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“A SMALL REVOLUTION”: THE ROLE OF A BLACK POWER REVOLT IN  
CREATING AND SUSTAINING A BLACK STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

by

Jared E. Leighton

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“A SMALL REVOLUTION”: THE ROLE OF A BLACK POWER REVOLT IN  
CREATING AND SUSTAINING A BLACK STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2008

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This thesis examines the Morrill Hall Takeover of January, 1969, and the creation of the Afro-American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Further, it follows the process of sustaining a black studies department including acquiring qualified professors, maintaining student interest, negotiating the relationship to the black community and overcoming funding shortages, as well as other bureaucratic difficulties. The events at the University of Minnesota are placed in the larger context of the long-term development of black studies, the rise of the Black Power Movement and Minnesota's tradition of liberalism. This work draws on reports from the University of Minnesota Archives, papers held at the Minnesota Historical Society, interviews, newspaper coverage of the takeover and subsequent department development, and secondary texts on black studies and black power.

## Introduction

In January, 1969, at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, black students took over Morrill Hall, an administrative building, to press the school to create a black studies department. They played a small, but important part in a concert of black student revolts occurring across the country at the time. At a school with roughly 40,000 students, a group of less than 100 African Americans made their presence felt and spurred the creation of a department that has educated thousands of students about black history and culture up to this day. Whereas other schools erupted in violence and black students faced repression, the University of Minnesota stood out for its peaceful change. In fact, university administrators noted,

The kind of issue raised by the [Afro-American Action Committee] is akin to the kind raised at Columbia University, at Oberlin, at Oshkosh, San Francisco State, Southern Illinois, and elsewhere. In no other case we know has the issue been resolved more peaceably, with less violence and property damage, with more rapidity, and with more satisfactory outcome than this one at Minnesota.<sup>1</sup>

The takeovers in Minnesota and elsewhere arose as unmistakable manifestations of the broader Black Power Movement. One of the foremost scholars of the Black Power Era in America, Peniel E. Joseph, writes, “The ‘modern Black Studies Movement’ represented perhaps the greatest political and pedagogical opportunity to fundamentally alter power relations in American society... While not completely successful, these efforts should by no means be considered a failure. On the contrary, Black Studies programs

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the President, University of Minnesota, “The events of January 13-15, 1969, at the University of Minnesota,” Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives), 4.

remain one of the enduring and outstanding legacies of the Black Power Movement.”<sup>2</sup> In the case of Minnesota, black studies have certainly left an impact.

Though they were participants in the event and, thus, may be inclined to overstate their legacy, Marie Braddock Williams, Rose Mary Freeman Massey and Horace Huntley declare that,

[T]he University has never been quite the same. The ethnic composition of its students, the content of its curriculum, the make up of student service programs, not to mention the make up of its faculty and administrators, have all been transformed into what the University looks and feels like today. As a result, the University is more inclusive, more tolerant, and less separated from the dynamics of the community which owns it.

They conclude that the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department represents the single most transformative event in the history of the University of Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

However, the Morrill Hall takeover still has its detractors who feel it was the wrong move. In 2006, following a reunion of the participants in the Morrill Hall takeover, Katherine Kersten of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* wrote a piece condemning the celebration. She highlighted the damage done in 1969 saying that the group “trashed university offices, stuffed student records in toilets and injured a fellow student” and “scattered student financial and academic records about the offices.” Damage occurred. But, Kersten failed to realize that most of the damage resulted from the creation of barricades in response to threats from white students outside, who also damaged the building.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, “Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement,” *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (Spring, 2003), 182.

<sup>3</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, Rose Freeman Massey, and Horace Huntley, “*Nerve Juice*” and the Ivory Tower: *Confrontation in Minnesota, The True Story of the Morrill Hall Takeover* (Jonesboro, AR: GrantHouse Publishers, 2006), xxii, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Katherine Kersten, “University’s praise for 1969 violence sets ugly precedent,” *Star Tribune*, April 26, 2006, no page given.

Though she argued the damage was bad, she wrote that the administration's reaction was worse. Kersten called University President Malcolm Moos' decision to agree to the students' demands a "cringing surrender of authority." Though she noted that Moos did this to avoid bloodshed, she condemned his decision nonetheless and offered no alternative. She further stated, "Moos didn't lift a finger against [the students], or even criticize their actions."<sup>5</sup> But, the primary documents prove this statement false. In fact, Malcolm Moos threatened to call the police in future incidents, created a commission to investigate the takeover and offered testimony to the jury in the students' trial. Finally, Kersten concluded,

What did the leaders of the occupation get? A first-class lesson in how to deal effectively with timid university officials. They learned that bullying tactics can win rewards, and that if you shout loud enough, the university may give you what you want. Last weekend, a new generation of students looked on as U officials feted the leaders of the Morrill Hall takeover. Listening to stories of that glorious day, these students may well have learned the same ugly lesson.<sup>6</sup>

However, a closer examination of the events reveals bureaucracy had impeded change. The only way to push a black studies program forward was to send a clear message to the administration that delay was no longer an option. Moreover, one must recognize the value of the students' goal. For generations, professors ignored the contributions of African Americans in the curricula at large, predominantly white universities which produced an incomplete understanding of history and a narrow, sometimes racist, outlook. In the end, the primary beneficiaries of the program created by the Morrill Hall takeover were not the few black students who worked for change, but the thousands of white students who later enrolled in black studies courses.

