

CIVIL RIGHTS IN NEW YORK CITY
FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE GIULIANI ERA

Edited by
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Introduction: Civil Rights in New York City

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Since the 1960s, most U.S. history has been written as if the civil rights movement were primarily or entirely a southern history. Of course, this is incorrect. The fight for civil rights has always been a national struggle, although the historian Thomas Sugrue writes: “Most northern communities did not erect signs to mark separate black and white facilities. . . . Northern blacks lived as second-class citizens, unencumbered by the most blatant of southern-style Jim Crow laws but still trapped in an economic, political, and legal regime that seldom recognized them as equals.” Northern activists mounted campaigns to confront racial discrimination. “Throughout the twentieth century, black and white activists (and occasionally Latino and Asian allies, who were a minuscule segment of the region’s population until recently) rose to challenge racial inequality in the North.”¹ For many years now historians have been attempting to correct this view. My own contribution to this effort has focused on the struggle in New York City, through a history of the black churches in Brooklyn, a biography of one of the most prominent religious leaders in New York City, and a forthcoming history of the teachers’ union. I also coedited a survey history of the civil rights movement that emphasizes the national—both northern and southern—character of this ongoing struggle. One of the first chapters in that book discusses the fight for school integration in Boston in 1787.²

Of course, no one has been alone in this work. There is a new generation of scholarship rewriting our understanding of this history.³ *Civil*

Rights in New York City represents one of the first compilations surveying this effort. The chapters in this volume focus on this northern history from a New York perspective.

Brian Purnell points out that the focus on the South in civil rights scholarship prevents us from grasping the significant role that the civil rights movement in Brooklyn as well as other places in New York City played in persuading the political elites and even ordinary New Yorkers that racial discrimination was a reality in the Big Apple. In their challenge to the southern paradigm, scholars not only have questioned the 1954 starting date of the civil rights movement but have argued that voting rights, public accommodation, and integration were not the only goals of civil rights campaigns. Jeanne F. Theoharis, for instance, has argued that the northern wing of the movement embraced black economic empowerment and a fairer distribution of governmental services and resources. Campaigns outside the South, she argues, did not limit their approach to nonviolent protest but adopted self-defense, and some campaigns were influenced by Black Nationalism. Theoharis and other scholars of northern civil rights struggles also challenge the portrayal of the Black Power movement in the late 1960s as a force that derailed the "triumphant" struggle for civil rights. Periodization is also an important question in this literature. Some contend that the objective that would later be identified with the black freedom struggle of the late 1960s was evident in the late 1940s and 1950s. Not only have northern civil right studies been more geographically inclusive; they have also moved beyond the white-black dichotomy so pervasive in studies on the South and have turned to the plight and agency of other people of color, especially Latinos and Asians.

There are at least four important components noted by scholars studying northern civil rights. The first component was a secular left that included members of the American Communist Party. Communists, especially during the Popular Front years, pushed a far-reaching civil rights agenda. However, Communists were not the only leftists fighting for racial justice. Other members of the secular left included anti-Communist democratic socialists and social democrats. A good example is Bayard Rustin, who was the main organizer of the February 3, 1964, New York City School Boycott and who would later support the United Federation of Teachers in its battle against a black and Latino school board in Ocean Hill-Brownsville in 1968. Some historians have also noted the pivotal role of labor in civil rights campaigns outside the South.

A second component was liberalism. The Cold War was, in part, a war of propaganda between the capitalist and Communist nations. One of the strongest weapons in the propaganda war was the Soviet Union's charge that the United States violated the rights of millions of African Americans. This accusation challenged the United States' claim that it was the paragon of democracy. Concerned that the Soviet Union's accusation might have hurt its chances of winning the hearts and minds of nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, U.S. liberals embraced a civil rights agenda. President Harry Truman created a Committee on Civil Rights in December 1946. The purpose of the committee was to investigate the condition of civil rights in the United States and to make recommendations to protect those whose civil rights were being violated. The committee's report was titled "To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights." Its recommendations included the creation of a permanent commission on civil rights, equal opportunity in education, and a civil rights division of the Justice Department; protection against lynching; and the creation of a federal fair employment practices commission. By the early 1960s American liberalism had become the dominant political ideology in the United States. The administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson was responsible for the passage of two of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation of the twentieth century: the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.⁴ New York City's liberal government outlawed discrimination in housing and employment. It also provided public housing to the working class and poor.

Another important component of the northern civil rights movement was the religious community. Various religious communities, including ministers of different denominations and non-ministerial lay people, were at the fore, organizing and carrying out demonstrations. It was not just in the South but in many places outside that region that black churches became the center force of civil rights campaigns. Nightly meetings in churches became revivals where people heard eloquent speeches and sermons, sang freedom songs, gave testimony, and helped finance the movements. Moreover, many from the black religious communities joined and rose to leadership in the local chapters of civil rights and grassroots organizations. Two examples are Ella Baker and Milton Galamison.

A fourth component of northern civil rights campaigns was those who advocated Black Nationalism. Those goals attributed to Black Nationalists did not first appear in the late 1960s but were evident in earlier

civil rights campaigns such as the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" crusades in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York during the Depression years. Historian Peter Levy notes that black activists involved in a civil rights struggle led by Gloria Richardson in the early 1960s in Cambridge, Maryland, were willing—as Black Nationalists often advocated—to defend themselves and not turn the other cheek. Those activists had ties with Black Nationalists, including Malcolm X, and even decided not to integrate lunch counters in the city. In some cases the line dividing those advocating civil rights and those in favor of Black Nationalist objectives was blurred. A good example is Malcolm X's decision to publicly support the second citywide boycott of New York public schools in March 1964. Although he never moved away from Black Nationalism, he opposed school segregation and said he considered himself "aligned with everyone who will take some action to end this criminal situation in the schools."⁵ Undeniably, New York City was one of the most important centers of civil rights activities. Long before the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jr. helped launch the Harlem Bus Boycott of 1941.

Civil Rights in New York City is unique because it is the only anthology that focuses on the civil rights movement in New York City from such a variety of perspectives. The highly acclaimed *Freedom North*, edited by Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komози Woodard, examines a number of northern black freedom campaigns. The book has received a number of glowing reviews and has been cited by numerous scholars, indicating the interest in northern civil rights. However, there is little attention paid to New York in the work, and only one chapter on New York City, home to the largest black population in the United States. Moreover, no other northern city had the number of civil rights campaigns that New York did. In fact, some of the largest civil rights demonstrations took place in New York City, and these campaigns had a direct impact on national politics.

Civil Rights in New York City consists of ten chapters covering various aspects of the struggle in New York, from the role of labor to the struggle at the City University of New York. The first chapter takes a look at the New York City Teachers Union from 1942 to 1945, and how it connected civil rights to the war effort. The union had been fighting for racial equality since 1935, when the Communist Rank and File Caucus gained control of it. The union fought to eliminate racist textbooks from the public schools, promoted "Negro History Week," and put pressure on the Board of Education to hire black and Latino teachers. Some

scholars have argued that the TU was nothing more than a Communist Party front following the dictates of Moscow. As proof, they point to the World War II period, when, they allege, the union abandoned its struggle for civil rights in favor of Moscow's push for collective security. However, I argue that instead of moving away from the fight for racial equality, the union placed that struggle in the context of World War II, arguing that racism and racist attacks were undermining America's capability to defeat the Axis powers.⁶ According to the TU, fighting racism was every American's patriotic duty, and a necessity in the war effort.

Chapter 2 turns the reader's attention to Ella Baker's years in New York City working with the NAACP and the city's grassroots movement to force the city to integrate its public school system. Many scholars note Baker's efforts with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and her pivotal role in the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. However, few have examined her role in the freedom campaign in New York. Barbara Ransby points out that Baker was one of the most vocal grassroots leaders in the city, attempting to help develop leadership skills in ordinary men and women. This chapter explores Baker's involvement in the New York City branch of the NAACP and in the grassroots organization Parents in Action, challenging school segregation and police brutality. Ransby contends that Baker's involvement with grassroots movements and leaders at times challenged the cautious "go slow" politics of the national leaders of the NAACP. Her objective in New York, as it would later be in the southern civil rights struggle, was to increase the involvement of people on the ground level.

Many national civil rights organizations and their local chapters were active in New York City. Brian Purnell highlights one of the most active chapters, the Brooklyn branch of the Congress of Racial Equality, and its effort to address racial disparities in city services. A strong social contract provided city workers with high wages, benefits, and the right to collectively bargain as well as provided affordable housing and health care services for the working class and poor. New York developed a reputation as a bastion of liberalism. Its antidiscriminatory policies, however limited, helped the city acquire a similar reputation for racial liberalism. However, the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) questioned the reality of that reputation. Purnell examines the 1962 direct action campaign by Brooklyn CORE, a racially integrated membership organization, to force the city to provide better sanitation services to Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's largest black community. It was Brooklyn CORE that exposed the city's racially discriminatory policy on garbage removal and the intransigence of city officials to seriously address

those discriminatory practices and policies. Purnell details this community-wide campaign involving Brooklyn CORE activists and residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant and examines the campaign's larger impact on structural inequality in New York City.

Although scholars now argue that integration was not the major objective of northern civil rights campaigns and prefer to describe the struggle as a fight for "desegregation," Peter Eisenstadt maintains that integration was a pivotal objective of battles in New York City. In the fourth chapter, he examines the fight for racial equality in housing, investigating the attempt in the 1960s to integrate the largest middle-class housing cooperative in New York, Rochdale Village in South Jamaica. Eisenstadt notes that the housing integration effort in the city's third-largest black community brought together a coalition of leftists, liberal Democrats, moderate Republicans, pragmatic government officials, and business executives. He details how powerful city figures such as Robert Moses, New York City's commissioner of parks, and Abraham Kazan, president of the United Housing Foundation, helped create Rochdale, and he points out the crucial role played by residents of the housing cooperative in maintaining a racially harmonious community. Unlike some recent scholars of northern civil rights who questioned the view that Black Power derailed the civil rights movement, Eisenstadt distinguishes these two social protest movements by contending that the rise of Black Power sentiment in the late 1960s and 1970s undermined the experiment at Rochdale.

One of the most explosive civil rights issues in New York in the 1950s and early 1960s was school integration. A number of scholars have blamed militant civil rights activists for the failure of school integration. However, these scholars ignore the fact that white parents organized a grassroots campaign opposing any effort to integrate schools. Moreover, important segments of the liberal community of New York also publicly opposed school integration. While a great deal of attention has been paid to southern white resistance to school integration in the 1950s and 1960s, little has been said of the fierce campaign in New York City. Chapter 5 explores New York City's school integration battle of the 1950s and 1960s and the well-organized campaign to defeat a small effort at integration by the Board of Education.

The sixth chapter, "The Dead End of Despair: Bayard Rustin, the 1968 New York School Crisis, and the Struggle for Racial Justice" by Dan Perlstein, turns our attention to the labor movement in New York City in the late 1960s by exploring one of the leading figures of the civil

rights movement, Bayard Rustin, and his alliance with the moderately liberal United Federation of Teachers against black activists in the late 1960s. Perlstein takes on recent scholarship that contends that Rustin was consistent throughout his years as a leading civil rights strategist and theoretician. Perlstein depicts a Rustin who became quite pessimistic about the American people's willingness to accept racial equality and increasingly felt that they were willing to accommodate the system. By the late 1960s, the once left-wing organizer of the 1963 March on Washington was siding with the United Federation of Teachers against more militant community activists and black trade unionists, who insisted that community control of schools was a necessary goal for gaining racial equality. Unfortunately, the strike led to tragic results, dashing all hopes of an alliance between labor and New York's black and Latino communities, and helping shift city politics to the right.

Johanna Fernandez's "The Young Lords and the Social and Structural Roots of Late Sixties Urban Radicalism" looks at the post-migration experience of Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Chicanos, and Mexicans in New York, and the impact of deindustrialization on these new arrivals. At the same time that these new groups were arriving in New York, Chicago, and other northern cities, there was a rapid shift in these cities from highly industrial-based economies that provided workers with living wages to service-oriented economies that offered newcomers mostly low-paying jobs or permanent unemployment. The Young Lords Party, which originated as a Chicago youth gang, was formed in response to the changing economic landscape, police brutality, and racism faced by young Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and others. Fernandez contends that the YLP was also shaped by the social protest movements of the 1960s, in particular, the Black Panther Party. Contrary to social science literature that blamed the conditions of people of color on cultural deficits, the YLP placed the blame on structural inequalities caused by exploitative capitalism and a racist system that targeted people of color. Members of YLP were not reformists but revolutionary nationalists who recognized their African roots and called for Puerto Rican Independence from United States imperialist rule. They identified with the national liberation movements in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and concluded that revolutionary, not reformist, methods were needed to address the plight of the urban poor.

While a great deal of attention has been paid to the struggle to end racial disparities in elementary and secondary education, little has been written on the fight for racial equality in public higher education during the

1960s. In Chapter 8, Martha Biondi examines how black students at Brooklyn College and other branches of the City University of New York in 1969 led civil rights campaigns that helped redefine CUNY's mission and relationship with black and Latino communities in the city. The students fought to end the attempt by colleges to marginalize them and insisted that these institutions help remedy the impact of segregation and unequal education. The students' civil rights protest helped usher in open admissions, which resulted in larger numbers of blacks and Latinos gaining seats in the public colleges of New York, and eventually the expansion of the black middle class.

David Dinkins, the first black mayor of New York City, took office in 1990 when New York was undergoing a dramatic demographic shift. Between 1980 and 1989, 854,000 immigrants made New York City their home, spreading out to the five boroughs. The black population had the largest increase with 381,175, many of whom came from the Caribbean and almost half of whom moved to Brooklyn. This 17 percent increase brought the black population to 2,102,512. The number of Hispanics in the city grew by 281,797 to 1,783,511. The Asian population more than doubled, growing from 281,218 to over 500,000 and making up 7 percent of the city's population. More than half of the Asians lived in Queens and Brooklyn. One of the fastest-growing Asian groups in the city was Korean Americans. Throughout the 1990s, Koreans flocked to New York and became the third-largest Asian group in the city. By 2000 close to 91,000 Koreans resided in New York, over 63,000 of them living in Queens, 12,459 in Manhattan, and 7,392 in Brooklyn. This large influx of immigrants ensured that race could not be seen simply as black and white.⁷

After a series of racial incidents in the 1980s, David Dinkins came to office declaring that his administration would heal the racial divide in New York. However, two major incidents undermine Dinkins's image as a racial healer. The first involved the boycott of the Red Apple, a Korean business, by residents of a predominantly black neighborhood in Brooklyn after a young Haitian woman alleged that the owner of the store assaulted her. The second occurred in the predominantly black and Jewish neighborhood of Crown Heights when a Hassidic driver accidentally hit two black children, killing one of them. In response, a crowd of black youths killed a rabbinic scholar, leading to several days of racial unrest. Political scientist Wilbur C. Rich contends that Dinkins failed to communicate to the public the actions he took to settle the disputes. The media framed Dinkins as weak and incompetent. More importantly, the

Red Apple and Crown Heights affairs demonstrate the complexities of race in New York and the limits of electoral politics. The coalition that brought Dinkins to office overestimated his reach in white ethnic communities. Moreover, before these incidents there was little outreach to the new immigrant communities.

