

# “HARLEM IS THE BLACK WORLD”: THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY AT THE GRASSROOTS

Garrett Felber

Harlem is raw black anger, black frustration, disillusionment. Harlem is HARYOU, which could spell hope for Harlem children. Harlem is Black nationalism. Harlem is Muslims. Harlem is bars and funeral parlors and black laughter and Langston Hughes and Malcolm X and Nipsey Russell and Adam Clayton Powell and Jesse Gray and Percy Sutton. Harlem is way up North, the Promised Land. . . . Yet Harlem is, for all that, essentially Dixie accents and Southern attitudes, like every acre of the North, shackled forever to the South.

—John Oliver Killens, “Downsouth-Upsouth” (1969)

Standing in the wake of landmark civil rights legislation and the midst of emergent calls for Black Power, Martin Luther King, Jr., provocatively asked in the title of his final book, *Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community?* Three years earlier at the Audubon Ballroom, in New York City’s Washington Heights neighborhood, activists gathered to answer a similar question. The newly formed Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) sponsored a panel discussion to address the recent Harlem uprising with community members from various political organizations ranging from socialists to black nationalists. The topic of the panel, “Harlem Riots and Where Do We Go from Here?” signaled 1964 as an equally important crossroads at the crucible of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. The year was not only marked by upheaval in Harlem and the emergence of the OAAU, but the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party’s (MFDP’s) challenge to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, the launching of Freedom Summer’s voter registration drives by the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), and the deaths of three civil rights workers in Mississippi. As Nikhil Singh has pointed out, “[I]t is not an accident that the explicit turn to black power in the mid-1960s followed the defeat of the initiative by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to gain full recognition at the 1964 Democratic Convention. . . . At its most prosaic and eloquent, this was the meaning of black power: the refusal to concede the right of black people to take the initiative even under the most unfavorable circumstances.”<sup>1</sup>

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How this moment is remembered and articulated is determined by how scholars have come to interpret the subsequent rise of Black Power. Some have portrayed that year's Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act the following summer as the capstones of the Civil Rights Movement. Meanwhile, the 1964 uprising in Harlem foreshadowed a series of upheavals throughout the late 1960s in the predominantly black communities of Watts, Newark, Detroit, and dozens of other cities across the country. Recent Black Power scholarship has pushed against the tendency to see these uprisings as the declension of a heroic Civil Rights Movement and instead as the beginning—or continuation of—a brand of militant black politics. This essay looks at the OAAU during its brief existence under Malcolm X's leadership, from its inception in early 1964 to his death in February 1965, as a temporal and spatial site in which Harlem activists came together and theorized new meanings and strategies for black politics.

The OAAU is not only important as a snapshot of what has been described as Malcolm X's "developing" political thought. Following his notorious characterization of President John F. Kennedy's assassination as a case of the "chickens coming home to roost" in December 1963, Malcolm was suspended for ninety days by Elijah Muhammad. Muslim Mosque Inc. (MMI) was Malcolm's first independent group following his break with the Nation of Islam (NOI). As it became more apparent that he would not be reinstated, he founded MMI on 12 March 1964 as a religious and political haven for those who followed him out of the NOI. MMI was black nationalist, Muslim, and modeled explicitly after the structure of the NOI. While the groups struggled to share a small space in the Hotel Theresa and tried to manage differences across class, gender, and religion, it would be a mistake to see these organizations simply as expressions of Malcolm's own trajectory.<sup>2</sup> Rather, this essay looks at the OAAU during this period as a convergence of different streams of activism: Harlem cultural radicalism, the black nationalism of the Nation of Islam, and a younger generation that came of age in the struggle for civil rights.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we can view Malcolm X as a fountainhead for Black Power, but also the OAAU as a coalescence of strategies such as community control, grassroots organizing, cultural nationalism, and black bloc voting at the crucial intersection of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.<sup>4</sup>

From the multiple political and organizational affinities of the panelists to the figurative act of putting the police on trial, the OAAU's "Where Do We Go from Here?" discussion at the Audubon Ballroom on 9 August 1964 embodied the "black united front" and the local grassroots focus on issues such as police brutality that the organizers envisioned in OAAU's early stages. The meeting featured confirmed participants ranging from Harlem nationalists such as Lewis Michaux, James Lawson, and Carlos Cooks to notable civil rights attorneys Paul Zuber, Percy Sutton, and Hope Stevens. Other national figures such as Bayard Rustin and

Anna Hedgeman also planned to be in the audience of nearly two hundred. The panel included representatives from a number of local organizations as well, including author John Oliver Killens, William Strickland of the Northern Student Movement, and Ralph Becten and Margaret Purcell of Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU), which had recently merged with Associated Community Teams (ACT) under the supervision of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell to form HARYOU-ACT. OAAU charter members Sara Mitchell and Peter Bailey both fired incisive questions at two rather defensive panelists from the New York Police Department (NYPD), and Malcolm X's close associate James Shabazz closed with a "fiery speech" condemning NYPD's search practices.<sup>5</sup>

For the OAAU one of the most significant outgrowths of the recent uprising in Harlem was what Killens identified as the increase in demonstrations of unity across the political spectrum.<sup>6</sup> In fact, notes from an organizational meeting a month before the rebellion and the OAAU's official debut claimed: "Harlem is the Black World. When we control New York City, we will then be a model for other United States cities."<sup>7</sup> Hence, the group's founding members imagined an organization that would start locally and think internationally. The OAAU did not see the two in tension. Embodied in the phrase "Harlem is the Black World" was a vision of an internationalist program around community politics within the African Diaspora. Its short-term goals of addressing local issues—rallying residents against police brutality, establishing a "Liberation School," offering child care and self-defense classes, and launching political education and voter registration drives—were a part of the larger vision of Pan-Africanism and human rights, which had dominated most discussions by the OAAU and Malcolm X during that crucial year.

The OAAU saw Harlem as a real and imagined space. On the one hand, Harlem had long been an exceptional space of black cosmopolitanism, a political and cultural metropole of the Diaspora. The OAAU recognized Harlem's particular international role by emphasizing the need to develop a larger presence of Africans in Harlem, collecting black newspapers from around the world, and stressing that members had the opportunity to learn multiple languages. However, they also saw it as a representative urban space—a portable model for local organizing. As charter member John Oliver Killens later wrote, "We must make the Harlems of the U.S.A. sources of black strength, political and otherwise."<sup>8</sup> By referring to it in the plural—Harlems—Killens and OAAU members positioned it as a black, urban space to be self-determining, self-policed, and controlled through community organizing. Therefore, by pronouncing that "Harlem is the Black World," the early members of the organization outlined a blueprint for local community organizing while also narrating a global imaginary of Pan-Africanism.

A week prior to the forty-seventh anniversary of Malcolm X's assassination (2012), OAAU founding member Peter Bailey noted, "Organizations are not insti-

tutions . . . we have to start paying attention to people who are building things.”<sup>9</sup> By focusing on community organizing, this essay identifies what black activists who gravitated to the OAAU learned during the crucial year of 1964 and where they took those lessons in the Black Power era. While still acknowledging the significant role Pan-Africanism played in the ideological framework of the OAAU, paying attention to local community initiatives allows for a more holistic narrative of the group’s program.<sup>10</sup> Formative OAAU meetings in the spring of 1964 reveal the organization’s focus on community politics in Harlem as a complement to its international vision of human rights. While the globalism of the OAAU was a crucial component of its scope, the organization emphasized constructing a local base around community issues in Harlem such as police brutality and stop-and-frisk practices, while developing educational and self-defense programs.<sup>11</sup> An account of the group’s weekly organizing, membership activities, and structure places the OAAU in a local context while still acknowledging its important move toward human rights on a global scale. The OAAU thus emerges as a crucial site for theorizing black politics in this period. Activists across various political traditions, generations, and geographic backgrounds developed ideas about local self-determination and international anti-colonialism and used them to inform political strategies in the Black Power era.

