Just My Soul Responding

Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations

Brian Ward

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The following year, however, the picketing of KFWB-Los Angeles by the NAACP, CORE and other local black pressure groups resulted in the hiring of black deejay Larry McCormack.[89]

The KFWB campaign was discussed at the 1964 NATRA convention in Chicago. Originally a loose social association of Rhythm and Blues and jazz deejays organized by Jack Gibson in the mid 1950s, a decade later NATRA emerged as the most dynamic organization in the struggle for greater black control over the content and rewards of black-oriented broadcasting. In Chicago, NATRA announced that it would not "encourage picketing of any station unless all reasonable means of arbitration or negotiations have first been explored". Thus it sounded a conciliatory tone, hoping, though none too certainly, that its aims might be achieved by negotiation, but reserving the option of direct action should this fail. Already, however, NATRA, like the civil rights movement as a whole in the aftermath of Atlantic City, was beginning to split into broadly identifiable radical and moderate factions.[90]

Del Shields, then a colleague of Georgie Woods at WDAS, delivered the most portentous address at the Chicago meeting. He urged black deejays to demand better remuneration from white station owners and better service from record companies. But he also demanded much greater station involvement in local politics and black community affairs. He called for an increase in black ownership and senior management to break the exploitative grip of whites and ensure greater responsiveness to black needs. "How can a white man know what a black man needs?", Shields asked. Black power was what was required.[91]

The following year, at NATRA's Houston convention, a new breed of young, highly politicized black deejays and staff, lead by Shields, his WDAS colleague Jimmy Bishop, Ed Wright of Clevelend's WABQ, plus veteran all-round music business fixer, Clarence Avante, seized control of NATRA's executive. This takeover ushered in a more militant phase in the struggle for black power within the music and broadcasting industries, as both rhetoric and tactics changed to reflect the black nationalism of the period. In a deeper sense, however, the co-ordinates of that struggle remained remarkably fixed. It was still defined by the same complex mixture of economic self-interest, personal ambition, racial loyalty, and communal responsibility which had characterized efforts to secure black power in the world of Rhythm and Blues during the first half of the 1960s.[92]

CHAPTER EIGHT

"On the outside looking in": Rhythm and Blues, celebrity politics and the civil rights movement

> It is not a given that because somebody is brilliant, or talented, or great, that they have consciousness and they care about the world they participate in. You will find in every category, and especially with entertainers, a huge capacity to be self-serving. (Bernice Johnson Reagon)[1]

The making of a myth

In October 1966, the black writer Rolland Snellings published an article in *Liberator* which proclaimed Rhythm and Blues a potent weapon in the black freedom struggle and hailed its singers as "PRIEST-PHILOSOPHERS" of the Movement. With jazz "taken over by racketeers and moved downtown into the clubs and bars of the middle-class pleasure seekers, away from the roots, away from the Heart, the Womb, away from the home of the people: uptown ghetto", Rhythm and Blues had become the "people's music, THIS is the reflection of their rising aspirations, THESE are the Truths sung by their modern PRIESTS and PHILOSOPHERS: WE are on the move and our music is MOVING with us".[2]

Snellings' powerful polemic has remained remarkably close to the conventional wisdom in writings both scholarly and popular on the relationship between Rhythm and Blues, its practitioners and the Movement. Some commentators have been even more forthright, claiming for soul singers a major leadership role in the Movement. Musicologist Portia Maultsby, for example, has written that "through their texts, soul singers not only discussed depressing social and economic conditions for black communities but also offered solutions for improvement and change". For A.X. Nicholas, soul music was

nothing less than the "poetry of the Black Revolution", while in a memorably shallow, if sadly typical, piece of mythmaking Robert Stephens claimed that soul performers "defined the expectations of black Americans" and even "directed" them, acting as "quasi-political representatives" who offered the black masses political "strategies which were the antithesis of acceptance and accommodation".[3]

Of course, Snellings, Maultsby and the rest were absolutely right to claim that the hopes and dreams, fears and frustrations, of ordinary blacks were expressed and embodied in the various forms of Rhythm and Blues. Black popular music and dance reflected, encoded and, through radio, records, dances and tours, helped to nationalize the new black pride and consciousness which was inextricably linked, cause and effect, to the emergence of a viable mass campaign for black civil and voting rights. And yet, the claims that Rhythm and Blues provided some sort of explicit running commentary on the Movement, with the men and women of soul emerging as notable participants, even leaders, tacticians and philosophers of the black struggle, have usually depended more on partisan assertion than hard evidence.

The tendency to simplify the complex relationship between Rhythm and Blues and the Movement has been encouraged and exemplified by two characteristics in most writings on the subject. The first has been a heavy reliance on song lyrics to locate and explain Rhythm and Blues' social and political relevance. Overt references to, and advocacy of, the civil rights struggle, or gritty depictions of the black social and economic predicament, or rousing calls for black pride and resistance, have routinely been presented as the principal site and source of the music's multiple meanings. This has certainly been true among Movement historians who, on the rare occasions when they have actually ventured beyond the freedom songs to mention the musical form most important to the mass of black Americans, have usually settled for a passing mention of, typically, James Brown's "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud" as proof of soul's political engagement and racial consciousness.[4]

This essentially logocentric approach has obscured the fact that the politics, meaning and influence of Rhythm and Blues did not reside solely – or even primarily – in such obviously engaged "social" or "political" lyrics. This was just as well, since "Say it loud" was not even cut until 1968, by which time the Movement was more than a dozen years old. Indeed, although there were some conspicuous exceptions, soul – like r&b, rock and roll, and black pop before it – had become the premier musical expression of mass black consciousness in the early-to-mid 1960s while paying relatively little explicit attention to the ongoing freedom struggle.

The second major impediment to a clear understanding of Rhythm and Blues' relationship to the Movement has been the tendency to exaggerate the extent of personal involvement in, or tangible support for, organized black protest by the heroes and heroines of soul. Because by the late 1960s

it was more than any self-respecting soul sister or brother could afford in terms of conscience, credibility or commerce not to be pledging very public allegiance to the struggle, doing benefit concerts, donating to worthy black causes, and often boldly speaking or singing out against racism in the entertainment industry and society at large, there has been an assumption that Rhythm and Blues artists and entrepreneurs had always been so forthright, committed and engaged; that they had always given generously of their prestige, income, time and talent to the Movement.

Indeed, many writers have found it extremely difficult to explain the significance of Rhythm and Blues in the black community at a time of widespread political mobilization and heightened racial consciousness without establishing some kind of direct linkage between its performers and organized black protest. This is even apparent in such sophisticated works as Daniel Wolff's biography of Sam Cooke, in which the author simply tries too hard to root Cooke's contemporary meaning in his personal activism and public support for the Movement and its goals.[5]

Certainly, Wolff sets much store by the claim of former Impression and Ice-Man of soul, Jerry Butler, that soul singers were "at the vanguard of the movement". In the early 1960s, Butler recalled that Cooke and other "entertainers would go in with the kids", joining student protests quietly, without fanfare. Butler subsequently became a bold and powerful voice for black rights within the industry, and later still a Commissioner of Cook County, Illinois. There is certainly no reason to think that Butler did not recognize political participation when he saw it in the early 1960s.[6]

Nevertheless, one must certainly marvel at the stealth with which a superstar like Cooke managed to join "the vanguard of the movement" – or else radically redefine what we mean by a vanguard. There appears to be nothing in the records of the major civil rights organizations to suggest any involvement by Cooke; no newspaper accounts of his presence on any picket lines, sit-ins or marches; no mention of Cooke as a participant in the scores of oral history interviews with Movement veterans; no membership dues, benefit concerts or donations – at least not until late 1964 when he gave his most overtly political song, the sublime soul-spiritual "A change is gonna come", to an obscure *The Stars Salute Dr Martin Luther King* album designed to raise funds for the SCLC.

It is clear that Cooke felt that this was the most appropriate place for such potentially controversial political material. Even in 1965, when the album version of "Change" was edited for single release, out went the verse with the most explicit, if still slightly coded, commentary on the indignities of Jim Crow: "I go to the movies,/ I go downtown./ Someone keeps telling me,/ not to hang around". Thus, Cooke continued to tiptoe around the sensibilities of his mainstream white audience, even as seven years into his secular career he was inspired by Bob Dylan's "Blowing in the wind" to address racial issues in his own songs for the first time.[7]

Perhaps the most subtle way in which Daniel Wolff seeks to close the distance between Cooke and the Movement is by the narrative ploy of juxtaposing key moments in Cooke's career with civil rights events in which he took no part, and on which he made no known comment. To give but one example, we learn of Cooke's momentous decision to insist on the desegregation of his concert with Jackie Wilson at the Norfolk Arena on 12 June 1959 amid discussions of contemporaneous events like Mack Charles Parker's lynching in Mississippi, Orval Faubus' latest enthusiasms for massive resistance, and a note about the volatile mood in Harlem that summer.[8]

Of course, at one level, this was quite appropriate. The Movement and the changing state of American race relations provided a crucial context for the development of Cooke's own career and political consciousness, and for the ways in which he and his music were interpreted by his peers. At another level, however, Wolff's approach is disingenuous and potentially misleading. Because there was apparently "no publicity" for Cooke's challenge to Virginia's segregation laws, the only cited source for the Norfolk incident is an interview with a local record store owner. This alone is certainly no reason to doubt its veracity, although it is puzzling that the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, which usually advertised all forthcoming black attractions, offers no evidence that Cooke was even in Norfolk on 12 June 1959. Certainly, two days later when Cooke and Wilson played in Birmingham they were doing their regular segregated gigs once more.[9]

What really matters here, however, is less the accuracy of the Norfolk story – Cooke certainly did give up Jim Crow gigs earlier than most of his contemporaries – than that it illustrates how Wolff sometimes spreads the largely anecdotal evidence for Cooke's personal involvement in Movement-related activities exceedingly thin. It was as if he felt that Cooke's status in the black community at a time of great social struggle could only be understood and given the appropriate profundity by transforming him into a bold Movement warrior. That is to misrepresent the nature, rather than the extent, of Cooke's significance.

In fact, Wolff himself offers a fascinating account of the diverse factors which actually fused to create Cooke's special meaning and resonance in the black community, and upon which his real claim to some kind of spiritual and psychological, cultural and even economic leadership rested. Regardless of subject matter, the way in which Cooke had grafted gospel onto a pop and r&b base was always expressive of black consciousness and aspirations in an era which prized both integration and the growing affirmation of a distinctively black American heritage and identity. His entrepreneurial activities with KAGS, Sar and Derby had made him both rich and relatively independent of white artistic and financial controls, which prompted vicarious enjoyment and admiration in black America. Cooke had also set up a series of studios, called Soul Stations, which were dotted around Los Angeles in a bid to nurture local black talent which might otherwise never

get a break. Coupled with his artistic and business successes, these studios helped to make Cooke a living exemplar of the black struggle to get into the system, with a sense of black pride and community responsibility intact. Similarly, although he never joined the sect, his growing interest in the Black Muslims and friendship with black boxing icon Muhammad Ali helped to mark Cooke as a proud race man.

In sum, Cooke's political significances and cultural meanings were derived from a wide range of personal and public, artistic and economic factors, acts and decisions, and from the ways in which these were interpreted by his contemporaries. His prestige and influence in the black community were certainly not reducible to, or even particularly dependent on, a minor association with the organized freedom struggle or a couple of explicitly engaged "political" songs which only appeared very late in his tragically short career.

Like most Rhythm and Blues singers, Sam Cooke was ultimately more inspirational than instrumental in the development of the civil rights movement. Indeed, while the cumulative effect of reading many Rhythm and Blues histories, autobiographies and interviews is to come away with a carefully cultivated sense of self-conscious engagement and political participation, until the second half of the 1960s there was often little more than sympathy and synchronicity. Certainly, the boasts and insinuations of some of these artists and their biographers contrast sharply with the memories of most civil rights workers. "I don't think they made a helluva contribution", stated June Johnson bluntly.[10]

The SNCC Freedom Singers and the Southern Folk Cultural Revival Project

The relative anonymity of Rhythm and Blues artists in Movement-related activities before the late 1960s did not indicate that they were somehow indifferent to the progress of the racial struggle. It did, however, reflect the existence of very real economic, personal, ideological, and even terroristic constraints on their capacity to offer much public support until the later 1960s. It also reflected the fact that, although most civil rights workers appreciated the formidable power of black secular and sacred musics in the black community, few actually gave much consideration to whether, let alone precisely how, Rhythm and Blues might be used as, in Snellings' phrase, a "political weapon". Indeed, although SNCC's John O'Neal rightly claimed "It was a singing movement", the civil rights struggle actually spawned relatively few attempts to use music as an instrument of education, enlightenment and possibly even mobilization for those not already in, or close to, the struggle.

One institution which did make a concerted effort in this area was the Highlander Folk School and, in particular, its musical director Guy Carawan. Carawan had long been interested in using folk music as a vehicle and resource for the sort of progressive democratic social movements the school was dedicated to promoting. Indeed, while historians have tended to assume that the freedom songs, with their stylistic blend of spirituals, gospel and folk-blues influences, emerged naturally as the distinctive soundtrack of the Movement, it was in no small part due to Carawan's efforts that they did so.

Thanks to the popularity of both gospel and Rhythm and Blues, old style, spiritual-based communal singing was moribund in many southern black communities by the start of the 1960s. This was especially true in the urban South, and even more particularly so among the young students who formed the vanguard of the early Movement. Thus while an older generation of black adults, like those who attended Highlander's first wave of Citizenship Schools in the South Carolina Sea Islands in the early 1960s, related instantly to a traditional style of communal singing over which new political lyrics were laid, Carawan found that the Fisk University students engaged in the Nashville sit-ins "initially reacted with embarrassment to new freedom songs that were sung with handclapping and in a rural free swinging style". With prompting from Carawan and others, however, southern students began to refashion this basic form, adding new lyrics and stylistic flourishes of their own to create the first round of contemporary freedom songs – as heard on the *Nashville Sit-In* album – and establish this revitalized musical form at the heart of the Movement's musical culture in the early 1960s.[11]

The best known attempt to use these freedom songs to proselytize beyond the Movement itself involved the SNCC Freedom Singers, who emerged during the Albany campaign of 1962, featuring Cordell Reagon, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Charles Neblett, Rutha Mae Harris and, occasionally, Bertha Gober. This group, its successors and imitators, performed on the frontline in the South, singing in the halls and churches, streets and jails where Movement workers and their host communities congregated. But the Freedom Singers also ventured further afield, where, as Julian Bond remembered, they represented SNCC's "public face, at least as much as Chuck McDew, John Lewis, or later Stokely Carmichael". The Freedom Singers showed "an audience of our peers on white college campuses around the country who we are".[12]

Playing to those predominantly white, usually student audiences, the Freedom Singers combined an important fundraising function with an explicitly educational mission. "The Freedom Singers were a tremendous Movement force", recalled campus organizer Stanley Wise. "I guess they worked a group of about 150 to 200 campuses around the country . . . [They] pulled songs from Movement groups all over the South. And they would sing those songs to groups around the country telling them of instances in which that song was

created, or why that song was sung then, or how it was used." With Cordell Reagon as narrator, the group used this blend of story and song "to engender a feeling in you that you were in fact there, participating with them".[13]

Bernice Johnson Reagon explained that the Freedom Singers "called ourselves a singing newspaper", and there was always an element of show, as well as tell, in their performances. While they urged their audiences to join or pledge monetary support to a particular organization dedicated to pursuing particular goals by particular methods, the songs themselves were often more demonstrative than didactic. At a time when Reagon and the Movement were still optimistic that "There was a thirst in the country outside of the South for people who wanted in some way to be part of dismantling segregation", the Freedom Singers sang songs and told tales about the racial situation in the South which promoted sympathy for the black struggle and passionately affirmed its moral rectitude. Then they waited confidently for their audience's consciences to lead them to support for the Movement.[14]

A second major attempt to use music as a formal component of Movement work was the Southern Folk Cultural Revival Project (SFCRP), co-founded by the ubiquitous Bernice Johnson Reagon and Anne Romaine. Romaine, who had joined SSOC while completing a master's thesis on the MFDP at the University of Virginia, was the strawberry-blonde folk-singing daughter of liberal North Carolina state senator Pat Cooke. Her own family history was inextricably bound to the cotton mill culture of North Carolina. In order to pay for law school, Pat Cooke had worked summers in the same Cramerton textile mills where his parents had once laboured. Before that, his grandfather had worked in the Earlanger Mills in Lexington. As a result, Anne Romaine's youthful world was full of the music and tales of mill-factory workers and their families. These were people who, in order to preserve a deep sense of community and personal worth, had – much like their black neighbours – fashioned from meagre material resources a remarkably vibrant and resilient grassroots culture. This background profoundly influenced Romaine's ideas about the role music, and culture more generally, might play in progressive community politics.[15]

Appropriately, the idea for the SFCRP emerged during a conference Romaine attended at Highlander in the fall of 1965. At this meeting, SNCC staffers, including Bob Moses, suggested that the impecunious young SSOC might try to raise money by using sympathetic folk singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez for benefits, just as SNCC had done. After discussions with Bernice Johnson Reagon, however, the concept was modified. Instead of bringing in northern-based folk celebrities, the SFCRP would use local southern musicians of both races to dramatize and celebrate a common, essentially working-class heritage of struggle against poverty and injustice through the various indigenous musics of the region.[16]

The SFCRP's "Mission Statement" announced that it was "concerned with building a South in which black people and white people can live together

in mutual respect. Our feeling is that this goal can be advanced by each recognizing the worth of his own grassroots tradition as well as the values of the underlying cultural exchange that [has] existed in the South for several centuries". Romaine and Reagon held that the traditional blues, folk and country musics of the southern states, with their wonderfully chaotic maelstrom of cross-racial influence and counter-influence, could be used to highlight the deep interpenetration and manifold similarities of black and white experiences in the region, while still preserving respect for the distinctiveness of each.[17]

Predicated on the belief, as Reagon put it, that "southern culture had ways in which [it] did not obey the race laws", the SFCRP was thus an attempt to render into song and performance the Movement ideal of the beloved community. Indeed, at its most radical, the project implied that the foundations for that community already existed in the South, usually hidden deep beneath layers of ignorance, poverty, and racial and class oppression, but periodically revealing themselves in southern musical culture.[18]

In the mid 1960s, at Stax, Fame, American, SS7 and many other southern studios, black and white southerners were engaged in precisely the sort of mutually respectful, biracial musical exchanges which the SFCRP extolled as a pathway to better racial understanding in the region. And yet, there was just no equivalent attempt by the Movement to use southern soul, or any other form of Rhythm and Blues music, as an educational or mobilizing tool, even though its audience, black and white, was much larger than for either freedom songs, or for grassroots southern musics. As we shall see, there were good reasons for this neglect. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the Movement's own reluctance to use Rhythm and Blues and its artists in any systematic way partially accounted for their generally low profile in the civil rights activities of the early 1960s.