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<sup>5</sup> Kersten, no page given.

<sup>6</sup> Kersten, no page given.

In fact, today, the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* reports that black studies is an unpopular major among African Americans. Only .8 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded to African Americans in 2000 lay in the field of ethnic studies. In fact, 29 times as many blacks earned a degree in business management. As a group, African Americans have become more "careerist" in their college course selections.<sup>7</sup> Correspondingly, black studies programs and departments remain limited. Only 9 percent of four-year colleges have a formalized black studies unit.<sup>8</sup> So, why is it important?

A historical look at black studies programs is valuable not only for seeing how change occurs, but to look back at a time before black studies appeared on predominantly white campuses because today black studies face attacks at many colleges and universities. Specifically, many schools refuse to grant black studies full departmental status. Numerous administrators do not consider it a legitimate academic discipline. Instead of pursuing truth and enlightenment, black studies supposedly represent an enclave of propaganda, victimology, and hate directed at whites. In an issue of the *National Review* dated January 29, 2000, Dick Arme, a Representative from Texas and House Majority Leader at the time, called black studies "pure junk" and "crib courses."<sup>9</sup>

However, there is no evidence that black studies challenges students any less than other programs.<sup>10</sup> The experience at Minnesota shows that black studies courses were often dense with information and conceptually difficult. In writing about the black

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<sup>7</sup> "Black Studies Is an Unpopular Major," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 36 (Summer, 2002), 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>9</sup> "Black Studies: The Emerging Importance of Departmental Status," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 37 (Autumn, 2002), 24.

<sup>10</sup> "Black Studies Is an Unpopular Major," 15.

studies courses at the University of Minnesota, John Wright, a student in the 1970s and later professor there, stated that the courses were rigorous and it was not a program where students could just walk through. Moreover, black studies played an integral role in attracting a more diverse student body which Wright called “absolutely necessary.”<sup>11</sup>

A document assessing the importance of the takeover and calling for funds to produce scholarly research on the event notes that African American students now constitute just over three percent of the undergraduate student enrollment. The Martin Luther King Program and the African-American Studies Department remain an integral part of campus academic life. Beyond that, the need for black cultural expression has been represented in the work and programming efforts of the Black Student Cultural Center, created in 1969.<sup>12</sup> Finally, black studies provided a path to the creation of other critical, but historically ignored areas of study. Wright contends, “All the subsequent development of Chicano studies, American Indian studies, even Women’s studies and so forth, all these lead to the issues that were raised and the institutional responses generated by the Morrill Hall takeover in 1969.”<sup>13</sup>

The present study examines the Morrill Hall takeover at the University of Minnesota and the work undertaken to create and sustain a black studies program there. It attempts to place the events in Minneapolis in the context of the longer history of African Americans in Minnesota and the larger movement for black studies and black power nationwide. This work is intended to provide a case study of a black studies

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<sup>11</sup> Stanford Lehmborg and Ann M. Pflaum, *The University of Minnesota 1945-2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 124.

<sup>12</sup> “Reunion, Celebration and Assessment of the Contributions of African American Students to the Cultural and Academic Life of the University of Minnesota 1968-2000,” Morrill Hall Disturbance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, May 24, 2001), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Art Hughes, “The legacy of the Morrill Hall takeover,” *Minnesota Public Radio*, April 21, 2006.



department to set alongside the few that have already been done. It engages the broader arguments that have been presented about black studies by Fabio Rojas in *From Black Power to Black Studies* as well as others to test their conclusions. Finally, it adds to the longer history of social movements. Rather than looking only at the movement itself, this work examines the durability of movement outcomes and the processes that stabilize or erode a movement's achievements.<sup>14</sup>

Understanding the events at the University of Minnesota allows one to see an example of a black student revolt which did not produce violence and the role that both students and administrators played in producing peaceful change. This situation shows non-violent change produced by a Black Power organization. Minnesota's location in particular offers information useful to those looking at the various manifestations of Black Power, in the North generally and the Upper Midwest specifically. It gives an example of students trained in the southern organizing tradition in the early 1960s taking part in a northern Black Power movement in the late 1960s.

Social movement historians should find interest in this study of a small group forcing change and navigating bureaucracy. Less than 100 students at a university of almost 50,000, currently the fourth largest in the country, changed the curriculum for the long-term. They not only pushed the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department, but also inspired the creation of other gender and ethnic studies departments. Moreover, the black power group which spurred the creation of the department was led by a woman and the department itself was chaired by women like Lillian Anthony and Geneva Southall in its early years. Because black power groups and black studies departments

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<sup>14</sup> Rojas, 8.

have been criticized for sexism, Minnesota offers an interesting case study of women's leadership in those areas.

The events at the University of Minnesota should also be of interest to historians of black studies as they highlight the connection and tension between campus and community. This study also points out the tension between securing departmental autonomy so black studies departments could be in charge of their own affairs and gaining interdepartmental cooperation to connect the department to long-standing disciplines. Further, it shows the changing backgrounds of professors over time as the department initially relied on local people who often lacked academic degrees and later hired professional educators as more people with black studies degrees arrived on the market. This was not without its problems as Minnesota will reveal.