### “NO KNOCKIN”

Although Malcolm X announced the formation of the OAAU on 28 June 1964, several months after breaking with the Nation of Islam, the organization had been in development for over six months. Peter Bailey, editor of the OAAU’s newspaper *Blacklash*, was recruited by a young activist, Lynne Shifflett, and Bailey recalled clandestine meetings while Malcolm was still a “silenced” member of the Nation of Islam:

[Lynne Shifflett] said, I’m going to call you on Saturday morning around 8 o’clock and I’ll tell you where and everything. You know, very secretive, you know it was all very secretive. So I said, OK. She called me. Told me where to meet and what time. Ah, I went over there. It was a motel in Harlem at 153rd Street and Eighth Avenue and, ah, when I got over there I saw John [Henrik] Clarke. I saw John Killens and a few other people. . . . And we sat around and talked for a while. And then in walks brother Malcolm. Now when he walked in, I said to myself, Ah, oh, this is going to be serious. . . . And after, we sat down and we talked and we began to meet there every Saturday for about three or four weeks maybe longer.<sup>12</sup>

The group was solidified by June, but the members agreed that the “organization should be set up and functioning before it [was] publicly announced.”<sup>13</sup> In addition to Malcolm X and Shifflett, who William Sales described as “clearly in

leadership roles,” Muriel Gray, Peter Bailey, John Killens, and John Henrik Clarke were a few of the most significant contributors.<sup>14</sup> After conducting several research meetings, the group settled on the name the Organization of Afro-American Unity at a meeting on 9 June at Lynne Shifflett’s apartment on Riverside Drive. Its inspiration, following John Henrik Clarke’s suggestion, was the recently formed Organization of African Unity (OAU), a body of African nations unified around goals of anti-colonialism and human rights.<sup>15</sup>

Even in its embryonic stages, the OAAU determined that it “should have a long range goal and short range goal.” Most studies of the OAAU and Malcolm X have highlighted the organization’s plan to bring the United States before the United Nations for human rights abuses against African Americans.<sup>16</sup> Less often recognized were its short-term goals within Harlem: “to find the one issue, housing, jobs, police brutality—whatever it may be, that the community is concerned with most and wage a resolute struggle around it in order to galvanize the masses.”<sup>17</sup> Despite the group’s clear global focus, embodied in its title, the OAAU emphasized a dual front, which would in fact start local while maintaining an international consciousness. These should not be seen in conflict. Indeed, early meetings stressed that the organization needed “a library with newspapers from all over the *Black World*” (italics in original). All officers would be required to speak two languages, or else be given the opportunity to learn a second.<sup>18</sup> The group also hoped that Africans would develop a larger presence in Harlem. “African nations should bring displays to Harlem so that Negro children can see and learn. Africans must be encouraged to move uptown.”<sup>19</sup> However, the organization concluded that it would “start work at [the] local [l]evel.” It continued, “Immediate action is necessary in Harlem. The ‘No Knock’ law and police brutality are prime issues.”<sup>20</sup>

New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller had signed the “no knock” bill into law as part of a new anticrime package in March 1964. Alongside the “stop-and-frisk” bill, which allowed any police officer to stop and search a person with impunity, the “no knock” policy exempted police with a warrant from knocking before entering a residence.<sup>21</sup> As civil rights attorney Paul Zuber sardonically noted at a 1964 rally, “A lot of us folks in Harlem thought that was the law already because they’ve been doing it that way for years.”<sup>22</sup> The issue was particularly salient, as the new law went into effect on 1 July 1964, just days after the organization’s formation.<sup>23</sup> Several weeks later, in mid-July, Harlem erupted as one of the first in a line of urban rebellions throughout the decade. A week of violence and property damage ensued in response to the killing of a 15-year-old African American, James Powell, by a white police officer. With Malcolm X in Cairo attempting to convince the OAU to denounce American racism as a human rights issue, OAAU and MMI member Benjamin Karim addressed a demonstration organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to protest the shooting. Just

weeks into the OAAU's existence, it was navigating the international terrain of human rights alongside the pervasive local issue of police brutality.

In a speech apparently prepared by Malcolm X the week prior to the OAAU's unveiling, he called Rockefeller's bill one of the "most oppressive laws in history . . . a law that is as bad as anything Hitler used against the Jews." Malcolm continued in his role as an unwavering social critic while in the Nation of Islam. He derided civil rights groups for staging sit-ins at White Castle restaurants the previous summer "because they couldn't eat hamburgers where they wanted to, or work where they wanted to. And now when it comes to the rights of the people of Harlem under the Constitution, there's dead silence."<sup>24</sup> Nearly a decade before Gil Scott-Heron rapped against Nixon's "no knock" practices in a song on his historic 1974 compilation album *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, the OAAU decided the law "should be [its] main and immediate project." In addition to preparing a legal brief to be presented to the membership, a small group outlined a three-step action program regarding the law. A twenty-four-hour telephone line would be available for victims of the law, leaflets would be made and distributed at rallies, and a silent funeral march from 145th to 125th Street would be held, with participants dressed in black and carrying a casket symbolizing their "intention to bury the . . . law." The members resolved that they must advocate "mass resistance to [the] law and be prepared to defend those who resist it."<sup>25</sup>

In speeches denouncing the law, Malcolm obscured the contentious political picture within Harlem by claiming that "not one major organization has had a demonstration against these laws."<sup>26</sup> In reality, the OAAU was joining an existing chorus of protests from rent-strike leader Jesse Gray; Harlem lawyers Cora T. Walker, Percy Sutton, and Charlie Rangel; as well as the NAACP and the New York branch of CORE.<sup>27</sup> To OAAU members, the complicated political scene in Harlem reinforced the need to create a "united front" around core community issues. With Harlem as its base, it became crucial to have members who were attuned to its needs and concerns.

The organization's initial coterie of leaders reflected a generational divide of both younger, transplanted activists seeking opportunities in New York and a group of veteran Harlem activists, writers, and actors with ties to the "Harlem radical tradition."<sup>28</sup> The former was comprised most prominently of Lynne Shifflett, Sara Mitchell, and Peter Bailey. Shifflett was born in 1940 and came from a middle-class family in Los Angeles where she had participated in a variety of social affairs such as Jack and Jill and Big Sister programs. While enrolled at Los Angeles City College, she traveled as part of the Crossroads Africa program to Nigeria, Portugal, and France, even meeting Kwame Nkrumah during her trip to Ghana. In 1963 Shifflett moved to New York City and began working as a news analyst at NBC.<sup>29</sup> She was even temporarily employed with the Internal Revenue



Service before leaving to pursue an advanced degree. Like many in her cohort, Shifflett came of age within the mainstream civil rights struggle as a former member of both CORE and the New York NAACP.<sup>30</sup>



OAAU Executive Secretary Lynne Shifflett with comedian Dick Gregory (middle) at OAAU rally in Harlem, 13 December 1964, with Zanzibari revolutionary Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu in attendance. Courtesy of Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, SC.

Sara Mitchell came from Georgia at around the same time as an aspiring writer. She soon found employment as a receptionist at the *New Yorker* magazine. In the summer of 1964 Malcolm X responded to a letter from Mitchell by encouraging her to attend an OAAU rally; Malcolm indicated, “Write me an objective analysis of your impressions of what we are trying to do, including your suggestions as to how we can do better.”<sup>31</sup> Mitchell responded with nearly twenty pages of constructive criticism and became one of the OAAU’s most active and devoted members.

Peter Bailey, another southerner born in Georgia and raised in Alabama, was recruited by Shifflett while the two worked at Rockefeller Center. Bailey had moved to Harlem after attending Howard University from 1959 to 1961. And although all were green to an established Harlem political scene, Bailey had begun to involve himself in community issues by the beginning of 1964, roughly the same time he joined the first OAAU gatherings. In an *Amsterdam News* editorial, he responded to claims that segregated schools were inherently inferior, adding that he only supported integrated schools knowing that “constant pressure on the [school] board [would] frighten them into action, but [would] also get the schools

. . . in Harlem and other black communities improved.” He chastised the community for their lack of resolve, noting that while the people of Jackson, Mississippi, boycotted stores the previous Christmas, Harlem was “lit up like a gambling strip in Las Vegas.” Writing on the brink of Harlem’s uprising that summer, he argued that it had not yet had a “bad revolution” and challenged the community to prove otherwise to “Wagner, Rockefeller, or any other politician.” He wrote, “They know that we don’t have the spirit of Jackson or even Philadelphia.”<sup>32</sup>

These young transplants joined a more established network of artists and activists in the community led by John Henrik Clarke, John Oliver Killens, Ruby Dee, and Ossie Davis. As literary critic Cheryl Higashida notes, the “cross-fertilization of Black nationalist, liberal, and Left activism had been particularly vibrant in Harlem.”<sup>33</sup> Clarke was the elder statesman of this group, having arrived in 1933, when he became associated with the Harlem History Club and Harlem Writer’s Guild. He also co-founded *Harlem Quarterly* and was an editor of *Freedomways*, a revitalization of Paul Robeson’s *Freedom* journal. *Freedomways* became an important touchstone for an older generation of black radicals and younger artists, many of whom operated within the larger orbit of the OAAU. Indeed, in 1963 Clarke edited a special issue devoted to Harlem, which Killens praised as “the first such issue of any magazine in 38 years.”<sup>34</sup>

Like others in this seasoned group, Ruby Dee had moved to New York decades earlier and attended Hunter College. She then joined the recently formed American Negro Theater, whose other prominent graduates Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier were on the fringes of the OAAU. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, who married in 1948, became close friends with Malcolm X following Davis’s successful Broadway play *Purlie Victorious* in 1961.<sup>35</sup> John Oliver Killens, with whom Davis and Dee formed the Association of Artists for Freedom in 1963, was another left-leaning nationalist member of this veteran cohort of Harlem activists. He moved to New York in 1948 and became a member of the National Labor Relations Board and Congress of Industrial Organizations, as well as a co-founder of the Harlem Writer’s Guild in 1950. What is most notable about the early composition of the OAAU is that its community credentials emanated not merely from Malcolm X, but a generation of writers and actors who had cultivated black radical politics during the 1940s and 1950s, before Malcolm X and the NOI had begun to make inroads in Harlem. But what brought these two generations of activists from a variety of political traditions together was a shared critique of what they saw as the slow pace and moderate politics of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement.