Making a statement, taking a stand

Perhaps inevitably, there were some Rhythm and Blues artists whose own consciences soon led them into the heart of the civil rights struggle, despite the general indifference of the Movement, or concerns about the possible effects of such activism upon their careers. In April 1963, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* noted that Clyde McPhatter was "One of the first to take an active part in a public demonstration of anger and disgust with the status quo". McPhatter had joined the Atlanta lunch-counter sit-ins in early 1960, and subsequently appeared on picket lines and at benefit concerts for both SNCC and the NAACP, of which he was a life member.[19]

McPhatter was unusual in apparently giving considerable thought to the utilitarian value of his art and celebrity. He believed he could make a special contribution by convincing young people, not least his white fans,

of the legitimacy of the protests against Jim Crow. In the spring of 1960, for example, he and organist Bill Doggett – another NAACP life member – staged a series of youth rallies at which McPhatter applauded "the young white students who, rejecting their heritage of racial prejudice, have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Afro-American youth in this irresistable crusade", and urged more to do the same.[20]

If McPhatter was a consistent voice and presence in the early 1960s, even as his own career entered a terminal slump which ended with chronic alcoholism and his death from a heart attack in 1972, others flitted in and out of the Movement scene. Julian Bond remembered local star Gladys Knight doing some very early benefits for the Atlanta Student Movement, before even the birth of SNCC or Knight's first round of national celebrity with "Every beat of my heart" and "Letter full of tears" in 1961. Bunny Sigler was a smooth-toned balladeer who had a decent hit with "I won't cry" in the early 1960s, later cut some proto-Philly soul for Parkway ("Let the good times roll") and Neptune ("Great big liar"), and resurfaced in the mid 1970s as writer-producer of a light funk-disco-pop stew for the Trammps, Drells and himself. In the summer of 1963, however, he was marching with Greensboro students to protest segregation in downtown restaurants and theatres, and leading 500 of them off to temporary jails set up at the Central Carolina Hospital.[21]

The Birmingham campaign in the spring of 1963 produced one of the most inspiring examples of personal courage from a black singer, when the blind veteran Al Hibbler, whose major mid-1950s hits "Unchained melody" and "He" had smouldered somewhere between torch-song jazz and gospel-blues, joined the demonstrations. While Ray Charles later excused his own absence from civil rights protests partly on the grounds that he would not know when to duck if white racists started throwing rocks, Hibbler bravely faced up to Bull Connor's men, dogs and hoses. On 9 April, the singer was arrested while picketing outside Loveman's, a downtown department store which ran a segregated lunch counter. Birmingham's police department, not noted for its sensitivity to bad publicity, drew the line at imprisoning a blind man and Hibbler was released at the gates of the city's southside jail.[22]

"Though I'm blind, I can see the injustice here", Hibbler announced and the next day he was back on the picket line. "He tried his best to get arrested", recalled WENN's station manager Joe Lackey. "He'd go down there and march and Bull Connor would go down there and personally arrest him. Put him in a police car and take him back to the motel. He would not put him in jail". On one occasion, while the other demonstrators were being herded into police vans and Hibbler was being ushered towards a waiting police car, he broke free and tried to rejoin his fellow pickets. "The police are trying to segregate me from my own people", he complained. An incensed Connor intervened, forced Hibbler back against a wall and launched what was, even by his own craven standards, an astonishing

verbal attack on the singer. "You can't work and anyone who goes to jail has to earn his food", Connor raged. "You can't do anything, even entertain". The national press reported the exchange, which only helped to reinforce in the public mind the link between Birmingham's vicious resistance to desegregation and a basic lack of human decency.[23]

While he was in Birmingham, Hibbler had also performed a benefit concert for the Movement. Four months later, a much bigger "Salute to freedom 1963" concert was held in Birmingham under the auspices of the American Guild of Variety Artists. The show, which raised around $9,000 for the CUCRL and the forthcoming March on Washington, featured an eclectic group of speakers and entertainers, including Ray Charles, Nina Simone, the Shirelles, Dick Gregory, and Martin Luther King. It was originally booked for Birmingham's Municipal Auditorium, scene of the Nat King Cole attack in 1956, but at the last moment the city authorities decided it was imperative to have the facility painted on the day scheduled for the concert. The show was moved to Miles College, where a hastily assembled stage even more hastily disassembled itself when a section collapsed beneath the silky-toned black pop balladeer Johnny Mathis. Earlier in the summer Mathis, who was just beginning to make a regular place on the lucrative white supper-club and cabaret circuit, had put that crossover audience at some risk by performing a couple of high-profile outdoor benefits in New York and Chicago, raising at least $20,000 for the NAACP and SCLC.[24]

Roy Hamilton performed benefits for most of the civil rights organizations in the early 1960s. Following his private attendance at the March on Washington in August 1963, however, he informed CORE's James Farmer, "I still feel that there is something more that I can personally contribute . . . whenever my services are needed, don't hesitate to call upon me". Like most other civil rights organizations, CORE had no idea of what exactly that "something more" might be. It never found a niche for the willing Hamilton beyond the fundraising shows which were the staple expressions of Movement support for most concerned black entertainers, unless, like Hibbler, McPhatter and Sigler, they chose to take to the streets.[25]

Another regular performer at Movement benefits was Jackie Wilson. In October 1963, Wilson was given an award by Philadelphia NAACP president Cecil Moore in appreciation for his efforts on behalf of the organization, which included raising $5,000 as headliner for a local "Freedom fund show" organized by deejay Georgie Woods. In March 1965, it was Woods who put together the massive "Freedom show" in support of the Selma campaign which attracted many Rhythm and Blues stars, including several Motown acts, and foreshadowed the much greater public profile for soul performers at Movement-related events in the second half of the decade.[26]

Among the acts at Woods' "Freedom show" were the Impressions. Curtis Mayfield, the group's chief inspiration, guitarist, singer and songwriter, was one of the most politically engaged lyricists of an era which actually produced

very few soul songs explicitly about the struggle or racial injustice. In June 1964, just as the Civil Rights Act passed into law and the Freedom Summer gathered momentum, the Impressions' "Keep on pushing" perfectly captured the mood of the moment, oozing confidence that the harnessing of black pride to concerted action would result in victory over oppression.

> Look yonder,
> What's that I see?
> A great big stone wall,
> stands there ahead of me.
> But I've got my pride,
> and I'll move it all aside,
> and I'll keep on pushing.

Perhaps the most sublime Mayfield song of the mid 1960s was "People get ready". This gorgeous long-lined spiritual, delivered by the Impressions in exquisite close harmony style, used the Exodus motif to invoke a vision of black national unity and the dogged faith required to complete the journey into freedom.

> People get ready,
> for the train to Jordan,
> picking up passengers,
> coast to coast.
> Faith is the key,
> open the doors,
> unbar them,

Mayfield sang in his beautiful, delicate high tenor. Mayfield and the Impressions continued to produce these sorts of positive, uplifting rallying cries throughout the 1960s. Invariably wedded to gospel imagery, songs like "Amen", "Meeting up yonder", and "We're a winner" celebrated black pride and offered unmistakeable endorsements and encouragement for those involved in the black struggle. Mayfield "always seemed to be right on time", remembered Stanley Wise. "You could see [his records] on every Movement turntable".[27]

Mayfield was unusual among the soul stars of the early-to-mid 1960s in his willingness to tackle social and racial issues regularly. Yet, because Mayfield favoured beatific gospel imagery and rich allegory over simple documentary-style narratives, few of his early lyrics made explicit mention of race or the Movement at all. Instead, their racial politics were made manifest by their use of black religious and secular idioms, and their setting amid the soulful black harmonies of the Impressions. It was this combination of sound, sense and style which bound Mayfield's songs to the new black consciousness generated by the early Movement.

Most of the other "engaged" soul songs of the early-to-mid 1960s also used quasi-religious imagery and the sounds of soul, rather than direct invocations of race, Jim Crow or the Movement, to make their racial provenance and political relevance obvious. Sam Cooke's "A change is gonna come" was a good example. So was Joe Tex's intensely moving "The love you save may be your own", which owed much to "Change" – even if the spare organ and guitar sound was a little more "downhome" churchy than on Cooke's lush citified production.

Released in early 1965, "The love you save" described how racism and its psychological and economic consequences still accounted for much of the domestic instability in black America, and thereby impeded black unity and progress. Tex, testifying as ever, placed his own travails and observations at the centre of a song which evoked all too common experiences in black America:

> People, I been misled and I been afraid.
> I been hit in the head and left for dead.
> I been abused and been accused.
> I been refused a piece of bread.
>
> I been pushed around; I been lost and found,
> I been given to sundown to get out of town.
> I been taken outside and brutalized.
> And I had to always be the one,
> to smile and apologize . . .

Not until the late 1960s would such lyrics become commonplace in soul music and by that time the prevailing mood of the nation, black and white, was very different.

Prior to the politicization of soul in the second half of the decade, the most constantly engaged star from anywhere near that musical universe was Nina Simone. Born Eunice Waymon in North Carolina in the heart of the Depression, like many of her generation Simone was raised to cope with and endure, rather than struggle against, the ways of the Jim Crow South. Consequently, as she tried to build her musical career in New York in the mid-to-late 1950s she was initially slow to recognize the "connection between the fights I had and any wider struggle for justice" being waged by the civil rights movement.[28]

In the early 1960s, however, under the tutelage of the black playwright-activist Lorraine Hansberry, Simone began to reconsider her own position and struggle for acceptance "as a black person in a country run by white people and a woman in a world run by men". Meditations on these two themes – race and gender – would later inform her best songwriting.[29]

Simone's interest in the civil rights movement increased steadily but was not manifested in either personal participation or the lyrics of her songs until the summer and autumn of 1963. The murder of Medgar Evers and the horror of the Birmingham 16th Street Baptist Church bombing resulted in her own political "road to Damascus . . . it came as a rush of fury, hatred and determination. In church language, the Truth entered me and I 'came through'". Simone resisted the urge "to go out and kill someone", and instead channelled her anger into the composition of "Mississippi Goddam" – her first explicitly "political" song.[30]

"Mississippi Goddam" was the closest Rhythm and Blues got in the early 1960s to Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham jail", the famous 1963 epistle in which the imprisoned civil rights leader confronted the criticisms of some white clergymen that he was irresponsibly seeking too much racial change too quickly. "'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never'", King wrote, insisting that blacks were tired of deferring their rights until such time as whites saw fit to bestow them.[31] With its bold gospel-jazz chording and stentorian vocals, Simone's song perfectly captured the same mood of mounting impatience with white prevarication and false promises:

> Oh, this whole country's full of lies,
> Y'all gonna die and die like flies,
> I don't trust you anymore,
> When you keep sayin',
> "Go slow, go slow" . . .
> Do things gradually and bring more tragedy.

Simone had "even stopped believin' in prayer", and instead trusted only to the mobilization of the black masses for deliverance.

For the next seven years, Simone's writings, recordings and performances were driven by her personal commitment to the struggle. She appeared at numerous marches and fundraising events, regularly heading south to perform for activists on the front line. In August 1963, for example, she was part of the Miles College benefit concert where one newspaper reported that her "ululating rendition of Oscar Brown Jr's 'Brown Baby' had thousands cheering to the skies". In April 1964, she performed a benefit for SNCC at Carnegie Hall, and in June headlined a SNCC "Freedom concert" in Westbury, New York to raise money for the Mississippi Summer Project. For many activists, "Mississippi Goddam" became an anthem that summer. "I mean everybody in the Movement just sort of took that as a tribute to the Mississippi Summer Project", remembered Stanley Wise. Although in the strictest sense it was no such thing, having been written the year before the Freedom Summer, this was a good example of the ways in which the meanings of a particular song could be amplified, manipulated or simply imposed thanks to acts of creative consumption by its listeners.[32]

In the spring of 1965, Simone played for the marchers making their way from Selma to Montgomery. The following summer she returned to Mississippi, joining those who continued James Meredith's solo "walk against fear", after he had been wounded by a sniper. "Unannounced she sort of came and played . . . did a concert for us right on stage", Wise recalled. In fact, when Simone had found out she was not on the original list of entertainers slated to join the Meredith March, she had virtually demanded to be involved. "They think we are always well organized in these things", confessed Stanley Levison, who as co-ordinator of many SCLC fundraising projects certainly knew better. Levison immediately made arrangements to fly the eager Simone south. Later the same year, CORE granted Simone a special award for her work on its behalf, which had included a series of east coast benefits in late 1965.[33]

By the end of the 1960s, Simone was singing "Revolution" and had joined many black militants in abandoning an always guarded faith in the efficacy of nonviolence and moral-suasion to secure black equality. One of those militants, and from the spring of 1967 SNCC's new chairman, H. Rap Brown, hailed her as "the singer of the black revolution because there is no other singer who sings real protest songs about the race situation". In 1970, black students gathered in the Student Union Grill at Ole Miss had played Simone's records before flambeauxing a confederate flag and marching on the chancellor's house to demand a black studies programme on campus.[34]

Nina Simone's conspicuous personal involvement in the struggle and willingness to discuss the black predicament in her lyrics was obviously a major factor in explaining her special status among Movement workers. Stanley Wise and Julius Lester, also of SNCC and himself a gifted folk singer, both named daughters in her honour. And yet, as Bernice Johnson Reagon explained, their respect depended on more than Simone's regular appearances at marches, fundraising and morale-raising concerts, and her lyrical beligerance at a time of great timidity among most black celebrities. The very sound of her music and the way in which she comported herself on stage and in her private and business life also helped to define her political and racial significance. "Simone helped people to survive", Reagon recalled. "When you heard her voice on a record it could get you up in the morning . . . She could sing anything, it was the sound she created. It was the sound of that voice and piano . . . Nina Simone's sound captured the warrior energy that was present in the people. The fighting people". There was a self-possessed assurance – critics would call it arrogance and bloody-mindedness – about Simone; an independence of mind, spirit and action which seemed both refreshing and inspirational. It was this combination of message, music and manner which made her such a potent figure for the Movement. She was, as MFDP chairman Lawrence Guyot neatly summarized, "an individualist, very strong, very committed, who talked about race in song like very few other people did".[35]

Simone's level of involvement was unmatched by any of the major figures of Rhythm and Blues in the early-to-mid 1960s, and it was probably not coincidental that she was actually outside the main run of soul artists. Simone was a classically trained singer-pianist; a Juillard graduate whose predilection for mixing Bach fugues, jazz, blues, folk and gospel frequently confounded attempts by critics, record label executives, producers, and nightclub owners to assign her to any of the stylistic slots routinely reserved for black artists. "I didn't fit into white ideas of what a black performer should be. It was a racist thing", she later wrote. Her distinctive hybrid stylings also meant that her principal black audience comprised mainly intellectuals and Movement workers who appreciated her candid lyrics and personal commitment. Her other fans were mostly white folk, jazz and blues aficionados, many of whom were northern college students or budding bohemians. They also tended to be racial liberals and as such were untroubled by Simone's politics.[36]

If Simone had less to lose in commercial terms than, for example, Diana Ross, in terms of giving public expression to her support for the black struggle, this should not detract from her courage, or impugn her motives. After all, it was Simone's life, not just her chart position, money and coiffure which she sometimes put at risk. Hard choices had to be made and, regardless of how much the peculiar composition of her audience gave her a certain room to manoeuvre, Simone chose to align herself publicly and proudly with an ongoing black freedom struggle with little regard for the personal or professional consequences.

Jazz, folk and the early civil rights movement

With the exception of Nina Simone and a few others, the low level of personal, financial or artistic support for the Movement from the Rhythm and Blues community during the decade after Montgomery contrasted with the contribution of many black, and some white, musicians and artists in other branches of showbusiness. Paradoxically, while the reputations of soul singers as Movement activists have generally been inflated over the subsequent decades, the important role of many from the worlds of jazz, folk and Hollywood have been consistently neglected or underplayed. While it may appear heresy to some, the fact remains that in certain respects Joan Baez was more important and conspicuously committed to the early Movement than James Brown, while Harry Belafonte did more to assist the struggle for black freedom in practical terms than all the soul icons of the 1960s combined.

In the summer of 1965, Betty Garman, who acted as a co-ordinator between SNCC's national office in Atlanta and support groups around the country, wrote to Dick Perez of the Cleveland Friends of SNCC, regarding

the possibility of Perez staging some celebrity benefit concerts in the city. "Unfortunately, we don't have any quick, sure fire way of scheduling big time performers for concerts – for anything for that matter", Garman admitted. Nevertheless, she explained, "There are a certain few artists who do things for us consistently and with whom we have certain kinds of arrangements with respect to their time . . . The people we can reach [are] [Pete] Seeger, [Theo] Bikel, Belafonte, Sammy Davis, Jr, Peter Paul and Mary, or Baez or Dylan".[37]

This was hardly an exhaustive list of the performers who did benefits for SNCC or contributed to the Movement in other ways in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, while a case might be made for the inclusion of some jazz artists, Garman's emphasis on white folk singers and black stars from Hollywood and Broadway accurately reflected the areas within the entertainment industry from which the Movement had come to expect the most visible, valuable and voluble support.