Beyond that, this thesis offers an important example of a black studies program which primarily educated white students. It also documents the same problems that many other black studies programs eventually faced with a shortage of funding and a decline of student interest. On a broad level, the case of black studies at the University of Minnesota both affirms and challenges parts of the dominant narrative on the history of black studies. The various aspects of this story should serve as a contribution to historians with a diversity of interests.

Peniel Joseph points out that "Organized student takeovers in support of black studies transcended regional, racial, and class differences."<sup>15</sup> Though these black student revolts took place everywhere from the Ivy League to land grant universities and were supported by people of a variety of backgrounds, the takeovers themselves were not all

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<sup>15</sup> Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006), 215.

the same. Thus, looking at the University of Minnesota helps scholars understand one of the many manifestations of the black studies movement.

## **Chapter 1: “We Are Who We Were”: The History and Historiography of Black Power, Black Studies, African Americans in Minnesota, and the University of Minnesota**

The historiography of black power student protest, especially on predominantly white campuses, remains limited.<sup>16</sup> The work that exists falls into a few distinct categories: texts for African American studies courses which include a section on the movements that led to their creation, specific case studies of colleges and universities that experienced protest (mostly from the time, but also some more recent work), black power histories which devote a section to the student movement, and a couple recent summative works which look at black studies on a broad scale.

Before delving into the history of black studies, one should be clear about the term. In their extensive examination of the field, Delores P. Aldridge and Carlene Young begin, “African-American, Afro-American Studies, Black Studies, Pan-African Studies, Africana, and Afro-Caribbean Studies are but different names for academic units that focus on the systematic investigation of people of African descent in their contacts with Europeans, their dispersal throughout the diaspora, and the subsequent institutionalization of racism and oppression as means of economic, political, and social subordination.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in this work, the terms will be used interchangeably while fundamentally referring to the same field of inquiry. To more clearly identify what discipline these

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Fultz, “Review of *Black Power on Campus* by Joy Williamson,” *The Journal of African American History* 89:2 (Spring, 2004), 195-196.

<sup>17</sup> Delores P. Aldridge and Carlene Young, “Historical Development and Introduction to the Academy,” found in *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* by Aldridge and Young, Eds., (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 3.

terms refer to, Aldridge later cites Alan Colon, whose definition of black studies is worth quoting at length. He writes,

Black Studies is fundamentally *corrective, descriptive, and proactive*. It is *corrective* in that the distortions and fallacies surrounding and projected against blacks within the white universities are countered with factual knowledge and critical interpretation. It is *descriptive* for it addresses the past and present events that constitute the black experience by accurate documentation with a perspective that utilizes, generates, and promotes concepts, theories, programs, and movements toward the alleviation or resolution of group problems faced by black people. It is *proactive* as it encompasses the black intellectual tradition in the social sciences and humanities, which simultaneously has been a type of praxis or unity between intellectual work and collective efforts for effective qualitative social change on behalf of the people of the African diaspora.<sup>18</sup>

With this understanding, one should note that in between the late 1960s or early 1970s and recent years, little work of historical value appeared on black studies. Instead, numerous scholars focused on creating the materials for black studies programs. During this time, Abdul Alkalimat and others published an *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A People's College Primer* (1986) and Maulana Karenga wrote his *Introduction to Black Studies* (1982). Works like these usually contained brief reflections on the origins of black studies and the modern movement to install programs and departments at the university level.

At the time of the black student revolts, some specific case studies appeared. San Francisco State College became the first school to create a modern black studies program and, consequently, also became the site of the most scholarly attention. Academic contributions included *Blow It Up! The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State College and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakawa* (1971) by Dikran Karaqueuzian, *By Any*

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<sup>18</sup> Delores P. Aldridge, "Status of Africana/Black Studies in Higher Education in the U.S.," found in *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* by Aldridge and Young, Eds., (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 521.

*Means Necessary: The Revolutionary Struggle at San Francisco State* (1970) and *Unfinished Rebellions* (1971) by Robert Smith, Richard Axen, and DeVere Pentony, *College Days in Earthquake Country: Ordeal at San Francisco State, A Personal Record* (1971) by Leo Litwak and Herbert Wilner, and *Shut It Down! A College in Crisis: San Francisco State College, October 1968-April 1969* (1969) by William H. Orrick, Jr.<sup>19</sup>

Though San Francisco State received much attention, other schools also became the subjects of scholarly analysis. Earl Anthony wrote *The Time of the Furnaces: A Case Study of Black Student Revolt* (1971) about the movement at San Fernando Valley State which stood out because of the severity of penalties imposed on students. The courts found nineteen students guilty of felonies; the first mass felony convictions of student dissidents in American history.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Charles A. Frye conducted an anonymous survey of three universities: one with a conservative, predominantly black population, another with a progressive, largely white population, and the third with a constantly growing black studies program. This resulted in his book *The Impact of Black Studies on the Curricula of Three Universities* (1976). Tom Myles looked at the black student revolt at a historically black college in *Centennial Plus I: A Photographic and Narrative Account of the Black Student Revolution, Howard University, 1965-1968* (1969). Finally, the rise of black studies in Ivy League schools received coverage in *The Harvard Strike* (1970) by Lawrence Eichel and others and *Black Studies in the University* (1970),

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<sup>19</sup> Dikran Karaqueuzian, *Blow It Up! The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State College and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakawa* (Boston: Gambit, 1971); Robert Smith et. al., *By Any Means Necessary: The Revolutionary Struggle at San Francisco State* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970); Robert Smith et. al., *Unfinished Rebellions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971); Leo Litwak and Herbert Wilner, *College Days in Earthquake Country: Ordeal at San Francisco State, A Personal Record* (New York: Random House, 1971); William H. Orrick, Jr., *Shut It Down! A College in Crisis: San Francisco State College, October 1968-April 1969* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1969).