The media portrayal of Dinkins as a weak mayor who allowed black militants to run rampant throughout the city helped deny him a second term and led to the election of Rudolph Giuliani in 1993. In the last chapter, Jerald Podair focuses on the impact that Giuliani's policies had on New York's black residents. In particular, Podair looks at the "Broken Window" policies, workfare, and privatization of public services—all reflecting the mayor's vision of creating "one standard" for all New Yorkers. Podair argues that Giuliani programs reflected the vision of white ethnic groups who saw spending on social services to assist African Americans as anathema to equality. They argued that government should adopt "race-neutral" policies only, extending the same legal protections to all. But Giuliani's goal of establishing one standard for all New Yorkers conflicted with the goals of civil rights forces and others who had a more substantive definition of equality. They argued that equality of outcome, including access to employment, fair housing, an end to racial discrimination, and the "reallocation and equalization of resources in the City," was the true meaning of equality. According to Podair, Giuliani's one-standard policy, his inflammatory racial rhetoric, and his public backing of the police in high-profile killings of blacks failed to provide a definition of equality that could unite New Yorkers, leaving the city racially divided.

This book demonstrates that the struggle for civil rights in New York City has a long history and has been fought in a number of venues by numerous groups and individuals with a variety of political perspectives. Those political perspectives helped individuals and groups shape their approaches and objectives, from collaborating with elites to adopting revolutionary tactics. Several campaigns for racial justice covered in this work had an impact on both the city and the nation. *Civil Rights in New York City* provides a sample of the rich historical record of the fight for racial justice in the city, making it essential that scholars of civil rights pay greater attention to New York.

continue to perplex Americans committed to social justice. Neither Rustin nor the advocates of community control he opposed offer an ideological role model or map. The very choices that Rustin and his adversaries made demonstrate that, despite the continuities of history, we must make our own consequential choices in the context of our own day.

7

The Young Lords and the Social and Structural Roots of Late Sixties Urban Radicalism

JOHANNA FERNANDEZ

Against the backdrop of America's spiraling urban crisis in the late 1960s, an unexpected cohort of young radicals unleashed a dramatic chain of urban guerilla protests that riveted the media and alarmed Mayor John V. Lindsay's New York. From garbage-dumping demonstrations to a series of church and hospital occupations—termed “offensives” after the dramatic Vietnamese military campaign against U.S. forces in 1968 known as the Tet Offensive—this small interracial group exploded into the country's consciousness, staging its social grievances with infectious irreverence and distinctive imagination. They had enormous ideas, a flair for the dramatic, and a penchant for linking international crises with local concerns; within a few years this group of young men and women would reshape social protest and win an astounding number of victories. They called themselves the Young Lords.

This chapter explores the character and influence of protest movements in the late 1960s through a review of the emergence of the Young Lords Party (YLP) in New York, a self-proclaimed Puerto Rican revolutionary nationalist organization that consciously fashioned itself after the Black Panther Party (BPP) and ardently championed the independence of Puerto Rico.¹ Through most of its active life between 1969 and 1974, the YLP led militant community-based campaigns that addressed issues

of racism, incarceration and police brutality, employment, and inequality in education and public health, including sanitation, lead poisoning, access to decent health services, and hunger in the lives of poor children. The Young Lords was led by first- and second-generation Puerto Rican radicals raised on the U.S. mainland, rather than on the island. Its members were youths who were radicalized by the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s and whose political outlook was shaped by the social and economic crises that began to grip northern cities in the postwar period.

The history of militant urban activism in the late 1960s suggests that organizations like the Young Lords and the Black Panthers were spawned by the deep and unprecedented social and economic changes taking place in northern cities in the postwar period, and that their practices and politics were also tied to these developments. The history of the Young Lords Party challenges mainstream depictions of the civil rights and Black Power movements. It suggests that although racial inequality in America impelled the movement's emergence, the objectives and character of protest were integrally interwoven with grievances of social and economic import and driven by a strong class impulse.²

Before its emergence as a political organization, the Young Lords was a gang that had been active in Chicago since the 1950s and that emerged politicized in that city in the tumult of 1968.³ The primary architect of the Young Lords' political conversion was its chairman, Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez, who became politicized in prison after reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and the story of religious transformation told by Thomas Merton in his best seller, *Seven Storey Mountain*. Upon his release from prison, Jimenez was targeted by a War on Poverty program designed to bridge the transition from jail to civilian life for former inmates; he was also approached by a local activist, Pat Divine, who convinced Jimenez that he should join the struggle against urban renewal in the Lincoln Park section of Chicago, where the Lords were active. After a number of failed attempts at politicizing the Young Lords, members of Jimenez's gang heeded the call of activism following the fatal shooting of one of their own, Manuel Ramos, by an undercover police officer, James Lamb. In the weeks that followed, the Young Lords would be politically transformed by the campaign they would mount to bring Officer Lamb to justice.

In consultation with Panther leaders Fred Hampton, Bobby Lee, and Henry "Poison" Gaddis, Jimenez proceeded to turn the Young Lords

into the Panthers' Puerto Rican counterpart.⁴ Because of their established gang network, hundreds of young men and women joined the Young Lords Organization (YLO) and partook in their militant neighborhood protests against police misconduct and urban displacement in Chicago under the guise of urban renewal.

The example set by the Black Panther Party provided a compelling model of organization that was instrumental to the evolution of the Young Lords. Following the first wave of urban upheavals beginning in Harlem in 1964, the BPP's founding members resolved to organize the radicalized sections of poor and working-class African Americans. The BPP initiated a series of "survival programs" to address the immediate causes of the riots. The first of these was a civilian patrol unit to monitor police arrests and defend community residents against police aggression in east Oakland, California. Later, the Panthers added a children's breakfast program, an ambulance service, and a lead-poisoning detection program to their compendium of activities.⁵

Between 1968 and 1970, the Chicago YLO led a series of militant campaigns with a community-service approach akin to the Black Panther Party's survival programs. In Chicago, a city targeted by Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty initiative, the YLO established tactical alliances with social service organizations, community advocates, and government antipoverty programs. The Young Lords' protest actions included the occupation of the Armitage Church in Chicago following several failed attempts at convincing church leadership to allow the group use of the space to set up a day-care program and health clinic. Collaborating with other radical organizations and social service groups, the Chicago YLO successfully stopped an urban renewal plan for construction of middle-income homes in the city's west Lincoln Park neighborhood that would have displaced Puerto Ricans and other Latinos.⁶

The Puerto Rican radicals inspired the formation of sister organizations in other cities, the most influential of which was based in New York City. The New York Young Lords subsequently duplicated the organizing efforts of the Chicago group in Puerto Rican neighborhoods, including East Harlem and the South Bronx. In New York, the Young Lords Organization—later renamed the Young Lords Party—was initiated by politicized students in 1969. It flourished alongside the conflagrations of New York's city and labor politics in the late 1960s. These young men and women full of passion came of age during the racially divisive NYC teacher's strike of 1968, the school decentralization movements in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, recurrent housing struggles, the welfare-rights movement, the prison rebellions at the Tombs and Attica,

local street riots, and the rise of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos as an electoral force in the city.

The New York chapter of the Young Lords was founded by a bright and dynamic core of first-generation college students. While generations before them had been excluded from higher education on the basis of race and ethnicity, in the 1960s African American and Puerto Rican students began to matriculate at universities across the nation in record numbers, following the institutionalization, between 1964 and 1966, of special admissions opportunities for minority students.⁷ As newcomers into an inhospitable environment, many students of color found campus life to be politically formative as they were confronted with issues of campus discrimination, financial aid, and the narrow scope of their colleges' core curricula. The young people who founded the Young Lords Party in New York all formed part of a network of Puerto Rican and African American student activists across the city who were involved in campus struggles. Young Lords Iris Morales and Felipe Luciano were members of the Puerto Rican Student Union, which served as a clearinghouse of activity, coordinating the efforts of the various Puerto Rican student groups emerging in colleges across the city.⁸ One of the major strategists of the organization, Juan Gonzalez, was a member of Students for a Democratic Society and a leading member of the coordinating committee of the Columbia Strike of 1968.

The core group of young people who initiated the launch of a New York chapter of the Young Lords were brought together and transformed by the experimental project in college education at State University of New York at Old Westbury, which rigorously pursued diversity, an innovative curriculum, and a structure of democratic practice that incorporated faculty and students in college governance. A number of them, including Denise Oliver, Mickey Melendez, and David Perez, had been identified by recruiters at Old Westbury because of their roots in socially conscious community work and associations with the Real Great Society, a government antipoverty program in East Harlem. Eventually, these young men and women became part of a network of activists who formed a precursor to the Young Lords called the Sociedad de Albizu Campos (SAC). Organized and led by Mickey Melendez, SAC was a reading circle named after the father of the Puerto Rican national independence movement, Don Pedro Albizu Campos, and composed of students who were interested in Puerto Rican history and the politics of Puerto Rico's national liberation movements.⁹

Through their readings and activities with the SAC, these students entered a markedly different stage in their political evolution that would eventually lead to a full-fledged embrace of revolutionary nationalism. Within this tightly knit network of budding revolutionaries of color, many were Puerto Rican but a number were African American. What they shared, however, trumped race: They knew each other intimately, they had grown together politically, and they were looking to make their mark where they were. At the same time, a number of SAC members, including Robert Bunkley and Pablo Guzmán, who was a recent arrival from a study-abroad program where he witnessed the tragedy of student protests in Mexico in 1968, were increasingly interested in the Black Panther Party.

As tens of thousands of students began to question the logic and structure of American society, many groups began to look outside the university to poor communities for more permanent sites of struggle. The SAC was especially influenced by the concept of "community control" in New York following the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school controversy, which, combined with the black movement's ardent call for independent black political power bases, inspired its members to connect ideological discussions with activity in the Puerto Rican community of East Harlem. At the urging of Mickey Melendez, the SAC made contact with prominent Puerto Rican student activists in the city, including Columbia University Strike Committee member Juan Gonzalez and Felipe Luciano, a member of the Last Poets, the Harlem-based group of Black Power-era artists whose politically charged live-music and spoken-word poetry performances in the 1960s prefigured the emergence of hip hop and rap in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the spring of 1969, an interview with Jimenez in the Panther newspaper, *Black Panther*, drew the attention of a number of members of the SAC.¹⁰ Of particular interest to SAC members was Jimenez's statements concerning the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.¹¹ In response, a small group of SAC members decided to drive to Chicago to learn more about the Young Lords. After convening with Cha Cha Jimenez and securing permission to launch a chapter of the YLO back home, the New York radicals, who were eager to connect theoretical understandings of power and politics with urban community organizing as the next phase in the movement, reported back with excitement on the mission and work of the Chicago group.

After learning from Jimenez about other radical New York groups attempting to make inroads among Puerto Ricans in that city,¹² members

of the SAC called on a preexisting Lower East Side YLO and an East Harlem photography workshop for inner-city youths with whom the East Side group had been collaborating to discuss merging the three groups into a New York chapter of the Young Lords Organization.¹³ The New York Lords announced their formation on Saturday, July 26, 1969, at the East Village's Tompkins Square Park.¹⁴ Before long, they were duplicating the organizing efforts of the Chicago group in East Harlem and the South Bronx.

Although the stated political goal of the Young Lords was the liberation of Puerto Rico, the group's first two years were consumed with the social and economic grievances of Puerto Ricans in urban communities on the mainland. The group's nationalist orientation and Puerto Rican identification obscured the Young Lords' diversity: Approximately 30 percent of the organization's membership was composed of African Americans and non-Puerto Rican Latinos.¹⁵ The fact that the Young Lords garnered support outside their ethnic group for their nationalist agenda is testament to the legitimacy of their claim and its parallels in anticolonial postwar struggles. In New York, the ethnic crossover imprinted in the Young Lords' membership was also incubated in the shared experiences of African Americans and Puerto Ricans in the city. These groups came to develop a unique relationship shaped by both groups' condition before the dominant society as racialized and colonial subjects.¹⁶

Their most famous campaign was their audacious garbage-dumping protests, which forced the city to conduct regular neighborhood garbage pickups. A quieter but more significant victory was their anti-lead-poisoning campaign, which was instrumental in the passage of anti-lead-poisoning legislation in New York during the early 1970s. At Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, the Young Lords were among the first activists to challenge the advent of draconian spending cuts and privatization policies in the public sector.

Because Puerto Ricans were relatively new arrivals in New York, the emergence of an organization as dynamic as the Young Lords became the subject of hundreds of articles in local news publications, including the *New York Times*. As recent arrivals, Puerto Ricans were not expected to assert themselves in such a dramatic fashion. In fact, according to various *New York Times* articles, in the postwar period, Puerto Ricans were viewed as a "mild mannered" people. One of the questions raised by mainstream depictions of Puerto Ricans as mild mannered is, What

accounts for the discrepancy between the way they were perceived upon their arrival and the aggressive and radical examples of protest that emerged within a section of Puerto Ricans in the late 1960s?

Riots were the single development that most influenced the emergence of northern urban radicalism in the 1960s. In 1966, over twenty-four cities went up in flames. That same year, Puerto Ricans rioted in Chicago. And the day before the Detroit riots of 1967, Puerto Ricans rioted in East Harlem.¹⁷ In addition to the riots, the failure, in the 1960s, of liberalism and its inability to posit solutions to social problems that corresponded to their magnitude also opened the door to revolutionary critiques of the urban crisis.

In 1966 and 1967, Puerto Ricans were the major protagonists in riots that swept through East New York and East Harlem. Detonated in each case by the police shootings of Puerto Rican civilians, these riots marked a turning point for Puerto Ricans in New York. They revealed the extent of civil rights injuries for minority groups other than African Americans. So shocking was the violence that it opened up the possibility of reformulating a public debate that the mainstream media had largely cast in black and white.

On the night of July 23, 1967, approximately twenty-four hours after the most extensive riots of the 1960s began in Detroit, the predominantly Puerto Rican neighborhood of East Harlem was roiled in violence. That night the police intervened in a common weekend brawl between two men in East Harlem. Renaldo Rodriguez, one of the men involved in the knife fight, was shot and killed by police officer Anthony Cinquemani. According to the police report, when Cinquemani and his partner approached the scene, Rodriguez lunged at the off-duty officers in street clothes with his knife. In response, patrolman Cinquemani drew his revolver, identified himself, and shot an allegedly un subdued Rodriguez repeatedly in the chest.¹⁸

In East Harlem during the 1960s, the fatal shooting of a civilian by a police officer was not uncommon. What was unusual was the violent conflict that immediately ensued between residents of East Harlem and the police. While poor communities in many northern cities were at the breaking point, East Harlem was a neighborhood of relatively new migrants. Nonetheless, in the three days of unrest that followed the shooting of Rodriguez, thousands of mainly Puerto Rican youths took to the streets. On the night of the shooting, about four hundred African American and Puerto Rican residents congregated at the intersection of 111th Street and Third Avenue, hurling rocks and bottles at the police.