These early members resolved to build lines of communication with activists in Harlem not only by promoting their organization, but by showing support for



local cultural events and political campaigns. This meant contact beyond the cultural elite. They believed, “Nothing should be able to happen in Harlem without our knowledge. We should know who the Bookies are, the numbers runner, the Bag Men, the big time dope operator, who owns and operate[s] various business[es] . . . be prepared to confront them, once we have built a firm, grass roots, organization and have the support of the community.”<sup>36</sup> This proletarian focus was explicitly articulated in a meeting on 30 May, where it was “generally agreed that the organization must appeal to the masses: the non-intellectual.”<sup>37</sup>

To better assess the social conditions of Harlem residents, a one-page synopsis documented unemployment levels, average income, the number receiving welfare payments, annual gross sales, and retail ownership.<sup>38</sup> Two statistics that would prove crucial to the OAAU revolved around issues of gender and labor. Women, who constituted 48 percent of Harlem labor, were considered—along with youth—“the core of most organizations in the ghettos.” An early June meeting determined that this “should be kept in mind at all times as [the OAAU formed its] action programs.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, women played a crucial role in the OAAU by chairing committees, writing for its newsletter, corresponding with foreign diplomats and civil rights leaders, and even forming satellite organizations in Boston, Montreal, and New Rochelle, New York. The FBI noted that Lynne Shifflett was essentially “running the OAAU while Malcolm X [was] in Africa.”<sup>40</sup> Second, the report noted that of nearly 4,000 retail stores in Harlem representing an annual gross of roughly \$350 million, almost all were owned by whites. Hence, it was decided that money would be needed to promote black businesses.<sup>41</sup> While the prominent role of women in the OAAU represented a departure from the more patriarchal structures of the NOI and MMI, the group’s focus on promoting black businesses and recruiting the working class were reminiscent of these other nationalist groups.

OAAU members also involved themselves in panels, workshops, and other community events in order to forge ties with existing groups. A conference sponsored by the Federation for Independent Political Action at Mt. Morris Church in December 1964 featured OAAU leaders in a variety of roles. In addition to Malcolm X’s keynote speech at the general session, John Henrik Clarke led a cultural workshop and OAAU supporters Jesse Gray and Rev. Milton Galamison chaired sessions on housing and education respectively.<sup>42</sup> Emily Taylor and Peter Bailey were also sent to observe a meeting of the Harlem Unity Council, which offered a nine-point report on “police reform and community accountability” following the Harlem uprising of July 1964.<sup>43</sup> Of course, these connections worked in both directions. Joseph Overton, chair of the Unity Council, also attended the OAAU panel discussion on the Harlem rebellion that summer.<sup>44</sup>

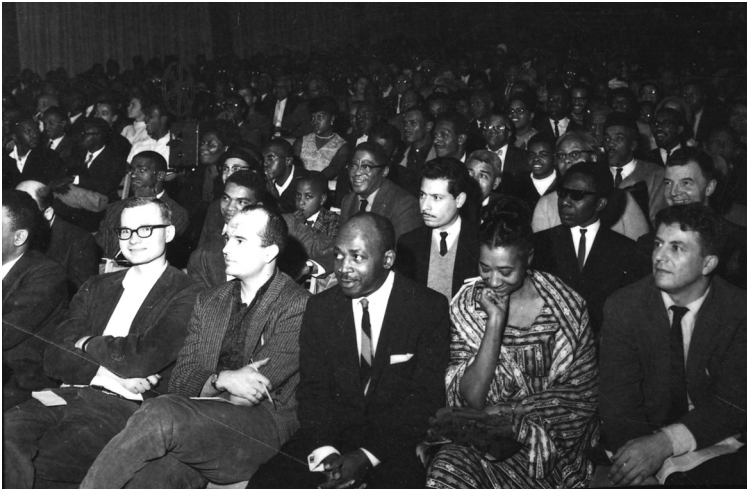
Efforts to build a local base included both formal electoral efforts and community aid programs. The OAAU called for an immediate voter registration drive

for the mayoral election of 1965 and presidential election of 1968. It also outlined plans to get surplus food for the unemployed, educational help for “junkies and prostitutes,” a reduction in the police force in Harlem, aid to the victims of police brutality, and a “clean up Harlem campaign” reminiscent of those held by black social organizations in the 1910s.<sup>45</sup> The OAAU emphasized salient local issues such as the “no knock” law and political action programs. It relied on the energies of a younger generation of transplants and the credentials and connections of a left-nationalist cohort of cultural activists who cut their teeth in the labor movement in the early Cold War era. Finally, the OAAU attempted to build a united front through its connections with existing organizations and activist networks such as the Harlem Unity Council and Federation for Independent Political Action. The group’s dual strategy of grassroots community organizing, alongside global black solidarity and anti-colonialism, reflected the OAAU’s belief that “Harlem is the Black World.”

### DECOLONIZING MINDS

The OAAU began implementing its holistic political and social program in July 1964. It crafted a rich and inclusive social environment with cultural, political, and educational programs seven nights a week.<sup>46</sup> What would it mean to be a member of the OAAU? What were the financial and organizational responsibilities, the educational opportunities, and the community imperatives that would greet a new member? This section pieces together the fragmentary evidence from the OAAU’s brief existence to outline the experience of the average rank-and-file member.

The OAAU held public rallies every Sunday evening to recruit new members. Although attendance depended dramatically on whether Malcolm X was present, the first meeting since the organization’s public unveiling was typical of those during his time in Harlem.<sup>47</sup> Approximately 350 people gathered at the Audubon Ballroom on the evening of 5 July 1964 to hear Malcolm speak.<sup>48</sup> He was introduced by MMI member Benjamin 2X Karim and Sherron 10X Jackson.<sup>49</sup> Although Malcolm began his speech by stressing the OAAU’s aim to internationalize the Civil Rights Movement, he also stressed the importance of black bloc voting. Calling civil rights picketing “completely outdated,” he pledged that the organization would go “house-to-house, block-by-block” in Harlem to register voters.<sup>50</sup> Malcolm’s speech applied the OAAU’s research on Harlem. He told the audience that he estimated “60 per cent of the eligible Negro voters in Harlem [were] not registered to vote.”<sup>51</sup> This voting drive, Malcolm determined, would represent “positive, constructive action rather than mere reaction.”<sup>52</sup>



**OAAU rally at Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, 13 December 1964. Seated in center Earl Sweeting and his wife (in African dress). Malcolm X read a message of support from Che Guevara in Cuba who was unable to attend, but wrote: "United we shall win!"  
Courtesy of Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, SC.**

A new member would fill out an application asking their education level, work experience, special abilities, other organizational affiliations, and special areas of interest. A two-dollar membership fee was required to join the organization, and one-dollar dues were collected each week.<sup>53</sup> The member would then receive a card certifying membership, signed by "Chairman Malcolm X." The back of the card militantly asserted "the right of self-defense, which is one of the most basic human rights known to mankind."<sup>54</sup> These new recruits could then attend members-only meetings held on Monday nights in Suite 128 at the Hotel Theresa, at offices shared by both the OAAU and MMI, or at the UNIA Hall on Eighth Avenue. Although nearly three hundred membership cards were distributed by 1965, most membership meetings consisted of less than fifty people.<sup>55</sup>

During Malcolm's prolonged absence, which lasted from 9 July to 24 November 1964, the OAAU maintained a series of daily programs reflecting the cultural and political committees outlined in its statement of aims. Wednesday nights were members-only meetings of the Political Action Committee, whose major project was voter registration. The Organization of United Brothers and Sisters held a judo class that began meeting on Monday and Thursday evenings in November. And, although it was founded with Harlem youth in mind, the judo class was open to all OAAU members and was distinct from a class run by the MMI.<sup>56</sup> Fridays were reserved for a restricted meeting of the Education Committee to prepare for "Liberation School" the following day.

