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## BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY ACTION MOVEMENT: THE PAPERS OF MUHAMMAD AHMAD (MAX STANFORD)

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This collection of RAM records reproduces the writings and statements of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and its leaders. It also covers organizations that evolved from or were influenced by RAM and persons that had close ties to RAM. The most prominent organization that evolved from RAM was the African People's Party. Organizations influenced by RAM include the Black Panther Party, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Youth Organization for Black Unity, African Liberation Support Committee, and the Republic of New Africa. Individuals associated with RAM and documented in this collection include Robert F. Williams, Malcolm X, Amiri Baraka, General Gordon Baker Jr., Yuri Kochiyama, Donald Freeman, James and Grace Lee Boggs, Herman Ferguson, Askia Muhammad Toure (Rolland Snellings), and Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael).

**Date Range:** 1962-1999

**Content:** 17,210 images

**Source Library:** Personal Collection of Dr. Muhammad Ahmad

### **Detailed Description:**

The Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) came into existence as a result of a year of organizing for student rights and involvement in the civil rights movement among a collective of undergraduate students at Central State College (now University) in late May to early June of 1962. RAM ran candidates for student government in spring 1962 and won all the offices in the student government.

The first community branch of RAM was established in December 1962 in Philadelphia, PA. The local Philadelphia organization became public in January 1963.

RAM engaged in voter registration/education drives, organized community support for the economic boycotts of the Philadelphia "400" ministers led by Rev. Leon Sullivan and held free African/African-American history classes at its office at 2900 Diamond St. in North Philadelphia.

RAM also participated in support demonstrations of the struggles then being waged in the South to end racial apartheid (segregation). RAM worked with Cecil B. Moore president of the NAACP in mobilizing approximately 30,000 African Americans over a week's period of time to demand inclusion into semiskilled and skilled jobs in the building trades at a construction site in the Strawberry Mansion section of North Philadelphia in May 1963.

The Revolutionary Action Movement was also active in coalitions to eliminate police brutality against the African-American community. RAM publicized itself as a revolutionary nationalist-internationalist organization based around the tactics of using confrontational self-defense direct action to achieve its ends. RAM also upheld the right of African-Americans to use armed self-defense to protect them against racist violence. RAM believed in collective leadership, had a governing central committee, published a bimonthly journal titled, "Black America" and a free weekly two-page (printed on both sides of an 8.5 x 11") newsletter titled "RAM speaks."

RAM sought to reach parity in jobs through its participation in mass demonstrations in labor (economic), education, political and also housing. RAM supported African-American businesses and encouraged African-Americans to patronize them.

*"It did not believe the questions of integration or separation were relevant, because RAM felt that, in order to achieve any objective, socialism would first have to be established in the United States. African Americans would have to institute the right of self-determination and decide for themselves what they as a people wanted to do. The mentors of the RAM cadres in the 1962 - 63 were Donald Freeman of Cleveland, Ohio, Chairman of the African-American Institute; Ethel "Azell" Johnson of Monroe, North Carolina, a coworker of Robert F. Williams who was a central committee member of RAM; and Queen Mother Audley Moore, who was an adviser. After a year (1963) of local and regional mobilization for jobs and resisting police brutality, RAM organizers went into the South, working with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), in Greenwood, Mississippi. From 1964—1965 RAM worked closely with Minister Malcolm X, who joined RAM and served as its secret international spokesman in conjunction with Robert F. Williams its international chairman."<sup>1</sup>*

RAM developed a 12-point program in June 1964, when it became a national organization. It read:

Development of:

1. A National Black Student Organization Movement.
2. Ideology (Freedom) Schools.
3. Rifle Clubs.
4. A Liberation Army.
5. Propaganda, Training Centers and a National Organization.
6. An Underground Vanguard.

7. Black Workers "Liberation Unions."
8. Block Organization (Cells).
9. A Nation within a Nation Concept, Government in Exile.
10. A War Fund (Political Economy).
11. Black Farmer Cooperatives.
12. An Army of the Black Unemployed.<sup>2</sup>

RAM attempted to politicize participants in the spontaneous urban rebellions of 1963 to 1968 through its theoretical journal, *Black America* and its various publications.

Besides struggling for economic, social and political equality in the north using various names, organizing African-American students on black and white college/university campuses, and raising the demand for Black studies, RAM sent field organizers into North/South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida Mississippi, and Texas as well as worked with the Deacons for Defense. RAM became a national organization in late spring of 1964 at the meeting held at 3061 Field St., Detroit, MI. RAM was the first African-American organization to denounce the US government's war of aggression against the people of Vietnam and support the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF) in 1964.

*"In 1965, RAM worked with the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM) and began to develop the motion for the establishment of Black Studies at some college (university) campuses. In 1966, it entered into an alliance with the SNCC and helped organize Black Panther Parties in several cities throughout the country. RAM was active in the Anti-Vietnam War Movement and raised the slogan, "America's the Blackman's Battleground." In 1967 its manifesto titled: World Black Revolution was published, which was widely circulated".<sup>3</sup>*

In 1967, RAM united street gangs in various cities into a youth organization called the Black Guards that fought against racial oppression.

*"In the spring of 1967, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, called Max Stanford, RAM's national field chairman, "the most dangerous man in America." This was the signal for a national and worldwide manhunt to take off the streets and incarcerate suspected RAM members. In 1968, facing repression from the intelligence agencies of the US government, coordinated with local police departments, the national central committee dissolved RAM as an organization".<sup>4</sup>*

The Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa, The League of Revolutionary Black Workers and the African People's Party superseded it.

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford), *Black Social and Political Thought: Selected Writings, Volume II*. [San Diego, California: University Readers, 2009], p 41.

<sup>2</sup>Op. Cit., p. 42., (June) historical correction.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 42.

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