The melee led to the sealing of traffic in twenty-four city blocks, and to the deployment of approximately 160 helmeted police and three busloads of officers from the Tactical Patrol Force, a special riot-control unit notorious for its abuse of power in Harlem, East and West.¹⁹

As mandated by state law, the mayor visited the scene of the riot, attempting to defuse the violence by talking to crowds of youths who were rapidly congregating on street corners. In these impromptu forums, the mayor asked the community to form a committee of Puerto Ricans with whom he would meet at Gracie Mansion to hear their grievances. In the meetings later that day, a group of young Puerto Rican leaders affiliated with various antipoverty programs achieved a compromise with the mayor and the chief of police. The leaders would help restore order in exchange for the temporary decommissioning of the infamous Tactical Patrol Force.²⁰

However, the truce was called off when a second wave of more intense rioting began less than twenty-four hours after the first eruptions. From tenement windows, Molotov cocktails and all manner of refuse were pitched at the police, while youths hurled bricks and garbage cans in open street confrontations with over one thousand police reinforcements dispatched to disperse the rioters.²¹ Day two brought approximately seven straight hours of rioting. The young people involved exhibited a naked and taunting hostility toward the police. On the third and final day of the crisis, the riots spread to Puerto Rican neighborhoods in the South Bronx. In total, four Puerto Ricans were killed, all with the .38 caliber bullets used in police guns.²²

During and following the East Harlem riots, a consensus emerged among civic groups, the mayor, the media, and even sections of the police department that the upheaval was not simply an eruption of lawlessness. In their actions, participants isolated particular grievances, and demands were sketched out spontaneously by the insurgents. The reality of these events challenged mainstream interpretations of the riots of the decade as anarchic. Although there was some looting, the violence in East Harlem was unequivocally directed at the police. Moreover, media coverage of the event suggests that fighting often intensified when the Tactical Patrol Force patrolled the streets. Reports of rioters congregating on street corners, of improvised soapbox speeches at different junctures in the course of the riots, and of groups of youths running through the streets with Puerto Rican flags point to the complex political character of the East Harlem riots. In one instance a man mounted a lamp pole,

“made a short speech in Spanish about Puerto Ricans fighting in Vietnam and said, ‘Something is owed to us.’”²³ Moreover, in the course of the upheaval, residents continually pressured politicians, police officials, and antipoverty workers making appeals for peace to order the removal of policemen stationed on rooftops. But this was not enough. The mood in the streets suggested that people wanted meaningful control of their neighborhoods and their institutions, a sentiment captured earlier in the decade by the idea of Black Power. One group drew a line in chalk just above 110th Street and over it wrote: “Puerto Rican border. Do not cross, flatfoot.”²⁴

The rebellion was as much an indictment of the police as an assertion of Puerto Rican rights. Yet as recent arrivals, Puerto Ricans were not expected to assert themselves in such dramatic a fashion, especially in light of their inexperience with New York City life. However, Puerto Ricans settled in the poorest sections of northern cities in the 1950s and 1960s at a moment of heightened racial segregation and economic displacement, and such conditions certainly fueled the riots of 1967. Moreover, such an audacious act of protest was made possible by the rebellious mood of the times. Puerto Ricans settled in northern cities as the civil rights movement successfully infused the national political debates on poverty and race in America with a new urgency. The timing of Puerto Rican migration, and the spread of the civil rights movement to northern cities, among other factors, would have an impact on the political identity of Puerto Ricans and their disposition for protest.

The Puerto Rican riots pointed to the growing disconnect between Puerto Rican leaders in the War on Poverty programs and the rank and file of the Puerto Rican community, which was moving increasingly to the left amid the struggles of the 1960s and in light of its own direct experience with the urban crisis. News reports suggest that there was a discrepancy between the political outlook of rioters and that of the antipoverty community organizers who attempted to quell the violence. Amid the rioting, one antipoverty worker remarked, “Tell a kid you’re putting \$1 million [in the poverty funds] and he says ‘that’s got nothing to do with me.’”²⁵ While traditional Puerto Rican leaders called for moderate measures—such as the integration of the police department and racial sensitivity training—the sentiment of deep discontent on the streets demanded a more far-reaching social platform, such as that offered by, among other radical organizations, the Black Panther Party, which linked economic conditions with political agency. Determined to establish a foothold in the antipoverty bureaucracy, however, many Puerto

Rican leaders failed to appreciate that the ire in the Puerto Rican community was fueled by social and political problems requiring much deeper reforms than those offered by the Great Society programs.

But local politicians were not in a position to prescribe enduring solutions to broad social problems. Their immediate work often revolved around managing volatile situations and outbursts of discontent. In New York, Mayor John Lindsay established "Little City Hall," which sought to bring organic leaders at the neighborhood level into City Hall and municipal government. According to the mayor, disturbances could be avoided through the cessation of "alienation [of various groups and communities] through greater contact" with responsive government officials. The "purpose was to tap street-level activists, including gang members, and enmesh them in a series of relationships with the administration."²⁶

Mayor Lindsay's attempts to address urban discontent came also in the form of his famous walking tours of poor neighborhoods. These tours were intended to earn him the goodwill of the city's growing and increasingly isolated African American and Puerto Rican residents, to counteract feelings of "powerlessness" among the poor, and to give them a sense that the mayor was personally invested in solving their problems. In 1967, the mayor's office established "the summer task force," raised close to \$1 million from corporate sponsors for summer programs, identified thirteen official trouble spots, and assigned members of his staff to coordinate responses to minor neighborhood complaints requiring the fixing of potholes, building of parks, removal of abandoned cars, and the like.²⁷ The very names of these programs were an indication of how the city's liberal administration understood the problems before it and how grossly inadequate they were in addressing the city's deep social problems. Mayor Lindsay's summer task force included the following programs: Operation Bookmobile (in Bedford-Stuyvesant); Harlem Cultural Festival; Operation Puerto Rican Repertoire Theatre; Operation Summer Jobs for Youth; Operation Sports Rescue (with the New York Knicks); Operation Plane Ride; and Operation Beat the Heat, which offered two thousand weekend bus trips to beaches, airports, and state parks in the summer of 1967.²⁸

These programs fit with the liberal notion that at core the problems experienced by urban communities of color were tied to lack of opportunity and exposure to aspects of a white middle-class lifestyle. Missing from Mayor Lindsay's assessment of and prescription for the problems confronted by communities of color was an understanding of northern

poverty and racism that identified its structural and economic dimensions: increased segregation in housing, consciously segregated public schools, an ailing public health care system, a disfigured landscape, structural unemployment, and poverty wages in the sectors that were employing people of color (as nurses' aides, orderlies, porters, cooks, elevator operators, and laundresses) in the hospitals, restaurant and hotel trades, and New York's declining postwar manufacturing industry.²⁹

The urban riots that exploded across the country in the latter half of the 1960s were a bold reminder of the class divisions in American society. These rebellions were a raw manifestation of the anger and political disenchantment of racial minorities in the postwar North. They dramatized the conditions of de facto racial apartheid, police brutality, and economic depression in communities of color. Moreover, the riots demonstrated that racial conflict was not solely a southern phenomenon and were a stark symbol of the crisis of credibility suffered by northern liberals. The riots expressed the sentiment already developing among civil rights workers in the South: that racial and economic inequality were a structural feature of American society, and that nothing short of a full-scale rebellion would bring about an equitable social order.

In many ways, this logic was right. In the South, white supremacists were at the helm of a renegade and anachronistic system of racist segregation that had, by the 1950s, become marginal to the American political and economic structure and therefore could now be defeated after a century of struggle. However, in the North, problems were more structural and entrenched in the very fabric of the system and therefore required changes of revolutionary proportion. After World War II, northern cities became more segregated by race and more divided by class than ever before in the history of the cities.³⁰

First, World War II encouraged a mass migration of people of color into the cities because during the war the economy was cranked up to maximum capacity for the war effort. African Americans from the South, Puerto Ricans from Puerto Rico, Mexicans from Mexico, and Chicanos and Native Americans from the Southwest traveled to northern cities in search of wartime jobs. The process of suburbanization, which happened simultaneously, encouraged the departure of whites from the cities. In many ways, the urbanization and proletarianization of otherwise rural people gave them confidence, improved their wages, and gave them a sense of their power in numbers. This migration to the cities fueled the civil rights movement.³¹

In the case of Puerto Ricans, the transfer of more than one-third of Puerto Rico's population to New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia between 1943 and 1960 engendered a unique generation of mainland-identified Puerto Rican youths. As sons and daughters of the postwar migration, their consciousness was shaped by an unlikely combination of politicizing experiences, from the rise of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War to their own experience in an urban setting beset by industrial decline and greater economic and racial segregation. The convergence of Puerto Rican migration with the rise of the civil rights movement, in particular, had a profound impact on the racial consciousness of the children of Puerto Rican migrants. Among other developments, this process gave birth to an organization with the kind of politics held by the Young Lords Party, which would insist that Puerto Ricans and African Americans shared common political and economic interests.

However, with the end of the war came a long-term process of structural changes in the economy of northern cities. A process of deindustrialization took hold that created a sizable class of *permanently* unemployed and discouraged young workers—a completely new development in modern urban history. The consequences for the newcomers were devastating. The industrial base of the cities, which until then had provided stable and consistent employment to new arrivals, was now evaporating just as African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Native Americans began to migrate into the cities in large numbers as a result of the wartime labor demands of WWII. People of color were disproportionately affected by these new changes. The situation was such that the Bureau of Labor Statistics began to publish a series of reports in the 1960s on the changes underfoot in the labor force of New York City. These reports articulated a concern over groups of predominantly African American and Puerto Rican men in their prime working years who were living in New York's poorest slums. Among Puerto Rican, African American, and white men, lack of job activity was highest among Puerto Ricans. In 1966, 47 percent of Puerto Ricans in New York were either unemployed, underemployed, or permanently out of the labor force for lack of success finding employment.³² In Chicago, 22 percent of industry moved to the suburbs between 1950 and 1977.³³ And city conditions were further worsened by tax-base erosion, which exacerbated the disrepair of the urban environment after the Depression.

These conditions, combined with police brutality and northern racism on the one hand, and on the other the raised expectations of change produced by migration and by the southern civil rights movement—

alongside very little real progress—led to the riots. The riots were a call to action for radicals. They suggested to many that the anger of the riots, if organized, could lead to social change.

These conditions also influenced the character of organizations like the Young Lords. It is no surprise, in the context of a postwar urban economy that for the first time in modern urban history had created a class of permanently unemployed urban dwellers, that radical organizations like the Young Lords and the Black Panthers would launch a critique of this development. Nor is it surprising that, at the same time, they would decide to organize what they called the "young lumpen proletarian cats," referring to a term coined by Karl Marx to describe the permanently unemployed and discouraged workers living on the margins of society. Radical grassroots movements that were cohering in the second half of the decade reflected the distinctive social features of the urban environment in which these movements emerged. The urban movements built by the Young Lords and BPP, and others, emerged out of and were a response to the new technical structures of capitalism in the form of automation and modernization in the second half of the twentieth century. Thus, these young militants were reacting to special conditions at the same time that they were trying to make sense of them.³⁴

In the cities the burden of the kind of poverty that was being produced in the postwar period was disproportionately borne by people of color, especially the young men among them. Yet in the public discourse of the 1960s, urban poverty was increasingly seen as a racial phenomenon rather than as a product of the postwar, structural transformation of the cities. Increasingly, racist theories about the dysfunctionality of the African American family and the propensity for violence among African American and Latino males came to explain the causes of the new urban crisis. In their papers and in their public meetings, organizations like the BPP and the YLP challenged quite sharply the bankruptcy of these theories.

In fact, contrary to the static narrative of the postwar urban crisis as a force that prostrated communities of color, the local histories of the Young Lords and the Black Panthers suggest that they were among the first to identify the causes of and launch a fight back against what we know today as the urban crisis. At the same time, the increased racism in mainstream political debates about the origins of the urban crisis, coupled with the increased racial segregation in the cities—that people of color were moving in and whites were moving out—made an interracial struggle with white Americans very difficult to imagine.

The material basis of the traditional call for black and white solidarity was evaporating. Instead, dramatic action was created by polyglot groups birthed by the increasingly multiethnic character of the American ghetto. Moreover, demographic changes shaped the nationalist political orientation of people of color in the cities. The organizations coalesced on the basis of race and ethnicity, reflecting the residual racial configuration and ideology of the old racial structures in America, but on the ground in their racial makeup and composition, they were a harbinger of things to come: The Young Lords reflected the diverse racial and ethnic makeup of the postmodern city, of which Los Angeles is the best example.

Despite its largely Puerto Rican membership and professed Puerto Rican nationalism, the organization possessed a rare multiracial and multiethnic composition. Operating in the interstices of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the YLO attracted Chicanos and African Americans, as well as other Latinos. According to Iris Morales, former member of the YLP and producer of the documentary film on the Young Lords, *¡Palante, Siempre, Palante!* "activists who had participated in the civil rights, Black liberation, and cultural nationalists movements joined." Puerto Ricans were a majority of the members, but African Americans "made up about 25 percent of the membership. Other Latinos—Cubans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Panamanians, and Colombians—also joined. One member was Japanese-Hawaiian."³⁵

Most importantly, non-Puerto Rican members were not merely passive participants in the organization but were integral to its lifeblood. Denise Oliver, an African American, was the first woman elected to the Young Lords' central committee. Pablo Yoruba Guzmán, one of the founders of the New York group and member of the central committee, was of Afro-Cuban parentage, and Omar Lopez, the major strategist of the Chicago YLO, was Mexican American.

With a formal leadership in New York largely composed of Afro-Latinos, and with African Americans making up fully one-quarter of its membership, YLP members launched one of the first Latino political formations that identified with the Black Power movement, that saw itself as part of the African diaspora, and that was instrumental in theorizing and identifying the structures of racism embedded in the culture, language, and history of Latin America and its institutions. Iris Morales, Felipe Luciano, and Denise Oliver were among the members of the organization who initiated the work of analyzing racial identification and racial formation in Latin America and the specific historical circumstances and comparatively different economic and political contours within which racism emerged in that continent.

But material conditions alone do not a radical movement make. The conditions outlined above, combined with northern racism and police brutality on the one hand and on the other the example set by organizations such as the Black Panther Party, were instrumental in fueling a radical movement. The riots functioned as a call to action for radical activists. After the riots, radicals understood that militant action alongside a radical analysis of the problems of American society could influence a wide spectrum of working people. The emergence of the Black Panther Party in 1966 was the most dramatic example of this development.

The Black Panther Party was compelling because it articulated in simple and uncompromising language the totality of political and economic grievances with which African American northerners had been concerned since the start of the civil rights movement during World War II. Their platform read as follows: "We want the power to determine the destiny of our Black Community. . . . full employment for our people . . . an end to the robbery by the white man of our black community . . . decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings . . . education . . . an immediate end to police brutality . . . clothing, justice, and peace."³⁶ The BPP's survival programs and their dramatic civilian patrol unit was a brilliant application of their politics because these addressed the causes of the riots in both economic and political terms. What was different about the BPP was that it combined concrete community-based organizing with an overarching critique of capitalism and a critique of the role of the state, a combination that had not previously been articulated decisively by any civil rights organization. Their critique of the state was critical because it tapped into a major trend within the movement wherein the state was a key focal point and target of protest. Sixties activists criticized and protested against government repression, against poor municipal services, against urban renewal, against the warfare state, against the state's control of women's bodies, against legal and state-sponsored forms of racial and ethnic oppression, and against the forms of punishment instituted by the state, as with the prisoner takeover of the Attica prison.³⁷ This moment gave birth to a rights-consciousness movement, in which the state was challenged on its violations of the rights of individuals.

The BPP also proposed an alternative view of how society might be organized on the basis of more humane priorities. They called themselves socialists. The Black Panthers then, did three important things: They engaged in a kind of organizing that connected with the anger and conditions of African Americans and other minorities in urban centers; they

articulated a theoretical analysis of the urban crisis; and they put forth an alternative vision of society. Because the BPP accomplished these three things, the organization gave northern protests a deeper purpose and meaning at precisely the time when radicalization was becoming widespread.

In essence, the BPP established a model of organizing that captured the imagination of urban dwellers and that awakened many other radical movements, especially among groups with a history of racial oppression in this country. Today, however, the Black Panther Party is maligned and not accorded its proper place in history and we know very little about the movements that it inspired. These included not just the Young Lords but also the Revolutionary Union Movement, the Brown Berets, the Health Revolutionary Unity Movement, I WOR KUEN, the Young Patriots, the American Indian Movement, and many others.