The Liberation School was the most consistent and successful program sponsored by the OAAU and the best example of its portable model of community organizing. "Freedom Schools" had been opened in New York City in 1963 and 1964 during the massive public school boycotts seeking "quality integrated education." However, education chairman Herman Ferguson believed the OAAU school was modeled after the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) Freedom Schools in Mississippi during Freedom Summer, but renamed to convey "the idea that we were educating our students to take their liberation rather than begging someone to give them freedom. Freedom when given can be taken back, but liberation has to be fought for."<sup>57</sup> And while the conditions and aims of the two schools differed because of the conditions of the Jim Crow South as compared to Harlem, both shared a deep commitment to teaching African American history. The first session of the OAAU's Liberation School taught about "the slave revolts and their connection with the [1964] so-called riots in New York City."<sup>58</sup> Other class readings included Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Kwame Nkrumah's *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development in Africa* (1964), and Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943).<sup>59</sup>

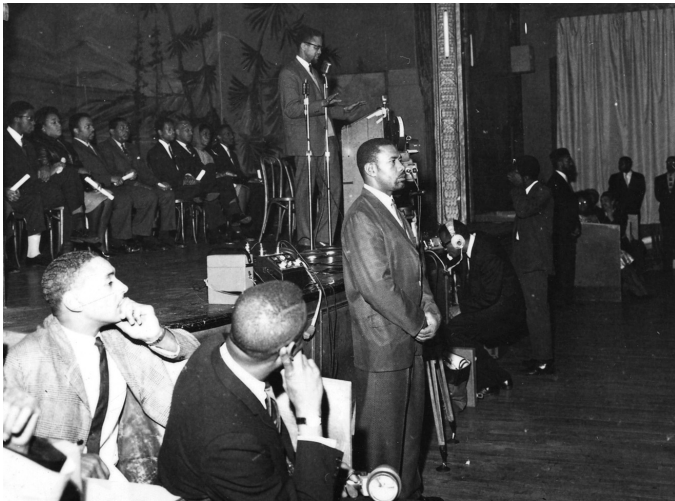
The Liberation School hosted a children's class from nine to eleven in the morning followed by a two-hour adult session at the Hotel Theresa.<sup>60</sup> The courses were open to the public and ran for six weeks, after which students received a diploma and a new class would be formed.<sup>61</sup> The OAAU conceived of this education as part of a larger pedagogy that would enable students to facilitate similar conversations within their own communities. Ferguson recalled, "At the end of the course a diploma was signed by Brother Malcolm and given to each individual who completed the course. The student was then supposed to go back to his community with a kit of resource materials to begin to organize and provide leadership."<sup>62</sup> Until recently, little has been known about the actual content of the courses and the educators at the school. However, Ferguson recently elaborated on the program:

A reading list was developed and assignments were given from this list. We used many speakers who were qualified to lecture on African History, the Middle Passage, Slavery and Reconstruction, and many other topics that were relevant to the centuries of suffering of our people here in the U.S. The list of speakers was long and it included such names as John Henrik Clarke, Dr. Yosef ben Yochannon, Queen Mother Moore, Richard Moore, Mr. Lewis Michaux, Pork Chop Davis, and on and on. All these speeches were taped for the purpose of putting together a spoken word library.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to guest speakers, the Liberation School featured a variety of core instructors including Herman Ferguson and educator James Campbell.<sup>64</sup> William Sales writes that the school was actually the "brainchild" of Campbell, a southern

migrant from South Carolina who, like John Henrik Clarke and others, fostered a “leftist-internationalist orientation” in New York from the 1950s.<sup>65</sup>

Students of the school’s one and only graduating class of ten included Yuri Kochiyama and the family of Yusef and Dara Iman.<sup>66</sup> Fortunately, although there is little record of most activists’ time in the Liberation School, biographer Diane Carol Fujino has recovered important notes from Yuri Kochiyama’s days as a student in her book on the late Japanese American activist. Kochiyama’s family was held in internment camps during World War II and she and her husband Bill moved to Harlem in 1960. Yuri Kochiyama met Malcolm X in 1963 while attending a CORE protest at a Brooklyn courthouse and joined the Liberation School at his request in November of the following year.<sup>67</sup> Kochiyama’s class notes from her first morning at the Liberation School give life to some of its internationalist dimensions. The class’ guest lecturer that day was MMI and OAAU executive secretary James 67X Shabazz. Kochiyama was impressed with Shabazz, who had pursued East Asian Studies at Columbia University and spoke some Japanese, Korean, and Chinese.<sup>68</sup> Kochiyama was also drawn to a Zambian guest lecturer who was a Ph.D. student at Columbia, “Mr. Mashashu.”<sup>69</sup> At Kochiyama’s second class, a tape recording of Fannie Lou Hamer was played, describing her impoverished upbringing and fight against police brutality in the South. Kochiyama noted simply, “America is a sick country.”<sup>70</sup>



**Malcolm X introducing the first (and only) graduating class of the OAAU’s Liberation School (back row). Norma Rogers (second from right) was on the *Freedomways* staff. OAAU member Earl Grant (wearing headphones) sits in front; and Sylvester Leaks of the Harlem Writers Group is also in front.**

**Courtesy of Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, SC.**



Fannie Lou Hamer's prominence in that Saturday's lesson was deliberate. The following week, the OAAU invited Hamer and SNCC's Freedom Singers to appear at their public rally following her speech alongside Malcolm X at the Williams Institutional CME Church in Harlem.<sup>71</sup> Such programming reveals the way in which the OAAU designed its courses to be a holistic agenda of historical, cultural, and political engagement. As Kochiyama wrote in her Liberation School notes, the most important goal of the oppressed is "to free our minds, to decolonize our minds." Such recollections reveal not only the depth of the Liberation School, but the strong intellectual contributions of OAAU members more broadly. "Just as Malcolm could speak about almost any topic," Kochiyama remembered, "all the people closest to Malcolm were the most incredible, well-read, widely knowledgeable people."<sup>72</sup>

With young writers such as Sara Mitchell, Lynne Shifflett, and Peter Bailey, and the OAAU's close connection to prominent black journalists William Worthy and Sylvester Leaks, it seemed inevitable that the organization should produce its own newsletter. Its official organ, *Blacklash*, offered another outlet for rank-and-file members to involve themselves in daily political struggle. The paper began on 18 July 1964 as two mimeographed sheets simply entitled, "OAAU Newsletter." Editor Peter Bailey was assisted by OAAU member Don Stephenson (sometimes spelled Stevenson), and their articles comprised a substantial portion of the publication. Stephenson denounced the Democratic National Convention, held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in August 1964, as a farce and deemed the MFDP's unsuccessful attempt to unseat the all-white delegation a success because it "brought international publicity to the open and subtle oppression and suppression" of African Americans.<sup>73</sup> He also endorsed rent strikes as a means to "unite, involve and organize all [A]fro-American tenants in ghetto areas to bring about not only better housing but better education, and the end of economic oppression."<sup>74</sup>

The paper also announced organizational developments such as a voter registration drive by the Political Action Committee, the Liberation School's first meeting, and an "out-of-doors cultural program" the following month.<sup>75</sup> By September, the paper had its official name and was six pages in length; it also added a third consistent contributor named Mariya Ahmed Plehee. The FBI, tipped off by an informant in the NYPD that Shifflett was using an alternative identity to publish editorials in *Blacklash*, concluded that "Plehee is possibly a pseudonym being used by the subject."<sup>76</sup> Echoing the fox and the wolf metaphor offered by Malcolm X to describe 1964 presidential candidates, Republican Barry Goldwater and Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson, Plehee charged: "[The question this year is whether they are going to deal effectively with the wolf, Goldwater, who openly flaunts his anti-black position, or Johnson, the fox, who cloaks his white supremacist background in well-sounding words and meaningless actions."<sup>77</sup> Shifflett became a regular writer, continuing to focus on the upcoming election and the poor civil



rights credentials of both candidates.<sup>78</sup> *Blacklash* lasted fewer than ten issues, and as William Sales notes, it was “unable to become the major propaganda vehicle that Malcolm X foresaw.”<sup>79</sup> However, what little evidence remains suggests that the paper reached at least two significant subscribers: one, Malcolm’s half-sister Ella Collins, who started an OAAU branch in Boston and would soon take over the organization in the wake of her brother’s death; and the other, an activist in Oakland, California, “interested in the liberation of all black people the world over,” was 28-year-old Bobby Seale, who would co-found the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense two years later on the West Coast.<sup>80</sup>

OAAU programming during Malcolm’s absence was active yet uneven. While the Political Action Committee met sporadically, the Liberation School, the United Brothers judo class, and *Blacklash* all featured contributions from the leadership and rank-and-file members. The OAAU’s Cultural Committee also experienced a surge of activity in October 1964, sponsoring weekly films and refreshments at UNIA Hall. These events paired films from Nigeria, Morocco, Brazil, Ghana, and Uganda with African musicians and poetry, reflecting an explicitly Pan-African sensibility.<sup>81</sup> During this same period, the community focus of the organization flourished through the development of its Community Action Committee that conducted food drives to prepare care packages for needy Harlem families. A membership meeting in October collected canned goods and twenty-five cents from each person to buy food for people in the community.<sup>82</sup>

The OAAU’s growth and increasing range of activity demonstrated its commitment to grassroots organizing, but also highlighted the tensions between charismatic leadership and community organizing that plagued the group during its brief existence. An FBI report on an OAAU street rally on the corner of 125th Street and Seventh Avenue documented these struggles. Held to “acquaint the public in the street with Malcolm X and his activities, . . . [p]hotographs of Malcolm X and articles written by him in newspapers and magazines were enlarged and placed on display so that passers-by could see and read them.”<sup>83</sup> Such Malcolm-centric focus helped recruit members, but also undermined the work of others in his absence. The month before, an argument broke out at a membership meeting over the lack of communication with Malcolm. They “argued on whether [he] should have the final word on all OAAU policies or if the group itself would formulate policies.” An FBI informant at the meeting reported that the “organization almost fell apart at the seams because of the lack of positive leadership.”<sup>84</sup> These problems led the FBI to conclude that Malcolm X “undoubtedly ‘is’ the OAAU.”<sup>85</sup> While narratives such as these have continued to characterize the OAAU as the singular vision of Malcolm X and thereby obfuscated the important contributions of its other key theorists and rank-and-file members, they nevertheless reveal the limitations of charismatic leadership and its tensions with the impulses for grassroots organizing.

## CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZING

Reflecting on the formative meetings of the OAAU, Peter Bailey recalled that there was no attempt made to deal with the issue of organizational structure.<sup>86</sup> Although the lack of collective decision making hindered the organization during Malcolm's absence, it begs the question of whether or not democratic structures were *undertheorized* or simply *unrealized*.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the aspirational logic of the OAAU's organizational structure tells an important story about the expectations for the organization's growth. The OAAU's structure bore out the tensions between democratic organizing and charismatic leadership, but was significantly more sophisticated than the simple "top-down" model scholars have described. Its founders recognized that "elements of the black populace across the country [had] been clamoring for a new type of leadership, a new type of organization. This organization [was] designed to meet that need." Although the OAAU continued to profit from Malcolm's international profile, it emphasized that the "role of the people and the leader in general [would] be defined each by the other."<sup>88</sup>

SNCC's emergence and Ella Baker's notion of group-centered leadership may have influenced the OAAU's structural design. Baker, a longtime NAACP organizer in Harlem and the South, was intrigued by the possibilities opened by the student sit-in movement, in particular by the possibility for moving beyond what she saw as the trappings of charismatic or singular leadership to more democratic decision making. In 1960 she wrote that the "inclination toward *group-centered leadership*, rather than toward a *leader-centered group pattern of organization*, was refreshing indeed to those of the older group who bear the scars of battle, the frustrations and the disillusionment that come when the prophetic leader turns out to have heavy feet of clay" (italics in original).<sup>89</sup> And while the OAAU was certainly less egalitarian than Baker's vision for SNCC, its organizational aims draw a contrast from the hierarchal structure of both the NOI and MMI.

The OAAU's organizational complexity and accountability of leadership both suggest a more nuanced balance of charismatic leadership and democratic organizing than previously understood. The original structure of the organization was partitioned into five parts: a chairman or leader; committees of five, nine, and three members; and "our people." The committee of five was to be administrative, comprised of a strategist, a chief investigator in charge of security, a national liaison representative responsible for mobilizing communities nationwide, an assistant speaker who would deliver local lectures, and a public relations chief in charge of press conferences and news releases. The committee would be responsible to the leader and vice versa. The committee of nine was subdivided into three parts (four chairmen, four directors, and a newspaper editor). The chairs would head an education department at the local and national level; a political depart-

ment to develop a “mobile grassroots political organization for the support of any candidate for office that is for [the OAAU’s] cause”; an economic department to challenge housing, employment, and transportation discrimination and effectively use boycott tactics; and membership committee to work with the national liaison representative. The four directors would be a fundraiser; a researcher on the local, national, and international levels; a cultural programs director to bring to the “national community an awareness of the cultural heritage and contributions of the Afro-American to this society”; and an international department responsible for setting up global offices and presenting global issues. Finally, the general staff would include a clerical secretary, legal advisor, and accountant.

Before the organization was publicly announced, Malcolm’s longtime attorney Percy Sutton was made the provisional legal advisor; John Henrik Clarke took the role of research director; and singer Abbey Lincoln was assigned as the director of cultural programming. However, there was little doubt that Malcolm X would be the organization’s chairman and, as the leaders struggled to make collective decisions in Malcolm’s nearly six-month absence, the complexity of its early structure became a drawback. By early 1965, FBI reports revealed a more simplified structure divided into administrative posts (chairman, executive and financial secretary, accountant, reporter, and liaison officer) and “five basic freedoms” committees (economic, cultural, political action, education, and youth division).<sup>90</sup>

Max Stanford (later Muhammad Ahmad) of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) gave an intimate view of the challenges of charismatic leadership as evidenced by his experience in the OAAU. He recalled a meeting with twenty or thirty people, including John Henrik Clarke and Malcolm X:

Malcolm would not chair the meeting. It would be somebody else chairing. And the discussion on the issue would go around the room. And people would be arguing different points of view. Malcolm would be the last person to say anything. And then he’d say, “Can I say something?” You could hear a pin drop. . . . And he would synthesize the whole argument. He would show everybody their strong points and everybody their weak points and how everything interrelated.<sup>91</sup>

This account reveals the uneasy balance between a democratic model, which allowed members to equally voice their opinions, and the still-exclusive terrain on which Malcolm X operated. As historian Barbara Ransby notes, “[S]cholars have drawn a line between charismatic leadership models and grassroots activist ones, with a parallel distinction made between mobilizing (for big events) and actually organizing communities to feel empowered to assess their own needs and fight their own battles.”<sup>92</sup> Although many were captivated by Malcolm’s persona and the organization continued to draw much of its membership through his charismatic leadership, the OAAU reflected many of the same democratic organizing principles as its southern contemporary, SNCC, and its activist mentor Ella Baker. Just

as Baker had once approached the same contentious political scene of Harlem as an NAACP organizer by encouraging members to maintain multiple affiliations, the OAAU hoped to act as a unifying force between the multiple political strands of the Harlem community. Likewise, both SNCC and the OAAU established alternative curricula and promoted voter registration drives as a means toward political empowerment of the working masses. And while both organizations struggled with the relationship between charismatic leadership and democratic organizing, the OAAU's structural aspirations were far more complex than have been previously understood.<sup>93</sup>

While the internationalization of the black freedom struggle is one of Malcolm's richest legacies to subsequent movements, and a critique of the OAAU's top-down leadership is crucial to understanding the limitations of the organization, a focus on community organizing allows for more obscured elements of the group's program to be recognized. Moreover, a focus on the constraints of singular leadership tends to reproduce its limitations if not balanced by a fuller account of founders and rank-and-file members who shaped the organization. Through the phrase "Harlem is the Black World," the OAAU imagined Harlem as a site of local community organizing and international consciousness. Its short-term goals of attacking the "no knock" law and forming cultural and political action committees within the community were a complement, not anathema, to its larger vision of Pan-Africanism. It was as much its community emphasis as its international outlook that proved to be the legacy of the Organization of Afro-American Unity for future movements.

## POSTSCRIPT

Malcolm X's assassination on 21 February 1965 profoundly changed the trajectory of the black freedom struggle. Political activists and artists who had been drawn to Malcolm were disillusioned, emboldened, and angered by the loss of their "black shining prince."<sup>94</sup> As OAAU member Louise Moore later wrote, "No one could remain the same after the brutal slaying of our beloved Malcolm."<sup>95</sup> Although Sara Mitchell hoped that with time "maybe the people most involved would be concerned with reviewing and considering and interpreting for themselves the 'Unity-Plan' Malcolm had designed. In the present, there was only grief."<sup>96</sup> While most histories of the OAAU have stopped with Malcolm's death, it is important that we continue to follow the organization into the late 1960s to see the continued significance of community organizing as well as the increased role of women's leadership in the emergence of national and international branches of the OAAU. The account of the OAAU under Malcolm's half-sister, Ella Collins, is often written as a declension narrative of an aberrant new organization masquerading under an old name.<sup>97</sup> While

the newly incorporated OAAU lacked the international scope of its predecessor and embraced a model of black nationalism more reminiscent of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and Nation of Islam, dismissing the organization entirely is problematic for several reasons. First, the fight for leadership of a revolutionary nationalist organization by two black women—Ella Collins and Betty Shabazz—on the eve of the Black Power Movement is notable in itself. Second, gender tensions continued to exist within the organization and “black women’s role in the revolution” was actively debated, suggesting a continuation rather than an about-face from the OAAU of the previous year. Finally, memorials following Malcolm’s death were active political functions that enabled alliances between activists, but have since been marginalized as evidence of a withering movement.<sup>98</sup> However, like the OAAU of 1964, the organization suffered from factionalism and an overreliance on singular leadership. By dismissing the group entirely though, we lose sight of the continuation of women’s leadership and community organizing, which characterized the OAAU and its successor, the OAAU, Inc.

Activists also carried lessons from the OAAU of 1964–1965 into the Black Power Movement. How these different ideas diverged, and the political and cultural forms they took, is one legacy of the multiple streams that coalesced to form the OAAU in Harlem. Just days after Malcolm’s assassination, John Oliver Killens received a letter from the New School for Social Research confirming a joint effort between the school and the Harlem Writers’ Guild.<sup>99</sup> The conference, entitled “The Negro Writer’s Vision of America,” was dedicated to the late Lorraine Hansberry and included a variety of authors and activists at the fringes of the OAAU in 1964.<sup>100</sup> Following a keynote address by novelist and social critic James Baldwin, former charter members and advisors participated in a variety of panels on literature and its role in politics. Novelist Paule Marshall was penciled in on a panel with Ruby Dee and others entitled “Negro Women in American Literature” and joined Killens and Ossie Davis to discuss African American literary artists. Davis was also featured on a playwriting panel with LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka and a variety of journalists on the relationship of African American writers and mass media. John Henrik Clarke would lead the discussion about whether or not a distinct black literary tradition existed—a question that would soon be answered emphatically with the emergence of the Black Arts Movement (BAM). Finally, John Killens gave the conference summary and took part in a star-studded panel on the role of black writers in the civil rights struggle, featuring Ralph Ellison, James Farmer, Louis Lomax, Roy Wilkins, and William Worthy.<sup>101</sup> The conference represented one of the primary expressions of political activity by former members in the period immediately following Malcolm’s death. As the cultural wing of the OAAU, these writers were public intellectuals who continued to theorize the developing relationship between black art and politics.