The celebrity turnout at the March on Washington in August 1963 featured a similar array of black and white artists and entertainers. The roll-call for the era's most dramatic set-piece demonstration of Movement support included Sammy Davis, Jr, Harry Belafonte, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Sidney Poitier, Diahann Carroll, James Garner, Pearl Bailey, Burt Lancaster, Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Kirk Douglas, Dick Gregory, Eartha Kitt, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Bobby Darin and Lena Horne. The March's official programme featured black soprano Marian Anderson, gospel star Mahalia Jackson, black folk-blues singer Josh White, and white folk singers Joan Baez, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Bob Dylan.[38]

Many of these entertainers also signed a proclamation to the effect that "all forms of racial segregation are injurious to the arts of the nation". No Rhythm and Blues artists signed this proclamation and, although Roy Hamilton and Little Willie John attended in a private capacity, apparently none were invited – or for that matter requested – to join the official cultural contingent which marched and was introduced to the crowd. The indifference of the Movement towards these artists and the reluctance of soul men and women to become publicly associated with civil rights protest appeared to be well-matched.[39]

Rhythm and Blues was not the only strain of black popular music missing from the official entertainment or cultural contingent at the March. As hard-working jazz saxophonist John Handy angrily noted, "of the large number of the 'cream of the crop' Negro and white artists and entertainers present, there was not one jazz artist on the program". Handy found this sleight incredible, "because jazz, along with the spirituals, has played a major role in the Negro's struggle for freedom. After all, jazz has been the Negro's artistic means of self-expression and has opened many minds and hearts to the Negro". In fact, unknown to Handy, there had been one informal attempt to include jazz on the programme when Duke Ellington

was approached. Although he had long performed benefit concerts for the NAACP, Ellington generally avoided both public participation in Movement activities and statements on the racial situation. Despite the efforts of Dick Gregory and Robert Kennedy, he could not be tempted to join the March, complaining rather lamely that "I'd love to go, but I've got sore feet. I can't walk that far".[40]

Handy's response to the absence of jazz at the March was revealing. A member of CORE's San Francisco chapter who had already been jailed for his civil rights activities, Handy rapidly convened an integrated Freedom Band to go out on the road. The Freedom Band, he announced, would act as the "musical troubleshooter for the Movement", with which it would identify "not only through its music, but also through its mode of dress, which is essentially the same as the uniform worn in the South by SNCC workers – i.e., work shirts, dark pants, denim jackets, etc.". CORE in particular supported the Freedom Band initiative, which included a benefit on its behalf with Dizzy Gillespie and Bill Cosby at the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco in September 1964. There was no evidence of any similar response from the Rhythm and Blues artists who had also been ignored by the organizers of the March on Washington.[41]

More generally, the participation of jazz musicians like Handy in Movement-related activities was rather more impressive than that of their Rhythm and Blues counterparts – although Nat Hentoff suggested that in 1961 the much touted political consciousness and commitment of the black jazz avant-garde was still largely chimerical or, at a significant best, largely a matter of aesthetics. Hentoff doubted "if one in five hundred even belonged to the NAACP".[42]

Nevertheless, in the decade after Montgomery there were distinct signs of jazz's growing identification with the formal Movement and its goals. This was reflected most obviously in the titles of works like Charles Mingus' "Fables of Faubus", Sonny Rollins' *Freedom suite*, John Coltrane's breathtaking "Alabama", and Max Roach's *We Insist! The Freedom Now Suite* album, which at Roach's instigation Candid Records offered to civil rights organizations at a knockdown price so that they could re-sell them to raise funds. The sense of political engagement was further promoted by the liner notes of many jazz albums, especially the crackling prose Imamu Amiri Baraka contributed to Impulse releases by Coltrane.[43]

Support for the Movement was also encoded in the aesthetics of the New Jazz, especially in the quest for a structural, particularly harmonic and rhythmic, freedom in a music which many heard as a sonic analogue to the black drive for liberation. SNCC worker Fay Bellamy certainly recognized sympathy for the Movement "in how the rhythms changed in jazz", adding perceptively that "I think the kind of mind-set a jazz person might have, versus the mind-set a Rhythm and Blues person might have, might have been somewhat different in that period of time". Bellamy was surely right. Unlike

Rhythm and Blues men and women, modern jazz artists tended to emerge from, and work mostly within, a self-conscious cultural vanguard, where music and racial, personal and collective politics were expected to mix. This was one reason why many critics reified the jazz avant-garde as the true sound of the black revolution, even as they grappled with the bothersome fact that the black masses seemed frustratingly indifferent to the music of their own liberation.[44]

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, jazz men and women gave hundreds of performances to raise vital funds for the Cause. In the summer of 1959, for example, the Chicago Urban League staged a major jazz festival in collaboration with *Playboy* magazine which featured Miles Davis, Count Basie, Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Dakota Staton and Kai Winding, and netted tens of thousands of dollars for the organization. Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, Charles Mingus and Thelonius Monk joined Nina Simone in sponsoring SNCC's "Salute to southern students" concert at Carnegie Hall in February 1963. In the fall of that year CORE staged the "Jazz salute for freedom" concert which gave rise to its loosely related, highly lucrative double-album. In February 1964, Miles Davis played a benefit for SNCC at the Lincoln Center, funds from which supported voter registration work in Mississippi. The following year, Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln took the *Freedom Now Suite* to the stage and raised around $900 for the Boston Friends of SNCC. In mid-decade Imamu Amiri Baraka invented the Jazzmobile, a black educational and jazz initiative which toured the Harlem streets teaching black history and preaching black cultural pride and unity, funded mainly by money liberated from President Johnson's Great Society programmes.[45]

Meanwhile, there were a number of individual challenges to the racial structure and economy of the jazz industry itself. Ornette Coleman, musically one of the most radical of the New Jazz players in his deconstruction of conventional Western harmonic and melodic conventions, withdrew from public performances for three years because none of the predominantly white-owned nightclubs would pay him what he "knew" his music was worth. The fiery pianist Cecil Taylor denounced the basic racial configuration of power in the music business and called for "a boycott by Negro musicians of all jazz clubs in the United States. I also propose that there should be a boycott by Negro jazz musicians of all record companies. I also propose that all Negro jazz musicians boycott all trade papers and journals dealing with music . . . We're no longer reflecting or vibrating to the white-energy principle". Again, the white bohemian and black intellectual coteries who comprised the core audience for jazz were unlikely to withhold their custom because of these and similar expressions of black pride and assertiveness. Indeed, they rather expected such displays of militancy as a sort of guarantee of their heroes' credentials as renegade critics of the existing social, economic, political and racial order.[46]

At a time when relatively few soul singers were conspicuous in Movement activities, folk singers like Joan Baez were more likely to be found on the front line. Here Baez accompanies author James Baldwin (left) and SNCC's Jim Forman on a march in Alabama.

While jazz furnished its share of early Movement supporters and a music which some found hugely inspirational, black folk singers like Josh White, Leon Bibb and Odetta Gordon, and gospel stars such as the Staple Singers and Mahalia Jackson, were equally conspicuous in fundraising efforts. In

Chicago, in May 1963, Jackson not only performed, but also arranged for free use of the auditorium and band to raise some $40,000 for the SCLC. A more modest New York benefit for CORE in August raised nearly $2,000, while another for SNCC the same year cleared nearly $6,500.[47]

White folk singers like Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, the Kingston Trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, the Chad Mitchell Trio, Theodore Bikel, Phil Ochs and the veteran Pete Seeger were also heavily involved in the early 1960s, doing innumerable benefit shows, joining marches and speaking out unequivocally on behalf of the Movement. "There was a significant array of white artists who were progressive politically . . . all of them came out of the folk movement", Harry Belafonte remembered.[48]

As Belafonte appreciated, these people initially came into the Movement because of their personal politics, not because the Movement had consciously sought them out. There was a selflessness and fierce moral commitment among some of these white folkies which mirrored that of the frontline Movement workers and sometimes had very tangible financial ramifications. In the summer of 1964, for example, a Seeger-Baez benefit concert for the New York SNCC office raised a respectable $1,350. Since neither artist would accept a fee or expenses, all but $27 of this was profit. By contrast, while the Nina Simone benefit at Westbury during the same summer had grossed over $2,800, after the support acts were paid, and publicity and expenses for Simone were deducted – she usually asked for $1,000, about one-third of her usual fee, for Movement shows – the organization grossed just over $577.[49]

Stanley Wise remembered seeing "Bob Dylan when I was a freshman at Howard. I remember him up there helping load trucks to take food to Mississippi. I mean he was right there on the frontline. I don't remember that from a lot of people". Julian Bond also recalled Movement workers who had seen and heard the young Dylan down in Mississippi, "saying . . . he didn't sound like anybody I'd ever heard before. But strangely engaging". Dylan's "Blowing in the wind" was quickly a fixture at civil rights rallies, while "Oxford Town" offered a stinging indictment of the response to James Meredith's 1962 efforts to desegregate Ole Miss.

> He went down to Oxford Town,
> guns and clubs followed him down,
> all because his face was brown.
> Better get away from Oxford Town.
>
> Oxford Town in the afternoon,
> everyone's singing a sorrowful tune,
> two men died beneath the Mississippi moon.
> Somebody better investigate soon.

Dylan's plea to "investigate soon" and his mocking question to the white community in another verse, "What do you think about that my friend?", gave encouragement to those who detected a growing impatience with American racism among young whites.[50]

Dylan was just one of the many white singer-songwriters who discussed racial protest and Movement matters with a candour seldom found in the Rhythm and Blues of the period. Pete Seeger's "Ballad of old Monroe", for example, celebrated the career of Robert Williams, the controversial NAACP secretary in Monroe, North Carolina, whose insistence on the black right to armed self-defence had seen him drummed out of the Association and hounded into exile in Cuba. If Nina Simone might have written something similar, it is difficult to imagine James Brown, let alone Holland-Dozier-Holland or Sam Cooke, tackling such subjects in the early 1960s.

Paul Simon's "He was my brother" was an earnest if maudlin paean to slain civil rights worker Andrew Goodman, who was a friend of Simon's from their days in acting class at Queen's College in New York. Tom Paxton's "Goodman, Schwerner and Chaney" mourned the same tragedy. Phil Ochs memorialized Medgar Evers in the "Ballad of Medgar Evers", while his "Ballad of William Worthy" celebrated the contribution of the black CORE worker who had participated in the Fellowship of Reconciliation's first Freedom Ride back in 1947 and later became a Solon of the contemporary struggle. Others, in the mode of Dylan's "Blowing in the wind" or "Only a pawn in their game" ("the very first song that showed the poor white was as victimized by discrimination as the poor black", according to Bernice Johnson Reagon), sang out about injustice and intolerance as part of a broader critique of contemporary American society and its moral inadequacies. As Barry McGuire's pop chart-topping "Eve of destruction" noted, Jim Crow and racism made a mockery of America's Cold War claims to moral superiority over the communist bloc. "Think of all the hate there is in Red China,/ Then take a look around at Selma, Alabama", McGuire rasped.[51]

While civil rights workers were deeply appreciative of the public and artistic stands people like Seeger, Baez and Dylan were taking, it was usually their politics and the money and public sympathy they generated for the Movement, rather than their music, which appealed to black activists. These preferences were even more evident beyond Movement circles, where few blacks gave a hootenanny about folk. CORE's Jimmy McDonald tried desperately to shift tickets for an October 1963 Dylan benefit in Syracuse, New York, but recognized that "most Negroes do not know that much about 'folk music', so that Bobby Dylan does not have that much appeal in the Negro community". A particularly ill-conveived Boston Friends of SNCC "folk concert" in the black Roxbury district raised a mere $89, of which nearly $67 was devoured by advertising and expenses. When Joan Baez played the all-black Morehouse College for SNCC in Atlanta in May 1963, the audience was 70 per cent white, just as it had been for an earlier concert

at Miles College in Birmingham, and just as it would be when she played Tougaloo College chapel in Mississippi in April 1964. The dedicated Baez was so concerned that she should only play before integrated audiences that it was written into her contract. Promoters then "had to call up the local NAACP for volunteers to integrate an audience for someone they'd never heard of". It was ironic that while jazz and folk had the "right" progressive message and performers who often showed a clear and eager public commitment to the organized struggle, those musical forms had a relatively small black audience compared with Rhythm and Blues, which had far fewer formal links to the Movement.[52]

Hollywood on parade

More important than soul, folk or jazz performers, in terms of keeping the Movement just about solvent in the early 1960s, were a number of stars from Hollywood and Broadway. In addition to consistent white supporters like Burt Lancaster, Tony Bennett, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Marlon Brando and Shelley Winters, regular black presences at marches and fundraising events included Sidney Poitier, Eartha Kitt, Dorothy Dandridge and the deeply committed husband and wife team of actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, who offered steadfast personal, financial and moral support to all phases of the Movement. Indeed, when Stanley Levison was desperate to find suitable ghostwriters to work with Martin Luther King on his account of the Birmingham campaign, *Why we can't wait*, he considered Davis a possibility, because "he's highly dedicated . . . has integrity . . . and has talent and could contribute something". In 1964, Davis and Dee had helped to found the short-lived fundraising vehicle, the Association of Artists for Freedom, in collaboration with author John O. Killens. Even Malcolm X courted the couple, seeking their endorsement and financial help for his Organization of Afro-American Unity, the proposed vehicle for his post-Nation of Islam engagement with a civil rights struggle which increasingly bore his intellectual and rhetorical imprint. Davis read the eulogy at Malcolm's funeral in 1965.[53]

Even more crucial to the Movement was a glamorous showbiz quintet of Lena Horne, Diahann Carroll, Dick Gregory, Sammy Davis, Jr, and Harry Belafonte. With the partial exception of Gregory, the reputations of all these performers withered, or were systematically destroyed, by the peculiar demands of the black power era. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, black stars who managed to maintain both black and white celebrity and refused to trade a complex, essentially humanitarian progressivism informed by resolute racial pride, for the far simpler, more reactionary, racial sectarianism then in vogue, were routinely pilloried as "Uncle Toms" or "Aunt Jemimas". It only made matters worse that Belafonte, Davis and Horne all had white

spouses – a sure sign of self- and race-hatred among those who measured racial integrity by such exacting standards as a fondness for kente cloth and whose own contribution to black liberation sometimes extended no further than the end of a well-kempt afro. Unfortunately, historians of the black power era have readily accepted and repeated such characterizations as if they represented an accurate assessment of these artists' roles or reputations among Movement workers and the black masses.[54]

Actress-singer-dancer Lena Horne had the longest protest pedigree of this querulous quintet. In 1919, at the age of two, she was featured in a New York NAACP branch bulletin as the youngest member of the organization. Horne was outspoken about the racial politics of the entertainment industry for most of her career. In 1945, following a meeting with a then little-known Little Rock NAACP official called Daisy Bates, she quit a government-sponsored tour of southern army bases, publicly denouncing the discrimination against black troops she had found at Camp Joseph T. Robinson. In the Cold War environment such gestures sometimes made it difficult for her to find work as producers carefully avoided anyone tainted with a reputation for radicalism. "I don't know what things will be like for the next generation", she admitted in 1949, "I only know we're having a hell of a time".[55]

When that next generation emerged to take up the struggle for black liberation, Horne was an immediate supporter – even if nonviolent discipline was not something which came easily. In 1960, she earned considerable street credibility when she hit a white engineering executive, Harvey St Vincent, with an ashtray and lamp after he had racially abused her in a swanky Beverly Hills restaurant. An unrepentent Horne explained that St Vincent had used "a word for Negro people that I don't use . . . and then he made sure my sex was properly noted with a nasty five letter word". She promptly split his eye and earned herself sackloads of black fan mail from all over the country.[56]

Horne was heavily involved in raising funds and generating publicity for the Movement, especially CORE, NAACP, and SCLC. In September 1963, shortly after performing a major SCLC benefit in Atlanta, Horne gave a typically forthright account of why she was so committed to supporting the civil rights campaign. "No Negro, whatever his station in life, is able to ignore it", she insisted, invoking the deep sense of personal calling and service which characterized all those entertainers who came forward to make a substantial contribution of time, energy and resources to the Movement. "The struggle is becoming a revolution and I want to be part of it, in whatever role I can fill best", she explained.[57]

Actress-singer Diahann Carroll was another regular performer at fundraising affairs like the May 1960 concert for the CDMLK organized by Harry Belafonte at the New York Regiment Armory. She was also a co-sponsor of the 1963 "Salute to southern students" show for SNCC. Two years later

A veteran of many struggles against discrimination within the entertainment industry, Lena Horne had become acquainted with the NAACP's Daisy Bates long before Bates became a national figure during the Little Rock school desegregation crisis in 1957. The inscription on this photograph, sent by Horne to Bates, reads: "Dear Daisy, my love and admiration, Lena".

her commitment was formally recognized when she and Julie Belafonte, Harry's second wife and a former dancer with the Kathleen Dunham dance troupe, were appointed co-chairs of SNCC's new Women's Division. Gloria Richardson, the fearless heroine of the Cambridge, Maryland, civil rights campaign, served as co-ordinator of the Division's steering committee, which was, Richardson wrote, "convened for the express purpose of providing funds for the southern workers and projects of SNCC on a continuing basis" through a range of social events and presentations. In the meantime, in 1963 Carroll had joined the board of directors of the Gandhi Society. This was essentially a fundraising heir to the CDMLK, conceived in part by Belafonte, and in turn succeeded by the American Foundation on Non-violence.[58]

From the late 1950s, black comedian Dick Gregory had ridiculed Jim Crow from the stage, in his books, and, when networks were feeling especially brave, on television. Gregory memorably characterized a southern liberal as "someone who'll lynch you from a low tree", and speculated on the new breed of long-limbed black supermen who would evolve if southern bus companies agreed to hire black drivers, but still required them to sit in the rear. It is unlikely that Gregory actually converted too many people to the black cause through his satire. Black fans hardly needed convincing of the cruel absurdities of Jim Crow, while his white fans were almost by definition broadly sympathetic and willing to have their collective consciences wittily pricked. Nonetheless, Movement workers certainly appreciated his refreshingly barbed take on American race relations and the way in which his acerbic commentaries helped to reinforce, for them and others, the righteousness of their fight.[59]

In the spring of 1963, Gregory joined voter registration efforts in LeFlore County, Mississippi and returned regularly to the state over the next few years. He brought with him not only his morale-boosting presence and valuable publicity, but also the funds he helped to raise in the supper-clubs and concert halls of the North. A 23-state tour for SNCC in 1964 generated more than $35,000. He even brought in food – seven tons of it in 1963, and 15,000 Xmas turkeys in December 1965 – for poor local blacks who suffered dreadfully when state authorities cut off federal food aid in an attempt to undermine support for voter registration. "He played an indispensable role at a time that it was needed", MFDP chairman Lawrence Guyot acknowledged.[60]

