122] Ewing also stated in his speech—in which he also criticized colleges and universities for not helping to solve urban problems—that black power had "creative possibilities" such as promoting "self-help" and "self-respect."[123]

By September 1968, Baltimore became known, at least among some black power activists, as one of those cities where local community people successfully fought for control of its Model Cities program. At the Third International Black Power Conference in Philadelphia, Robert "Sonny" Carson declared that "Model Cities Programs, where Blacks are not in control of the policy-making apparatus, cannot effectively address themselves to the problems of the black community."[124] A radical CORE leader from Brooklyn, New York, Carson argued "that Black Power advocates did not 'want anything to do with the white power structure as it is now. I believe that capitalism has to be destroyed if black people are to be free.'"[125] In his statement during the conference, Carson continued, "Where federal, state, and local programs cannot be controlled, these, as well as other programs must be blocked. We have applauded the efforts of Black people in Newark, Bronx, Rochester, Baltimore, Philadelphia in their successful attempts at stopping all white model cities programs."[126]

Garnering local citizenry input and control over the Model Cities program, however, did not end the debates and disagreements in Baltimore. Even following the initial compromise that established the policy steering board and after the federal government's approval of a five-year Model Cities implementation program grant in January 1969, black activists and Baltimore officials, including Mayor D'Alesandro and city council president William D. Schaefer, continued to struggle over who ultimately should control the program as well as its direction. Edgar Ewing would leave the agency in January 1969 to manage an Inner Harbor redevelopment project, and Walter P. Carter (known as "Mr. Civil Rights" and a diehard advocate for poor people's representation, economic rights, and political power) already had become the Baltimore Model Cities agency's chief community organizer. Through all these changes, however, a crucial question remained: "Who is to run the program: City Hall or the people." In other words, "who will be working for whom?"[127]

1968

As governor and mayor, respectively, McKeldin and D'Alesandro had approached black power with relative composure, measured responses, and a willingness to sometimes relent to citizens' demands, of course, without fully ceding municipal power. Spiro T. Agnew, who succeeded McKeldin as Maryland's governor, however, responded with brashness and harshness to black activists' assertive demands, particularly expressing disdain for black power activists (no matter their particular definition of black power) and anyone who seemed to consort with them.[128]

In 1968, Agnew's civil rights coordinator, Dr. Gilbert Ware sent the governor a memo titled, "Your Image in Negro Community." Highlighting Baltimore

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activists' critical concerns such as welfare allowances, taverns, housing, and "your (to the militants) impersonality," Ware encouraged Agnew "to pay personal ostentation-free, visits to the ghetto."[129] The memo continued,

> Of the utmost importance is the Negro's, especially the black militant's, conceptualization of you as friend or foe. To this point, he has considered you to be his foe. Right or wrong, that is how it is, and we can expect hostility toward you to grow, especially in view of the recent newspaper articles which suggest that you overstated the case against Rap Brown.[130]

Apparently taken aback by Ware's assessment, Agnew sent his memo with a handwritten question on it to his Staff Steering Committee. "There is absolutely no way to overstate the case against Rap Brown. What is your analysis?"[131] Agnew had taken to frequently lambasting H. Rap Brown, head of SNCC, for a speech he had given in Cambridge, Maryland, in July 1967—following upon the heels of an NSRP rally. After Brown "called for an escalation of black liberation politics, explicitly sanctioning guerilla warfare as a political tactic," the crowd applauded feverishly.[132] That night in Cambridge, tensions mounted, resulting in a shooting, Brown leaving town, and fires burning down two city blocks while white firefighters, upon the orders of the police chief, watched from their trucks in a nearby shopping center. Agnew was appalled by Brown's fiery rhetoric—but apparently not the firefighters' and police chief's dereliction of duty—and blamed the SNCC leader and black power advocate for upsetting peace in his state. Agnew's staff committee told the governor that apparently Ware did not have a "clear understanding of the extent to which you are willing to recognize or work with the Negro militants."[133] They suggested Agnew meet with Ware to discuss Ware's performance, to clarify Agnew's views, and to tell Ware "if he has strong feelings in given areas, he should…present them in such a fashion as to suggest alternate courses of action for your consideration."[134]