Building on that momentum, in the late 1960s, the Young Lords captured the political imagination of a growing number of Puerto Ricans in New York and dramatized the problems of poor African American and Puerto Ricans. Beginning in 1969, the Young Lords in New York engaged in a fast-paced course of dramatic and media-savvy campaigns and established branches in the Bronx, East Harlem, Brooklyn, the Lower East Side, Hartford, Bridgeport, Newark, Camden, and Philadelphia.³⁸

The first campaign was the Garbage Offensive, a campaign protesting irregular sanitation services in East Harlem and the absence of garbage cans on street corners in that neighborhood. They called attention to the problem by sweeping the streets and clearing empty lots and erecting traffic barriers at major intersections with the garbage they collected. Thus, they stopped traffic for blocks on end, attracted the attention of thousands of local residents, created a public town-hall meeting effect, and in the process captured the attention of local officials. Their demonstrations were covered heavily by the media in the summer of 1969 and contributed to making sanitation a major issue in the run-up to the mayoral election of November 1969. The group successfully exposed the city for not deeming Puerto Ricans and African Americans worthy of city services.³⁹

A quieter and lesser-known campaign was their Lead Offensive. In the fall of 1969, the Young Lords launched a campaign to combat lead poisoning among children. In collaboration with medical residents, nurses, and hospital staff at Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem, they

launched a door-to-door testing drive and used press conferences to publish their results: 30 percent of the children they tested were lead positive. The Young Lords had launched their initiative after the nearly fatal case of Gregory Franklin, an African American boy who lived in a building with over one hundred housing violations. The militants held sit-ins at the Department of Health, leafleted in East Harlem, and used the media to expose government inaction. In 1974, the *Journal of Public Health* credited the Young Lords and their activism with the passage of anti-lead-poisoning legislation in the city. This was the first campaign in what became the Young Lords' crusade for medical rights for poor African American, Latino, and Asian city dwellers.⁴⁰

In December 1969, the Young Lords took over the First Spanish Methodist Church in East Harlem and turned it into a social service sanctuary for the poor. They used everything at their disposal to illustrate their cause. At a press conference, a Young Lord explained: "People who claim to be Christian have forgotten that it was Jesus who walked among the poor, the most oppressed, the prostitutes, and drug addicts of his time. That it was Jesus who said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."⁴¹

Then, in the summer of 1970, they did the unthinkable and occupied Lincoln Hospital, with the blessing of a radical flank of doctors. The Young Lords' efforts advanced swiftly from discreet one-on-one conversations with patients and employees concerning hospital conditions to a dramatic twelve-hour occupation of the Nurses Residence, a building that formed part of the Lincoln complex and had in an earlier era housed the first nursing school for African American women in the United States and had been a stop in the underground railroad. The Young Lords were also continuing the work of the BPP and various other activists who, in the winter of 1969, spearheaded a battle over control of the community mental health clinic affiliated with Lincoln. The Young Lords' occupation dramatized Lincoln's deplorable conditions, and the crisis at Lincoln Hospital became a major item in the city's political debates. The whirlwind of controversy was recorded in over one hundred mainstream and alternative news articles.⁴² As a result, government officials were forced to find ways to improve care in the public hospitals. The Young Lords were among the first activists to challenge the advent of draconian reductions in social spending on public hospitals and privatization policies in the public sector. Their actions

eventually led to the creation of one of the principle acupuncture drug treatment centers in the Western world at Lincoln.⁴³

At their best, the Young Lords demonstrated a willingness and keen ability to read the pulse of local communities, identify issues significant to them, and adapt their work and campaigns accordingly. They were also especially successful at building coalitions with health professionals in East Harlem and the Bronx. Their ability to link local concerns with international causes was effective and allowed them to tap into the broader concerns of the period. Their creative tactics and brilliant use of the media was also critical to their success and popularity.

They were also courageous in taking the best ideas of the Black Power and women's movements to expose and challenge gender inequality, homophobia, and color prejudice among Latinos. The group's commitment to the struggle against racism and their insistence that poor African Americans and Latinos shared common political and economic interests was core to their work. Although Puerto Ricans as a group did not necessarily identify with African Americans, upon their arrival on the U.S. mainland many Puerto Ricans encountered many of the same racial barriers as did African American southerners migrating to northern cities in the postwar years. The convergence of Puerto Rican migration with the rise of the civil rights movements had a profound impact on the racial consciousness of the children of Puerto Rican migrants. For example, numerous members of the Young Lords considered joining or were members of African American protest groups prior to the Young Lords' emergence. As suggested earlier, the group played a crucial role in identifying and challenging the unconscious racism embedded in Latino culture, language, and values.

The history of the Young Lords suggests that even though the story of the 1960s is told in black and white, by the mid-1960s, the movements and its members reflected the multiracial and multiethnic character of American cities. Most importantly, the history of the Young Lords challenges mainstream assumptions about the civil rights and Black Power movements. When we think about the black or brown radicals of this period, we immediately think about the struggle for racial equality. However, the group's campaigns demonstrate that while movements of the 1960s were impelled by issues of race, the objectives and the character of protest were integrally tied to issues of social and economic import. Increasingly, movement activists were concerned with finding solutions to problems as pedestrian as garbage collection, the removal of lead paint

from tenement walls, the crisis of health care and its delivery, social welfare programs, and urban renewal, among other issues. Essentially, movement activists were concerned with issues pertaining to a social-democratic polity.

Conclusion

By the 1960s, postwar deindustrialization, white flight, and residential tax-base erosion in the cities had produced unprecedented levels of racial segregation, permanent unemployment, and all the attendant problems of urban decay: poor education, health, and housing; a disfigured physical landscape; and explosive tensions between the community and the police. It was against this backdrop that the northern civil rights movement emerged. The Young Lords' militant activism and the group's insurgent politics were rooted in a deep social disenchantment at worsening objective conditions, a disenchantment that only deepened when the hopes raised by the civil rights movement did not materialize in the North.

For their part, the Young Lords repudiated the dominant liberal Puerto Rican organizations of the time on the basis that their strategy of addressing racial and economic inequality within established legal and governmental institutions was tantamount to negotiating the terms on which poverty would be brokered rather than attacking the problem at its root. They captured the political imagination of a growing number of Puerto Ricans in New York by articulating the experiences and grievances of second-generation Puerto Rican youths, who were reared in a racially and economically segregated urban setting that was radically different from that of their island-born parents. In the late 1960s, the Young Lords became a magnet for disaffected urban youths. Spawned by postwar urban conditions, the Young Lords represented a new and bold development in the Puerto Rican community, which articulated the uniquely American identity of mainland-born Puerto Ricans and gave organizational expression and direction to their urban discontent.

In East Harlem, the fantastic growth of the Young Lords Party was a manifestation of the leftward ideological shift in the Puerto Rican community and the growing dissatisfaction with mainstream solutions to that community's mounting social problems. The leadership of this radical group satisfied the desire of many Puerto Ricans for a radical critique of society, one that addressed the domestic and international issues affecting their lives—from the persistence of poverty in the United States and the

rationale for American intervention in Vietnam to the increasingly popular issue of Puerto Rican independence. Because of the success of the organization in appealing to large numbers of people in East Harlem and the city at large, the rise of the Young Lords represents the most observable political development within the Puerto Rican community following the riots of 1967. Through protests, grassroots organizing, and political education, the Young Lords consciously established an alternative to what they perceived as the failure of the social service-oriented antipoverty strategy adopted by the Puerto Rican reformers since the 1950s. The Young Lords enjoyed tremendous popularity in New York, in part because they tapped into these sentiments. They were also the first group to originate in the mainland United States whose main purpose was to achieve Puerto Rican independence and foster a sense of pride in being Puerto Rican through a political understanding of Puerto Rico's history of resistance against U.S. domination.⁴⁴

As we have witnessed recently in New Orleans, the urban disrepair against which organizations like the Young Lords and Black Panthers fought, and its racialized character, is still with us today. There is a lot that can be concluded about this age of great dreams during which ordinary people took the reins of history in their own hands. One of the most important contributions of radicals was that they helped alter the terms of the political debate in America. The conservative ideas that have become dominant in the movement's aftermath for almost four generations have upheld that government is not charged with the task of solving social problems, that the invisible hand of the market will redistribute wealth and address all manner of crises, and that success is determined by individual virtue and poverty is the result of inherent character flaws.

In the 1960s however, radicals won the argument that poverty was brought about by circumstances beyond the control of the poor and that these circumstances had long historical roots and that they were tied to the organization of society. They won the argument that racial oppression was a natural outgrowth of a society divided by class; that urban renewal in the form of gentrification and business-sponsored development would not solve the profound problems of urban deindustrialization and disrepair; and finally, they argued that imperialist war was not acceptable in a democratic society. All of these ideas merit reconsideration in American society today.

8

"Brooklyn College Belongs to Us": Black Students and the Transformation of Public Higher Education in New York City

MARTHA BIONDI

Black student activism exploded in the spring of 1969. These students followed in the footsteps of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and were deeply influenced by its radical and Black Nationalist organizers, many of whom had left the South and were active on college campuses across the country. Coinciding with the grassroots community control of schools movement, African American college students in New York City aimed to redefine the relationship between educational institutions and urban black communities. In the spring of 1969, students at every single division of the City University of New York rose up in protest. The two-week occupation of City College in Harlem precipitated a political crisis in the city and ushered in a major shift in public policy; as a result, it received extensive local and national media attention, but strikingly, it has garnered little attention from historians. Similarly, the struggle at Brooklyn College has been virtually forgotten, even though it was crucial in reshaping the admissions policy, the university's relationship to communities of color, and the curriculum. As one observer has rightly noted, "The integration of CUNY has been the most significant civil rights victory in higher education in the history of the United States."¹ Yet this story has been left out of most narratives of the black freedom struggle, an elision that is all the more striking in light

of the fact that much of the post-civil rights backlash has focused on ending affirmative action in college admissions.² This chapter examines the black student movement in New York City, focusing on Brooklyn and City colleges, in order to show the enormous impact that this generation of student activists had on university policies, structures, and cultures. While not as iconic as the students in suits and ties at Greensboro lunch counters earlier in the decade, these students may have read *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* and contemplated guerilla warfare, but they won reforms that transformed public higher education and paved the way for the expansion of the black middle class in the New York City region. While emphasizing the students' achievements, the chapter also examines opposition to the movement, shedding light on ideas and alliances that would grow much stronger as political conservatism gained ascendancy in the United States.

Additionally, this story complicates the widely held view that the ascendancy of Black Nationalist politics in the late 1960s blocked multi-racial alliances, moved class issues off the activist radar, muted black women's voices, and alienated and drove away white allies. Rather, this generation had a flexible and dynamic conception of so-called identity politics: They forged alliances with Latino and Asian American activists, occasionally collaborated with radical white students, and kept socioeconomic issues front and center. African American female students, moreover, fought for black studies and affirmative action as much as their male peers, notwithstanding the rise of a macho political rhetoric. One key change, of course, was that black students also wanted to organize all-black formations, and be the leading force in shaping the tactics and goals of antiracist activism on campus. And this they achieved.

The students were not protesting racial segregation in college admissions but rather token desegregation, the terms of which had marginalized black and Puerto Rican students in the overwhelmingly white campus culture, labeled them culturally deprived, and expected them to be grateful. Students pushed back against these terms. Black and Puerto Rican students had long ago gained entry to tuition-free City, Brooklyn, Hunter, and other colleges under the prevailing admissions standards. Affirmative action, meaning programs and policies aimed at admitting "minority" students who did not meet the prevailing entrance criteria, began with the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program in 1966. Reflecting the new clout of a growing bloc of black and Puerto Rican legislators in Albany, SEEK provided promising graduates of city high schools a college education and the extra academic support, counseling, and remediation needed to succeed. It was by far the

largest program of its kind in the country. These new admissions policies, culminating in 1970 with the launch of open admissions, were part of a social movement to redefine both the mission of public universities and the criteria to determine "merit." Black students, in particular, posed the question: Should public colleges be expected to offer opportunity to a broad range of taxpaying New Yorkers, or should they be permitted to adopt the exclusionary practices of private institutions and rely on test scores to determine admission? Moreover, students demanded a new answer to an old but critical question of the civil rights era: How should the United States correct the consequences of segregation—in this case, the unequal educational system that it had produced? The prevailing view had been that efforts should focus on improving primary and secondary schools in order to better prepare students for college. But in the late 1960s, African American youths argued that it was the college's responsibility to offer the appropriate remediation. They increasingly framed access to higher education as a right of postwar U.S. citizenship. Fortunately for them, the broader urban turmoil across the United States played a role in encouraging college officials to reevaluate admissions policies. After several summers of very serious and deadly urban unrest, white administrators feared black militancy and the prospect of riots at their gates. According to one scholar, CUNY's motive in authorizing open admissions was "to appease an explosive urban youth population."³

Black student activists at Brooklyn College launched their movement on a campus that, in the spring of 1968, was 96 percent white.⁴ The campus tumult of the late 1960s reveals the stunning lack of preparation for desegregation on American campuses. For its part, Brooklyn College had appointed a committee in 1964 "to look into the need to create educational opportunities for students on the campus, or students who were not being admitted." In the words of acting president George A. Peck, it "worked sporadically at first" and finally came up with a plan to admit two hundred black and Puerto Rican students in a special program in 1968.⁵ The students did not demand open admissions for all graduates of city high schools—a policy that the Board of Higher Education was in fact already preparing to launch in 1975—but rather, more specifically, they called for a sharp increase in the black and Puerto Rican student population.⁶ For all the vaunted erudition and cosmopolitanism of the faculties at the City University of New York, Brooklyn College offered thirteen courses "with content related to American minority groups," the president's office reported in 1969, and all of them had begun in 1968! A big problem, the administration contended, was "finding faculty

to teach them,"⁷ a statement that points to the slow pace of the production of African American PhDs in the United States fourteen years after *Brown* and twenty years after President Harry S. Truman had appointed a committee to study minority access to higher education.

Among the small number of black students at Brooklyn College, a few key leaders emerged, notably Leroy (Askia) Davis and Orlando Pile. Both young men were involved in off-campus organizing and their efforts at Brooklyn College should be seen as part of the overall black freedom struggle. Pile was the student representative on the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community school board and was also involved in local welfare rights organizing. African American women were at the center of both these campaigns, a fact that balances the largely masculinist portrait of the Black Power era and illustrates a broader range of influences on a generation that venerated Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon. Askia Davis came up to New York from Georgia at age fifteen. He saw *The Battle of Algiers*, read *Black Skin, White Masks*, and joined the Black Panther Party. But Malcolm X had the most decisive and far-reaching influence on his life trajectory. All his life he had eagerly awaited the day he could join the military. "I always dreamed of going to the air force academy," and becoming a pilot, he said—in order to drop bombs. "That was my goal. I was a warrior." He might have gone to Vietnam like his brother if he hadn't encountered *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. "Reading Malcolm X really changed me—really, like overnight."⁸

In 1968 Davis and Pile began to reach out to the small number of black students—approaching them in the library, Davis recalled—and soon organized BLAC, the Black League of Afro-American Collegians. In conjunction with the Puerto Rican Alliance, BLAC became a major force on campus, especially as the protests dramatically increased black enrollments. BLAC would present eighteen demands to the administration in the spring of 1969, but they also tried to change campus conditions through their own direct action. One tactic they used to overcome black students' sense of isolation in the classroom, especially in the face of offensive or insensitive racial remarks, was to get groups of black students to register for the same course. In 1969, five or six black student activists plus several more non-political black students enrolled in an introductory literature course taught by Robert Fitzhugh. The first day, Askia Davis recalled, Fitzhugh walked in and saw "this sea of black faces. He was shocked." Still, Davis remembered, "We were polite. We wanted to learn." One day Orlando Pile asked Fitzhugh why there were no black writers on the syllabus and even presented the professor with a

list of important black writers. One imagines that James Baldwin and Richard Wright were probably on this list. Fitzhugh retorted that these writers were "social activists, not major novelists." A "personal confrontation" ensued. Fitzhugh asked Pile why he didn't leave the class if he didn't like it, and Pile said, "Why don't you?" "And then," said Pile, still incredulous many years later, "the professor walked out!" BLAC leaders arranged with the dean for the black students to withdraw from the course, and the activists did, but the others chose to remain. A couple of weeks later, the remaining students changed their minds and told Pile that Fitzhugh was grading all their work poorly and had "disrespected them" when they brought it up. Number eleven on the list of eighteen demands called for the dismissal "of all White professors who have demonstrated racist tendencies," specifically Robert Fitzhugh of the English department.⁹

The "18 Demands," interestingly a much longer list than the "Five Demands" at City College, are wide ranging and reveal much about the students' political sensibilities and vision. The list is striking for its boldness and scope. Yet at the same time, it is concrete and pragmatic, suggesting the students' dual sense of themselves as radical yet efficacious. The first demand called for the admission to Brooklyn College of all black and Puerto Rican applicants regardless of their scholastic record. The second demand called for "a free tutorial program" and "basic skills courses" to enable students "to fulfill their scholastic potential." While the first goal seems to reject all entrance criteria, the second one illustrates that the students still took academic success seriously. Even though students were challenging prevailing definitions of who was qualified to enter college, they were not rejecting academic culture or excellence. On the contrary, they wanted to benefit from it.¹⁰ Most significantly, the demands show the students' desire for Brooklyn College to serve the educational needs of the population of Brooklyn, not only of those applicants whose test scores were the highest.