<sup>20</sup> Earl Anthony, *The Time of the Furnaces: A Case Study of the Black Student Revolt* (New York: Dial Press, 1971), 13.

regarding the creation of a black studies program at Yale, edited by Armstead Robinson and others.<sup>21</sup> These works remain important as Ivy League schools tend to be trendsetters spurring other universities to model their programs. Moreover, universities like Harvard are today the site of the strongest black studies programs, at least in the prestige of their faculty.

These works from the immediate period of can be coupled with more recent works of historical scholarship. These include Donald Alexander Downs' *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (1999), Wayne Glasker's *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (2002), and Joy Williamson's *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (2003).<sup>22</sup>

In Glasker's work on Penn, he looks at the connection between Black Nationalism and student activism. He reveals that this Black Nationalist perspective did not lead African Americans to isolate themselves from the larger white campus community. In the first few chapters, he documents important examples of protest at Penn in the late 1960s, including demands for a black history course and a black studies program.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, in Joy Williamson's work on the Illinois campus in Urbana-Champaign, she finds that black power ideology became central to the movement for educational

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<sup>21</sup> Charles A. Frye, *The Impact of Black Studies on the Curricula of Three Universities* (Washington: University Press of America, 1976); Lawrence Eichel et. al., *The Harvard Strike* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970); Armstead L. Robinson, et. al., *Black Studies in the University: A Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

<sup>22</sup> Donald Alexander Downs, *Cornell '69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Wayne Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Wanda M. Brooks, "Review of *Black Students in the Ivory Tower* by Wayne Glasker," *The Journal of Negro Education* 72:2 (Spring, 2003), 241-242.

change.<sup>24</sup> However, Fabio Rojas criticizes their work for focusing exclusively on student politics and failing to examine the long-term impact on two universities. They look at the immediate aftermath, but do not explain what happens to movement achievements in the long run.<sup>25</sup>

A few general studies were completed around the time of the student takeovers including *Black Power and Student Rebellion: Conflict on the American Campus* (1969) edited by James McEvoy and Abraham Miller.<sup>26</sup> McEvoy and Miller divided their work into three sections which offered heavily factual case studies, position papers by participants, and an analysis of conditions which produced unrest. While not an especially trenchant piece of historical scholarship, reviewer Charles E. Ramsey noted at the time that the work offered some documents which would become of great use to future historians.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholas Aaron Ford produced another general text near the end of the black studies movement entitled and *Black Studies: Threat or Challenge?* (1973).<sup>28</sup> Ford's book included a significant research contribution by presenting information gleaned from personal interviews with teachers, students, and administrators at over 100 colleges. He also analyzed questionnaires, college brochures, and college catalogs. Finally, Ford presented a history of black studies courses before the 1960s, the various rationales for

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<sup>24</sup> Michael Fultz, "Review of *Black Power on Campus* by Joy Williamson," *The Journal of African American History* 89:2 (Spring, 2004), 195-196.

<sup>25</sup> Rojas, 17-19.

<sup>26</sup> James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, Eds., *Black Power and Student Rebellion: Conflict on the American Campus* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Charles E. Ramsey, "Review of *Black Power and Student Rebellion: Conflict on the American Campus* by James McEvoy and Abraham Miller," *American Sociological Review* 36:3 (June, 1971), 569-570.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Aaron Ford, *Black Studies: Threat or Challenge?* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1973).



such programs, problems facing black students at predominantly white colleges, and more.<sup>29</sup>

Recently, more summative texts on the creation of black studies programs have appeared. In 2003, Delores P. Aldridge and Carlene Young edited a collection titled *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies*. However, Rojas offers the same criticism of this collection as he does of the work of Glasker and Williamson: they present a narrow timeframe which does not allow readers to grasp the longer history of black studies.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Aldridge and Young argue early on “There was indeed a direct correlation between community activism and program implementation. The size, quality, resources, and effectiveness of the Black Studies programs varied with the skill, expertise, commitment, and community support of the implementer of each program.”<sup>31</sup> While these sentences are open to more than one interpretation, the authors seem to be contending that black studies programs were propelled by change coming from outside the university. Though one cannot argue that the larger black power movement had significant influence over black students pressing for change, especially in regards to consciousness, community activists themselves often remained on the outside of student movements for the creation of black studies.

This view is advanced by the most important text on black student revolts, which arrived a few years later when Rojas published *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement became an Academic Discipline*. Rojas covers some specific case studies devoting a large chapter to San Francisco State College and another to the

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<sup>29</sup> William G. Paul, “Review of *Black Studies: Threat or Challenge?* by Nicholas Aaron Ford,” *The History Teacher* 8:1 (November, 1974), 135.