A month later, in the wake of the 1968 rebellion, which exploded in Baltimore two days after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, Agnew unashamedly publicized his venom, not just at lawlessness, but at what he viewed as the black power roots of that lawlessness. He called out the National Guard and asked for federal troops. Then Agnew called a meeting with 100 black leaders, many of whom had been walking the streets trying to keep order. At the meeting, Agnew did not acknowledge the black leaders' peacekeeping efforts, but instead expressed his intense dislike of black radicalism and political confrontation.

Before Parren J. Mitchell, the former executive director of Baltimore's community action program and the city's first black elected Congressman, arrived at the meeting, he already knew what Agnew had planned to say. "The Press people had alerted me and I was frantic with calling people, saying, look get to him tell him to change that, drop it all together."[135] According to Mitchell, "Here you have the governor flanked by [Gelston] representing the military power, flanked by whoever the police chief was…and this great stage setting which was really interpreted by me and others as saying, 'I've got the might and the power.' That was the first thing that rubbed me wrong."[136] Sitting next to Rev. Marion Bascom,

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Parren Mitchell listened disgustedly, and when Agnew used the word "coward" to describe the assembled black leaders, Mitchell stood up and left. "Nobody calls me a coward, I don't care who it is. So at that point I was the first one up, out of the room."[137]

Agnew argued that "the looting and rioting which has engulfed our City during the past several days did not occur by chance. It is no mere coincidence that a national disciple of violence, Mr. Stokely Carmichael, was observed meeting with local black power advocates and known criminals in Baltimore on April 3, 1968—three days before the Baltimore riots began." Agnew did not address how this supposed meeting on April 3—a full day before King's unexpected assassination on April 4—resulted in "no mere coincidence" when the dismay and outrage of Baltimore residents exploded in rebellious turmoil.[138] Agnew also described Carmichael and Brown as "twin priests of violence" and "agents of destruction" and compared them with white supremacists and their organizations.[139] "They will surely destroy us if we do not repudiate them and their philosophies—along with white racists such as Joseph Carroll and Connie Lynch—the American Nazi Party, the John Birchers, and their fellow travelers."[140] He then called for black leaders to help, but told them "your help will be of little value if you did not know and subscribe to the objectives for which I seek it. We can do much together—little apart."[141] Agnew moved toward closure of his speech with the following words: "Let us promptly and publicly renounce any who counsel or condone violence."[142]

Moderate black civil rights leaders, who Agnew summoned to hear his speech while excluding others such as Walter Lively, fumed at the way Agnew talked down to them as if they were children. Outside Rev. Marion Bascom's Douglas Memorial Church, where black leaders met to devise a collective response, an unidentified minister said, "He's forcing us all to become militants.... We are the moderates who strove for a continuing dialogue for unity. I know for a fact, Agnew has not conferred with his own liaison man (Dr. Gilbert Ware) for over a month."[143] In their collective statement, leaders expressed "shock" at Agnew's "tone and fervor," his "audacity and temerity at directing such remarks to those assembled," and his attempts to "deliberately... divide us. We are all militantly against the continuation of a system which denies and demeans black people."[144] The statement called "upon all people of goodwill, black and white, to let the governor know that he failed to demonstrate enlightened and concerned leadership today and that he failed to divide the black community."[145] Looking back on the incident, Parren Mitchell stated, "I think that temporarily that Agnew confrontation provided the platform on which a much tougher, militant Black group, Black leadership could become... Had he not done this, and I'm not saying that it was right or wrong for that new tough Black militant group to emerge, but he provided a forum for it."[146]

Agnew's public statements erased the multivocal and multiorganizational character of Baltimore's black power politics through his public renderings of black militancy as singular, national, vile, and reactionary—a national politics for him akin to white extremism. He did not acknowledge the role that local black power activists and civil rights leaders played in stemming violence in Baltimore—in the past or present. He did not distinguish between the utterances

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of national and local black power activists. Nor did he differentiate among the politics of moderate black leaders and their more militant counterparts—even though black activists themselves often did. Agnew's public outrage and vilification of black militants would make him the darling of the Republican Party and the Richard M. Nixon presidential campaign.