These college student activists also called for the establishment of Afro-American and Puerto Rican institutes to be "controlled by Black and Puerto Rican students with the help of the Black and Puerto Rican faculty and the community." The wording of this demand suggests both that the students had a nontraditional conception of ethnic studies and that they did not trust the college to set up the institutes and so claimed this role for students of color. At many campuses student activists had a "movement" conception of black studies—seeing it as a bridge between black students and black communities, in addition to its transformative

intellectual potential. The thirteenth demand called for a special course that would give academic credit for field work in the community, reflecting this generation's desire to make their college educations "relevant" to community needs, and their desire not to wall themselves off in an ivory tower. Indeed, Brooklyn College set up an entirely new college—the School of Contemporary Studies—that incorporated many of these goals. Echoing a similar demand at City College, the fifteenth demand asserted that students majoring in education—future public school teachers—should be required to take courses in black and Puerto Rican studies. This reflected the students' sense of obligation to use their position inside the college to affect the education of Brooklyn youth of all ages. The students also demanded the hiring of black and Puerto Rican professors in all units of the college, showing their desire not to let the creation of the new Afro-American and Puerto Rican institutes create an excuse for the other departments not to diversify.¹¹

By early 1969, student activists had engaged in extensive organizing on campus and had gained considerable support. The BLAC faculty advisor was Professor Craig Bell, but Orlando Pile felt that each of the small number of black professors on campus supported them, as did several white professors as well, "especially and very vocally" Bart Meyers, who later penned a useful history of the struggle for the campus newspaper. In keeping with the nationalist ethos of the time, it was important to black and Puerto Rican students to lead and direct their own organizations and movement. The largely white Students for a Democratic Society chapter on campus supported the citywide push for open enrollment, and they were engaged in a range of campus actions that spring. Pile said that their support was fine but "they could not be part of us."¹²

In mid-April, frustrated that the faculty had not yet considered the eighteen demands, a group of black and Puerto Rican students came to a faculty meeting, took over the microphone, and commanded faculty not to leave. "Militant" students disrupting normal campus procedures and making "demands" to a "frightened" faculty became the archetypical sequence of events at American campuses in 1969. "We want the 18 demands presented now," Askia Davis declared. "You will not shut your eyes any longer," he told the faculty. "Brooklyn College belongs to us, not you."¹³ The president subsequently participated in a forum of two thousand people, but the administration, according to the student radicals, took a "rigid stance."¹⁴ Davis felt the president was "dead set against African American studies and open admissions."¹⁵ Students at City College encountered similar difficulties on these issues, especially admissions,

and it would ultimately fall to the Board of Higher Education to enact a new admissions policy.

In March, April, and May student militancy increased, culminating in a mass demonstration in the president's office at the end of April. One hundred and fifty students from BLAC and the Puerto Rican Alliance and forty white students "squeezed into" the president's office in Boylan Hall, where a meeting among administrators and student representatives over black and Puerto Rican issues was in progress. They dramatically presented the eighteen demands but the president was actually out of the office. Some students reportedly engaged in minor vandalism and someone spray painted the words "power" and "revolution" on walls inside and outside the building. The students stayed for a couple of hours and left when they heard that the police had been called. In the meantime, some radical white students took over other campus buildings, while black students blocked the entrance to Boylan Hall, and unknown persons set small fires on the campus.¹⁶ In early May, one hundred students led by SDS held a demonstration inside the dean's office, and acts of arson and vandalism continued, alongside daily and increasingly large rallies. On May 6, President Peck alleged that a hundred students, mostly black and Puerto Rican, blocked firefighters from entering the administration building to douse a small fire, reportedly the fifth small blaze of the day.

In contrast to City College, where the administration engaged in negotiation with black and Puerto Rican student activists, including the "militants," at Brooklyn the administration decided to turn to law enforcement to quell student protest. They sought an injunction barring students from "congregating in or near buildings, creating loud or excessive noise, or employing, inciting or encouraging force or violence." Students fought the injunction with attorneys from the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee and the New York Civil Liberties Union, who argued that it was an unconstitutional restraint on freedom of speech and assembly. It should be noted that there were many white students who had been advocating and engaging in aggressive forms of protest—and this was well known to campus authorities. Indeed, some Brooklyn College officials, like white administrators at many American colleges, saw radical whites, especially those in SDS, as more destructive than black student activists. Some even viewed white radicals as instigating black student revolt. Peck later testified to a Senate committee investigating campus riots. Montana senator Lee Metcalf asked him, "So you think that SDS in spite of the fact that they were not part of this black revolt,

spurred it on and encouraged it, and, using your phrase, masterminded it?" To which Peck replied, "All they could." He added that he did not think SDS had the same emotional commitment to "the cause of blacks" but used it to advance general social destruction. Interestingly, though, this worldview did not prevent Peck from targeting black and Puerto Rican students—but no white students—for arrest that spring.¹⁷

Shortly before dawn on May 12, 1969, police officers across the city raided the homes of seventeen African American and Puerto Rican Brooklyn College students, including Orlando Pile and Askia Davis. They arrested the students and even arrested Pile's mother, Blanche Pile, for interference. Another two students were also indicted. As college students with no criminal records and strong family and community ties, the \$15,000 bail was widely seen as excessive. The students spent four days at Rikers Island. They were each charged with eighteen felonies and five misdemeanors, including inciting riot and arson, which together carried a sentence of 228 years. The allegations had come from an undercover police informant who had infiltrated BLAC and befriended the students. "He looked the part," Askia Davis noted, with his big afro, dark skin, and beard. "He had the rhetoric, but he was really a cop." In Pile's view, the allegations by the police informant were a form of retaliation: They represented the administration's attempt to thwart the black student movement and block their demands to change Brooklyn College. The next day the prosecutor claimed to have found in various homes "a revolver, a sharp-edged spear, and clubs" as well as batteries and gasoline, which he termed "material used to manufacture firebombs."¹⁸

The eighteen-year-old Davis had been a member of the Black Panther Party and had actually been named on the original warrant for the New York "Panther 21" but was in California when the police made those arrests. "I was meant to be the Panther 22," he said, which likely explains the overwhelming force they used to arrest him that morning in May. He remembered his thoughts when he heard a knock on the door early that morning. "A young lady lived next door. I was basically trying to seduce her. She used to knock at my door; we used to tease and flirt, but nothing ever happened. So I get this knock at five o'clock in the morning and I said, 'Wow, she finally gave in.'" Nine police officers came to make the arrest. Three came through the door. "They threw me to the floor, put a gun to my head, and cocked the trigger." When the officer finally pulled the gun back and looked at the very youthful-looking Davis, he said, "God, you're nothing but a kid." They searched the

house and found nothing unlawful. Rikers was a "rough experience" although it made him feel he could endure hardship and prevail. He believed that authorities were trying to punish and intimidate them for their activism.¹⁹

The media made much of the radical literature the police reportedly found in the students' homes and used this to promote an image of them as violent, subversive radicals, undeserving of support or sympathy. The *New York Post* highlighted that the students were in possession of "The Writings of Che Guevara," "Quotations from Mao Tse-tung," and a "typewritten document entitled 'Blueprint for Campus Revolt,'" which the district attorney said referred to the "strategy at San Francisco State College."²⁰ *New York Daily News* readers were given an over-the-top account that sought to stoke fears of Communism: "Brooklyn District Attorney Eugene Gold revealed that 122 detectives making pre-dawn arrests in four boroughs found inflammatory writings of Chinese and Cuban Communists."²¹ This media frame exacerbated the already-powerful stigma of criminal prosecution in the eyes of the public. But in the eyes of the students, the arrests backfired and increased campus support for BLAC's agenda.

Moreover, the arrests sparked an outpouring of support among black New Yorkers. "The black community really got together" to support us, Davis said. Attorneys George Wade and Ray Williams argued before Brooklyn Supreme Court judge Dominic Rinaldi that the bail was punitive. Williams also pointed to the racial bias in the arrests, noting that "there were S.D.S. students involved but they were not brought in because they are white." Outraged at the assertion, the judge warned him against "using the courtroom as a vehicle for racist statements." But the Appellate Division ordered the bail reduced to \$6,500. U.S. representative Shirley Chisholm, herself a Brooklyn College alum, raised the bail money. She convinced Dr. Thomas W. Matthew, the president of NEGRO, the National Economic Growth and Reconstruction Organization, to put up his share of Interfaith Hospital, a drug treatment clinic in Queens, as collateral. And she got the Reverend William A. Jones of Bethany Baptist to put up his church.²² As it turns out, the case never went anywhere—the state never produced any evidence, and after about a year of delays and negotiation, the attorneys and judge reached a deal in which the students accepted a short probationary period, and the charges were dismissed and the students' records ultimately expunged. The *Kingsman* editorialized that the probationary period "seems suspiciously like a move to repress dissent on campus, since the 19 are not guilty enough to be prosecuted."²³

After the arrests and subsequent stationing of one hundred New York City police officers on campus, a large group of students and faculty went on strike. Their demands were: Drop the charges against "the BC 19," implement the eighteen demands, and get the police off campus. Askia Davis said he didn't realize how much support the black and Puerto Rican students had from the majority white campus until this point. The *Kingsman* editorialized in favor of the strike: "The 20 arrests on Tuesday morning were conducted in a manner that heaped disgrace on the American legal system and added to many students' hatred and distrust of the New York City Police." It demanded that the administration remove police from campus, reporting that an officer had arrested a student for spitting, which led to a bloody clash.²⁴ The relentless pressure finally induced the college to make concessions, and President Peck and the faculty went on record urging the Board of Higher Education, the governing body of CUNY colleges, to enact a new open-admissions policy. They passed a resolution urging the Board of Higher Education "to offer a college education to every high school graduate in the city, particularly needy Negroes and Puerto Ricans."²⁵ Clearly, the students' efforts to bring the black liberation movement to Brooklyn College had an effect; it had a similar effect across the river in Manhattan, but without the criminal prosecutions.

Student activists at the City College of New York (CCNY) had also engaged in a long series of escalating tactics before two hundred of them took over the buildings of south campus on April 22, 1969, and renamed it the "University of Harlem." As at most colleges, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. had precipitated a transformation in black student consciousness and sparked a new determination, even a sense of obligation, to step up the pace of change. "The movement really began in 1968," south campus occupier Sekou Sundiata recalled.²⁶ The struggle at City was led by the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community (BPRSC)—a name that richly signifies the politics of the era by emphasizing the collective over the individual and asserting a black/brown partnership in a Black Nationalist era that was moving toward third worldism. The left-wing W. E. B. Du Bois Club also contributed to the formulation of the "five demands," having presented President Buell Gallagher with a petition of 1,600 signatures to "End Racism at CCNY" in November 1968. This evidently motivated students of color to launch their own effort. "We were indignant," Sundiata said, "that the Du Bois Society was circulating those kinds of demands which really articulated our interests, and that we had not moved on them ourselves."²⁷

City College, located in the heart of Harlem, was only 4 percent black and 5 percent Puerto Rican.²⁸ As a professor put it, "There City College sits, smack dab in the middle of the largest Black community in the country, and only 9 percent of its day time students are Black or Puerto Rican. And 5 percent of that 9 percent came through the SEEK program."²⁹ As at Brooklyn College, City's faculty and students were predominantly Jewish, a composition that reflected, in part, the legacy of anti-Semitic admissions and hiring practices at private universities. The students relied on research by CUNY economics professor Alfred Conrad to ascertain the racial composition of area high schools and, as a result, they called for a student body that was 43 percent black. This constituted an enormous jump and suggests that students had embraced a radical new conception of a public university's responsibility to its community. As the students put it, "We are committed to make this college more relevant to the community."³⁰ While this may have seemed radical in 1969, in many ways it was an approach steeped in the history of City College, which had been founded as a free college to serve the children of the poor and from 1900–1925 had required only a high school diploma for entrance. A minimum grade average was then introduced but open admissions returned for World War II veterans.³¹

The second most controversial BPRSC demand was for a school for black and Puerto Rican studies. According to the students, the curriculum at City College offered "virtually nothing" on Africa or African Americans. In the words of Toni Cade, author of the groundbreaking feminist text *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, and a highly regarded mentor to the protesting students, the English department clung to "the deeply entrenched notion that Anglo-Saxon literature is The Literature."³² The leadership of SEEK professor Toni Cade is worth elaborating on, especially since activism from the late 1960s, including the black student/black studies movement, has been framed—and not inaccurately—as a quest to restore black manhood.³³ Still, black women played critical roles in these movements. Cade penned an open letter to students encouraging them to seize control of their educational destinies. Steeped in the vernacular of the era, it offered both guidance and solidarity and conveyed the humanism propelling radical activism. It bears quoting at length. "Dear Bloods," she wrote: "There are two traditions within our culture that are worth looking at, for they tell us a great deal about our responses. One, we have been conditioned to turn off, short out, be cool; two, we have often been pushed to make something from nothing. The first response is a negative one. We did it, or do it, to survive

surely—but at great cost to ourselves. We've learned how to bottle up anger, put our minds in a jar, wear a mask. The second is a creative urge. It too comes out of the need to survive. . . . Out of which bag do you dip?" she asked. "Something out of nothing is so much better than blowing a fuse," she advised. "On the assumption that all of you mumblers, grumblers, malcontents, workers, designers, etc. are serious about what you've been saying ('A real education—blah, blah, blah'), the Afro-American-Hispanic Studies Center is/was set up. Until it is fully operating, *the responsibility of getting that education rests with you in large part*. Jumping up and down, foaming at the mouth, rattling coffee-cups and other weaponry don't get it. If you are serious, set up a counter course in the Experimental College. If you are serious, contact each other." And she closed, "Serious, Miss Cade."³⁴

Cade was not only a key supporter of the students, but she formulated and publicized a model for a black and Hispanic studies center at City College. "At least 90 percent of the several hundred rebellions that have taken place on the American college campuses and in the American high schools in the last six years," she wrote in a campus newspaper, "were propelled by and revealed a gross dissatisfaction with the curriculum (its premises, its omissions, its presentations, its designers)." Contestations over knowledge and learning had moved to the forefront of black activism. This essay was composed before the takeover of south campus, but Cade saw it coming. "We can safely assume that an explosion is imminent," she declared. "The students have already indicated that they are weary of being lied to, tired of playing games, damned if they'll be indoctrinated, programmed, ripped off any longer." Cade proposed that the center be "a course-offering agency, a research agency, a buttress, a skills bank, [and] a conference center." Doubtless her most controversial idea was for the center to be "controlled by Black and Latin students and faculty who will have the power to hire using their own standards, and to design courses considering their own needs." Toni Cade appended a list of courses that the center might offer, including "American Justice and the Afro-American," "Negritude," "Revolution," and "Trends in Western Thought." Her eventual goal, which in light of the demographics of City College was very radical, was that "the Center would lead ultimately to a Black University."³⁵

In February 1969, the college had hired Barbara Christian, the literary scholar who would produce pioneering scholarship on black women writers during her long career at Berkeley, and Wilfred Cartey, a Trinidadian-born literary scholar, to design a black studies program. Both were

also affiliated with Columbia University at the time. According to Christian, the call for such a school was "a very controversial demand." Initially, she wrote, "the students were primarily concerned with their own culture—black, African, Afro-American, West Indian, Puerto Rican culture." But, she said, the involvement of Asian American students in the struggle at City College encouraged them to broaden their vision. "The students then took a look at how many courses were offered on Latin America, how many courses on Asia. And there were very few." This desire to address the needs of all "minority" groups on campus induced Christian and Cartey to propose a school of urban and third-world studies, but the faculty senate rejected their proposal late that spring.³⁶ As we shall see, the college administration resisted the proposals designed by black professors and moved instead to implement a very different vision.