<sup>30</sup> Delores P. Aldridge and Carlene Young, Eds., *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2000); Rojas.

<sup>31</sup> Aldridge and Young, 4.

University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Chicago, and Harvard University. But, he also includes more general analysis gleaned from surveys and interviews and a study of the Ford Foundation's funding of black studies programs. He offers both a sociological perspective examining how social movements and bureaucrats in the university make change as well as historical analysis. The work of Fabio Rojas informs this study of the University of Minnesota to a significant degree.

Beyond black studies in particular, this study fits into the larger historiography of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. This includes works on armed self defense like Timothy Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (1999), Lance Hill's *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (2004), Christopher B. Strain's *Pure Fire: Self-Defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (2005), and Simon Wendt's *The Spirit and the Shotgun* (2007). The historiography also contains significant works on the cultural side of Black Power including William Van Deburg's *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (1992), Komozi Woodard's *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics* (1999), and Jeffrey Ogbar's *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (2005). Van Deburg's work includes a significant section on black student revolts to create black studies programs. To a lesser extent, Peniel Joseph's general survey *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour* covers this subject as well.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Lance E. Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Christopher Strain, *Pure Fire: Self-Defense as Activism in the Civil Rights Era* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Simon Wendt, *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007); William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992);

This study of the University of Minnesota draws much more on the part of the Black Power Movement which stresses culture and consciousness. The work of Van Deburg and Joseph are particularly important in attaching Minnesota to the more general trajectory of the larger Black Power Movement. While most of the black students at the University of Minnesota advocated a right to self-defense, they did not take up arms. Their leader, Rose Freeman, trained under Fannie Lou Hamer and participated in the southern movement. While she took up the kind of black consciousness advocated by figures in the Black Power Movement, she also sought to avoid violence, which was more in keeping with the non-violent side of the Civil Rights Movement.

One also must examine the work on African Americans and civil rights in the state of Minnesota. Here, the historiography is also quite limited. David Vassar Taylor's brief work *African Americans in Minnesota* (2002) represents the main general text on the subject and devotes only one-half page to the Morrill Hall takeover.<sup>33</sup> An excellent work on the development of civil rights liberalism in Minnesota has been written. The work of Jennifer Delton in *Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* is driven by the question: why were white Minnesotans interested in race? For Delton, the key to answering the question comes through understanding a distinct Midwestern brand of liberalism developed by Hubert Humphrey where local people voted on national issues and national platforms. Along

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Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> David Vassar Taylor, *African Americans in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 55.

side top-level politicians, the African American communities in Minnesota publicized civil rights and tied liberals to national party politics.<sup>34</sup>

The history of the University appears in two volumes. The first was published by James Gray in 1951. His book, *The University of Minnesota 1851-1951*, covered one hundred years of the university's history. More importantly, in 2001, Stanford Lehmberg and Ann M. Pflaum published *The University of Minnesota 1945-2000*. A request for research funds from 2001 point out that this text "gives limited treatment to the complex underlying forces involved." They continue,

Little, if any, scholarly effort has been expended to explore and record the history of African American involvement at the University and the take-over of Morrill Hall that led to the establishment of the aforementioned programs...A qualitative assessment of the impact of African Americans on the University during the latter part of the century has not been attempted. The African American students who are presently enrolled at the University of Minnesota have no memory of the take-over, individually or collectively.<sup>35</sup>

While the document requests \$115,000 for a research project which included funds for 50 oral interviews, the project never took place. However, their second initiative, a reunion, did take place in 2006.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the only book which gives the Morrill Hall takeover an extended treatment is "*Nerve Juice*" and *the Ivory Tower* (2006) by Marie Braddock Williams, Rose Mary Freeman Massey, and Horace Huntley.<sup>37</sup> The three participated in the takeover and the work can best be described as a memoir. While it contains information of historical value which informs the present study, it lacks the qualities of a work of historical scholarship

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<sup>34</sup> Jennifer A. Delton, *Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xiii, xvi.

<sup>35</sup> "Reunion, Celebration and Assessment of the Contributions of African American Students to The Cultural and Academic Life of the University of Minnesota 1968-2000," Morrill Hall Disturbance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, May 24, 2001), 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley.

as there are no footnotes or endnotes, limited historical context, and only brief sections analyzing the events. Neither this book nor any other examines the history of black studies at Minnesota beyond the Morrill Hall takeover.

The long history of Minnesota's Afro-American Studies Department and others remains absent from the historiography. While some people have written about the creation of black studies at the University of Minnesota and elsewhere, few have gone beyond 1969. Fabio Rojas, a foremost historian of black studies, points out, "Movement scholars have concluded that more needs to be said about the consequences and outcomes of a social movement. Compared to the voluminous research on mobilization, the literature on outcomes has yet to mature to a comparable level."<sup>38</sup> This leaves those interested in black studies at the University of Minnesota and elsewhere wondering, "Can the creation of black studies programs and departments be considered a long-term success?"