Gregory was not just in Mississippi in the 1960s, he was all over the country, frequently putting his body as well as his time and talent on the line. "He was like a fireman; whenever it would break out, he'd turn up on the scene", recalled *Jet* editor Robert Johnson. "He felt he could turn the spotlight on it, hoping there was a streak of decency running either in the democratic system, the institutions of justice, or individuals themselves that would somehow justify the position of the civil rights people once the people looked in and saw what was happening".[61]

In the summer of 1964, Gregory regularly turned up to support Gloria Richardson and the volatile Cambridge Movement. "We usually asked him to come in when things were getting too much out of control", Richardson recalled, "because he could say the same things that everybody else was saying, but it kind of lessened the tension in terms of his performance and his political jokes". Just as germane, Richardson noted "he was available", which was more than could be said for most black stars.[62]

In early August 1965, Gregory was imprisoned for joining street protests against the reappointment of Chicago's notorious superintendent of schools, Benjamin Willis, whose policies had ensured that the city's public school system remained functionally segregated. By this time Gregory had already been to prison in Chicago (on a previous occasion), Greenwood, Birmingham, Selma and Pine Bluff, Arkansas in connection with various civil rights protests. He had also supported an unsuccessful campaign for black athletes to boycott the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, and quietly endowed a private fund to subsidize poor black students in Chicago who wanted to stay in school but were forced out to work because of financial problems. A few weeks after his August 1965 arrest, Gregory was shot in the leg during the Watts riots, which he subsequently endorsed as "urban renewal without the graft".[63]

Another black entertainer who could be expected to show public support for the early Movement was Sammy Davis Jr. The quintessential all-round Hollywood-Broadway star performed at countless benefit shows, served as an informal consultant to the NAACP on various fundraising ventures, and also acted as a recruitment agent for the Association. In one personal appeal to his showbiz colleagues Davis wrote, "We artists have set an inspiring example of tearing down race barriers in our own field. Now we must put our time, our money, our whole-hearted efforts on the line with our conscience". Entertainers should, he urged, "help the NAACP fight for freedom" by giving benefit concerts, taking out life memberships – Davis had three – making financial contributions and speaking out "on the importance of civil rights".[64]

With a lucrative adult, white, middle American crossover audience, as well as perennially cautious sponsors and producers, to lose if he appeared too radical, any public identification with the black struggle entailed some personal risk on Davis' part. Nevertheless, he worked diligently to lure fellow Hollywood rat-packers Frank Sinatra, Peter Lawford, Dean Martin and Joey Bishop to join him in major benefit concerts like the 27 January 1961 "Tribute to Martin Luther King" for the SCLC at Carnegie Hall which raised over $22,000. This was roughly 12 per cent of the SCLC's total income for the grim fiscal year 1960–61. Another show at the Westchester Auditorium in White Plains, New York in December 1962 was barely less successful.[65]

Davis also staged the "Broadway answers Selma" show at the Majestic Theater in New York in April 1965, which raised money for the families of slain civil rights activists James Reeb and Jimmie Lee Jackson. Each of the

four major civil rights organizations also netted around $24,500 from the concert. In July 1965 he organized the "Stars for freedom" show which provided important seed-money for the SCLC's new Summer Community Organization for Political Education (SCOPE) project. These benefits were supplemented by regular out-of-pocket payments, including the earnings from a week of shows in May 1963 (estimated at $20,000) which Davis donated to the SCLC.[66]

Although cruelly baited as a "Black Caucasian" during the black power era, and largely ignored or marginalized by Movement historians ever since, Harry Belafonte played a major role in the development of the civil rights movement during the decade after Montgomery. "The respect for that guy runs as deep as for anybody", stated Bernice Johnson Reagon, who appreciated that Belafonte's personal commitment and contribution was unmatched by anyone, from any realm of either black or white entertainment.[67]

For Belafonte, that involvement began in earnest in early 1956, when Martin Luther King arranged a private meeting in New York to seek his advice about promoting national support for the Montgomery bus boycott. King was encouraged to seek out Belafonte because his progressive politics and outspokenness on racial issues were already well known. Born to poor West Indian parents in Harlem in 1927, after the Second World War Belafonte had become closely involved in the rump of left-wing politics in New York as it struggled to survive the onslaught of McCarthyism. He associated closely with labour organizers, joined the Young Progressives of America, and in 1948 worked for Henry Wallace's left-liberal Progressive Party in Wallace's doomed bid for the presidency.[68]

By the mid 1950s, Belafonte's stage, recording and film career had also taken off. Critically acclaimed screen performances in box-office smashes like *Carmen Jones* in 1954, coupled with his captivating live and recorded blend of African-American folk materials, labour songs, and tunes from the Caribbean islands, had made him one of the nation's best-known entertainers. His RCA albums outsold even Elvis in the late 1950s, with *Belafonte Sings of the Caribbean* the first record by a solo artist to sell a million copies. In 1955 his income was estimated at around $350,000; two years later he grossed over a million dollars.[69]

Caricatured visions of a bare-chested Belafonte, the classic island exotic, bellowing "The banana boat song" in his cut-off jeans, trademark big-buckled belt, open-toed sandals and floral shirts, still dominate popular memories of the singer. Yet there was a quiet subversiveness about much of his art in the 1950s. In retrospect, it is remarkable that this political radical and racial malcontent actually achieved enormous crossover success at all in the midst of anti-communist paranoia and the heightened racial sensitivities associated with the battle against Jim Crow and the rise of rock and roll. In a world where gradations of skin colour and physiognomy mattered, it no doubt helped that Belafonte, like Lena Horne, had a relatively light, coffee'n'cream

complexion, and that his features were rather more Caucasian than African. Nevertheless, to have attained such celebrity with materials which juxtaposed tales of workers' toil and class struggle with songs of black pride and celebrations of a pan-African diasporic heritage was still astonishing. "When I sing 'John Henry' ", he explained in 1957, "I project myself into the roots of the song. I'm charged with pride in what John Henry means to all Negroes". In a world where miscegenation remained the ultimate white taboo, even his film roles were tinged with controversy. In *Island in the Sun* he played the love interest that dared not speak its name opposite white actress Joan Fontaine.[70]

With his art already making bold racial statements, and with his personal wealth and status at stake if he lost the large white portion of his audience, Belafonte might well have chosen to stay mute on matters of racial politics, or to distance himself from the Movement. Instead, he very deliberately sought to use his art and the public platform it provided, to denounce racial and economic injustices and support various struggles against them at home and abroad. This was testament to both his own integrity and to the lessons he had learned from Paul Robeson, who, alongside W.E.B. DuBois, profoundly influenced Belafonte's conception of the role that artists might play in progressive politics. "Robeson could not have embodied a more perfect model for me as to what to do with your life as an artist deeply immersed and sensitive to social issues and activism", he recalled. "Service is the purpose of art. What else is it in the service of? The fact that I can get off selfishly in an act of self-expression is itself wonderful. But what does that do?"[71]

At his first meeting with Martin Luther King, Belafonte was persuaded that nonviolent direct action, with its blend of pragmatism and moral vigour, was the perfect constructive outlet for the bitterness, anger and frustrations which he, like so many other blacks, keenly felt but had struggled to parlay into effective political action. After this initial encounter, Belafonte put himself and his art at King's disposal and quickly became a close friend, trusted advisor, effective recruiter and nonpareil fundraiser for the civil rights leader and the Movement more generally.[72]

Like most sympathetic artists, much of Belafonte's work for the Movement involved benefit shows, like the one in 1956 which raised money for the Montgomery protests and was one of literally dozens which he either participated in or helped to organize over the next decade. Yet Belafonte's role extended far beyond benefit concerts. In 1960, for example, he worked with Stanley Levison and Bayard Rustin to create the CDMLK. With labour leader A. Philip Randolph and New York minister Rev. Gardner Taylor as co-chairs, Belafonte served alongside Sidney Poitier on the CDMLK's cultural committee, while Nat King Cole acted as treasurer.[73]

The CDMLK quickly moved beyond its immediate goal of helping King fight spurious tax-evasion charges in Alabama. Correctly predicting that this would not be the last time southern authorities used quasi-legal means to

harass King and the Movement, the CDMLK worked to establish "significant reserves of funds to be able to meet these onslaughts on Dr King's person", so that King would not be "forever tied up in jail". In addition, the CDMLK contributed to the SCLC's "Crusade for Citizenship" voter registration drive and nurtured the burgeoning student activism in the South by creating a "Revolving bail fund" for those jailed in sit-ins. The CDMLK also provided half of the $2,000 that the SCLC used to help fund a meeting of student leaders at Shaw University, Raleigh. It was from this meeting in mid April 1960 that SNCC emerged.[74]

These projects obviously required substantial sums of money and by the end of 1960 the CDMLK had raised around $86,000. After the deduction of publicity and administrative expenses it was able to contribute more than $51,000 to various aspects of the southern struggle. Most of this income came from corporate, union and private donations – including an unspecified amount from Belafonte himself. However, the largest single contribution was the $10,000 generated by the 17 May 1960 "Night of stars for freedom" concert Belafonte staged at New York's Regiment Armory, where Diahann Carroll had appeared alongside Poitier, Dorothy Dandridge, Shelley Winters and the embattled King. More than simply a concert, the event was preceded by a well-publicized gathering of many black artists and celebrities at the Statue of Liberty, where they laid a wreath in mourning for lost black civil rights. This, Belafonte noted, was a classic example of the ways in which celebrity involvement could work by making the affair both a "fund-raising event" and "an opportunity to interpret the message of our Committee to a huge segment of the community".[75]

Beyond raising funds and morale for King's civil rights work, Belafonte appreciated that at a more personal level, the mental and financial demands of leadership weighed heavily on King and his family. Since King had to be careful about accepting personal gifts because they might provide an opportunity for southern authorities to harass him on tax matters, or for his enemies to condemn him for profiteering from his position in the Movement, Belafonte quietly began to contribute money towards the running of the King family home. He helped to hire private secretaries and even nannies so that Martin and his wife Coretta could be seen together in public at important strategic moments and thus present the image of middle-class domestic respectability which might help endear them and their cause to middle white America. By 1961, Belafonte was even secretly paying the premiums for a life insurance policy which gave the virtually uninsurable King $50,000 of cover, payable to Coretta on her husband's death.[76]

Belafonte was also useful to King and the Movement as a conduit to the Kennedy brothers. In 1960, presidential nominee John Kennedy had sought a meeting with the star to discuss civil rights and secure Belafonte's influential endorsement. Belafonte told Kennedy that he would do better to stop courting black celebrities and enter into a meaningful dialogue with real

black political leaders like King. After Kennedy's election victory, however, Belafonte, who later worked as an advisor to Kennedy's Peace Corps, emerged as a sort of mediator-cum-courier between the administration, SCLC and SNCC, who all appreciated his basic reasonableness and discretion.[77]

Those same qualities also enabled him to act as an effective mediator within the civil rights movement, where he helped to keep the often fractious relationship between SCLC and SNCC from undermining a common struggle. "I worked a long time trying to keep them from just completely tearing each other apart", he recalled. Fay Bellamy saw this aspect of Belafonte's contribution first-hand when she attended some particularly tense meetings at the White Horse Hotel in Selma in 1965. "He was present because he was trying to act as a mediator between SNCC and SCLC because we were always falling out", she remembered. By and large, Bellamy felt he succeeded because both groups "had a lot of respect for Belafonte's ability to try to be fair".[78]

While Belafonte was especially close to King and the SCLC, he actually worked with all the major civil rights organizations at one time or another, although his relationship with the NAACP was often rather fraught. While he admired individual NAACP branches and members, and respected the Association's quasi-autonomous Legal Defence and Educational Fund Inc., Belafonte mistrusted the organization's "fraudulent" and "elite" national leadership, which he saw as a self-serving conservative black clique. "I didn't think the organization should be killed", Belafonte later admitted. "I think the NAACP served a very important purpose. I just thought that the leadership should be swiftly annihilated. Nonviolently!"[79]

Conversely, although the NAACP recognized Belafonte's potential for generating publicity and funds, its leadership remained deeply worried about his adverse impact on their moderate image. Although Belafonte quipped that "My leftist background couldn't have been half as frightening to them as their rightist background was to me", NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins was extremely reluctant to court or accept Belafonte's help. This was apparent at the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage in Washington, organized by a consortium of civil rights organizations and led by Martin Luther King. Ella Baker, another product of the Old Left and one of the great intellectual and organizational wellsprings of the modern Movement, recalled that "they had a press conference at the NAACP headquarters. I was told that they had banned [Belafonte] . . . They may have thought of him as 'Red'. I think it was an anti-communist reaction on the part of the NAACP".[80]

There were other issues involved too: not least the sense that Belafonte's "presence would only send a shudder through Eisenhower . . . because he did not look favourably on my political behavior". Ironically, some 18 months later, with Martin Luther King hospitalized following a near-fatal stabbing by a deranged Harlem woman, Belafonte accompanied Coretta Scott King, A. Philip Randolph and Jackie Robinson to deliver a petition to the White

House. The petition, which demanded the immediate desegregation of public schools, was the final act of the Youth March for Integrated Schools, from which, as David Garrow has noted with eloquent brevity, "notably absent were Roy Wilkins and other NAACP officials".[81]

If Belafonte's relationship with the NAACP was strained, it was rather better with CORE. In 1960, for example, Belafonte allowed the organization to use his signature on 200,000 letters appealing for funds and recruits. This initiative helped to swell CORE's membership by some 40 per cent during the year to a total of 20,000.[82]

Belafonte was even closer to SNCC, which accorded him a respect and deference it bestowed with great selectivity on older blacks. Julian Bond recalled that Belafonte "had a lot of moral authority because his politics were so decent and he had behaved in such a decent way all of his public life". He "was very much out in front", agreed June Johnson. Stanley Wise remembered that Belafonte's contributions came in all shapes and, except where his clothing was concerned, sizes. Whenever SNCC workers were in New York they would routinely stay in Belafonte's apartment where he would give out useful gifts to his impecunious young guests. "We used to get his clothes . . . Oh God, he had such rich clothes. But he had such long legs". Nothing would fit the diminutive Wise. "I hated him, because I loved his taste in clothes!", Wise joked. "Belafonte was just a key friend to the Movement . . . I mean, there is just no other way to describe him".[83]

In fact, as Jim Forman movingly noted in December 1963, there were times when Belafonte appeared to be personally bankrolling many of SNCC's activities.

> Not only did you pledge your support, but you gave the first grant to make the dream of an independent student movement equipped with a staff a reality. Since the summer of 1961 your commitment to our struggle has not faltered and you have on many occasions enthusiastically given your time, your money, and encouraged your friends to support us. We shall never forget this.[84]

Belafonte was more than simply a patron, fundraiser or clothier for SNCC – although these functions were all invaluable for an organization sometimes operating on little more than passion and a shoestring budget. Throughout the early 1960s he was regularly consulted regarding specific initiatives, like a book-buying campaign for the under-resourced Miles College, and a protest against police brutality in Americus, Georgia.[85]

Belafonte also advised on much broader strategic issues, most importantly SNCC's 1962 decision to undertake voter registration work in the Deep South under the auspices of the Voter Education Project (VEP). The VEP was, in part at least, a gambit by the Kennedy administration to get black protestors off the streets and highways and into the electoral arena after the

domestic and international embarrassment of the bloody freedom rides. It offered tax-exempt status to contributions from wealthy philanthropic foundations who wished to support voter education work in the South. However, with SNCC getting much less than it had expected from the VEP – despite having the most ambitious projects – resources for its voter registration work depended heavily on fundraising efforts by Belafonte and others. Indeed, without the revenue yielded by events like the 1963 show Belafonte organized in Carnegie Hall, SNCC's painstaking work could not have continued on the scale it did. Fundraising events accounted for over $32,000, or more than 10 per cent, of SNCC's total income of around $307,000 in 1963. With record sales and the Freedom Singers' tours generating another $20,300, "entertainment" of one kind or another accounted for about 17 per cent of SNCC's income that year.[86]

Meanwhile, Belafonte contributed to SNCC's Deep South efforts in many other practical ways. When, in the summer of 1961, several SNCC workers were imprisoned in McComb, Mississippi for trying to register black voters, their colleague Charles Jones feared they might be lynched. Jones immediately called not only the Justice Department's civil rights attorney, John Doar, but also Belafonte, who frequently provided the bond money to free SNCC workers from southern jails, or else contacted attorney-general Bobby Kennedy who then pressurized recalcitrant southern officials to release, or at least protect, their prisoners.[87]

Belafonte was sometimes even to be found on the frontline in Mississippi. In the wake of the Freedom Summer and the Atlantic City challenge, he and Sidney Poitier dodged the Klan to smuggle $60,000 to workers in Greenwood; money which enabled the MFDP and SNCC to continue their registration work the following year and eventually take better advantage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. When Belafonte arrived in Mississippi he was shocked to find many of the leading activists utterly spent from the physical, mental and emotional efforts of the previous two years. Suffering from "battle fatigue, they were really like in shock, just worn out", he recalled. "And just the fatigue . . . alone was getting in the way of clear thinking". Belafonte promptly paid for ten leading SNCC workers, including Bob and Dona Moses, Ruby Doris Robinson, Julian Bond and Bob Zellner, plus the indomitable Fannie Lou Hamer, to go on a physically and spiritually rejuvenating trip to Africa.[88]

The Africa trip was just one more example of Belafonte's personal generosity. From the late 1950s, it was estimated that around 20 per cent of his annual income was diverted into the tax-exempt Harry Belafonte Foundation of Music and Arts, disbursed to various scholarship funds for needy children, as well as to educational and arts projects. In 1962, he assigned his appearance fees for television's *What's My Line* and the *Merv Griffin Show* to SNCC. He regularly underwrote benefits like the "Salute to southern students" and gave numerous, and ultimately incalculable, out-of-pocket