By 1968 the seeds of black power activism were firmly planted and fertilized alongside rights struggles in Baltimore. CORE Target City, Baltimore CORE, welfare rights activists, U-JOIN, CIG, IMA, as well as the animated Black Panther Party mobilized with varying degrees of vigor in the city throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s.[147] And yet, while 1968 became a year popularly remembered for tumult in cities, in fact, an examination of how urban residents' material realities, the roots and concrete activist manifestations of movement ideologies, and the unexpected historical turns coincided reveal 1968 not only as a "year" many years (and arguably decades) in the making, but also as a fulcrum for grassroots and national political campaigns in the years to come.

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Notes

I would like to thank the following people for reading this chapter in its entirety and offering invaluable advice: David Goldberg, Peniel E. Joseph, Premilla Nadasen, and the participants of the Colgate 1968 conference.

1. Daniel Drosdoff, "Powell Bids Negroes Aid One Another," *Baltimore Morning Sun* (*BMS*), February 28, 1966, Folder: Problems—Negro Housing, 1965–1966, Box 5, Series VII, Citizens Planning Housing Association Papers (CPHA), University of Baltimore Archives (UBA), Baltimore, Maryland.
2. Ibid.
3. Richard H. Levine, "Black Power Top Issue," *BMS*, July 5, 1966, Folder: July–December 1966, Box 128 (Negroes) Series VI, Commission on Government Efficiency and Economy (CGEE), UBA.
4. "Black Power," *BMS*, July 6, 1966, Folder: Civil Rights, 1966, Box 3, Series VII, CPHA, UBA.
5. Yohuru Williams makes this very point in his article discussing Roy Wilkins and Black Power politics, writing, "Interestingly, it was not necessarily the term *power* but the use of the word *black* before it that made Wilkins uneasy. To be sure, Wilkins understood the implications of Black Power. Following Harry Truman's 1948 presidential victory, secured with robust Black electoral supports, Wilkins had commented, "The message was plain: White power in the South could be balanced by black power at the Northern polls. Civil rights were squarely at the heart of national politics." See, Yohuru Williams, "'A Red, Black and Green Liberation Jumpsuit': Roy Wilkins, the Black Panthers, and the Conundrum of Black Power," in Peniel E Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 172. Also see, Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), p. 19.
6. Levine, "Black Power Top Issue," *BMS*, July 5, 1966. Also, "Black Power," *BMS*, July 6, 1966, and "C.O.R.E.'s New Policy," *Baltimore Evening Sun* (*BES*), July 6, 1966, both in Folder: Civil Rights, 1966, Box 3, Series VII, CPHA, UBA. Also see Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 215–228.