In order to fully understand the events which took place at Morrill Hall and after, one must examine the long history of black studies from its beginnings in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This allows one to see the struggle of the Afro-American Action Committee (AAAC) in Minnesota as part of a long-term strategy of resistance to white oppression by way of studying the contributions and culture of African Americans who faced exclusion in education as well as politics and social life. Russell L. Adams points out,

The proper place to begin to understand the nature of the contemporary Black Studies movement is not the campus but the city, and the best place to begin to understand the urban dimensions of the movement is not the 1960s but the years before...the Black Studies movement is but a continuing aspect of our general battle for survival and liberation in a fluctuatingly hostile environment, and that a part of what is seen today in the Black Studies movement is but a fluctuation in a fight and an

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<sup>38</sup> Rojas, 7.

expression of black collective awareness dating back to the seedtime of this nation.<sup>39</sup>

Lawrence Crouchett, in his work on early black studies movements, identifies the beginning of black studies with secret teaching during slavery, hidden from white masters. The first white-approved black studies organizations came from the Quakers as early as 1713. These religious objectors to slavery wanted blacks to be equal and total citizens. They taught African Americans their history so they could see their humiliation and subjection in a system of forced servitude, travel as missionaries to Africa, and resettle as freed slaves there.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, Russell L. Adams divides his analysis of the history of black studies into on-campus and off-campus black studies. He finds that off-campus black studies began in New England with slaves who developed petitions for their manumission. In doing so, they included studies of their conditions and character in a system of racial servitude. Adams identifies the abolitionist David Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* as "the first black clearly political document that engendered a direct response from the slavocracy."<sup>41</sup> It employed historical study to make its argument that black people had suffered more than any other people in the world, among other points. The work of Walker remains a landmark document as the first piece of black studies scholarship.

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<sup>39</sup> Russell L. Adams, "Black Studies Perspectives," *The Journal of Negro Education* 46, no. 2 (Spring, 1977), 99.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence Crouchett, "Early Black Studies Movements," *Journal of Black Studies* 2, no. 2 (December, 1971), 189-190.

<sup>41</sup> Adams, 101.

With the advent of Reconstruction, black history received a boost.<sup>42</sup> The post-war concern for educating black citizens appeared foremost in the creation of Lincoln Schools. Loyal Leagues also provided education for many black politicians. Adams identifies W.E.B. Du Bois as the founding father of on-campus black studies shortly after Reconstruction.<sup>43</sup> He and other pioneers of the field located the cause of problems among African Americans in the institution of segregation, worked to reveal important lines of ancestry, and tried to make black students capable participants in a democratic society.<sup>44</sup> In 1897, Du Bois taught the first black studies curriculum at Atlanta University. At first, black studies simply meant a course in “Negro history.”<sup>45</sup> In fact, black history continues to stand at the center of black studies. Maulana Karenga contends that black history remains “indispensable to the introduction and development of all other subject areas. Black History places them in perspective, establishes their origins and developments, and thus, aids in critical discussion and understanding of them.”<sup>46</sup>

Numerous scholars also made attempts to create a black historical society following Reconstruction, but they would not ultimately be successful until Woodson and others organized the Association for the Study and Preservation of African American Life and History in 1915 and the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916. To them, black studies would foster racial pride and solidarity and combat prejudice and discrimination.<sup>47</sup>

Adams notes that Woodson kept his association separate from campus and remained at

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<sup>42</sup> Crouchett, 192.

<sup>43</sup> Adams, 103.

<sup>44</sup> Crouchett, 192-195.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 192-195.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in James B. Stewart, “The Field and Function of Black Studies,” found in *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* by Aldridge and Young, Eds., (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 16.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

the forefront of off-campus black studies, though Woodson's work served as the key resource for on-campus black studies, exposing a gray area in Adams' binary.<sup>48</sup>

In 1919, Woodson reported that Northern colleges began offering black studies courses. His organization created and distributed the materials which made such courses possible. The University of Minnesota was one of eight northern colleges listed as offering a course, in this case, "The American Negro." At the same time, Woodson criticized many of these courses for being unproductive, arguing that they often became a degrading discussion of the "menace of race" and an extended justification of "preventive measures" taken by whites. Elsewhere, Garveyism offered a more productive impulse for the study of African American history and culture by encouraging racial pride and reverence for one's ancestors.<sup>49</sup>

In a sped-up version of events, Lawrence Crouchett covers 40 years in two pages noting that educational institutions in the 1920s remained slow in developing black studies, but federal programs renewed interest during the Great Depression. By the mid-1930s, southern black schools added black studies courses. However, black educators and leaders abandoned black studies between 1940 and 1960.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Russell Adams finds that black studies struggled against administrative hostility, philanthropic opposition, and indifference on the part of many black faculty during the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup>

In his analysis, Crouchett argues that the rise of the contemporary Black Muslim movement brought renewed study of black history and life. By the late 1950s, the call for

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<sup>48</sup> Adams, 108.

<sup>49</sup> Crouchett, 197.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 198-199.