Many of these writers contributed to, and were inspired by, the burgeoning Black Arts Movement, which had its foundations in Amiri Baraka's move to Harlem in the summer of 1965. However, it was some of the OAAU's rank-and-file members who would go on to become the key catalysts in the movement. Liberation School graduate Joseph Washington (Yusef Iman) became a crucial actor and activist in the BAM through his involvement in Harlem's Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BARTS) and as director of Amiri Baraka's Spirit House Movers with his children. Just a year after Malcolm's death, Iman appeared in New York with the San Francisco-based Afro-American Folkloric Troupe, in a tribute to W. E. B. Du Bois sponsored by *Freedomways*.<sup>102</sup> His wife, Truly Washington, also became involved in black theater. In June 1965 she was part of a "Greek chorus" in the play *Three Shades of Harlem*, written by Roger Furman and Don Brunson and performed by the New Heritage Theatre.<sup>103</sup> She also performed alongside her husband in a reading of a children's play at Harlem's Salem Methodist Church at Christmas 1965.<sup>104</sup> Another couple, Hakim and Dorothy Jamal, brought lessons from their time with the OAAU to the West Coast in the formation of Maulana Karenga's US Organization. The two named US's first paper after Malcolm X's famous speech, "Message to the Grassroots," and dedicated its first issue to Betty Shabazz. Moreover, just as women had taken the primary role in the cultural realm of the OAAU, Dorothy Jamal and Karenga's wife, Haiba, formed the US School of Afroamerican Culture.<sup>105</sup> Another couple, Nanny and Walter Bowe, also went on to become crucial members of the BAM. Both were active in nationalist literary circles since the early 1960s in the organization On Guard for Freedom, along with Harold Cruse and LeRoi Jones. Even prior to Malcolm's death, Nanny Bowe was featured on a handbill with key figures in the movement such as LeRoi Jones, A. B. Spellman, and Marion Brown at a tribute to black poetry in New York City.<sup>106</sup>

While many former OAAU members went on to comprise the core of the Black Arts Movement and continued to work within similar networks of cultural activists, others took more divergent paths. Peter Bailey went from the small newsletter of the OAAU to become the editor of *Ebony* from 1968 to 1975 and a regular columnist for *Jet* magazine.<sup>107</sup> Lynne Shifflett had already left the organization in late 1964 to care for her ailing mother and returned to her home in Los Angeles where she became the director of an antipoverty program, the Watts Neighborhood Adult Participation Project (NAPP). Not unlike the Liberation School of the OAAU, Shifflett and NAPP worked with the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) to establish a Freedom School that stressed the "contributions made by Negroes to American Culture."<sup>108</sup> Ethel Minor, one of Shifflett's sharpest critics in the OAAU, went south to work as SNCC's communications director under Stokely Carmichael.<sup>109</sup> Several years later, she became an assistant



administrator of Rev. Douglas Moore's D.C. Black United Front (BUF), which at the 1972 Gary Convention significantly called for a "dismantling of Israel."<sup>110</sup> In 1969, amidst criticism at Stokely Carmichael "having run away" to Guinea, Minor reflected upon a similar reaction "when Brother Malcolm went to Africa, without explanation to anyone for six months in 1964, when many of his co-workers and followers began to complain and question why he was in Africa. Not only that, but many folks in Harlem attacked him for 'not being home when we need him so bad' after the Harlem 1964 rebellion broke out." Remembering her time as OAAU secretary, Minor noted that "the reaction to Malcolm's stay in Africa was much the same as the reaction of many people to Stokely's stay in Guinea."<sup>111</sup> Finally, Sara Mitchell continued her work in the Harlem community. In 1965 she penned a proposed documentary, entitled "Seeking God in the Ghetto," with Bernard Dyer, who had been appointed to a position in the (then) recently formed film corporation Muntu Productions, Inc.<sup>112</sup> The following year, she was named "Miss Africa 1966" by James Lawson at Harlem's annual Marcus Garvey Day celebration.<sup>113</sup> In 1981 she published her recollections of Malcolm's assassination in a tribute entitled *Shepherd of Black-Sheep*.<sup>114</sup>

In the years following Malcolm X's death, former OAAU members charted new directions of activism as diverse as the various streams that coalesced in Harlem during 1964. These were in part forged through community organizing at the crucible of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. Just as the organization's charter members hoped to construct a local base for a global vision of Pan-Africanism, which would ultimately be mobile and transportable, they took these strategies and lessons with them to disparate points of the black freedom struggle. By conceptualizing the OAAU through the phrase "Harlem is the Black World," members crafted a holistic vision of a black united front that incorporated strategies from the Civil Rights Movement, while remaining critical of its more moderate elements. It also anticipated many developments in the Black Power Movement. Remembering the OAAU through this optic reminds us, as Peter Bailey emphasized, that "organizations are not institutions." Rather, they are articulations of a particular time and place, generated by the ideas and organizing of their membership. The OAAU's legacy, then, is not merely as an expression of Malcolm X's shifting political views, but the convergence of multiple streams and generations of activism that found expressions in various forms in the Black Power era.

## NOTES

I am indebted to Matthew Countryman, Sherie Randolph, and Stephen Ward for their constructive comments. I also want to sincerely thank James Campbell, Herman Ferguson, and Akemi Kochiyama for their consultation, photos, and archival materials that were invaluable in putting together this essay.

<sup>1</sup>Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 208.

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps the most salient of these divisions was the issue of women's leadership in the OAAU. Herman Ferguson, head of the Liberation School, argues that Malcolm believed "women [should have an] equal position to men. . . . The women that Malcolm seemed to place a lot of confidence in, they were responsible, they were well educated." See Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York, 2011), 374. However, MMI members came to him demanding that he speak with Malcolm about these women's roles. As James 67X Shabazz explained it: "[MMI] had a space. And men tend to be territorial. So we saw this as our space." He identified the problem of the traditional notions of gender imported from the NOI by many MMI members: "I came from an organization where a woman had a place, man had a place. . . . I had a whole bunch of men around me that were accustomed to taking orders and instructions from men because the women got instructions from women." See James 67X Shabazz interview with Manning Marable, 1 August 2007, Malcolm X Project Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY (hereafter MXPP).

<sup>3</sup>As Askia Muhammad Toure presciently noted in a 1963 issue of the *Liberator*, there was an emerging "generation of militant young people . . . suspended between [the Nation of] Islam and the civil rights organizations." This could also describe many activists who joined the OAAU a year later. See Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 232.

<sup>4</sup>I do not wish to depict the members of the OAAU as either articulating purely Black Power strategies or as proto-Black Power actors. I am interested, rather, in seeing the various streams of activism that converged at this historical juncture and the ways in which the theoretical labor of the OAAU, as well as its individual members, can be mapped onto the Black Power era. Scholars such as Peniel Joseph have argued for the concomitance of the Black Power and Civil Rights movements rather than a "from-to" narrative. "[F]ar from being mutually exclusive," Joseph writes, "[they] paralleled and intersected with one another." By suggesting a "Long Black Power Movement" model, which begins in 1954 and ends in 1975, with a "classical" period of 1966–1975, he has argued that "even as notions of a 'Long Civil Rights Movement' seek to break convention through adopting a more panoramic view of the era, they reinforce master narratives by subsuming Black Power under the all-powerful rubric of civil rights." While the OAAU certainly reveals strategies and approaches used in the Black Power Movement, I believe the distinction between a *social movement* and activist strategies and discourse remains a crucial one. See Peniel Joseph, ed., *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level* (New York, 2010), 2 and 11.

<sup>5</sup>List of participants, box 14, folder 2, Malcolm X Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library (hereafter MXC). Also see Lynne Shifflett to John Lewis, 3 August 1964, box 14, folder 2, MXC and OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York Office, 11 August 1964.

<sup>6</sup>John Oliver Killens, *The Black Man's Burden* (New York, 1969), 61–96.

<sup>7</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>8</sup>Killens, *The Black Man's Burden*. Although the essay was published in Killens's 1969 collection, *Black Man's Burden*, he had begun conceiving of the project in 1964 as a member of the OAAU. See Keith Gilyard, *Liberation Memories: The Rhetoric and Poetics of John Oliver Killens* (Detroit, 2003), 199.

<sup>9</sup>Letese Clark, "Malcolm X Legacy Is Focus of Shaw Library Talk," *The Hilltop*, 11 February 2012.

<sup>10</sup>Some scholars have noted the centrality of local organizing to the OAAU, but few have pursued its full dimensions. William Sales's work on the OAAU is by far the most comprehensive, but focuses largely on Malcolm X's politics and what the organization meant for his own developing political vision. See Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (Boston, MA, 1994).