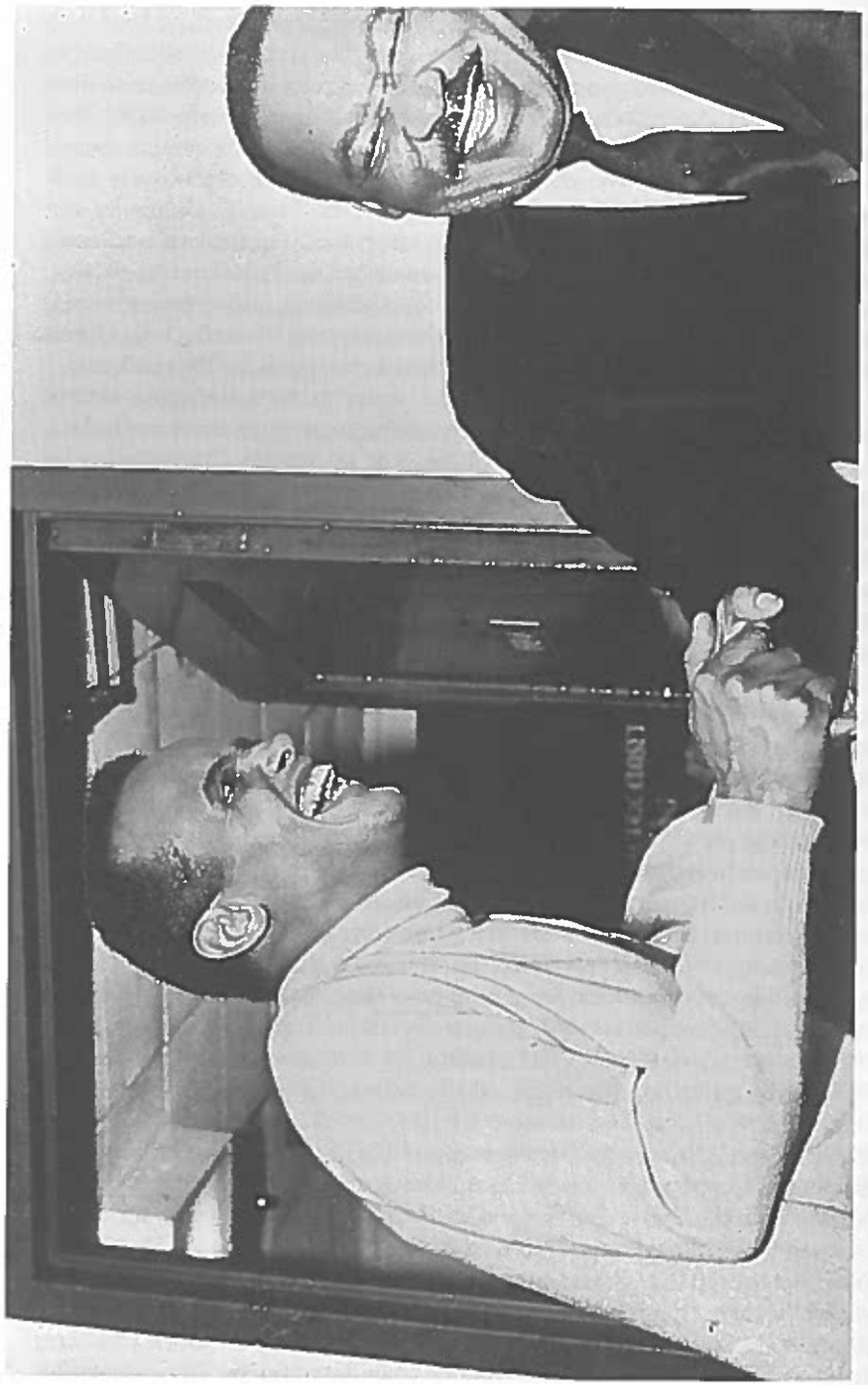
donations, usually of around $500, but amounting to more than $8,000 to SNCC alone during the critical summer of 1964.[89]

Belafonte's humanitarian work continued into the black power era which saw the steady discrediting of his record for its alleged moderation. This was not without its ironies. While black power militants of various stripes frequently romanticized the ghetto as the untapped source of a black revolutionary vanguard, Belafonte was actually a product of that environment. He had precisely the ghetto background, the street-based radicalism and deep racial consciousness, which Huey Newton or Maulana Ron Karenga – doing their best to conceal their own college backgrounds and entrepreneurial ambitions beneath layers of carefully cultivated streetwise affectations and pseudo-Africanisms – would have sold their berets and dashikis to boast.

Moreover, Belafonte clearly saw much value in the more constructive, community-building and consciousness-raising aspects of the broad black power impulse. In the summer of 1966, just as Stokely Carmichael was emerging as one of black power's most eloquent spokesmen and the latest black bogeyman for white Americans, Belafonte announced on national television that he was "in great part committed to the humanist desires and aspirations of a Stokely Carmichael". The same year he publicly endorsed A. Philip Randolph's ambitious but doomed Freedom Budget proposal – a slice of imaginative socialism which would have provided a sort of federally planned and administered Marshall Plan for black America.[90]

In many ways Belafonte's growing public attention to the economic coordinates of racial injustice and, as he came out strongly against the Vietnam war, global militarism and imperialism, simply signalled a reaffirmation of his own left-labour radical roots. Nevertheless, in April 1967 Belafonte's longstanding personal assistant Gloria Cantor was so alarmed by what she perceived as her employer's new militancy that she called to discuss the situation in confidence with Stanley Levison – and, of course, with the FBI agents who were tapping Levison's phone at the time. Deeply torn by competing loyalties and affections for Belafonte and Martin Luther King, Cantor told Levison that after a recent strategy meeting attended by Belafonte, Levison, King, Carmichael and Andrew Young, she was "very upset about Harry because I felt that he was pushing Dr King and he was siding with SNCC . . . He's pushing [Dr King] to side with SNCC". Cantor stressed that "Dr King sets a great deal of store by [Belafonte]", and feared that, since Belafonte was still secretly paying many of King's domestic bills, King was "dependent in an area which he doesn't have to be". This Cantor felt, made King very susceptible to Belafonte's influence.[91]

Levison was less convinced that King could do without Belafonte's financial support. "He has a struggle with expenses", he reminded Cantor. He did, however, agree that "Harry has been attracted emotionally" to the fiery rhetoric and theatrical presence of Carmichael and the Black Panthers. Nevertheless, Levison reassured Cantor that it would be impossible for



No celebrity played a greater role in the civil rights movement than Harry Belafonte, pictured here with Martin Luther King, to whom he was a trusted friend, advisor, and benefactor.

anyone to persuade King to endorse programmes which often rested on notions of armed self-defence and sometimes advocated withdrawal from progressive biracial politics into racial separatism. Moreover, he and King were both confident that when it came "down to the harder points" of tactics, Belafonte would always reject ill-conceived shows of bravado over clearly defined programmes of constructive action.[92]

Certainly, the benefit concerts for the SCLC continued in 1967 as Belafonte and Joan Baez tried, with decidedly mixed results, to raise enthusiasm and funds for the Poor People's Campaign which eventually took place after Martin Luther King's death. In the aftermath of that assassination, Belafonte became one of the executors of the King estate, chaired the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Fund, and eventually joined the board of directors of the SCLC, where he was one of several who tried to stop the woefully inept Ralph Abernathy from completely destroying an already devastated organization.

Although Belafonte remained a very wealthy man throughout this period of intense political involvement, his commitment took a certain toll on his health and career. His nerves were at times shredded by the contradictory demands of his career, concerns for his and his family's well-being, and the needs of his public activism. He faced his share of physical dangers: bomb threats, Klan pursuits, and a tear-gas assault through the air-conditioning system at a Houston benefit. He regularly had to cope with sneering editorial criticisms of his activism, and hurtful condemnations by conservatives and self-styled militants alike for his views. Hollywood studios ignored him and he did not appear on the big screen at all during the 1960s. Sponsors repeatedly threatened to withdraw support from television shows in which he was scheduled to appear. There are still few entertainers of his stature never to have been offered a product to endorse, or to have had a corporate sponsor for a show or tour.[93]

And yet, when Belafonte weighed "that evil of being blacklisted and denied opportunity against what we were achieving, and I weigh that loss of opportunity against what I was experiencing with Fannie Lou Hamer and Julian Bond, and Bob Moses and Ella Baker, and Dr King and all of that, the loss seems almost inconsequential". For Belafonte, the Movement was an irresistible moral crusade and joining it was simply not optional. "There was just no other choice. There was no other army to join. There was no other country to go to. There was no other head of state to appeal to. It was it. It was the day. I felt that there was no place else in the world to be other than here".[94]

Explaining an absence

Perhaps more than anything else, it was Harry Belafonte's sense of personal calling, what he described in 1957 as a "nerve-wracking sense of duty", coupled with his capacity for self-sacrifice, which distinguished him and a few others from their fellow entertainers and largely accounted for their

highly conspicuous presence in Movement-related activities. As Bernice Johnson Reagon recalled, "There is a real difference between what people will say about, say a Belafonte, or a Pete Seeger. There did not seem to be anything self-serving. It was no fad, it was no 'I'll do a benefit today'. It was like, 'This is a part of my life. As this Movement goes, so will I go'". The Movement did not have to go looking for these people. They came to the Movement, offering to do whatever they could on its behalf because, as Reagon put it, their "biggest fear was that it would be over before they had a chance to participate".[95]

For all their appeals to soul brotherhood and potent musical expressions of black pride and consciousness, very few Rhythm and Blues singers and entrepreneurs felt or, perhaps more accurately, succumbed to the pull of the early Movement in quite this way. Reagon was frustrated, if not altogether surprised, that they did not contribute more to the early struggle. "We really thought those people should be sending money. They should be doing benefits". They were getting their money, in part at least, from black people, who were "on the move", and whose activism promised to improve the lives of all blacks, artists included. "We thought all of them should be there. But, you know, what you think and what they think are different things . . . Sometimes, I think, they couldn't quite see an interest".[96]

Harry Belafonte himself often found it "extremely difficult" to get his fellow entertainers to make any sort of public artistic, personal and financial commitment to the Movement. "Especially in black America, where I thought my task would be easier, I found enormous resistance", he lamented. "When the time came for show and tell, nobody showed, they had nothing to tell". Yet, even within this general pattern of celebrity diffidence, Belafonte felt that the leading Rhythm and Blues artists – James Brown, Sam Cooke, the Motown stable – were particularly cautious. "All of these people distanced themselves from the Movement; not only once removed from it, but sometimes twenty times removed from it, I think".[97]

There was no mystery about this abstentionism. Most successful or ambitious Rhythm and Blues artists and entrepreneurs were anxious to avoid potentially controversial gestures which might alienate, or permanently put beyond their reach, a highly lucrative white record-buying, concert-going and radio-listening public – this at a time when equal black access to the rewards of the mainstream consumer market was widely accepted as one of the Movement's legitimate goals. Yet it was also a time of widespread white support for legislation to protect basic black civil rights and Belafonte felt that many black performers exaggerated the extent to which support for the Movement would damage their careers. Pointing to his own continued success, in 1960 he argued that "it is false to think one's concern with political life and one's country is necessarily at the risk of one's career". Blasting his fellow artists for their lack of engagement, Belafonte complained "I see fear all around me and I have no respect for it".[98]

Grounded or groundless, these fears were nonetheless real enough. Even Belafonte acknowledged that they decisively shaped the responses of many aspiring or established soul artists to the early Movement. "I think most of them were in great, great fear of losing their platform", he suggested. They dreaded "losing their newly found moments of opportunity". Julian Bond also suspected that for many Rhythm and Blues artists, their expanded personal ambition – itself a correlate of the Movement's early promise – prompted a feeling that "this could be my big break. I could break out. I could go into the larger white market. I better tread lightly here".[99]

R&b and soul singers were hardly unusual in their reluctance to align themselves conspicuously with a Movement which was frequently dangerous to life, limb and livelihood. While the extent of mass black participation was remarkable given the perils involved, Bernice Johnson Reagon recognized that it "was always a minority" who took part in protest activities. Lawrence Guyot put it even more bluntly: "The reason more artists weren't involved was because a large segment of the black population wasn't involved – for the same reason, terror".[100]

Guyot actually had great sympathy for the dilemma of black musicians and entrepreneurs in this period, trapped between the narrow demands of economic self-interest and personal safety, and broader needs of a fight against the racial injustices which ultimately robbed all blacks of freedom, opportunity and security. "A musician before 1965 who said, 'Yes, I support voter registration' put everyone in his group in danger if he was to travel in the South", Guyot stated. "Now, if he was prepared to say that and not travel in the South and thereby lose that market he had to make that decision".[101]

Very few made any such decision and the problem was especially acute for local, frequently impoverished, southern performers. Regardless of their own feelings on the Movement, economic realities ensured that many had little choice but to remain silent on racial issues and provide entertainment in facilities which remained functionally segregated long after the 1964 Civil Rights Act had outlawed such arrangements. Indeed, while both the NAACP and SNCC ran successful campaigns to keep black and white entertainers, including classical musicians Gary Graffman and Birgit Nilsson, the Journeymen folk group, and the cast of television's *Bonanza*, from appearing at segregated Mississippi venues in 1964, a disarmingly honest Roscoe Shelton admitted that he and most of his southern contemporaries continued to play Jim Crow dates throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[102]

Shelton desperately wanted the Movement to succeed. Yet he played no benefits and took part in no demonstrations until 1965, when he joined the last 18 miles of the Selma to Montgomery March. As Lawrence Guyot had appreciated, for Shelton and many others, a simple but decisive blend of fear and finances accounted for his inaction. "Mostly the southern entertainers were a little reluctant to get involved", explained Shelton, "because

they still had to live pretty much in that region and they were a little – I don't want to say frightened – reluctant".[103]

Worth Long, an SNCC worker heavily involved in the Greenwood movement, and one of those most interested in trying to use popular culture as an educational as well as a fundraising tool, found the same widespread caution among musicians in the region. "Now, very few of the musicians actually participated except by going to mass meetings", he admitted. "I don't know any musician who's gotten arrested, for instance, during the '60s for demonstrating . . . And I've talked to a lot of them about that. They say, 'no, well, you know, I couldn't do that and play a set tonight too'".[104]

While this sense of personal priorities goes a considerable way towards explaining the relatively meagre support Rhythm and Blues artists afforded the early Movement, the nature and extent of their participation was also circumscribed by the fact that few black singers had much control over the key decisions which affected their careers. Fay Bellamy recognized that "They were stars to the masses", but what, she asked, "was really going on in their lives? Did they own their music? . . . Were they working for Berry Gordy, or some other company?" For the most part, Julian Bond felt that individual artists "had nothing to do with where they went; who they appeared before; what the circumstances were. They were just out there churning out the music, night after night, and leaving all the decisions to somebody else who, typically, is business-oriented and doesn't care about these things, and is frightened that if the artist gets involved in these things they will lose money".[105]

Bond was right. The configuration of economic and managerial power within the recording and broadcasting industries of the early-to-mid 1960s consistently worked against the likelihood that Rhythm and Blues would become a major source of artistic comment on American racism, or of public support for black insurgency. The whites and the handful of blacks in positions of real power within the music business usually proved more concerned with market penetration than political mobilization. As Stanley Wise recalled, "Marvin Gaye had attempted for a number of years to just do something with us . . . And I know Stevie Wonder was just trying really hard. They were the two I remember specifically who indicated over and over again they wanted to do something with us. They wanted to help us somehow". Before Selma, however, despite repeated attempts to enlist their services, Motown's support was usually, at best, covert and fleeting. "I think it was primarily because . . . they just weren't sure how the population would accept that. Because they were trying to get to their main market and . . . they didn't want to be viewed as militants or belligerents, or that sort of stuff".[106]

If black singers, their managers and labels were cautious about getting visibly involved in Movement-related activities, it is important to recognize

that there was a stultifying cycle of inactivity at work here. Because few Rhythm and Blues artists came forward, the Movement simply did not put much time or energy into trying to recruit from their ranks.