Paradoxically, as the students were struggling to radically expand the size of CUNY colleges, the already-existing SEEK program was slated for drastic cuts, a development that foreshadowed worrisome things to come. In his February 1969 budget proposal, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller slashed SEEK funding. This sparked a mass spring mobilization on New York campuses, which all sent busloads of students to Albany to save SEEK—CCNY alone sent thirty-five buses. Still, despite their staunch support for SEEK, the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community rejected paternalist aspects of its structure—such as rules prohibiting their election to student government. But most bothersome was that SEEK counselors were mostly white and were required to be clinical psychologists. The students felt that this stigmatized SEEK students as "psychologically flawed." The only counselor of color was Betty Rawls, who became a strong ally and mentor to the student activists and participated in the spring negotiations with administrators. Thus, the BPRSC demanded "a voice for SEEK students in setting guidelines for the SEEK Program, including the hiring and firing of all personnel." Like their counterparts in Brooklyn, the students occupying south campus also demanded that courses in Spanish language and black and Puerto Rican history be required for all education majors.³⁷

The response to the five demands revealed a wide gap in perception between black and white New York communities. On the one hand, the students received an outpouring of support from black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers, who provided south campus with food, solidarity, and protection. They viewed the sit-in as part of the civil rights movement's quest for equal opportunity and inclusion. But the students also faced substantial criticism and, they felt, misunderstanding. They were accused

of lowering standards in both admissions and curricular offerings, of supporting racial exclusion, and of generally pushing an agenda that was more political than academic. In response, they issued press releases offering careful elaboration of their positions. They explained that yes, white students could take courses in the school for black and Puerto Rican studies; it was not a "racial" project, but one meant to teach and research the history and culture of "80% of the world's population." Moreover, "the school is not a vehicle for political indoctrination." It "will not have a watered down degree," they emphasized. Students had to meet all the regular requirements to graduate. And the admissions demand—to offer graduates of area high schools a proportionate place at City—"will not lower the standards of the college. Students would be given supportive services on the model of SEEK and would not be allowed to move on through the college unless they fulfill the standards for graduation at CCNY."³⁸

Students also sought guidance and solidarity from faculty, who organized two support groups: the Black and Puerto Rican Faculty Group and the integrated but predominately white Faculty for Action.³⁹ The students worked with both groups. As white SEEK professor Fran Geteles remembered, the student activists were savvy organizers who understood that both groups had something to offer. Some scholars of the civil rights movement, and especially of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, have lamented that the rise of Black Power politics led to an emphasis on slogans and speeches at the expense of grassroots organizing.⁴⁰ But Geteles's memory complicates this interpretation. She felt that "the students were very smart politically. They adopted Black Nationalist thought and rhetoric but didn't behave in an exclusionary way. They were shrewd organizers." A Brooklyn College professor had a similar recollection. Carlos Russell, an Afro-Panamanian educator and activist who directed SEEK before becoming dean of the School of Contemporary Studies at Brooklyn College, described black student activists there as committed and idealistic. To illustrate, he related how one cold winter day, a student gave his shoes away to a homeless man: "They were like SNCC," he said, referring not to the group's northern image but to its reputation for identification with ordinary folks in the South.⁴¹

In response to the seizure of south campus, CCNY president Buell G. Gallagher closed the college. This created an opportunity to negotiate an end to the crisis, and for two weeks negotiators from all sides worked eight to fourteen hours a day to reach a settlement. But Gallagher's decision also galvanized the opposition. It's important to appreciate that City

College alumni held influential positions in city government, media, and the courts, and many clamored for a police response. Mayor John Lindsay's policy was to bring in police only if requested to do so by the college president, and Gallagher did not want a police raid. At a key faculty meeting, Wilfred Cartey stirred his colleagues with moving arguments against calling the police to open south campus, advocating instead "conciliation with black students." Also influencing administrators was CCNY's location in Harlem, an African American neighborhood whose community leaders had aligned themselves with the students. Askia Davis thinks this was the main reason arrests were not made at City but were made at Brooklyn College, which is located in an area that was affluent and white.⁴²

Gallagher's early public statements reinforced two common—though contradictory—views of black student activists of this era: first, that they embodied/portended violence, and second, that they were more pragmatic and serious about reforming higher education than white student radicals, who were typically portrayed as either more frivolous or more destructive. The occupation of south campus at City College occurred shortly after a photo had circulated around the world of black students at Cornell exiting a building heavily armed after the administration had agreed to several of their demands. In the eyes of some, Cornell became Munich—and denunciations of liberal "capitulation" to threats of armed violence proliferated. Gallagher took to the airwaves in New York City, declaring over WCBS radio, "Both incidents [CCNY and Cornell] illustrate graphically the failure of student extremists to understand what a university stands for." At this juncture, Gallagher revealed his distance from black students and a lack of understanding of their particular motives: "The student militants' rejection of personal accountability, regardless of whether their background is privileged or ghetto, stands at the heart of the campus revolution across the country. Tyranny, whether exercised by the majority, or a minority, is still tyranny." He also echoed a widely held view among college officials that student radicalism would strengthen conservatism. "With each forcible takeover, each ransacking of administration files, each disruption of classes for the majority of students, the hands of the ultraconservatives in the legislature are strengthened."⁴³ Yet, at the same time, as Gallagher began negotiations with the students, he came to respect their sincerity and the seriousness of their mission. A week later he was asked to defend his decision not to call the police when he had called them several months earlier to quell a largely white antiwar protest. "The circumstances are not the same," he

explained. "They were causing extensive damage . . . smoking pot and fornicating in public," but the black and Puerto Rican students occupying south campus "are behaving in an orderly manner." And as he got to know black and Puerto Rican student activists that spring, this view solidified.⁴⁴

The upcoming fall election turned the CCNY sit-in into a citywide political controversy and foreshadowed the way that racial backlash politics would dramatically shape electoral discourse in the ensuing decades. State senator John J. Marchi, who was opposing the liberal Lindsay for the Republican nomination, attacked the mayor "for not taking swift police action" at City and other CUNY campuses.⁴⁵ Actually, there was at least one police officer on south campus—an undercover agent, whom the students had discovered, interrogated, and released.⁴⁶ Another political aspirant took the matter to court. City Comptroller Mario Procaccino, who was seeking the Democratic nomination for mayor, obtained a Supreme Court injunction directing the college to open on May 5. This was precisely when students and administrators all believed they were making substantial progress in the negotiations. Police opened the campus and occupied it for rest of term as a wave of fires, vandalism, and violent attacks on black students followed. Gallagher, president for seventeen years, resigned on May 10.⁴⁷ He said that "politically motivated outside forces" had made it "impossible to carry on the process of reason and persuasion."⁴⁸ Indeed, that same day a *New York Daily News* editorial called for the House Internal Security Committee to probe charges that "Red Cuba and Red China are helping to finance some of the worst campus troublemakers." It called for a "Hayakawa for City College," referring to the authoritarian president of San Francisco State College, who was willingly doing the bidding of conservative California politicians, most notably Governor Ronald Reagan. Their wish seemed to come true with the selection of Joseph Copeland as acting president, whose commencement address equated the occupiers of south campus with the Ku Klux Klan, sparking a walkout by graduating black and Puerto Rican students.⁴⁹

The Jewish Defense League (JDL), a right-wing vigilante organization led by Rabbi Meir Kahane, had also gone to court to open the college, but Procaccino had gotten there first. Formed in 1968 to combat alleged anti-Semitism by black New Yorkers, the JDL quickly became notorious for fanning the flames of black-Jewish division in the city. In 1969, Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, voiced the perspective of mainstream Jewry

when he condemned the group: "The so-called Jewish Defense League violates every ethic and tradition of Judaism and every concept of civil liberties and democratic processes in American life."⁵⁰ The JDL's activities at Brooklyn College betrayed the strong-arm tactics of the organization and its lack of support among the college's large Jewish population. By 1971, black and Puerto Rican students had a greater visibility and presence at Brooklyn College and had begun to win seats in student government. Askia Davis believes this growing political clout inspired an attack by the JDL. One day that year, Kahane "brought in a huge group" to campus. Coincidentally, a few hundred black and Puerto Rican students were meeting at the student center that day, and the two groups converged. "It was really bad," Davis recalled. Several people went to the hospital. Yet Davis remembers this clash as an important turning point. "Every year we were subject to some kind of attack at Brooklyn College." But this time, "they attacked us and got beaten. . . . They took a heavy blow that day." He stressed that the students were defending themselves: "We had no interest in fighting Kahane or anybody else. We were just kids. He brought grown men out on the campus and they came out with all kinds of objects: bats, and other things." Moreover, Davis recalled, the skirmish with the JDL did not reflect black-Jewish relations on campus: "We had more support among the Jewish students than he did," he said. In fact, college authorities obtained an injunction barring the JDL from campus, and Kahane later consented to "refrain from disruptive activities at Brooklyn College." Looking back, Davis said, "just that we ended up feeling safe was a big, big accomplishment."⁵¹

The student uprisings across the city in the spring of 1969 induced the Board of Higher Education to accelerate and broaden an open-admissions plan slated to begin in 1975. The original plan was to assign most high school graduates to community colleges, rather than four-year, or senior, colleges but student protest won a much larger number of slots at the senior colleges, and moved up its launch to 1970. Of course, the students had not led the call for open admissions. Allen Ballard, a black CCNY professor, director of SEEK, and scholar of black education, argued that "by moving from a quota arrangement specifically designed to serve the needs of Black and Puerto Rican students to a position of open admissions, the board both diverted the thrust of the Black and Puerto Rican demands and gained a white middle class constituency for the program." Ballard, it should be noted, was the first black director of SEEK, and he implemented the BPRSC demand to permit the hiring of

social workers, rather than solely clinical psychologists, as SEEK counselors. Still, the impact of open admissions on black and Puerto Rican educational opportunity was nonetheless substantial. "I don't know, as of this writing," Ballard wrote in 1973, "whether open admissions will be a success or not. However, it has opened vistas for Black and Puerto Rican high school youths previously condemned to a life of poverty because their averages and SAT scores did meet the requirements of the City University of New York."⁵² The impact of open admissions was dramatic: 35,000 freshmen entered CUNY campuses in 1970, a 75 percent increase from 1969. One-quarter of these entering students were black or Latino. After open admissions, 75 percent of New York City high school graduates attended college, a rate well ahead of the national average. According to the historian Conrad Dyer, two-thirds of these students would have been ineligible to attend college, even community college, under the old admissions standards. In 1975, five times as many black and Puerto Rican students were enrolled in the senior colleges as in 1969.⁵³

The demand for curricular change, however, produced a much more equivocal outcome. Over the summer, the Board of Higher Education had rejected the demand to establish a separate school of third-world studies but authorized CUNY colleges to set up urban and ethnic studies departments. Without consulting the BPRSC or black and Puerto Rican professors, including the two—Christian and Cartey—City had hired to design such a program, acting CCNY president Joseph Copeland announced the creation of the new Department of Urban and Ethnic Studies and appointed Osborne E. Scott, a former army chaplain and current vice president of the American Leprosy Missions, as chair.⁵⁴ Wilfred Cartey called the two-course department "an insult not only to the black and Puerto Rican community, but to City College itself." This move by a college president to simultaneously grant a black studies program and then turn around and contain or undermine it was not unique to City College. Most colleges around the country failed to finance or build the kinds of innovative, large, and comprehensive African American studies units that black student activists and their faculty allies had envisioned. At City, this development was transparent, as Copeland had been hired as a revanchist president. His quest to put black folks in their place found blunt expression when he publicly called Professor Cartey "shiftless." Calling it an "insidious and malicious" remark, Cartey raised the prospect of a lawsuit and declared: "I'm not seeking an apology. I'm seeking redress for a group." For his part, Copeland did not deny using

the word, saying, "I've never associated that word in my understanding with any racial group." But this supposed naïveté is contradicted by his evident awareness of the implication of the word in the offending quote. "He's too goddamn shiftless—and you can use that word in your story there—shiftless," he had said to a campus reporter.⁵⁵

The tendency by many to credit—or blame—the City College protest with the onset of open admissions has, along with the legacy of the criminal prosecution, worked to suppress an acknowledgment of the significance of the struggle at Brooklyn College. But the students there achieved a great deal. "We were responsible for changing the climate of the campus," says Orlando Pile, now a physician.⁵⁶ After open admissions, the number of black and Puerto Rican students rose significantly, but as Davis underscored, "it wasn't just blacks and Latinos who benefited from open admissions—a lot of working-class whites had been shut out too." Other reforms included the establishment of an Afro-American Studies Institute and a Puerto Rican Studies Institute, which both became departments a year later, significant changes in required courses, and more counselors.⁵⁷ An important, though controversial, legacy of the protest was the creation in 1972 of the School of Contemporary Studies as a division of the college, whose mission was to be "present oriented, concerned primarily with the social problems that are engaging our contemporary world." Until its demise in 1976, the school was located in downtown Brooklyn and offered a unique field studies requirement where students did internships in legal services agencies, health service organizations, and penal institutions. As its dean, Carlos Russell, recalled, the program "brought the streets and classrooms together." An evaluating committee later reported that "some students appear to have been profoundly affected by their experience in field study." Nevertheless, the main campus faculty tended to regard the school's curriculum, faculty, and students as beneath the standards of Brooklyn College, and rifts developed internally between Russell and his faculty.⁵⁸

These changes on New York campuses were part of a national trend, as many colleges and universities began to increase black enrollment and implement other reforms in the face of concerted black student protest. Having long ignored or postponed social change, universities suddenly had to act fast in the face of student revolt. Yet many commentators then and since have blamed student activists for "coercing" change or ushering in black studies programs of questionable quality, even though of course it was administrators who established the programs. But others saw inevitability to the confrontations. In May 1969 George Paster, the

dean of students at City College, resigned in protest over what he viewed as the impermeability to change of academic institutions. "People who want to change such institutions," he said, "have to grab them by the scruff of the neck and yell: 'please listen to me' if they are ever to be heard. I honestly don't know anyway you can break through the rigidity of the institution other than the way the blacks and Puerto Ricans have done it." He felt that students used force "to be heard[,] not really to destroy." Moreover, in a point echoed by administrators at other campuses, Paster said that "once they had been heard, we sat down to some of the best and most productive discussions ever in the college—they have taught us so much."⁵⁹