Although he sees the OAAU as largely Malcolm's political vision, Kevin Gaines comes closest to describing the symbiotic relationship the OAAU saw between the local and international when writing that when "Malcolm died, he was in the process of forging the African American masses' inchoate aspirations for cultural autonomy into a political analysis of U.S. power at home and abroad and, through the OAAU, into a program for African Americans that situated local activism within a global framework." See Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006), 209. Alan Bloom's teleological depiction of a local agenda, which was undeveloped, and a fuller Pan-Africanist one, which was still nascent, is most typical of those who have recognized both aspects. See Bloom, "Malcolm X (1925–1965): A Pan-African Revolutionary," in *The Human Tradition in the Black Atlantic, 1500–2000*, eds. Beatriz Gallotti Mammogian and Karen Racine (London, 2010), 170–171.

<sup>11</sup>Malcolm X biographer Louis DeCaro importantly remarked that the "philosophy of the OAAU was wholistic, focused on politics, economics, community improvement, self-defense and education." However, his focus

remained on Malcolm's time abroad rather than elaborating what such an organization actually looked like in the United States. Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., *On The Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X* (New York, 1996), 226.

<sup>12</sup>Peter Bailey interview, 14 November 1988, Blackside, Inc., Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection, accessed 3 August 2011, <http://digital.wustl.edu/e/cii/iiiweb/bai5427.0800.008peterbailey.html>. James 67X Shabazz, when interviewed by Manning Marable in 2007, confirmed that the OAAU began meeting prior to Malcolm's split from the NOI. See James 67X Shabazz interview with Manning Marable, 1 August 2007, MXPP.

<sup>13</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>14</sup>Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 105.

<sup>15</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York, 19 June 1964.

<sup>16</sup>Scholars such as Michael Gomez have argued that with the OAAU's founding, "Malcolm's entire orientation shifted to one of emphasizing international cooperation." See Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge, UK, 2004), 353.

<sup>17</sup>"Notes on an Organization and Possible Issues around Which to Struggle and Raise the Level of Consciousness of the People," no date, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>18</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>19</sup>Working papers, 14 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>20</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964.

<sup>21</sup>Laymond Robinson, "Legislators Pass Anticrime Bills," *New York Times*, 19 February 1964. The bill likely had a particular resonance for Malcolm X, whose East Elmhurst duplex was invaded by police detectives while he lectured in Boston in 1958; his wife and other NOI members were subsequently tried in what became the longest assault trial in New York City history at the time. See Marable, *Malcolm X*, 150–153.

<sup>22</sup>"New Police Laws Scored at Rally," *New York Times*, 8 March 1964.

<sup>23</sup>Not only was the OAAU's fight against racial profiling and police brutality a response to pressing local conditions, but it continues to be an important lesson for those still fighting against the city's unjust "stop and frisk" policies. According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, New Yorkers were stopped over half a million times in 2012, 89% of whom were innocent and 87% of whom people of color. See <http://www.nyclu.org/content/stop-and-frisk-data>, accessed 5 August 2011.

<sup>24</sup>"DIGNITY plus MANHOOD plus FREEDOM equal HUMAN RIGHTS," no date, box 14, folder 4, MXC.

<sup>25</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>26</sup>This contentious political world was familiar to Malcolm, as it was one which he entered in 1954 as a young organizer for the Nation of Islam. He recalled this earlier period in his autobiography: "The big trouble, obviously, was that we were only one among the many voices of black discontent on every busy Harlem corner. The different Nationalist groups, the 'Buy Black!' forces, and others like that; dozens of their step-ladder orators were trying to increase their followings." See Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York, 1965), 251.

<sup>27</sup>"Harlem Warns City on Stop Frisk Law," *Amsterdam News*, 4 July 1964; Walter Bilitz, "Report from New York," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 June 1964; and "Seek Fed. Court Action on 'Stop-Frisk' Bills," *Amsterdam News*, 14 March 1964. New York CORE was one of the most active civil rights organizations during the Harlem rebellion, turning a rally on 18 July meant to address the three missing civil rights workers in Mississippi into a denunciation of police violence and the recent killing of James Powell.

<sup>28</sup>Marable, *Malcolm X*, 341. I borrow the term "Harlem radical tradition" from Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 275.

<sup>29</sup>Marable, *Malcolm X*, 322.

<sup>30</sup>Lynne Shifflett FBI File, Memo, 19 October 1964.

<sup>31</sup>Malcolm X to Sara Mitchell, 22 June 1964, box 3, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>32</sup>Peter A. Bailey, "'School Fight': Pulse of New York's Public Schools," *Amsterdam News*, 7 March 1964. Here, Bailey's newness to Harlem politics may have made him myopic to some of the boycott-related activism in New York. Following similar efforts in Philadelphia, Brooklyn CORE had experimented with selective patronage campaigns reminiscent of the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" efforts of the 1930s. For more on the boycotts, see Stacy Kinlock Sewall, "The 'Not Buying Power' of the Black Community: Urban Boycotts and Equal Employment Opportunity, 1960–1964," *The Journal of African American History*, 89, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 135–151.

<sup>33</sup>Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945–1995* (Urbana, IL, 2011), 17.

<sup>34</sup>John Killens, “Why Spend Billions to Put White Man on the Moon?” *Muhammad Speaks*, 13 September 1963, box 77, folder 5, John Oliver Killens Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (hereafter JOKP). Killens was likely referencing *Freedomways*, 3, no. 3 (Summer 1963): 315–34, which was reprinted in *Harlem: A Community in Transition*, edited by John Henrik Clarke (New York, 1964), 77–96. Clarke also edited another compilation on Harlem around the same time. See *Harlem U.S.A.*, edited by John Henrik Clarke (New York, 1971).

<sup>35</sup>Malcolm wrote Elijah Muhammad for permission to see the play earlier that year. See DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, 285.

<sup>36</sup>“Notes on an Organization,” no date, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>37</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>38</sup>For example, while the Mayor’s committee estimated that it took a minimum household income of \$6,000 to survive, Harlem’s average was less than \$4,000. See “Social, Political, and Economic Facts on Harlem,” box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>39</sup>Working papers, 14 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>40</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, Chicago, 10 November 1964, 21–22.

<sup>41</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>42</sup>Federation for Independent Political Action program, 19 December 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>43</sup>Thomas Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia, PA, 2007), 208; and Lynne Shifflett to Joseph Overton, 3 August 1964, box 14, folder 2, MXC.

<sup>44</sup>List of participants, box 14, folder 2, MXC.

<sup>45</sup>Working notes, n.d., box 14, folder 3, MXC. For more on clean-up campaigns, see Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 167.

<sup>46</sup>Because these programs were run by chairs of various OAAU committees, many suffered bouts of inactivity depending on the leadership of the committee chair.

<sup>47</sup>The disparity of attendance when Malcolm was in the country versus in Africa and the Middle East revealed the limitations of a charismatic model of organizing discussed later in this essay.

<sup>48</sup>One of the challenges of the organization was drawing interest to public rallies in Malcolm’s absence. A rally the following Sunday after his departure to Africa, which drew only 125 people, demonstrated such difficulties. See OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York Office, 13 July 1964.

<sup>49</sup>Identified by the FBI as “Sharron Jackson,” the presence of Karim and Jackson indicates a cross-pollination of membership between the MMI and OAAU, which was one of the most contentious issues between the organizations. Lynne Shifflett claimed that Malcolm directly stated no OAAU officials would come from the MMI, but rank-and-file members could join. She attributed tensions to the fact that MMI was religious and the OAAU was non-sectarian. See OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 40. Not coincidentally, the MMI became more influential in the operation of the OAAU around Malcolm’s return in November, which was also the same period that James 67X Shabazz took over for Shifflett. See OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 30 September 1965, 37. By this period, the FBI believed the OAAU was “actually said to be dominated by the MMI” and that Malcolm was overheard saying he trusted MMI members more because “Muslims know how to take care of business.” See OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 41–42.

<sup>50</sup>Malcolm’s nephew, Rodnell Collins, writing about the deleted chapters of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, points to a passage in the statement of aims about organizing the black community “block by block, to make the community aware of its power and potential.” He recalled that the OAAU “stressed responsibility, self-defense, discipline, education, and a commitment to unity. There is no doubt that their inclusion in the autobiography would have enhanced its already strong emphasis on substance.” See Rodnell Collins with A. Peter Bailey, *Seventh Child: A Family Memoir of Malcolm X* (New York, 1998), 207–208.

<sup>51</sup>“Malcolm X Maps New Fight: With Ballots,” *Chicago Defender*, 7 July 1964. Indeed, the aforementioned handout of Harlem facts recorded that of the 250,000 eligible to vote, approximately half of those are registered. See “Social, Political, and Economic Facts on Harlem,” box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>52</sup>“Malcolm X Maps New Fight: With Ballots,” *Chicago Defender*, 7 July 1964 and OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York, 6 July 1964.

<sup>53</sup>Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 115.

<sup>54</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, Washington, DC, 20 July 1964.