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8. "C.O.R.E.'s New Policy," *BES*, July 6, 1966.
9. Bradford Jacobs, "Gray Power," *BES*, July 8, 1966, Folder: July–December 1966, Box 128 (Negroes) Series VI, CGEE, UBA.
10. Daniel Drosdoff, "C.O.R.E. Move Against War Is Expected," *BMS*, July 4, 1966, Folder: Civil Rights, 1966, Box 3, Series VII, CPHA, UBA.
11. "C.O.R.E.'s New Policy," *BES*, July 6, 1966.
12. Levine, "Black Power Top Issue," *BMS*, July 5, 1966.
13. CORE News Release, April 21, 1966, Folder 369—CORE, Box 499, S26, RG 9, BCA.
14. Rhonda Y. Williams, "Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power," *The Black Power Movement,* p. 84.
15. Numerous scholars have begun the work of documenting the tenor of Black Power struggles at the local level. See, for instance, essays in *The Black Power Movement*; Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Yohuru Williams, *Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Black Panthers in New Haven* (New York: Brandywine Press, 2000); Winston Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and the Black Struggle for Human Rights, 1960–1977* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) & Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Also see, Robert O. Self and Thomas J. Sugrue, "The Power of Place: Race, Political Economy, and Identity in the Postwar Metropolis," in Jean-Christophe Agnew and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *A Companion to Post-1945 America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002, 2006), pp. 20–43.
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50. Ibid.
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52. "Luthardt Ousted at School Hearing," *BAA*, May 7, 1966.
53. Ibid.
54. Lupo, "'Why Us?' For C.O.R.E. Target, Officials Ask," *BES*, April 15, 1966. Also, "Officials Meet on Ways to Stop New Rally-Riot," *BES*, July 29, 1966, Folder: July-December 1966, Box 128 (Negroes), Series VI, CGEE, UBA; Kenneth D. Durr, *Behind the Backlash: White Working-Class Politics in Baltimore, 1940–1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 131–134.
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60. "Racist Party Is Forbidden to Use Parks," *BMS*, July 30, 1966.
61. "Officials Meet on Ways to Stop New Rally-Riot," *BES*, July 29, 1966.
62. "Gelston Praised for Rights Work," *BMS*, June 22, 1966, Folder: January–June 1966, Box 128 (Negroes), Series VI, CGEE, UBA.
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64. "Racist Party Is Forbidden to Use Parks," *BES*, July 30, 1966.
65. George J. Hiltner, "States' Rights Aims Outlined," *BMS*, August 11, 1966, Folder: July-December 1966, Box 128 (Negroes), Series VI, CGEE, UBA.
66. George J. Hiltner, "Leaders Get 2 Years for Racist Rally," *BMS*, November 22, 1966, Folder: July–December 1966, Box 128 (Negroes), Series VI, CGEE, UBA.
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68. Wilbur Pinder Jr., "Negro Leaders See Quiet Summer," *BES*, April 19, 1967; John E. Woodruff, "Mayor Seeks to Cool Off Hot Summer," *BMS*, June 14, 1967; Robin Frames, "Rioting Here Is Doubted by Church, Rights Leader," *BES*, July 22, 1967; Oswald Johnston, "State, City Act to Head Off Violence," *BMS*, July 27, 1967; "Mayor Hopeful on Return of Racial Peace," *BES*, October 2, 1967; Philip Potter, "Mayor Tells of Means to Prevent Riot," *BMS*, October 6, 1967, all in Folder: 1967, Box 128 (Negroes), Series VI, CGEE, UBA.
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70. Drosdoff, " C.O.R.E. Move Against War Is Expected."
71. For a similar story on the evolution of black power politics in Los Angeles, see Jeanne Theoharis, "'Alabama on Avalon': Rethinking the Watts Uprising and the Character of Black Protest in Los Angeles," *The Black Power Movement*, pp. 27–53. In this essay, Theoharis discusses how the school board's inaction throughout the 1940s and 1950s in desegregating schools, and its passage of Proposition 14 that overturned the city's 1963 Fair Housing Act in 1964, made L.A. ripe for increased protests in the 1960s, including Watts in 1965. She argues that "Indeed, Black Power in Los Angeles evolved out of a genealogy that includes, rather than reacts to, what is often deemed 'civil rights protest'—out of mounting critique of racial liberalism by community activists in the city over three decades and an activist politics of confrontation that long preceded the uprising."
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75. Franklin, "Baltimore Vexing to CORE Campaign."
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99. Ibid.
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106. See Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing*, chapter 6; "Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power," in *The Black Power Movement*; "Nonviolence and Long Hot Summers: Welfare Rights Struggles in the 1960s" for *Borderlands E-Journal*, 4, no. 3, 2005. Access at: http://www.borderlandsejournal.adelaide.edu.au/vol4no3_2005/williams_welfare.htm; "We're Tired of Being Treated Like Dogs: Poor Women and Power Politics," *The Black Scholar*, Special Edition on *Black Power Studies: A New Scholarship*, Fall/Winter 2001, 31–41. Also see, Premilla Nadasen, *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005).
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