At CORE, this neglect was compounded by the fact that the key figures in its fundraising activities until the mid 1960s, Val Coleman and Marvin Rich, were middle-aged white men who, for all their many qualities, were just not very attuned to the world of soul. Although volunteer lawyer George Schiffer, who worked as Berry Gordy's copyright expert, provided CORE with a natural conduit to Motown, the inexperience in this field was indicated by the fact that Coleman's first three attempts to secure Stevie Wonder's services were directed to Milt Shaw's Shaw Artists Corporation, rather than Motown's ITMI. Rich's subsequent plea for Wonder, the Marvelettes and Contours to appear in a series of benefits was sent to one "Berry Gardy" of the "Motonen Record Company".[107]

If race and generation partially explained Rich and Coleman's initial lack of interest, and general lack of success, in courting Rhythm and Blues stars, it was much the same at SNCC. Because of its own student base and biracialism, one might have expected the young SNCC to try to do more with popular black singers whose audiences were also young and often biracial. Experience, however had quickly persuaded Julian Bond "that you can't appeal to . . . this class of entertainers. That if you are going to get help it's going to be the Belafontes, the Dick Gregorys, the folk people . . . but these other people are just not going to be there". As a result, Stanley Wise summarized that "there was never any real effort on our part unless the artists themselves pushed it. In other words, artists had to do something for us despite our hesitancy".[108]

In a sense, this neglect simply reflected the low priority which Rhythm and Blues, *per se*, was accorded as an educational tool or mobilizing vehicle in the early Movement. Sympathetic artists and entertainers were conceived of primarily as the fillers of tills and drawers of publicity, rather than as political leaders, strategists, or educators. Harry Belafonte was a partial exception to this rule, yet around the time of the Meredith March Stanley Levison reminded Gloria Cantor that entertainers, including her boss, needed to know their place. They were sought, Levison said, "because they give you a certain image and the press pays more attention when you have celebrities with you. That's all it is. They call attention to you".[109]

Levison's brusque assessment was not unusual and some black artists were deterred by the rather cavalier treatment they received from organizations which only turned to them when they were deep in financial trouble. According to Coretta Scott King, a frustrated Mahalia Jackson once complained of the SCLC that "those niggers don't ever bother with me until they want something". Junius Griffin's work as the SCLC's director of public relations, and then in Motown's publicity department, gave him a unique dual perspective on these matters. He, too, felt that when Rhythm and Blues

artists were brought in for fundraising dinners or rallies they were often treated insensitively and left disillusioned by the whole experience.[110]

According to Griffin, Esther Gordy had once explained to him that "Motown was reluctant to allow their artists to participate in Movement events and activities because they were used as mere addendums to programs and never as an integral part of the activities". Singers were invariably asked to perform in the aftermath of dozens of speeches so that, although these artists had often drawn the crowds to the benefit in the first place, they were made to feel like an afterthought. Often grappling with inadequate sound systems, these proud performers were served up to the audience as a light fluffy dessert, to be enjoyed only after the real main course – the hearty political messages of struggle and freedom – had been devoured. Moreover, Griffin recalled, while these singers "were always given a lively welcome . . . when they were ready to leave the following morning, no one was present to say goodbye. Artists and their management were highly offended by this practice. It was a classic battle of egos . . . of civil rights stars and the recording stars not understanding the needs of each other".[111]

This mishandling of notoriously fragile celebrity egos was related to the broader problem of the Movement's basic inexperience at organizing fundraising events or dealing with entertainers. In 1965 Betty Garman admitted that SNCC's use of celebrities was "kind of a hit and miss operation". Garman was nothing if not honest and the Movement's use of entertainers, whether for recruitment purposes, publicity, or fundraising, tended to be extremely haphazard. Certainly, Junius Griffin could recall "no concerted efforts to court soul artists during [his] years with SCLC". There may have been "individual efforts", where civil rights workers had personal contacts with performers. But even here, Griffin felt that there was little understanding of "how to convert these relationships into capital for the Movement".[112]

Poor Stanley Levison could never quite decide which alarmed him most: the amateurism and ineptitude with which the SCLC planned and executed some of its own fundraising events, or the exorbitant costs of hiring professional promoters to do the job properly and increase the chances of a good return. An early SNCC fundraising primer had also highlighted this dilemma, suggesting that while "benefit concerts and entertainers are probably the most lucrative field exploited by professional promoters", with those professionals at the helm "such affairs seldom net more than 10 per cent to the beneficiary".[113]

In an effort to cut costs and increase the rate of return from these benefits, civil rights groups – particularly at the local level – frequently trusted to the enthusiasm and ingenuity of Movement workers who rarely had any previous experience or contacts in the world of entertainment or concert promotion. There were some exceptions, like ex-singer Jimmy McDonald at CORE's New York office, and Richard Haley, who, before he became CORE's assistant to the national director and then director of its Southern Regional

Office in New Orleans, had accompanied the greats of black music in the Apollo house band.[114]

In the main, however, workers in Movement fundraising, communications and publicity departments were novices who learned how to do their jobs, with varying degrees of success, by actually trying to do them. While these resourceful pragmatists arranged many successful parties, events and shows, Betty Garman explained to Dick Perez of Cleveland's Friends of SNCC that such enterprises were fraught with dangers for the amateur organizer, especially when bigger stars and venues were involved. "Very often the Friends of SNCC group itself sets up its own contact and makes a date directly with the performers. The only problem with this is that sometimes the Friends can't pull off a concert and the big time performer sings to an empty house – which then sours him or her on ever doing another concert for SNCC". In these circumstances, as CORE's Marvin Rich noted, civil rights groups frequently found themselves trying to pass off ill-conceived, hastily planned, inadequately promoted, or poorly timed fundraising events, which actually raised little or no money, as "good publicity" for their organization.[115]

Regardless of who actually organized and promoted these benefits, they ran the gamut from disastrous to highly profitable. After advertising, accommodation and musicians' expenses were deducted, an entire week of concerts by Sammy Davis at the Apollo in 1958 netted the disappointed NAACP less than $4,000, of which $1,300 came in the form of a donation from sympathetic theatre owner Frank Schiffman. A major show at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium in September 1961, organized by the city's SCLC affiliate and featuring Harry Belafonte, the Chad Mitchell Trio and South African folk singer Miriam Makeba, cleared little more than $600. In May 1964, a much more modest benefit by black folk-blues singer Josh White grossed $577 for SNCC. Unfortunately, by the time White's fee of $300 was deducted and the show's promoter, Bill Powell, had fraudulently used the rest to have his car repaired, SNCC was left with nothing. Even worse, in 1965 CORE accepted author James Baldwin's offer to use the opening night of his play *Amen Corner* as a fundraising event, and then contrived to make a net loss on the evening of $29.[116]

At the other end of the spectrum, however, there were some very impressive returns. A 1964 New York jazz concert hosted by baseball star Jackie Robinson raised $25,000 for an outlay of just $500. The 1965 "Broadway answers Selma" promotion, headed and partly organized by Sammy Davis, generated nearly $100,000 in ticket sales, donations and merchandising, divided equally among NAACP, CORE, SCLC and SNCC. Above all, this was what the Movement sought from its celebrity contacts – the money with which to continue its work and the chance to publicize its efforts.[117]

These priorities help to explain not only the Movement's general lack of interest in courting Rhythm and Blues performers, but also the sorts of

entertainers whose support it did covet. In the summer of 1965, an excited Constancia "Dinky" Romilly caught wind of a rumour that the Beatles were willing to do a benefit for SNCC. Even when Romilly, who like Betty Garman worked as a co-ordinator between SNCC's Atlanta headquarters and its nationwide support groups, had established that "there is not much basis to the rumours", she still wrote hopefully to Joan Baez and Bobby Dillon (sic) asking for their help in making contact with the group and stressing the severity of SNCC's latest financial crisis.[118]

Although Julian Bond remembered that he and "other people in SNCC were interested in [the Beatles'] music", there was an even greater interest in the group as a cultural phenomenon; as youthful symbols of a growing disdain for the established social order. "They were so fresh and irreverent. So close to a little bit of what we imagined ourselves to be – contemptuous of adult forms and not willing to conform to the standard way of dressing or thinking . . . They were irreverent and we were irreverent and I think there was a kind of identification there", Bond recalled.[119]

Notwithstanding such identification, however, Romilly's primary concern was the sheer pecuniary and propaganda value of having the most popular act on the planet perform for the organization. An SNCC guide to fundraising had already suggested that if the New York office really wanted to put on a spectacular benefit, "James Brown or the Beatles could be added" to the programme. If there was a touching naiveté about the assumption that either act could be induced to perform, it is clear that SNCC really saw little difference between the two in terms of their usefulness to the Movement.[120]

Like SNCC, CORE was also mired deep in financial crisis in the summer of 1965, with debts of more than $220,000. Val Coleman and James Farmer made a similar bid for celebrity salvation, trying unsuccessfully to persuade Frank Sinatra to do a huge outdoor benefit at Shea Stadium in the wake of the Beatles' triumph there. Coleman recognized that the key to raising major sums of money was enlisting a superstar like Sinatra. "Without Frank we should hang it up and go back to $150 tea parties", he argued. The following year, Martin Luther King discussed with Levison the possibilities of getting someone – anyone, it really did not matter who – to play for the SCLC at the newly built Madison Square Gardens, because curiosity alone would guarantee a sell-out.[121]

In all these cases, publicity and a high box-office return were what mattered most, irrespective of who performed, or whether they or their art had any real link to black America or the Movement. For the same reasons, it actually made perfect sense for the Movement to woo sympathetic, wealthy Hollywood and Broadway figures, not least because they could afford to be more personally generous. After a spring 1963 all-star rally in Los Angeles had raised over $35,000 for the SCLC, the mainly white celebrities involved retired to actor Burt Lancaster's house where they collected another $20,000 in loose change and pledges, with $5,000 and $1,000 respectively coming

from stalwart supporters Marlon Brando and Paul Newman. When Diahann Carroll threw a modest private party for a few well-heeled friends in New York in 1964, it made a profit of nearly $4,000 for SNCC.[122]

At the top end of the Rhythm and Blues pay scale, a few individuals might have been able to match this sort of personal generosity. Fats Domino earned $700,000 in 1957; Ray Charles commanded between $3,500 and $4,500 per performance by 1961; Motown grossed $8 million in 1965, while in the same year James Brown earned more than $1 million from live shows alone. However, these were exceptions and very few Rhythm and Blues stars had anything like this sort of money to give, even if they were so inclined. Black musical celebrity did not always indicate financial well-being, let alone political consciousness.[123]

But it was not just the pocketbooks of the stars themselves which the Movement wanted to pick. The attention, hopefully hearts, and definitely money of their fans, friends and associates were targets too. However, the critical constituency here was again white not black. Since the earliest days of the Montgomery bus boycott and the fledgling SCLC, when black churches were a principal source of funding, white Americans had been the major sponsors of the civil rights movement which blacks largely created and populated. At least until 1966, about 95 per cent of CORE's funding came from whites, mostly from Jewish Americans who were disproportionately represented among the white benefactors of, and participants in, the organization. In 1966, whites provided about 70 per cent of SCLC's income.[124]

Movement fundraisers, keenly aware of the economic distress of many black communities, were naturally reluctant to try to grind any extra income from that meagre resource. Instead they concentrated on encouraging more whites to recognize the legitimacy of the struggle and make a contribution. Direct mailing campaigns were the most successful means of extracting this support and all the major organizations solicited "big names" precisely because they appreciated that, as an SNCC report put it, "Many contribute to organizations only because well-known persons are listed as sponsors, endorsers or board members".[125]

Again, these strategic and economic priorities militated against major efforts to recruit Rhythm and Blues artists. In fact, Harold Battiste reckoned that, in a broader sense, the early Movement's determination to project an image of unimpeachable middle-class respectability rendered most Rhythm and Blues artists unsuitable for its needs, and in turn made those artists uncomfortable about getting involved. There was a class dynamic within the early Movement which reflected both the nature of the white audience it was trying to reach, and its own heavy dependence on clerical and student leadership.[126]

In this environment, soul stars of humble origins and minimal education were often left on the outside looking in. Purely according to the Movement's own fiscal agenda, there was little use for performers whose black

fans were often poor, and whose white audience was often smaller, younger and less affluent than that of major showbiz figures like Sammy Davis or Marlon Brando, or even black literati like author James Baldwin, who SNCC also used as a magnet for white liberal funds. If endorsements from Wilson Pickett or James Brown might have done much to raise black morale and even some black cash, they were unlikely to have been as effective among those whites whose consciences and cheque books the Movement desperately needed to reach.[127]

By presenting this broader context for the relative anonymity of Rhythm and Blues stars in the early Movement, it is possible to understand, rather than simply condemn on one hand, or excuse on the other, their widespread failure to participate in Movement-related activities. There clearly were opportunities to get involved at any number of financial, artistic or personal levels, yet for a variety of reasons few Rhythm and Blues singers chose, or were able, to take advantage of them in the decade after Montgomery. Conversely, however grateful they were when Nina Simone or Curtis Mayfield validated their struggle in song, or when Al Hibbler and Clyde McPhatter joined their protests on the street, civil rights leaders made no attempt to try to use Rhythm and Blues music in any systematic way, or to make its artists feel truly wanted and welcome among their ranks.

All of which begs that most perplexing of questions: so what? What, if anything, did the early Movement really lose as a result of its own indifference towards Rhythm and Blues music and its artists, and the general caution or inability of the artists themselves to get more involved? Would the course of the Movement have been significantly different if more soul men and women had become involved earlier? And if so, in what respects?

In monetary terms, it is clear that Rhythm and Blues represented an underexploited, if limited resource. Even relatively impecunious black artists were in a position to generate funds, if not by personal donations then by doing benefit shows – even on the chitlin' circuit – or by donating proceeds from some of their recordings. The Artists' Civil Rights Action Fund, founded in 1965, even offered the chance to contribute a day's earnings each year to the Movement in secret, thereby avoiding whatever risks there were in pledging public support. Apparently, no Rhythm and Blues artists took advantage of the scheme and the main benefactors were a familiar crew of Belafonte, Davis, folk singers Chad Mitchell and Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary, white popster Bobby Darin, and authors James Baldwin and Joseph Heller.[128]

Furthermore, it was in the nature of the Movement and its oscillating fortunes that any and all contributions, however small, could be disproportionately important at the recurring moments of financial crisis. No sooner did civil rights organizations experience an upsurge in income, as happened to CORE after the Freedom Rides, to all the groups during the momentous summer of 1963, to SNCC in the freedom summer of 1964, and again to

SNCC and SCLC during the 1965 Selma campaign, than they expanded their staffs and operations, stretching human and fiscal resources dangerously thin. The very sense of urgency which motivated and characterized the early Movement meant that long-term financial planning and security were frequently sacrificed in order to pursue more immediate goals and establish much-needed new projects. Consequently, any additional income was potentially priceless, helping to keep operations ticking over by paying perpetually overdue staff salaries, covering phone and electricity bills, and keeping ageing cars refuelled and in working order until the next big windfall, benefit, or direct mailshot replenished the coffers.[129]

Irrespective of the extent to which a concerted fundraising effort involving Rhythm and Blues acts might have helped to alleviate a little of the Movement's financial hardships, there was also an important non-pecuniary dividend to be redeemed from such public expressions of solidarity in terms of their inspirational and educational value. While it is unlikely that any amount of personal or artistic engagement with the Movement would have produced extra legions of activists or donors from the ranks of the once hostile, indifferent, or even mildly sympathetic, it is nevertheless true that popular music and its heroes did help to shape the ways in which people – especially young people – perceived the world, sorted out its heroes from its villains, and evaluated the relationship between its rights and its wrongs.

There was undoubtedly a sense that those black and white artists who did volunteer some kind of public commitment to the Cause had a genuine impact upon the way their fans viewed the struggle. Even the congenitally cynical Stanley Levison recognized that Joan Baez offered important access to college students, "not only for the money but the educational value". Lawrence Guyot believed that the involvement of such artists "was tremendously important because it gave a legitimacy to protest at a time that that was a question, rather than an affirmation, not only in the South, but in the country . . . They did it and helped expand the range of those to whom the stand was not only acceptable but necessary". Their visible support for the struggle, whether at benefits, or on marches and at demonstrations, or even in their songs, brought the Movement and its goals "to a lot of people who wouldn't necessarily listen to a freedom song, or to a gospel song, that 'hey, this is legitimate . . . because Leon Bibb, who I respect, says its legitimate – or Nina Simone, or Lena Horne'. And we should never underestimate the importance of people . . . who had some of the cult groups saying to their groupies, 'this is good' ".[130]

There was certainly evidence that when black artists did speak out against racism, or for the Movement, the black community, activist or otherwise, greatly appreciated the gesture and wished that more would do the same. In late September 1957, for example, Louis Armstrong launched a scathing public attack on President Eisenhower's handling of the Little Rock crisis, to

which Lena Horne and Eartha Kitt quickly added their own chorus. Accusing Ike of having "no guts", Armstrong claimed that the president was allowing Orval Faubus, an "uneducated plowboy", to make a mockery of the law and dictate to the government. Meanwhile, Armstrong protested, the president "smiles and goes out to play golf". Armstrong eventually pulled out of a government-sponsored goodwill tour of the Soviet Union because of "the way they are treating my people in the South".[131]

A vox-pop survey of black Virginians in the aftermath of Armstrong's remarks revealed that many took enormous heart from the way in which a few of their leading celebrities had put their heads above the parapet and spoken out for racial justice. Contrasting Armstrong, Horne and Kitt to the "gutless" Ike and their equally gutless silent showbiz contemporaries, Manchester Greene of Portsmouth expressed "great admiration for their intestinal fortitude. I wish we had more Armstrongs and Ertha (sic) Kitts in our group". George Perkins of Norfolk thought "Armstrong knew what he was doing and is ready to accept whatever the consequences. Wise or unwise I have only praises for him". The views of Rhythm and Blues singers on the Little Rock crisis were not made public.[132]

For those already in the Movement, this sort of encouragement and endorsement of the Cause and their work could only help to reinforce their sense of purpose and commitment, demonstrating that their sacrifices were appreciated by artists they often greatly admired. Certainly, Martin Luther King valued the psychological uplift public support from black celebrities could provide. In early 1961, in the wake of Sammy Davis' Carnegie Hall benefit for the CDMLK, King personally drafted a letter to the performer which amounted to his most extended meditation on the role black entertainers might play in the freedom struggle. King began by noting that "Not very long ago, it was customary for Negro artists to hold themselves aloof from the struggle for equality, in the belief that the example of this personal success was in itself a contribution, in that it helped to disprove the myth of Negro inferiority – which indeed it did".[133]

Yet King characterized this position, which was the one adopted by most Rhythm and Blues singers and entrepreneurs, as an "essentially defensive position which does not meet the needs of our time when the Negro people as a whole are vigorously striding toward freedom". He commended entertainment "giants like Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, Mahalia Jackson" and Davis, who were not "content to merely identify with the struggle. They actively participate in it, as artists and as citizens, adding the weight of their enormous prestige and thus helping to move the struggle forward". Who, King asked rhetorically, "can measure the impact, the inspirational effect upon the millions of Negroes" of learning of such involvement by "one of their idols . . . ?"[134]

Inspiration was a difficult thing to quantify, yet the success of the early Movement was heavily dependent on the spirit and morale of its

participants. To keep on keeping on in the face of persistent white racism, intimidation and violence, and federal prevarication, required a constant reaffirmation of the belief that the struggle was righteous, winnable and supported by all right-thinking Americans – but especially by a unified black community marching irresistably towards freedom, justice and equal opportunity. The inability or unwillingness of most soul artists to associate publicly with the early Movement robbed civil rights workers of another potentially useful source of validation and inspiration for their efforts.