<sup>51</sup> Adams, 108.



black studies had increased. The movement for black studies courses and departments spread from North to South, from colleges to secondary schools and then to the elementary grades.<sup>52</sup> Alternatively, Adams claims the *Brown* decision led to increased attention on the black experience. He then points out that the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. was the immediate catalyst for “the black student revolt” which called for, among other things, more black studies courses on campus.<sup>53</sup> In a third and slightly different take, Peniel Joseph concludes that the modern black studies movement can trace its immediate roots “in the depths of the Cold War that witnessed unprecedented and unexpected black political radicalism.” Several converging phenomena contributed to the radicalization of black students in the late 1960s: Third World liberation struggles, the prominence of Malcolm X and, to a lesser extent, Robert F. Williams, close political relationships with veteran activists, and the influence of revolutionary books and journals.<sup>54</sup>

While there is little evidence that either the Black Muslim movement or the *Brown* decision fueled the movement in Minneapolis, there is plenty of evidence that the death of King spurred the Afro-American Action Committee to push for black studies at the University of Minnesota. Though there is not much evidence that the AAAC talked about Third World liberation struggles, they did read revolutionary books and journals. While none of them practiced armed self-defense, they did bring at least one speaker to campus who advocated bearing arms and did so while talking with the group. The connection to veteran activists probably represented one of the strongest forces as the

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<sup>52</sup> Crouchett, 198-199.

<sup>53</sup> Adams, 109-111.

<sup>54</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, “Dashikis and Democracy,” 183, 197.

leader of the AAAC, Rose Mary Freeman, learned from and worked alongside Fannie Lou Hamer.

Fabio Rojas argues that three conditions needed to be present for black studies to emerge: disappointment with the Civil Rights Movement and unwillingness to wait for white assistance which promoted radicalism, the rise of black nationalist groups, and newly admitted black students on largely white campuses.<sup>55</sup> The intensity of these forces is revealed in the fact that, by 1970, this movement could cite 640 institutions which offered courses in black studies, though only 65 granted an undergraduate degree in the field.<sup>56</sup> All three of Rojas' conditions were present at Minnesota and they became one of the institutions which create a black studies department.

The modern movement for black studies, as in earlier times, also required the efforts of intellectuals. Harold Cruse wrote one of the key texts of the modern black studies movement, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. He called for a reconceptualization of black identity and focused on the role of black intellectuals in achieving this task. Furthermore, he pointed out that black intellectuals and white liberals engaged in an unequal relationship which prevented the creation of a discourse on black liberation that went beyond the narrow confines of liberalism. The book was well-received by younger African Americans who were angered by what they saw as ineffective black leadership. This group felt they had to gain control of cultural institutions that misrepresented black history and black people. They argued that universities should strengthen institutions which made the black community viable and raise the political consciousness of black students, which included an international

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<sup>55</sup> Rojas, 24.

<sup>56</sup> Adams, 109-111.

perspective. Peniel Joseph argues, “Cruse’s works paved the way for an ideological analysis of African and African American culture that would provide the building blocks for the transformation of democracy in the U.S.”<sup>57</sup>

William Van Deburg dates the beginning of campus revolts, in general, with the free speech controversy at Berkeley. He writes, “Once the demonstrators learned that powerful institutions could be immobilized by expressive acts such as boycotts, sit-ins, and the ‘liberation’ of administration buildings, there was no turning back. Through militant self-expression, they had discovered the secret to student power.” This strategy spread to groups advancing other issues like stopping the arms race, ending conscription for the war in Vietnam, and creating black studies departments. The American Council of Education conducted a study which found that, though they represented less than six percent of all college students, black students were involved in 57 percent of all campus protests in the 1968-1969 school year. Moreover, in 1967 and 1968, over 90 percent of sit-ins instituted by black students occurred on college campuses rather than segregated facilities in the surrounding communities.<sup>58</sup>

More specifically, according to Peniel Joseph, the modern black studies movement began in 1967 at San Francisco State College when the school hired Amiri Baraka and Sonia Sanchez as visiting professors.<sup>59</sup> This program was a result of a black student revolt. In fact, takeovers often formed a part of the movement for black studies, which usually included violence. In the most well-publicized takeover at Cornell University in 1969, black students occupied a building in an initially non-violent action. However, the situation turned to armed self-defense when some students smuggled guns

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<sup>57</sup> Joseph, 192-194.

<sup>58</sup> Van Deburg, 67-68.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph, 191.

in to protect the group against drunken white students who attempted to takeover the building.<sup>60</sup>

Not far from the University of Minnesota, at Wisconsin State-Oshkosh, black students presented a list of demands and “ransacked” the presidential suite. The sheer number of protesters arrested required that the city haul them away in Hertz rental trucks. In the aftermath, the university expelled 90 of the 114 black students enrolled at the time. Over at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2,100 National Guard troops carrying rifles, tear gas, and machine guns were called in to control “the disorder.”<sup>61</sup>

Though a takeover took place in Minnesota and students engaged in self-defense, guns and violence never became a part of the situation. Conversely, the takeover was not as peaceful and “proper” as the one at Vassar College where students sat-in at Main Hall and ended the demonstration by leaving a list of demands and two bouquets of yellow daisies.<sup>62</sup>

While forming a part of a larger series of black student revolts, one must also be conscious of the unique circumstances of African Americans in Minnesota. Thus, one must consider the history of the black population there. Before World War II, the story is largely one of a small, close-knit community without many connections to the struggles of African Americans elsewhere in America. Minnesota’s African American population remained quite small and isolated for many decades.<sup>63</sup>

While African Americans in Minnesota certainly made important contributions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these events are sparsely documented. Certainly, the role of Dred Scott