<sup>55</sup>OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 7–8, 16–17. Membership meetings began being held on Tuesday nights after Malcolm X returned in November 1964. See OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 9.

<sup>56</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York, 12 November 1964. The FBI was unsure if, in fact, the “United Brothers” judo class was formally affiliated with the OAAU, or if members simply attended. See OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 46.

<sup>57</sup>Iyalua Ferguson with Herman Ferguson, *An Unlikely Warrior: Evolution of a Black Nationalist Revolutionary* (Raleigh, NC, 2011), 132–133. The OAAU was not alone in borrowing inspiration from SNCC’s Freedom Schools. That same year in Philadelphia, activist John Churchville founded a Freedom Library storefront, which grew out of his experience as a field secretary with SNCC in Georgia and Mississippi. See Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA, 2005), 180–181.

<sup>58</sup>“Education: Liberation School,” 3 August 1964, *OAAU Newsletter*. Although scholars have assumed that the Liberation Schools of the Black Panther Party were direct descendants of SNCC’s Freedom Schools, the OAAU may have also provided a model for the Panthers’ education programs later in the decade. See Donna Murch, *Living For the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), 180. For links between the OAAU and Oakland Panthers, see Bobby Seale to OAAU, 4 November 1964, OAAU Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

<sup>59</sup>Diane Carol Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis, MN, 2005), 151.

<sup>60</sup>Ferguson, *An Unlikely Warrior*, 132; OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 44–45.

<sup>61</sup>OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 44.

<sup>62</sup>Ferguson, *An Unlikely Warrior*, 133.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>64</sup>OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 44.

<sup>65</sup>Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 120.

<sup>66</sup>Ferguson, *An Unlikely Warrior*, 132–133. Although evidence of other attendees remains scarce, membership dues reveal one-dollar payments for the Liberation School in early 1965 by Janette Walton, Stephen 3X, Sister Truly Washington (Dara Iman), Oakland Herndon, James Payne, and Kochiyama. See OAAU membership dues, box 14, folder 9, MXC.

<sup>67</sup>Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*, 135 and 148.

<sup>68</sup>James 67X Shabazz interview with Manning Marable, 24 July 2007, MXPP; and Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*, 148–149.

<sup>69</sup>Mashashu was recorded phonetically rather poorly by the FBI as Mr. “Whashashi.” OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 44; Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*, 149.

<sup>70</sup>Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*, 150.

<sup>71</sup>Malcolm X FBI File, Memo, New York, 21 December 1964.

<sup>72</sup>Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle*, 150–151.

<sup>73</sup>Don Stevenson, “Dem’s Convent: Farce,” *Blacklash*, 14 September 1964, 4.

<sup>74</sup>Don Stephenson, “20th Century Feudalism,” *Blacklash*, 23 November 1964, 3.

<sup>75</sup>*OAAU Newsletter*, 3 August 1964, 4–5.

<sup>76</sup>Lynne Shifflett FBI File, Summary Report, 27 November 1964, B. The FBI’s claim may be inconclusive, but the difficulty in finding any information about Plehee in my own research seems to confirm the bureau’s suspicions.

<sup>77</sup>Mariya Ahmed Plehee, “Immorality, Goldwater and Johnson,” *Blacklash*, 14 September 1964, 6.

<sup>78</sup>Mariya Plehee, “Anti-Black Record,” *Blacklash*, 9 November 1964, 7.

<sup>79</sup>Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 119.

<sup>80</sup>Letter from Bobby Seale, 4 November 1964, and money order from Ella Collins, 6 October 1964, OAAU Collection.

<sup>81</sup>OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 1 April 1965, 56–57.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 43–44.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>84</sup>OAAU FBI File, Summary Report, New York, 23 September 1964, 29.



<sup>85</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, New York, 23 September 1964.

<sup>86</sup>Sales, *Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 105.

<sup>87</sup>Marable claims the OAAU had not “cultivated procedures of collective decision making.” See Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, 460. In a response to Marable’s biography, activist Bill Fletcher suggested the text raised questions about “the balance between charismatic leadership and democratic organization.” See Bill Fletcher, “Manning Marable and the Malcolm X Biography Controversy: A Response to Critics,” accessed 29 July 2011, [http://www.blackcommentator.com/434/434\\_aw\\_marable\\_malcolm\\_controversy\\_share.html](http://www.blackcommentator.com/434/434_aw_marable_malcolm_controversy_share.html).

<sup>88</sup>Working papers, 6 June 1964, box 14, folder 3, MXC.

<sup>89</sup>Ella Baker, “Bigger Than a Hamburger,” *Southern Patriot*, 18 (June 1960).

<sup>90</sup>OAAU FBI File, Memo, Washington, DC, 6 January 1965.

<sup>91</sup>Marable, *Malcolm X*, 354.

<sup>92</sup>Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 172.

<sup>93</sup>SNCC was also at the brink of its decision to employ a coalitional model, which asked whites to work against racism in their own communities, while the OAAU had maintained the importance of racial autonomy from its outset.

<sup>94</sup>This refers to Ossie Davis’s widely quoted eulogy for Malcolm X. See “Ossie Davis’ Stirring Tribute to Malcolm X,” *Amsterdam News*, 6 March 1965, 1.

<sup>95</sup>Louise R. Moore, “When a Black Man Stood Up,” *Liberator*, July 1966, 7.

<sup>96</sup>Sara Mitchell, *Shepherd of Black-Sheep: A Commentary on the Life of Malcolm X with an on the Scene Account of His Assassination* (Macon, GA, 1981), 21.

<sup>97</sup>See Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation*, 160. In part, this narrative was supported by OAAU members such as Peter Bailey who were disillusioned with Collins’s leadership.

<sup>98</sup>Journalist Peter Goldman recalled an OAAU meeting years later: the “active membership had dwindled to a handful, and its most visible activities in Harlem were the annual commemorations of Malcolm’s birth and death.” See Marable, *Malcolm X*, 468.

<sup>99</sup>Albert W. Lands to John O. Killens, 26 February 1965, box 84, folder 2, JOKP, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>100</sup>Hansberry is best known as the first African American woman playwright to have her work, *Raisin in the Sun*, performed on Broadway. However, she also shared a space in the Harlem left-nationalist tradition with many OAAU members, writing for Paul Robeson’s *Freedom* journal during the 1950s. She also carried an internationalist and anti-colonial consciousness, which resonated with many in the organization. For more on her internationalist politics, see Fanon Che Wilkins, “Beyond Bandung: The Critical Nationalism of Lorraine Hansberry, 1950–1965,” *Radical History Review*, 95 (Spring 2006): 191–210. Also see, Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism*, 57–81.

<sup>101</sup>Tentative outline, “A Conference on the Negro Writer’s Vision of America,” box 84, folder 2, JOKP.

<sup>102</sup>“Photo Standalone 16,” *Amsterdam News*, 12 February 1966.

<sup>103</sup>Loften Mitchell, “New Heritage Theatre in Exciting Production,” *Amsterdam News*, 26 June 1965.

<sup>104</sup>“Salem Church Play, Sunday,” *Amsterdam News*, 25 December 1965.

<sup>105</sup>In fact, Scot Brown suggests that Jamal wanted to form US on the basis of Malcolm X’s political philosophy and left in 1966 as Karenga’s Afrocentrism predominated the group. See Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York, 2003), 38–41.

<sup>106</sup>Lorenzo Thomas, “Black Art/Handbills,” *Callaloo*, 4 (October 1978): 74.

<sup>107</sup>Even Bailey continued to work through cultural channels. By the mid-1970s, he was offering annual roundups of black theater in New York as a contributor to *Black World* and associate member of the Black Theater Alliance. See Peter Bailey, “Annual Round-Up: Black Theater in America,” *Black World*, April 1976, 54–62.

<sup>108</sup>Jack Jones, “Watts Riot Shows Need for Responsible Adults,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 March 1966; “L.A. Council NCNW Heads Watts Project,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 21 April 1966.

<sup>109</sup>Jack Nelson, “SNCC Focuses Mood of Negro Rebellion,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 August 1967.

<sup>110</sup>Cedric Robinson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis, MN, 2007), 115. Also see Joe Elam, “BUF Kicks School Officials,” *Afro-American*, 14 June 1969. Minor had articulated a pro-Palestine position several years earlier as a member of SNCC, holding a conference that expanded on the SNCC position paper, “The Palestine Problem,” claiming that Zionists “conquered Arab homes ‘thru terror, force and massacres.’” See “Jewish Groups Strike Back at S.N.C.C. Attack,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 August 1967.



<sup>111</sup>Ethel Minor, "Black Voices: What Is Stokely Doing?" *Afro-American*, 4 October 1969.

<sup>112</sup>"New Negro Film Company Formed," *Amsterdam News*, 7 August 1965. Also see Sara Mitchell and Bernard Dyer, "Seeking God in the Ghetto: A Proposal for a Filmed Documentary," box 66, folder 11, JOKP.

<sup>113</sup>"Sara Mitchell Crowned 'Miss Africa 1966,'" *Amsterdam News*, 7 August 1965.

<sup>114</sup>Mitchell, *Shepherd of Black-Sheep*.