Ultimately, however, it should be remembered that the black community actually expected rather less of their singers and popular music in terms of political leadership or Movement-related activities than subsequent commentators have suggested. In the decade after Montgomery, singers and songs were not necessarily where the black community looked first when searching for political direction, or economic leadership, or personal role models. As Eldridge Cleaver observed, white America has an arrogant habit of trying to determine who are the real leaders and voices of the black community, invariably choosing them from the "apolitical world of sport and play". This, Cleaver argued, was a way to take the "'problem' out of a political and economic and philosophical context and [placing] it on the misty level of 'goodwill', 'charitable and harmonious race relations'". The many critics, black as well as white, who have routinely exaggerated, or misrepresented the political and leadership roles of Rhythm and Blues artists and their music in the early years of the Movement are in some ways the unwitting heirs to this tradition.[135]

Rhythm and blues artists were much admired, of course. But Georgia's feisty state representative, Billy McKinney – a community activist since before he became one of Atlanta's first black policemen in 1948 – felt that, in the main, "They were not leaders, just musicians. They were not role models . . . we just didn't expect them to put anything [back] in the community". McKinney linked this to the more general observation that personal economic and status considerations have always cut across racial solidarity in black America. "One of the fallacies of black society is that those who make it . . . put a whole lot back into it", he observed. On the rare occasions when an individual entertainer broke with this pattern to assume a more engaged stance, McKinney felt simply that "it put them above the average artist . . . Harry Belafonte would fit into a role-model-type person, but I can't think of a whole lot of musicians who were role models".[136]

On the face of it, Billy McKinney's dismissal of the notion that the black community had much expectation that its musicians would participate in, let alone lead, black protest seems too sweeping. It is certainly unsettling, since it appears to fly in the face of what we think we know about the enormous emotional investment black audiences have traditionally made in their music and celebrities. It seems to compromise our understanding of the ways in which popular black artists have served as cultural representatives

of the black community and its changing consciousnesses. Moreover, it seems to ignore the fact that some blacks clearly did hope that their celebrities would become more active supporters of the Movement at various personal, economic and artistic levels.

And yet, hope and expectation are hardly synonyms. Black hopes that their favourite musicians might emerge in the vanguard of Movement-related activities, or as bold advocates and patrons of the freedom struggle, were seldom realized. As a result, there was a rather lower level of expectation about any such involvement. In any case, as Cleaver and McKinney agreed, in the 1950s and early 1960s, black America had a whole range of political organizers and labour leaders, philosophers of social change, and dedicated Movement workers, who seemed to be helping the mass of blacks take meaningful strides towards freedom and equality. Consequently, black entertainers were simply not so sorely needed, or expected, to fulfil anything resembling formal roles in the early years of the Movement. Any help with fundraising, recruiting, education or morale-boosting was welcome, but their main community responsibility was to do their damnedest to be hugely successful in America, while helping to sustain the spirits, identity and cohesion of the black community through their music.

This was no trifling contribution, of course, and in itself constituted one type of leadership. And, perhaps, in the final analysis, it is a definition of leadership which is at issue here. While political education and community mobilization were largely beyond the functional capacity of Rhythm and Blues, and any involvement in the formal struggle was low on the agenda of most of its artists, the music nonetheless performed a valuable function. They also served who watched, watusied and wailed. By dramatizing and celebrating the black community's refusal to succumb to the mental and spiritual ravages of racism and poverty, Rhythm and Blues did what black popular culture had always done best; it promoted and sustained the black pride, identity and self-respect upon which the Movement and its leaders were ultimately dependent.

In this respect, however, most Rhythm and Blues singers were not much like civil rights leaders and activists at all. Instead, they were more like those cautious black ministers who took no formal part in the early struggle, but whose churches, sermons and even musical offerings nonetheless helped to foster the emotional strength, the psychological resources, and even some of the money, which others transformed into a mass movement for black civil and voting rights. Soul singers and their songs did much the same, offering another example of the way in which various social, political and economic functions in black life had been largely transferred from the sacred to the secular sphere.

PART THREE

One nation (divisible) under a groove

86. For biographical information on Francis Fitzgerald, see *Who's who in the southwest, 1965–66* (Chicago: Marquis, 1965). See also "Staff of WGIV", August 1963 (exhibit XVIII, folder 4A), in WGIV, "Application for renewal of broadcast station license", box 196, FCC; A. Abarbanel & A. Haley, "New audience for radio", *Harper's Magazine* (February 1956), p. 59. For Fitzgerald's support of Fred Alexander, see "Receipt no. 36", 8 April 1965; "WGIV invoice to Fred Alexander", 19 April 1965, both references, folder 31, box 1, Fred D. Alexander papers.
87. "Citation for award to Francis M. Fitzgerald, from St Paul's Baptist Church, Charlotte'" (signed by J.C. Clemmons and Rev. James F. Wertz), July 1953, reprinted in "Program for 'Genial Gene Day'", Charlotte Armory Auditorium, 22 November 1953, p. 15. Francis Fitzgerald quoted in *New York Times*, 5 August 1960, p. 33.
88. Press release, 6 December 1963; "Report of direct action: Philadelphia branch NAACP for year 1963", p. 15, both III-C-137, NAACP. See also *Billboard*, 30 November 1963, pp. 3, 37; *ibid.*, 7 December 1963, p. 4.
89. "Los Angeles membership bulletin", 31 March 1964; "Why we are demonstrating", both F-II-10, CORE-Add.
90. "The Negro dj and civil rights", *Broadcasting*, 31 August 1964, p. 61. NATRA was originally NARA – the National Association of Radio Announcers – but became NATRA in 1965, when black television announcers were included. I have used NATRA throughout.
91. Del Shields quoted in Broadcasting, 31 August 1964, p. 60.
92. George, *Death of rhythm and blues*, pp. 111–13.

Chapter Eight

1. Bernice Johnson Reagon, interview with Brian Ward, 24 January 1996, University of Newcastle upon Tyne Oral History Collection (hereinafter, UNOHC).
2. R. Snellings, "Keep on pushin': rhythm & blues as a weapon", *Liberator* **5**, October 1966, pp. 6–8.
3. P.K. Maultsby, "Soul music: its sociological and political significance in American popular culture", *Journal of Popular Culture* **17**(2), 1984, p. 51. A.X. Nicholas (ed.), *The poetry of soul* (New York: Bantam, 1971), p. xiii. R. Stephens, "Soul: a historical reconstruction of continuity and change", *Black Perspectives in Music* **12**, Spring 1984, pp. 21–43.
4. See, for example, H. Sitkoff, *The struggle for black equality, 1954–1992*, revd edn (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), p. 202. For a classic logocentric approach, see B.L. Cooper, "Popular music: an untapped resource for teaching contemporary black history", *Journal of Negro Education* **48**, Winter 1979, pp. 20–36.
5. D. Wolff et al., *You send me: the life and times of Sam Cooke* (New York: Wm Morrow, 1995).
6. Jerry Butler quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 238–9.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 290–2, 314.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 201–2.
9. See "Auditorium parking concession – car parking: June 1959", 1 July 1959, 3.28: Municipal Auditorium, James W. Morgan Mayoral Papers; *Birmingham News*, 14 June 1956, p. A-27.
10. June Johnson, interview with Brian Ward, 22 January 1996, UNOHC.

11. Guy Carawan, memo to Myles [Horton] and Connie [Conrad], n.d., reel 7, frame 347–353, Highlander Folk School Papers.
12. John O'Neal, interview 2 with Thomas Dent, 25 September 1983, Thomas Dent Holdings (hereinafter TDH). Julian Bond, interview with Brian Ward, 20 March 1996, UNOHC. Reagon interview. B.J. Reagon et al., *We who believe in freedom* (New York: Anchor, 1993), pp. 159–62.
13. Bond interview. Stanley Wise, interview with Brian Ward & Jenny Walker, 19 October 1995, UNOHC.
14. Reagon interview.
15. Biographical details about Anne Romaine are drawn from various unrecorded private conversations and clippings from the *Charlotte Observer*, 19 March 1994 and 3 September 1995; *Gaston Gazette*, 3 June 1994, p. 5, all in Anne Romaine press file, n.d. See also Anne Romaine, "Curriculum vitae", 1995; *Cavalier Daily*, 10 February 1983, pp. 4/6. For mill-town culture, see J. Dowd Hall et al., *Like a family: the making of a southern cotton mill world* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).
16. This account of the origins of the SFCRP is drawn from A. Romaine, "Southern folk cultural revival project", box 2, folder: Anne Romaine narrative (SFCRP History), SFCRP papers (hereinafter SFCRP). Reagon interview.
17. "Draft mission statement", n.d.; "Proposal for SFCRP", n.d., both box 3, folder: correspondence with foundations, 1967 proposal, SFCRP.
18. Reagon interview.
19. *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 20 April 1963, p. 23. Bond interview.
20. Clyde McPhatter quoted in *Amsterdam News*, 9 July 1960, p. 15. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 25 February 1960, p. C-3. See also Marion Barry, letter to James Forman, 6 July 1962, A-IV-47, SNCC papers (hereinafter SNCC).
21. Bond interview. *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 22 June 1963, p. 14.
22. *New York Times*, 10 April 1963, p. 29. R. Charles & D. Ritz, *Brother Ray* (London: Futura, 1980), pp. 272–6.
23. Al Hibbler quoted in *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 20 April 1963, p. 23. Joseph Lackey, interview with Brian Ward, 26 June 1996, UNOHC. Al Hibbler and Bull Connor, both quoted in *New York Times*, 11 April 1963, p. 21.
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33. *Ibid.* Stanley Levison, to Billy [Rowe?], 22 June 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr, FBI Files, II: The King-Levison Files (hereinafter FBI:K-L). For Simone's CORE shows, see, for example, Andrew B. Stroud, letter to Jim McDonald, 16 August 1965; Alan Gartner, letter to Andrew Stroud, 20 August 1965, both E-II-44, CORE papers Addendum (hereinafter CORE-Add). Alan Gartner, "Memo re: Fund Raising Department Report", n.d., B-I-13, CORE-Add.
34. See Garland, *Sound of soul*, p. 183. *Newsweek*, 30 March 1970, p. 83.
35. Reagon interview. Wise interview. Lawrence Guyot, interview with Brian Ward & Jenny Walker, 16 December 1995, UNOHC.
36. Simone, *I put a spell on you*, p. 69.
37. Betty Garman, letter to Dick Perez, 14 July 1965, A-IV-70, SNCC.
38. See S. Davis Jnr. (sic), *Hollywood in a suitcase* (London: W.H. Allen, 1981), p. 207. Harry Belafonte, interview with Brian Ward, 12 March 1996, UNOHC. For the full list of participants in the cultural contingent to the March, see Clarence B. Jones, circular to Cleveland Robinson, Bayard Rustin and Ossie Davis, 21 August 1963, reel 8, folder: Ossie Davis, Bayard T. Rustin papers (hereinafter BTR).
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40. John Handy, "The Freedom Band", 14 September 1964, part I, box 7, folder 1, CORE papers (hereinafter CORE). Duke Ellington, quoted in D. George, *The real Duke Ellington* (London: Robson, 1982), pp. 113–14.
41. Handy, "The Freedom Band"; "Jazz at the Masonic – Program", 14 September 1964, part I, box 3, folder 7, CORE.
42. N. Hentoff, "Jazz and reverse Jim Crow", *Negro Digest* (June 1961), pp. 70–4.
43. For arrangements concerning *We Insist! The Freedom Now Suite*, see St Clair Clement, letter and enclosures to John Lewis, 7 August 1963, A-I-31, SNCC.
44. Fay Bellamy, interview with Brian Ward, 18 October 1995, UNOHC.
45. "Chicago Urban League Newsletter", July 1959; Bettye Jayne Everett, letter to William Sims, 25 July 1959, both in 8:5:Playboy Jazz Festival, National Urban League papers. "List of sponsors for 'Salute to southern students'", n.d.; James Forman, letter to Diahann Carroll, 13 February 1963, both A-IV-69, SNCC. For the "Jazz salute to freedom" concert, see Val Coleman, letter to Symphony Sid, 3 September 1963, II:6, CORE: 1941–67. For Miles Davis' benefit, see Jim Mansonis, letter to Miles Davis, 6 March 1964, B-I-12, SNCC. For the Roach-Lincoln concert, see "Boston Friends of SNCC: financial summary – first quarter, 1965", and "Boston Friends of SNCC: financial statement", April 1965, both A-VI-6, SNCC. The jazzmobile is discussed in L. Jones (I.A. Baraka), *The autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Imamu Amiri Baraka* (New York: Freundlich, 1984), pp. 211–12.
46. For Coleman see B. Sidran, *Black talk* (New York: Da Capo, 1981), p. 143. Cecil Taylor quoted in *Down Beat Yearbook – 1966*, pp. 19, 31.
47. The $40,000 figure is mentioned in Martin Luther King, telephone conversation with Stanley Levison, 28 May 1996, FBI:K-L. "Financial report – Mahalia Jackson concert", 7 August 1963, part II, box 11, folder 15, CORE. "SNCC: New York Branch – statement of receipts and disbursements from concerts and benefits, from Jan. 1, 1963 – Dec. 31, 1963", A-VI-6, SNCC.

48. Belafonte interview.
49. "New York Friends of SNCC: balance sheet (May 1 – Sept. 30, 1964)", A-VI-6, SNCC. For Simone's fees, see Andrew B. Stroud, letter to Jim McDonald, 16 August 1965, E-II-44, CORE-Add.
50. Wise interview. Bond interview.
51. For Paul Simon's friendship with Andrew Goodman, see P. Humphries, *The boy in the bubble: a biography of Paul Simon* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 24. Bernice Johnson (Reagon) quoted in R. Shelton, *No direction home: the life and music of Bob Dylan* (New York: Beech Tree, 1986), p. 179.
52. Jimmy McDonald, letter to Marvin Rich, 23 October 1963, V:179, CORE: 1941–67. "Boston Friends of SNCC: financial statement, May 1965", A-VI-6, SNCC. *Atlanta Inquirer*, 25 May 1963, p. 7. J. Dittmer, *Local people: the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 228, 478–9, n. 31. J. Baez, *And a voice to sing with: a memoir* (New York: Summit, 1987), p. 103.
53. See John O. Killens & Ossie Davis, recruitment letter, 21 May 1964, Schomburg Center Clippings File: "Association of Artists for Freedom". Stanley Levison, telephone call with Martin Luther King, 21 May 1963, FBI:K-L. W.W. Sales, Jr, *From civil rights to black liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (Boston: South End, 1994), p. 107.
54. See, for example, W. Van DeBurg's *New day in Babylon: the black power movement and American culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 265–72.
55. See *New York Post Magazine*, 27 March 1945; Lena Horne quoted in *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 27 September 1949, both in Schomburg Center Clippings File: "Lena Horne" (hereinafter, SC-File: "Horne"). L. Horne & R. Shickel, *Lena*, 2nd edn (Garden City, N.Y.: Limelight, 1986), pp. 173–7. In the early 1940s, Horne had complained how, on one hand, she was not allowed to talk to whites on screen because southern distributors objected to such interracial exchanges, while, on the other hand, her light complexion and aquiline features meant that she was not "considered" coloured enough for roles opposite black actors, lest audiences mistake her for a white woman. When Max Factor concocted a darkening make-up to help her out of this dilemma, she refused to use it, just as she refused to sing blues and spirituals simply because that was what white Hollywood expected all blacks to sing, preferring instead a smooth, vaguely jazzy pop style. *New York Post*, 30 June 1941; *New York Post Magazine*, 29 September 1963, both SC-File: "Horne".
56. Lena Horne quoted in *Amsterdam News*, 20 February 1960, pp. 1/10, 1/35; *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 18 February 1960, pp. 1-A/3-A; *New York Times*, 17 February 1960, p. 30. *New York Post*, 17 February 1960, p. 1.
57. For the Atlanta benefit, see *Atlanta Inquirer*, 3 August 1963, p. 8; *Amsterdam News*, 10 August 1963, p. 20. Lena Horne quoted in *New York Post*, 29 September 1963, p. 4. Horne's own refreshingly self-effacing account of her Movement work appears in Horne & Shickel, *Lena*, pp. 275–91.
58. *Amsterdam News*, 14 May 1960, p. 3. Carroll's support for SNCC is acknowledged in a letter from James Forman to Diahann Carroll, 13 February 1963, A-IV-69, SNCC. Gloria (Richardson) Dandridge, "Women's division report", 1 December 1965; Julie Belafonte & Diahann Carroll, "Dear friend letter", 8 December 1965, both A-IV-123, SNCC. See also Gloria Richardson Dandridge, interview with Jenny Walker, 11 March 1996, UNOHC. Stanley Levison acknowledged

Belafonte's influence in the Gandhi Society in a telephone conversation with Toni Hamilton and Clarence Jones, 17 April 1962, FBI:K-L.

59. Biographical details drawn from Schomburg Center Clippings File: "Dick Gregory" (hereinafter, SC-File: "Gregory"). D. Gregory, *Nigger: an autobiography* (New York: Dutton, 1964). See also D. Gregory, *From the back of the bus* (New York: Dutton, 1962).
60. *New York Post*, 2 April 1963; *ibid.*, 3 April 1963. *Jet*, 14 January 1965, SC-File: "Gregory". *New York Times*, 3 April 1963, p. 1/40. Guyot interview. Johnson interview. Dittmer, *Local people*, pp. 145, 152, 155, 174.
61. Robert E. Johnson, interview with John Britton, 6 September 1967, Ralph J. Bunche Oral History Collection.
62. Richardson interview.
63. *New York Times*, 26 February 1964; *New York Post*, 3 October 1963; 3 August 1965; 13 August 1965; 22 December 1965; 16 February 1966; 1 December 1966; 3 September 1968, all SC-File: "Gregory". *Ebony*, March 1964, p. 95. R. Johnson interview. Dick Gregory quoted in G. Horne, *Fire this time: the Watts uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), p. 184, p. 376 n. 81. Gregory's activism continued into the Black Power era. In 1966, he ran an unsuccessful write-in campaign for the mayoralty of Chicago and was jailed for a "fish-in" in support of Native American land rights in Washington State. In July 1968 he served yet more time for another illegal fishing expedition to the Nisqually River – by which point he had already fasted against the Vietnam war and announced his intention to run for the presidency on the Freedom and Peace Party ticket. See *New York Post*, 16 February 1966; 1 December 1966; 3 September 1968, all SC-File: "Gregory".
64. Sammy Davis Jr, "Letter to the entertainment field" (n.d.), III-A-44, NAACP.
65. For the Carnegie Hall show, see S. Levison, letter to Martin Luther King, 5 December 1960; Martin Luther King, letter to Sammy Davis Jr, 20 December 1960, both box 23, folder 20, Martin Luther King papers (hereinafter MLK). Ralph D. Abernathy, "Treasurer's report: fiscal year: September 1, 1960 – August 31, 1961", box 129, folder 15, SCLC papers (hereinafter SCLC). D.J. Garrow, *Bearing the cross: Martin Luther King, Jr, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Vintage, 1988), pp. 155, 168. For Westchester, see Al Duckett, memo to Wyatt Tee Walker et al., 24 November 1962; "Westchester salute to Martin Luther King, Jr, benefit program", both box 45a, folder 78, MLK.
66. For the "Broadway answers Selma" show accounts and line-up see "Deposits", 4 June 1965, part III, box 2, folder 15, CORE; Marvin Rich, letter to Mr Albert Lee Lesser, 28 June 1965, part III, box 1, folder 6, CORE; "Deposits", 23 July 1965 and "Deposits", 31 August 1965, both part III, box 2, folder 15, CORE; "Deposits", 2 December 1965, part III, box 2, folder 16, CORE. See also "Broadway answers Selma – programme", and James Farmer, letter to Eli Wallach, 6 April 1965, both E-II-19, CORE-Add. For "Stars for freedom", see Martin Luther King, "Dear friend letter", 1 July 1965, box 128, folder 13, SCLC. SCOPE was an ambitious attempt to emulate the Freedom Summer's registration and educational efforts in Mississippi throughout the Deep South. See Garrow, *Bearing the cross*, pp. 415–16, 428–9, 438, 440–2, 446, 454. For Davis' personal donation to the SCLC in May 1963, see Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Martin Luther King, 28 May 1963, FBI:K-L.