Still, open admissions always retained critics who argued that high admissions standards were more important than broad access to public higher education. "Only at CUNY," a SEEK professor wryly observed, "were those standards viewed as fixed, immutable and exempt from social and political realities."⁶⁰ Albert H. Bowker, the former chancellor of the City University of New York, thought racial resentment drove the attacks on open admissions. "There's been a lot of white flight from City College," he observed. "And most of the people who write about this are City College graduates who are mad."⁶¹ In a fateful conjuncture, open admissions coincided with the New York City budget crisis of the 1970s, and the ensuing drop in funding seemed to make the discourse of failure shrouding open admissions a self-fulfilling prophecy. The severe budget cuts climaxed in the "retrenchment of 1976" when the state of New York took over the City University of New York, laid off many faculty, and imposed tuition for the first time.⁶² The caseload of SEEK counselor Fran Geteles doubled from fifty to one hundred students. "Class sizes also grew sharply," she said, "which made it much harder to help students than before. Remedial classes had been no more than twenty; now some had forty students."⁶³

A *New York Times* review of a 1984 play called *Open Admissions* reflected the skeptical view of open admissions, saying that it "shuffles its poor students through four years of overcrowded and under-taught classes—then pushes them out the door with a worthless diploma."⁶⁴ Still, those "worthless" diplomas brought thousands of black and Puerto Rican students to the middle class. But the attacks took their toll. By 1990, some of the creators and proponents of open admissions were lamenting that the college had made such a radical change with too little resources and planning. Allen Ballard thought CUNY should have

implemented "a well articulated, gradually phased in, well funded operation aimed at a savable number of Black and Puerto Rican students in the high schools." Professor Leslie Berger felt similarly: "It was almost criminal to let them come in and let them fail because of the lack of service. We knew what we needed. It was no mystery."⁶⁵ In 1998, Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani declared that "open enrollment is a failure" and the CUNY Board of Trustees replaced it with standardized tests for admissions and eliminated all remedial courses from the senior colleges. As a City College student wrote, "the avenue for education for many NY high school students has been closed."⁶⁶

This discourse of failure obscures the fact that a generation of lawyers, civil servants, teachers, artists, and social workers in New York City got their start through open admissions, notwithstanding its severe underfunding and other flaws. CUNY colleges today are both more competitive and more expensive, reflecting and reinforcing the widening socioeconomic divisions in the United States. Black and Puerto Rican college students in the late 1960s rejected market-driven approaches to higher education. They insisted upon the right of working-class African Americans and Puerto Ricans to receive the benefits of public higher education in New York City. Their tax dollars, after all, were paying for it. As Barbara Christian put it in 1969, a "much over-looked factor is that City College is supported by taxes. And Black and Puerto Rican people pay taxes just like everybody else. Yet they are not in any way represented in the ethnic make-up of the College."⁶⁷ Inspiring this generation was the conviction that seniors at poorly funded and poorly performing public high schools should not be punished for society's failure to provide high-quality secondary education for all but rather should be rewarded for their determination and desire to gain a college education. These student activists understood that college was critical to class mobility, especially since workers of color in New York City had been the first and hardest hit by deindustrialization and automation.⁶⁸ It's important to appreciate that the struggle for affirmative action, open admissions, and black and third-world studies was centered at public universities as much as, if not more than, at private ones. This is a story not of elites but of the children of migrants and immigrants. Like their counterparts in the South, they were tired of waiting for someone to enforce Supreme Court rulings; they understood that to achieve more far-reaching social change, they had to put their bodies on the line—and so they did.

Giuliani and his adversaries in the black community fought over so bitterly between 1994 and 2001. They will need to ask themselves what government can do to break down the structural barriers that still prevent black New Yorkers from achieving “full equality” in city life. They will also need to ask themselves once again whether “equal treatment” is truly “equal” if it results in disproportionate hardship for one group of New Yorkers. “One City, One Standard,” Rudolph Giuliani’s answer to this question in the late twentieth century may not be the answer in the twenty-first.

Notes

Introduction: Civil Rights in New York City

Clarence Taylor

1. Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xv–xvi.
2. Clarence Taylor, *The Black Churches of Brooklyn* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Jonathan Birnbaum and Clarence Taylor, eds., *Civil Rights since 1787: A Reader on the Black Struggle* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
3. Some works are James R. Ralph Jr., *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Randal Maurice Jelks, *African Americans in the Furniture City: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Grand Rapids* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside the South* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Gretchen Cassel, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Mathew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Adina Back, “Up South in New York: The 1950s School Desegregation Struggles” (PhD diss., New York University, 1997); Jeanne F. Theoharis, “‘We Saved the City’: Black Struggles for Educational Equality in Boston,” *Radical History Review* 81 (2001): 61–93; Gerald Horne, *The Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of*

the *Urban Crisis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*.

4. Birnbaum and Taylor, *Civil Rights since 1787*, 388–93, 539–47.

5. Elizabeth Cohn, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, 16; Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 50–51; Peter Levy, “Gloria Richardson and the Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland,” in Theoharis and Woodard, *Groundwork*, 97–115; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*, 158–60.

6. “Identify the Enemy,” *New York Teacher News* editorial, February 26, 1944.

7. Edward B. Fiske, “New York Growth Is Linked to Immigration,” *New York Times*, February 22, 1991; Cao O, “Providing Leadership to Asian Agencies: Asian American Federation of New York,” <http://www.naswnyc.org/CSPP/Asian/providingLeadership.html>.

1. To Be a Good American: The New York Teachers Union and Race during the Second World War

Clarence Taylor

1. Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 243–44; Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 72–74; *New York Teacher News*, October 9, 1943.

2. Freeman, *Working-Class New York*, 73; *New York Teacher News*, October 9, 1943, and October 16, 1943.

3. Celia Lewis Zitron, *The New York City Teachers Union, 1916–1964* (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), 15–27; New York Teachers Union Membership List of 1940, Rapp-Coudert Papers, State Library of New York, Albany.

4. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front* (London: Verso, 1997), 4–9.

5. New York Teachers Union Membership List of 1940; Heinrich W. Guggenheimer and Eva H. Guggenheimer, *Jewish Family Names and Their Origins: An Etymological Dictionary* (Newark, N.J.: KTAV, 2007). There is no way of determining the exact number of Jewish teachers in the union. I have not found any information on the religious, racial, or ethnic makeup of its membership. Therefore, I have relied on surnames that appear in the 1940 membership list. To be sure, there are some problems with this method. Some non-Jewish members may have been married to Jews and used their spouses' names. On the other hand, there may have been Jews who were married to non-Jewish members and used their spouses' last names. Many Jews changed their last names to more Anglicized names. Moreover, some surnames are shared by Jews and non-Jews. Although an examination of surnames is far from perfect, such an approach gives

us some idea of the makeup of the TU. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 128–29.

6. Ruth Jacknow Markowitz, *My Daughter, the Teacher: Jewish Teachers in the New York City Schools* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p. 163.

7. *New York Teacher News*, October 16, 1943.

8. *New York Teacher News*, October 9, 1943.

9. *New York Teacher News*, October 2, 1943; Road to Victory, *New York Teacher News*, February 19, 1944.

10. “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, November 13, 1943; “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, November 20, 1943.

11. “Hysteria—Fascist Pattern,” *New York Teacher News*, November 20, 1943

12. “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, November 20, 1943.

13. *New York Teacher News*, January 8, 1944.

14. *Ibid.*; “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, November 13, 1944.

15. “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, February 26, 1944.

16. “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, January 8, 1944.

17. “Road to Victory,” *New York Teacher News*, January 22, 1944.

18. *Ibid.*; “No Diploma for Anti-Semites,” *New York Teacher News*, February 26, 1944.

19. Robert Harris, “Teachers and Blacks: The New York City Teachers Union and the Negro, 1916–1964” (master’s thesis, 1971), 70; *New York Teacher News*, June 30, 1945; Teachers Union, “Schools for Victory,” 1942, Charles James Hendley Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

20. *New York Teacher News*, January 22, 1944.

21. Teachers Union, “Policy for the Teachers Union, 1941–1942,” Charles James Hendley Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Teachers Union, “Teachers’ Part in Victory for Democracy,” Charles James Hendley Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University; Teachers Union, “Education and National Defense,” n.d., Charles James Hendley Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

24. Teachers Union, “Education for Victory in 1943,” Seventh Annual Educational Conference, Charles James Hendley Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *New York Teacher News*, January 15, 1944.

27. *New York Teacher News*, January 8, 1944, and January 29, 1944.

28. *New York Teacher News*, January 29, 1944.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Rachel Davis DuBois, *All This and Something More: Pioneering in Intercultural Education, an Autobiography* (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Dorrance, 1984), 3–18.

31. *Ibid.*, 30–34.

of the community control conflict were a time when many teachers moved to the suburbs. Perlstein, *Justice, Justice*, 62.

71. D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 473. On African American debates about the relative role of race and class in black oppression, see, for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois, "Marxism and the Negro Problem," *Crisis*, May 1933, 104.

7. The Young Lords and the Social and Structural Roots of Late Sixties Urban Radicalism

Johanna Fernandez

This review of the history and significance of the Young Lords builds on the arguments I put forth in my doctoral dissertation: Johanna Fernandez, "Radicals in the Late 1960s: A History of the Young Lords Party in New York" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005). My work builds upon the following pioneering works on the Young Lords: Frank Browning, "From Rumble to Revolution: The Young Lords," in *The Puerto Rican Experience*, ed. Eugene Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1973), 231–45; Jennifer Lee, "The Young Lords, a New Generation of Puerto Ricans: An Oral History," *Culturefront* 3, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 64–70; Agustin Lao, "Resources of Hope: Imagining the Young Lords and the Politics of Memory," *Centro* 7, no. 1 (1995): 34–49; Suzanne Oboler, "Establishing an Identity in the Sixties: The Mexican-American/Chicano and Puerto Rican Movements," in Susan Oboler, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)presentation in the United States*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), chap. 4; Carmen Teresa Whalen, "Bridging Homeland and Barrio Politics: The Young Lords in Philadelphia," in *The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora*, ed. Andres Torres and Jose E. Velazquez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), chap. 7. Retrospective accounts by former Young Lord activists have also contributed greatly to my work: Pablo Guzmán, "Puerto Rican Barrio Politics in the United States," in *The Puerto Rican Struggle: Essays on Survival in the U.S.*, ed. Clara Rodriguez, Virginia Sanchez Korrol, and Jose Oscar Alers (Maplewood, N.J.: Waterfront Press, 1984), 121–28; Pablo Guzmán, "Ain't No Party Like the One We Got: The Young Lords Party and *Palante*," in *Voices from the Underground: Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era*, vol. 1, ed. Ken Wachsberger (Tempe, Ariz.: Mica Press, 1993), 293–304; and Pablo Guzmán, "La Vida Pura: A Lord of the Barrio," and Iris Morales, "¡Palante, Siempre Palante! The Young Lords," in Torres and Velazquez, *The Puerto Rican Movement*; Mickey Miguel Melendez, *We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights and the Young Lords* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003).

1. During most of the colonial period, Puerto Rico functioned primarily as a military outpost and had a diverse nonsegregated population consisting of a small number of slaves and Native Americans, a substantial number of freemen of color and poor white tenant farmers, and government officials. In Puerto

Rico, rigid racial demarcations did not form part of the New World colony's social fabric, in part because the slave plantation system was not a central feature of the island's economy. When a plantation economy did develop in the nineteenth century, severe labor shortages led to compulsory labor laws, which forced white land squatters to work alongside slaves and freemen of color in the fields. This development encouraged racial mixing and blurred racial differences as black slaves and white and colored laborers were compelled to intermingle with one another in the fields, an arrangement that eventually led each to find common cause with the other. See Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 82–94. For a discussion of racial ideology in the United States, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143–77, and Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the USA," *New Left Review* 181 (1990): 95–118.

2. Johanna Fernández, "Between Social Service Reform and Revolutionary Politics: The Young Lords, Late Sixties Radicalism, and Community Organizing in New York City," in *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles outside of the South, 1940–1980*, ed. Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

3. For a discussion of Chicago gangs, see Andrew Diamond, "Hoodlums, Rebels, and Vice Lords: Street Gangs, Youth Subcultures, and Race in Chicago, 1919–1969" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004), and Frederic Milton Thrasher, *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

4. Henry "Poison" Gaddis, interview by author, January 2007, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

5. Charles E. Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* (New York: Black Classic Press, 1998).

6. Frank Browning, "From Rumble to Revolution: The Young Lords," in *The Puerto Rican Experience*, ed. Eugene Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1973), 232.

7. These included New York State's Educational Opportunity Program and the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program conducted in public universities and the Higher Educational Opportunity Program in private colleges. For a fuller discussion, see Clara Beatrice Sargeant, "Project Demonstrating Excellence: An Examination of the First Eight Years of the SEEK Program at Bernard M. Baruch College, 1969–1977" (PhD diss., Union Graduate School, 1978).

8. Chapters of the Puerto Rican Student Union at Queens and Herbert Lehman Colleges, in particular, provided resolute leadership to the nascent Puerto Rican student movement in New York by insisting that the political scope of protests be broadened. The most politically conscious elements of this

group linked their particular grievances to the movement for Puerto Rican independence and to the mounting struggles at the University of Puerto Rico against on-campus military recruitment for the Vietnam War. Alfredo Lopez, *The Puerto Rican Papers: Notes on the Re-emergence of a Nation* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 320.

9. Michael Abramson, *Palante: Young Lords Party* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 8; Lopez, *Puerto Rican Papers*, 324.

10. For a discussion of the Chicago Lords and their activities, see Browning, "From Rumble to Revolution," 231–45.

11. "Interview with Cha Cha Jimenez Chairman of the Young Lords Organization," *Black Panther*, June 7, 1969, 17.

12. Abramson, *Palante: The Young Lords Party*, 9. According to Pablo Guzmán, the Lower East Side chapter of the Young Lords was formed without the consent of the founding Chicago group. Guzmán, "Ain't No Party Like the One We Got," 296.

13. Hiram Maristany, interview by author, summer 2001, New York.

14. Luciano and Maristany, "The Young Lords Party, 1969–1975" (1983), 7; Lao, "Resources of Hope," 36.

15. Morales, "¡Palante, Siempre, Palante!" 214–15.

16. For a fuller discussion, see Ramon Grosfoguel, *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), chap. 5.

17. Jack Bloom, *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement: The Changing Political Economy of Southern Racism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 200; Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion*, 92–93; United States, Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government, 1968), 144.

18. Homer Bigart, "Disorders Erupt in East Harlem; Mobs Dispersed," *New York Times*, July 24, 1967, 1, 17.

19. Sylvan Fox, "Police the Target of Ghetto Wrath," *New York Times*, July 24, 1967, 17; "El Barrio Woes Told by Figures," *New York Times*, July 24, 1967, 17.

20. Peter Khiss, "Causes Pondered by Puerto Ricans," *New York Times*, July 25, 1967, 18.

21. Homer Bigart, "2 Killed, 12 Injured," *New York Times*, July 25, 1967, 1, 18; Homer Bigart, "Renewed Violence Erupts in 2 Puerto Rican Areas," *New York Times*, July 26, 1967, 1, 20.

22. "The Puerto Ricans: Behind the Flare-Up," *New York Times*, July 30, 1967, sec. 4, 1; McCandlish Phillips, "Residents of East Harlem Found to Have Ingredients for Violence," *New York Times*, July 27, 1967, 20.

23. Bigart, "2 Killed, 12 Injured," 18.

24. *Ibid.*; Cannato, 135.

25. "Causes Pondered by Puerto Ricans," *New York Times*, July 25, 1967, 18.

26. Ira Katnelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 137; Lindsay, *The City*, 118.

27. Barry Gottehrer, interview by author, January 2005, Washington, D.C.

28. Vincent J. Cannato, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York* (New York: Basic, 2001), 130.

29. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Experience of the Puerto Rican Worker," *Middle Atlantic Region, Regional Report* no. 9 (June 1968): 13; Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 183–85.

30. Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

31. Bloom, *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement*, chaps. 2 and 3. On the early civil rights movement in New York, see Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

32. Although service industry jobs replaced blue-collar employment, the process of structural economic conversion failed to absorb large swaths of the urban population into the national economy. As early as the 1960s, the Department of Labor began to track the percentages of displaced workers using a new concept called "subemployment," a statistical index for tracking people who were either unemployed, underemployed, or permanently out of the labor force for lack of success finding employment. USDL, "Labor Force Experience of the Puerto Rican Worker": 21.

33. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

34. I am adapting, to the urban environment, an analysis of the general character of 1960s protesters articulated in Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (New York: Verso, 2004), 43.

35. Morales, "¡Palante, Siempre, Palante!" 214–15.

36. Phillip Foner, *The Black Panthers Speak* (New York: Lippincott, 1970), 2–4.

37. Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*, 43.

38. "One Year of Struggle," *Palante* 2, no. 8 (July 31, 1970): centerfold. Tamiment Library, New York University.

39. Murray Schumach, "Seas of Garbage Engulf Islands on Broadway," *New York Times*, September 3, 1969, 1; Joseph P. Fried, "East Harlem Youths Explain Garbage-Dumping Demonstrations," *New York Times*, August 19, 1969, 86; Carl Davidson, "Young Lords Organize New York," *Guardian*, October 18, 1969, 6. For a reference to the series of demonstration held by the YLP, see also "Plastic Bags Given East Harlem in War on Garbage Pile Up," *New York Times*, September 13, 1969, 33.

40. Joseph Fried, "Paint-Poisoning Danger to Children Fought," *New York Times*, March 2, 1969, sec. 6, 1, 8; "Lead Poisoning Is Affecting 112,000 Children Annually, Specialists Report," *New York Times*, March 26, 1969, 23. For

more precise figures, see Gary Eidsvold, Anthony Mustalish, and Lloyd F. Novick, "The New York City Department of Health: Lesson in Lead Poisoning Control Program," *American Journal of Public Health* 64, no. 10 (October 1974): 959. The last document was replicated as a pamphlet by the New York City Department of Health, Vertical File, New York City, Poisoning, Lead (1970s Folder), Municipal Archives of the City of New York.

41. Juan Gonzalez, quoted in *El Pueblo Se Levanta: The People Are Rising*, videorecording (New York: Third World Newsreel, 1970); also quoted in "The Young Lords," recording by Elizabeth Perez-Luna, Pacifica Radio Archives, 1977.

42. For a discussion of the Young Lords' "Lincoln Offensive," see Johanna Fernandez, "The Young Lords and the Postwar City: Notes on the Geographical and Structural Reconfigurations of Contemporary Urban Life," in Kenneth Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, eds., *African American Urban History Since World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 60–82.

43. "Bronx Conflict Focused on Community Control," *Hospital Tribune* 3, no. 9 (n.d.): 1, 20, D. Samuel Gotteson Library, Yeshiva University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine Archives, Lincoln Hospital Papers and Vertical File, 1960–1975; Fitzhugh Mullan, *White Coat, Clenched Fist: The Political Education of an American Physician* (New York: Macmillan, 1976); Cleo Silvers and Danny Argote, "Think Lincoln," *Palante*, July 3, 1970, 2, 16; Ellen Frankfort, "The Community's Role in Healing a Hospital," *Village Voice*, November 26, 1970, 12, 14; "Lords Liberate Hospital," *Old Mole*, August 7, 1970, 5; Alfonso A. Narvaez, "Young Lords Seize Lincoln Hospital Building," *New York Times*, July 15 1970, 34.

44. On the popularity of the organization see Juan Gonzalez, interview by Columbia University Oral History Program, New York, 1988, 61. This is the most complete publicly accessible oral history of any member of the organization to date.

8. "Brooklyn College Belongs to Us": Black Students and the Transformation of Public Higher Education in New York City

Martha Biondi

1. "CUNY contains the largest number of black and Latino scholars ever to attend a single university in the history of the United States. The importance of CUNY as a source of opportunity for non-white students and their communities is highlighted by the fact that CUNY traditionally awards the largest number of master's degrees to black and Latino students of any institution in America. Last year CUNY conferred 1,011 master's degrees to black and Latino students while the State University of New York awarded only 233." Ronald B. McGuire, "The Struggle at CUNY: Open Admissions and Civil Rights," <http://leftspot.com/blog/?q=book/export.html> (accessed November 24, 2010).

2. Much has been written about open admissions; see, for example, David E. Lavin, Richard D. Alba, and Richard A. Silberstein, *Right versus Privilege: The Open Admissions Experiment at the City University of New York* (New York: Free

Press, 1981). But scholars of the civil rights and Black Power movements have neglected or ignored it. See for example, Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality: 1954–1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), and, more recently, Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006).

3. Conrad M. Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions: The Impact of the Black and Puerto Rican Students' Community (of City College)" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1990), 193.

4. Bart Meyers, "Radical Struggle for Open Admissions at CUNY," *Kingsman*, February 27, 1976. In 1968, 192 black students entered as part of a new Educational Opportunity Program. Others came through SEEK, which by early 1969 made up of 470 students. Another new 1968 initiative was the One Hundred Scholars program, where the top one hundred graduates of each high school were automatically accepted to college. Forty-five of these students chose Brooklyn College. Still, according to one student who entered that year, black enrollment in the liberal arts college was only 1 percent. *New York Times*, May 21, 1968; Duncan Pardue to Franklin Williams, February 5, 1969, Institute of the Black World Papers, box: Survey of Black Studies Programs, folder: Brooklyn College, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library; Orlando Pile, telephone interview by author, June 30, 2005.

5. United States Congress, Senate Committee on Government Operations, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*, 91st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 5193.

6. Students at City College advocated admitting black and Puerto Rican students in proportion to their presence in local high schools. They also called for access for poor whites as well and said they should constitute 20 percent of the freshmen class, reflecting their presence in the local high school population. Students at Brooklyn College called for the admission of all black and Puerto Rican applicants, regardless of their scholastic record.

7. Duncan Pardue to Franklin Williams, February 5, 1969.

8. Askia Davis, interview by author, July 19, 2005, New York City.

9. Pile interview; Davis interview. The president said he "deplored racism but procedures of academic freedom must be maintained." Only the Board of Higher Education, he said, could take action on specific evidence of racism. Bart Meyers, "Radical Struggle for Open Admissions at CUNY," *Kingsman*, February 27, 1976.

10. At City College, SEEK professor Fran Geteles said that the students there "were very sensitive to the issues of under-preparedness and were not asking for indiscriminate entrance." Conrad Dyer found that many former student activists reiterated this point in interviews. See Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions," 103.

11. *Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*, 5197–99.

12. Pile interview.

13. *Kingsman*, April 23, 1969.

14. Meyers, "Radical Struggle."
15. Davis interview.
16. Ibid.; *New York Times*, May 1, 1969.
17. *Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*, 5203.
18. *New York Times*, May 14, 1969; *Kingsman* (special edition), May 12, 1969; Davis interview; Pile interview.
19. Davis interview.
20. *New York Post*, May 13, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 2, University Archives and Special Collections, City College of New York (hereafter CCNY).
21. *New York Daily News*, May 14, 1969.
22. Ibid.; *Kingsman*, May 16, 1969; Davis interview. Ironically, Dr. Matthews also went to jail in 1969—for refusing to pay federal income tax. An outspoken advocate of self-help and black capitalism, Matthews, the first black neurosurgeon in the United States, said he gave his taxes to his organization, NEGRO, rather than to pay for welfare programs. President Nixon commuted the six-month sentence after sixty-nine days. *New York Times*, April 2, 1973.
23. *Kingsman*, February 27, 1970, and March 6, 1970; Judge Rinaldi said the indictments would be dismissed after six months "if they behaved." Things didn't turn out as well for the prosecutor or the judge. In 1983 Eugene Gold, who was Brooklyn district attorney from 1968 to 1981, admitted to "unlawful sexual fondling" of a ten-year-old girl—the daughter of an Alabama prosecutor—in a Nashville hotel room during a convention of district attorneys. And Judge Dominic Rinaldi was suspended from the bench after being indicted for perjury in 1973, although a jury later acquitted him. See "Gold Gets Probation in Fondling of Child; Agrees to Treatment," *New York Times*, October 21, 1983, and "Dominic Rinaldi Dies: A Retired Justice," *New York Times*, November 27, 1983.
24. "STRIKE!" editorial, *Kingsman*, May 12, 1969.
25. *Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*, 5191.
26. Sekou Sundiata (formerly Robert Feaster), interview transcript, n.d., Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 1, CCNY.
27. "Chronology of a Crisis," n.d., Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 1, CCNY; Sundiata interview.
28. These statistics describe 1967. Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions," 64. This was the first official ethnic census conducted at CUNY schools.
29. Barbara Christian, "City College Saga Part 2: Dual Admissions," *Inside and Outside the Plaza*, n.d., reprinted from *Harlem News*, June 1969, Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 2, CCNY.
30. The Black and Puerto Rican Student Community to the faculty and students of City College, press release, April 26, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 4, CCNY. Conrad's spouse, the writer Adrienne Rich, also taught at CCNY and was a supporter of the student activists. Frances Geteles, telephone interview by author, August 29, 2007.

31. Barbara Christian, "City College Saga Part 2: Dual Admissions," *Inside and Outside the Plaza*, n.d., reprinted from *Harlem News*, June 1969, Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 2, CCNY.
32. Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions," 98; Toni Cade, "Realizing the Dream of the Black University," *Observation Post*, February 14, 1969, Martha Weisman Papers, Open Admissions folder, CCNY. In 1970 Toni Cade became Toni Cade Bambara.
33. See, for example, Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).
34. Miss Cade to "Dear Bloods," n.d., Five Demands Conflict Collection, Public Relations folder, CCNY.
35. Toni Cade, "Realizing the Dream of the Black University," *Observation Post*, February 14, 1969, Martha Weisman Papers, Open Admissions folder, CCNY.
36. Barbara Christian, "City College Saga: Lesson in Democracy," *Inside and Outside the Plaza*, August–September 1969, Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 2, CCNY.
37. Alecia Edwards-Sibley, "The Five Demands," *Paper*, April 2002, Martha Weisman Papers, Strike of 1969 folder, CCNY.
38. Black and Puerto Rican Student Community, "Queries and Answers on Demands #1 and #4," May 28, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 7, CCNY.
39. There was some overlap—Betty Rawls and Barbara Christian were in both groups. Geteles interview.
40. See Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).
41. Carlos Russell, interview by author, June 11, 2005, New York City.
42. Bart Meyers, "Radical Struggle for Open Admissions at CUNY"; "Talk of the Town," *New Yorker*, May 3, 1969, in Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 1, CCNY; Davis interview.
43. WCBS Transcript, "Campus Disruption—II," April 23, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, Public Relations folder, CCNY.
44. *New York Post*, April 30, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 1, CCNY.
45. *New York Times*, May 1, 1969.
46. Transcript of film (unfinished), Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 2, CCNY.
47. Bart Meyers, "Radical Struggle for Open Admissions at CUNY," *Kingsman*, February 27, 1976.
48. *New York Post*, May 10, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 1, CCNY.
49. Editorial, *Daily News*, May 10, 1969, Five Demands Conflict Collection, box 1, CCNY; *New York Post*, June 13, 1969, Five Conflict Collection, box 1, CCNY.

50. *New York Times*, May 18, 1969.
51. *New York Times*, May 5, 6, and 25, 1969; Davis interview.
52. Allen B. Ballard, *The Education of Black Folk: The Afro-American Struggle for Knowledge in White America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 127, 141.
53. Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions," 176.
54. "Urban and Ethnic Studies Dept. Created," *Campus*, September 2, 1969, Martha Weisman Papers, CCNY.
55. "A Negro Professor at C.C.N.Y. Charges Slander," *New York Times*, September 20, 1969.
56. Dr. Pile graduated in 1972, attended medical school at Rutgers University, and did his internship and residency at MLK/Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles. Askia Davis is an administrator for the New York Public School system. He has served as special assistant to three chancellors.
57. Davis interview; Pile interview.
58. Russell interview; Memorandum, n.d., and "Report of the Committee to Evaluate the School for Contemporary Studies at Brooklyn College," March 1976, Information Files, #91–021; folder: BC—Schools—School for Contemporary Studies, Brooklyn College Special Collections and University Archive.
59. "Dean Quitting CCNY Post Tells Why," *New York Post*, May 28, 1969.
60. Ed Quinn and Leonard Kriegal, "How the Dream Was Deferred," *Nation*, April 7, 1984, 412–14.
61. Albert H. Bowker, oral history by Harriet Niathon, September 6, 1991, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
62. Martha Weisman, "Legacy of Student Activism at the City College," April 21, 1989, Legacy of Struggle Collection, CCNY.
63. Geteles interview.
64. Frank Rich, quoted in Quinn and Kriegal, "How the Dream Was Deferred," 412.
65. Dyer, "Protest and the Politics of Open Admissions," 184.
66. *Closing the Door: The Fight for a College Education*, a film by Ellie Bernstein, c. 1999, CCNY; Kelechi Onwuchekwa, "The Truth behind Open Admissions," *The Paper*, April 2002, Martha Weisman Papers, CCNY.
67. Barbara Christian, "City College Saga Part 2: Dual Admissions," *Inside and Outside the Plaza*, reprinted from *Harlem News*, June 1969, Legacy of Struggle Collection, box 2, CCNY.
68. See Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

9. Racial Events, Diplomacy, and Dinkins's Image

Wilbur C. Rich

1. See M. A. Farber, "Black-Korean Who-Pushed-Whom Festers," *New York Times*, May 7, 1990, B1.

2. See Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
3. Howard Kurtz, "Bonfire of Inanities: How News Fuel Racial Tension," *Washington Post*, May 10, 1990, B1.
4. See Don Terry, "Diplomacy Falls to End Store Boycott in Flatbush," *New York Times*, July 16, 1990, B1.
5. Farber, "Black-Korean Who-Pushed-Whom Festers."
6. See Kim, *Bitter Fruit*, 2.
7. Russell W. Baker, "New York's Korean Grocery Turmoil Rooted in Cultural and Economic Conditions" *Christian Science Monitor*, May 31, 1990, 7.
8. Kim, *Bitter Fruit*, 11.
9. "All for the Price of a Lime," *Economist*, May 19, 1990, 31.
10. "Sonny Carson, Koreans and Racism," *New York Times*, May 8, 1990, A28.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Cited in David Seifman and Rita Delfiner, "Ed: I'd Personally Bust Boycott of Korean," *New York Post*, May 10 1990, 3.
13. Sam Roberts, "Metro Matters: Which Mayor Knows Best on the Boycott?" *New York Times*, July 30, 1990, B1.
14. Todd Purdum, "Dinkins Steps up Criticism of Brooklyn Protesters," *New York Times*, May 10, 1990, B3.
15. Sam Roberts, "From an Unlikely Source, Praise for Koch," *New York Times*, February 2, 1990, 61.
16. Todd Purdum, "Judge Critical of Dinkins over Boycott," *New York Times*, May 11, 1990, B1.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Rita Delfiner, "Dave 'Diplomat' on Korean Boycott," *New York Post*, May 9, 1990, 7.
19. Ari L. Goldman, "Racial Unity and Dissent in Brooklyn," *New York Times*, May 18, 1990.
20. William W. Sales Jr. and Rod Bush, "The Political Awakening of Blacks and Latinos in New York City: Competition or Cooperation?" *Social Justice* 27, no. 1 (2000): 28.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. "Talking Like a Leader," *New York Times*, May 13, 1990, 18.
25. Reported in Rita Delfiner, David Seifman, and Karen Phillip, "Raves and Raspberries for Dinkins Speech," *New York Post*, May 12, 1990, 5.
26. Todd Purdum, "Dinkins Asks for Racial Unity and Offers to Mediate Boycott," *New York Times*, May 12, 1990, 1.
27. "This City Is Sick of Violence: Dinkins's Address," *New York Times*, May 12, 1990, A1.