67. Reagon interview. For a largely uncritical account of the abuse heaped upon Belafonte and others, see Van DeBurg, *New day in Babylon*, p. 267. See also E. Cleaver, *Soul on ice* (New York: Dell, 1968), p. 89. The only Movement historian who has given Belafonte anything like his due is Taylor Branch. See T. Branch, *Parting the waters: America in the King years* (Simon & Schuster, 1989), pp. 275, 288–9, 388–9, 481, 485, 513–14, 877. See also Henry Louis Gates' sympathetic profile, H.L. Gates, Jr, "Belafonte's balancing act", *New Yorker*, 26 August/2 September 1996, pp. 132–43.
68. For Belafonte's first meeting with King, see Harry Belafonte, Martin Luther King & Merv Griffin, "*The Merv Griffin Show*, 6 July 1967: transcript", 3:1, Martin Luther King papers, printed matter. Also, Belafonte interview. For biographical information, see A. Shaw, *Belafonte: an unauthorized biography* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1960); G. Fogelson, *Belafonte* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1980); Schomburg Center Clippings File: "Belafonte" (hereinafter SC-File: "Belafonte").
69. *Sunday News*, 1 May 1955, in SC-File: "Belafonte". *Look*, 25 June 1957, p. 142. *Time*, 2 March 1959, p. 40.
70. Harry Belafonte quoted in *Saturday Evening Post*, 29 April 1957, pp. 28, 69. See also *Look*, 25 June 1957, p. 142.
71. Belafonte interview.
72. *Ibid.* Belafonte et al., "*Merv Griffin Show* transcript".
73. Belafonte interview. For the Montgomery benefit, see *Amsterdam News*, 1 December 1956, p. 3.
74. Belafonte interview. CDMLK, "The revolving bail fund", n.d.; Stanley D. Levison, "Minutes of board meeting", 7 March 1960; Nat King Cole et al., "Dear friend letter", n.d., all box 23, Papers of A. Philip Randolph (hereinafter, APR).
75. CDMLK, "Statement of income and expenditure for the period ended July 31, 1960,"; Stanley Levison, "Minutes of board meeting", 7 March 1960; Martin Luther King, "Dear friend letter", 6 October 1960, all box 23, APR. *Amsterdam News*, 16 April 1960, p. 3; *ibid.*, 14 May 1960, p. 3.
76. Belafonte interview. Warren Ling, letter to Martin Luther King, 28 February 1961; David Adelman, letter to Martin Luther King, 1 March 1961; David Adelman, letter to Martin Luther King, 13 June 1961, all box 56, II, folder 36, MLK.
77. Belafonte interview. *The Reporter*, 2 March 1995, p. 1.
78. Belafonte interview. Bellamy interview.
79. Belafonte interview.
80. *Ibid.* Ella Baker, interview with Eugene Walker, 4 September 1974, Southern Oral History Program.
81. Garrow, *Bearing the cross*, p. 112.
82. A. Meier & E.P. Rudwick, *CORE: a study in the civil rights movement, 1942–1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 127.
83. Johnson interview. Wise interview. Bond interview.
84. James Forman, letter to Harry Belafonte, 4 December 1963, A-IV-48, SNCC.
85. For the "Books for Miles College" programme, see (Horace) Julian Bond, letter to Harry Belafonte, 10 May 1962. For the Americus initiative, see James Forman, letter to Harry Belafonte, 5 September 1963, both A-IV-48, SNCC.
86. For Belafonte's material and tactical support of SNCC's voter registration campaigns, see C. Carson, *In struggle: SNCC and the black awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 70; Dittmer, *Local people*, p. 145; E. Burner, *And gently he shall lead them: Robert Parris Moses and civil*

rights in Mississippi (New York: New York University Press, 1994), pp. 38, 43, 61, 86. For Belafonte's role in the Carnegie Hall concert see James Forman, letter to Harry Belafonte, 4 December 1963, A-IV-48, SNCC. "SNCC Income, January 1, 1963 to December 31, 1963", A-IV-27, SNCC.

87. See Branch, *Parting the waters*, pp. 513–14.
88. For the Greenwood adventure, see Johnson interview, and June Johnson, interview with Thomas Dent, II, 22 July 1979, TDH; Belafonte interview. For the Africa visit see K. Mills, *This little light of mine: the life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (New York: Dutton, 1993), pp. 134–44. See also Belafonte interview; Carson, *In struggle*, pp. 134–6.
89. *Time*, 2 March 1959, p. 44. The assignment of television appearance fees is noted in (Horace) Julian Bond, letter to Harry Belafonte, 8 November 1962, A-IV-48, SNCC. SNCC's financial records rarely break down personal and general contributions by individuals, but some of Belafonte's donations can be traced through the related correspondence. See Gloria Cantor, letter to Charles McDew, 11 December 1962; James Forman, letter to Gloria Cantor, 18 December 1962; James Forman, letter to Gloria Cantor, 23 September 1963, all A-IV-48, SNCC; "List of sponsors for 'Salute to southern students' ", (n.d), A-IV-69, SNCC; "Financial Report – Washington Office, Summer 1964", A-VI-6, SNCC.
90. Belafonte et al., "*Merv Griffin Show* transcript". Bayard Rustin, letter to Harry Belafonte, 8 September 1966; "Endorsees of Freedom Budget", both reel 13, folder: Freedom Budget (correspondence, requests for endorsement), BTR.
91. Gloria Cantor, telephone conversation with Stanley Levison, 17 April 1967, FBI:K-L.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Belafonte interview.
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.* Harry Belafonte quoted in *Look*, 25 June 1957, p. 142. Reagon interview.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Belafonte interview.
98. Harry Belafonte quoted in *Pittsburgh Courier*, 30 August 1960, p. 23.
99. Belafonte interview. Bond interview.
100. Reagon interview. Guyot interview.
101. *Ibid.*
102. For the NAACP and SNCC campaigns to keep artists out of Mississippi – a precursor of the 1980s Artists and Athletes against Apartheid campaign directed against South Africa by Harry Belafonte and tennis star Arthur Ashe – see *Musical America* (July 1964), pp. 9/55; *Student Voice*, 25 February 1964, p. 3. *New York Times*, 27 February 1964, 29 March 1964, 3 April 1964, 4 April 1964, 6 April 1964, 10 April 1964. Bond interview. "Press release, No. 36", n.d., B-I-127, SNCC. Mary King, "Cancellations: Oxford, Mississippi"; John Lewis, letter to the Journeymen, 25 March 1964, all A-I-31, SNCC.
103. Shelton interview.
104. Worth Long, interview with Thomas Dent, 29 July 1979, TDH.
105. Bellamy interview. Bond interview.
106. Wise interview. For an early attempt to secure the services of Motown acts, see Marvin Rich to Berry Gardy (sic), 4 May 1964, V:179, CORE: 1941–67.
107. Val Coleman, letters to Milt Shaw, 2 January 1964, 20 January 1964, 10 February 1964; Marvin Rich, letter to Berry Gardy (sic), 4 May 1964, all V:179, CORE: 1941–67.

108. Bond interview. Wise interview.
109. Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Gloria Cantor (summary), 16 June 1966, FBI:K-L.
110. Coretta Scott King, telephone conversation with Stanley Levison, 24 May 1969, FBI:K-L. Junius Griffin, interview with Brian Ward, 22 July 1996, UNOHC.
111. *Ibid.*
112. Dick Perez, letter to Bobbi Jones, 8 July 1965; Betty Garman, letter to Dick Perez, 14 July 1965, both A-IV-70, SNCC. Griffin interview.
113. For example, Stanley Levison could not believe that the SCLC was paying Al Duckett $100 a day, possibly amounting to a total of around $4,000, to help organize a 1962 benefit in Westchester, New York. See Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Jack (probably O'Dell), 9 October 1962, FBI:K-L. "Unwise or questionable fund raising methods", n.d., A-IV-13, SNCC.
114. For a brief biography of Jimmy McDonald, see "Betty Frank Radio Show", n.d., F-I-37, CORE-Add. For Richard Haley's musical background, see Meier & Rudwick, *CORE*, p. 113, and Richard Tinsley, letter to Richard Jewett, 16 February 1965, B-I-13, CORE-Add.
115. Garman to Perez. Marvin Rich, "Memo re: fundraising", 2 October 1964, E-II-4, CORE-Add.
116. For the Sammy Davis Apollo shows, see Richard W. McLain, memo to Herbert Hill, 27 May 1958; John Morsell, letter to V. Jean Fleming, 18 August 1958; "Statement of receipts and expenditures for the Apollo Benefit, April 11–17, 1958", all references III-A-44, NAACP. For the Belafonte show in Nashville, see "Belafonte Concert: Financial Report", box 74, folder 10, Kelly Miller Smith Papers. "Pertaining to Bill Powell and the fraudulent misuse of funds raised for SNCC", n.d., A-IV-70, SNCC. For the *Amen Corner* benefit, see Jimmy McDonald, memorandum to Mrs Newman Levy, 20 April 1965, E-II-2, CORE-Add.
117. For the Robinson jazz concert, see Rich, "Memo re: fundraising". For the Broadway answers Selma show, see "Deposits", 4 June 1965, part III, box 2, folder 15, CORE; Marvin Rich, letter to Mr Albert Lee Lesser, 28 June 1965, part III, box 1, folder 6, CORE; "Deposits", 23 July 1965 and "Deposits", 31 August 1965, both part III, box 2, folder 15, CORE; "Deposits", 2 December 1965, part III, box 2, folder 16, CORE.
118. Dinky Romilly, letters to Joan Baez and Bobby Dillon (sic), 9 July 1965; Dinky Romilly, letter to Manuel Greenhill, 21 July 1965, all B-I-52, SNCC.
119. Bond interview.
120. "SNCC guide to fundraising", n.d., C-I-151, SNCC.
121. "Report of the Convention Fundraising Committee: statement of income and expenditures for year ending May 31, 1965", E:II:4, CORE-Add. Val Coleman, memo to James Farmer et al., 26 July 1965; James Farmer, letter to Frank Sinatra, n.d., both E:III:4, CORE-Add. Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Martin Luther King, 30 November 1966, FBI:K-L.
122. Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Martin Luther King, 28 May 1963, FBI:K-L. SNCC New York Office, "Special gifts – parties", A-VI-6, SNCC.
123. *Tan* (November 1957), pp. 30–1, 75. *New York Post*, 4 January 1962, in Schomburg Center Clippings File: "Ray Charles". N. George, *Where did our love go?* (New York: St Martin's, 1986), p. 139. *Time*, 1 April 1966, p. 75.
124. For CORE's white funding base see Meier & Rudwick, *CORE*, p. 336; I. Powell Bell, *CORE and the strategy of nonviolence* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 65–71. For SCLC's white funding base, see Martin Luther King, telephone

conversation with Stanley Levison (summary), 26 July 1966; Bill Stein, telephone conversation with Stanley Levison (summary), 19 October 1966, FBI:K-L. See also R. Cleghorn, "The angels are white: who pays the bills for civil rights", *New Republic*, 17 August 1963, pp. 12–14.

125. "Unwise or questionable fundraising methods".
126. Harold Battiste, interview with Brian Ward, 8 November 1995, UNOHC.
127. For the Baldwin mailing, see "SNCC New York Office, December 1964 – accounts", A-VI-6, SNCC.
128. See "Artists contribute to civil rights: press release", 25 January 1965; "Confidential Memorandum re: ACRAF", 3 August 1965, A-IV-51, SNCC.
129. To give but one example of this perennial financial hardship, in November 1964 CORE's Richard Haley announced that the Southern Project's Thanksgiving Retreat was to be cancelled for lack of funds. Acknowledging that already "many of the southern staff . . . have given up part of their tiny subsistence to help keep the project going", in the absence of any financial "angel", Haley had to call for "still more belt-tightening". Richard Haley, "Memorandum to southern staff", 18 November 1964, part II, box 11, folder 15, CORE.
130. Stanley Levison, telephone conversation with Martin Luther King (summary), 29 September 1966, FBI:K-L. Guyot interview.
131. Louis Armstrong quoted in *Norfolk Journal & Guide*, 28 September 1957, pp. 1/2.
132. Manchester Greene and George Perkins quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.
133. Martin Luther King, draft letter to Sammy Davis, n.d., box 52a, folder 7a (2 of 3), MLK.
134. *Ibid.*
135. E. Cleaver, *Soul on ice*, p. 89.
136. Billy McKinney, interview with Brian Ward & Jenny Walker, 19 October 1995, UNOHC.

Chapter Nine

1. Curtis Mayfield quoted in *Soul*, 22 September 1969, p. 16.
2. Statistics on black economic and political trends are drawn from S.A. Levitan, W.B. Johnston and R. Taggert, *Still a dream: the changing status of blacks since 1960* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 15–17, 32, 36, 41. J. Blackwell, *The black community: diversity and unity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 52–74, 243–76; S.F. Lawson, *Black ballots: voting rights in the South, 1944–1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 331; S.F. Lawson, *Running for freedom: civil rights and black politics in America since 1941* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), p. 203.
3. A. Hacker, *Two nations: black and white, separate, hostile, unequal* (New York, Ballantine, 1995), pp. 107–9.
4. Useful critiques of the continuing black economic predicament are A. Pinkney, *The myth of black progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), and B. Landry, *The new black middle class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). See also Blackwell, *The black community*, esp. pp. 31–80, 117–49.
5. T. Blair, *Retreat to the ghetto* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977), p. 242. Lawson, *Running for freedom*, p. 203. H. Sitkoff, *The struggle for black equality, 1954–1992*, revd edn (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), p. 221. See also R. Weisbrot, *Freedom bound: a history of America's civil rights movement* (New York: Plume, 1990), pp. 288–318.
6. For the triumph of conservatism in Mississippi, see J. Dittmer, *Local people: the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). For black mayors, see Lawson, *Running for freedom*, pp. 164–82.
7. For the Nixon-Ford administrations and race, see Lawson, *Running for freedom*, pp. 136–40, 183–9; Sitkoff, *Struggle for black equality*, pp. 212–14.
8. Lawson, *Running for freedom*, p. 140.
9. See Hacker, *Two nations*, pp. 166–71; Sitkoff, *Struggle for black equality*, p. 224. See also G. Orfield, *Must we bus?: segregated schools and national policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978).
10. A.P. Sindler, *Bakke, DeFunis, and minority admissions: the quest for equal opportunity* (New York: Longman, 1978).
11. M.L. King, *Where do we go from here: chaos or community?* (New York: Bantam, 1967), p. 153.
12. Weisbrot, *Freedom bound*, p. xiii.
13. For a generally balanced overview of Karenga and cultural nationalism, see W. Van DeBurg, *New day in Babylon: the black power movement and American culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 170–91.
14. See F. Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (New York: Grove, 1968); F. Fanon, *Black skins, white masks* (New York: Grove, 1968).
15. Stanley Wise, interview with Brian Ward & Jenny Walker, 19 October 1995, University of Newcastle Oral History Collection (hereinafter, UNOHC).
16. A.Y. Davis, "Black nationalism: the sixties and the nineties", in *Black popular culture: a project by Michele Wallace*, G. Dent (ed.) (Seattle: Bay, 1992), p. 320.
17. For a while Brown even used two drummers, John "Jabo" Starks and Clyde Stubblefield. According to Brown, Stubblefield's meeting with the Nigerian musician Fela Kuti in Lagos was an influence on the rhythmic conceptions at the heart of the new funk. But then again, so were jazz drummers like Kenny Clark and Elvin Jones who "dropped bombs" in explosive rhythmic clusters, while Fela Kuti's own high-life music was already heavily indebted to Western rock and r&b influences, not least Brown's own brand of soul. J. Brown (with B. Tucker), *James Brown: the godfather of soul* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1988), p. 221.
18. F. Kofsky, *Black nationalism and the revolution in music* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), p. 43.
19. R. Vincent, *Funk: the music, the people, and the rhythm of the one* (New York: St Martin's, 1996), pp. 37–8.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 188–90.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–8.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 6. In truth, historical accuracy is not among Vincent's many virtues: his civil rights movement starts with "the Desegregation Act of 1954" (there was no such "Act"), picks up momentum with the Greensboro, South Carolina sit-ins (Greensboro is in North Carolina), and ends with the decade's final piece of major legislation – the 1969 civil rights act against housing discrimination (it was actually passed in 1968). *Ibid.*, pp. 47–8.
23. Vincent, *Funk*, p. 4.
24. George Clinton quoted in G. Tate, *Flyboy in the buttermilk* (New York: Fireside, 1992), p. 39.
25. See Vincent, *Funk*, p. 37.
26. George Clinton quoted in *Amsterdam News*, 10 September 1977, p. 10.