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Van Deburg, 65-66.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>63</sup> Delton, 61-62.

and his wife Harriet are widely recognized in Minnesota and national history. Scott spent two years at Fort Snelling (1836-1838) in Minnesota, leading to a pivotal court case in the Antebellum Era. During the Civil War, 104 black men served in Minnesota regiments contributing to what became a struggle for black liberation. Shortly following the war, the state legislature abolished segregation in Minnesota public schools.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1870 and 1890, the Twin Cities area (Minneapolis and St. Paul) experienced a six-fold growth in the black population as a large number of mostly young males from the upper South followed patterns of post-war migration to the North.<sup>65</sup> Between 1910 and 1940, the black population only increased from 7,084 to 9,928. But, in the next decade, it experienced a 41 percent increase growing to 14,022. Though, black people still only made up one-half of one percent of the state's total population. The primary reasons for a perennially small black population lay in the lack of available jobs due to a small industrial base as well as discriminatory hiring practices in those businesses that existed. While black people experienced discrimination in stores and were barred from neighborhoods by whites who formed restrictive covenants, the hardest-hitting form of discrimination could be found in employment.<sup>66</sup>

Though racial violence remained rare in Minnesota, it still occurred in vicious forms. The most shocking instance took place in Duluth in 1920 when a mob assaulted three black circus workers. They held a mock trial in the street accusing the three of assaulting a local white girl. Then, they hung the three black men from lampposts. Much

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<sup>64</sup> Taylor, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>66</sup> Delton, 61-62.

like lynching elsewhere, eighteen members of the mob faced indictments for murder and rioting, but only two were found guilty of rioting and none of murder.<sup>67</sup>

Minnesota also witnessed a housing confrontation similar to that of the well-known Dr. Ossian Sweet. In July, 1931, a black World War I veteran attempted to move into an all-white neighborhood. Four thousand whites angrily besieged his home hurling stones at it for four days. In an attempt to resolve the crisis the only way they knew how, civic leaders convinced the veteran to sell his home. However, there is speculation that he moved elsewhere in the same neighborhood.<sup>68</sup>

Like blacks elsewhere, African Americans rejected the passivity of victimhood. Instead, they fought back against discrimination. In 1898, Attorney Frank Wheaton won a seat in the state house and penned a law which banned discrimination in bars. In other legal landmarks, J. Louis Ervin, a black lawyer, won acquittal for his black client accused of murdering a white man in 1917, a rarity for the time. These political and legal activities combined with organizing. Community members founded NAACP chapters in St. Paul in 1913 and Minneapolis the following year. These organizations mobilized to successfully eliminate racial identification in crime reporting and protest the showing of D.W. Griffith's heroic tale of the Klan, *Birth of a Nation*. At the same time, due to the small African American population, these chapters possessed few resources and counted few members.<sup>69</sup>

Until World War II, the interests of most African Americans in Minnesota remained parochial. But, the upheaval of war mobilization increased black Minnesotans identification with the larger African American freedom movement. Local newspapers

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Delton, 62, 64.

placed municipal activities in a larger, grand narrative about civil rights across the United States. Moreover, protests rose as the local black community embraced the nationwide idea of double victory.<sup>70</sup>

Progress in civil rights continued following the war. In 1945, Hubert Humphrey won the election for mayor of Minneapolis. Civil rights became a central priority of his administration with the creation of a Council on Human Relations (CHR) and a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). This made the city one of only a few municipalities country-wide to enforce non-discrimination with regard to employment. But, the Council on Human Relations went beyond employment. This privately-funded government group researched racial and religious discrimination, educated the public, monitored the media for racist content, and investigated some individual cases of discrimination.<sup>71</sup>

All this time, the population of black people in Minnesota continued to remain a small percentage of the whole. Regardless, demographics were not the key factor in Minnesotans' acceptance of black civil rights. Jennifer Delton writes, "Historians attribute the emergence of race in northern politics to the sudden wartime influx of black migrants into northern cities, which led to economic competition, housing conflicts, new voters, violence, and shifts in political power. But Minnesota experienced no great increase in its black population during the war. It experienced no race riots, no new influx of voters to be courted. Nonetheless, Minnesotans made racism and civil rights a political issue."<sup>72</sup> She elaborates,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 93, 99.

<sup>72</sup> Delton, xxi.

Those Minnesotans who identified racism as a problem did so for the same reasons other Americans embraced antiracism during World War II: a sense of right and wrong, the paradox of fighting for democracy while twelve million citizens were denied basic democratic rights, the migration of black Americans out of the South, where they could not vote, to the North, where they could, fear of racial strife, and African American activism. These reasons motivated many Minnesotans to organize seminars and workshops about racism and religious prejudice, to study the racial situation in Minnesota, and to prohibit racial discrimination.<sup>73</sup>

Between 1950 and 1970, the pinnacle years of the civil rights and black power movements, Minneapolis and St. Paul both registered a roughly 400% increase in their African American populations. Most of the increase came from migrants from the South and North-Central states.<sup>74</sup> Though Delton notes that Minnesota experienced no “race riots” in the immediate post-World War II period, civil disorder did break out in the Twin Cities in 1968. David Vassar Taylor writes,

The outbreak of civil disorder in the Twin Cities on Labor Day weekend in 1968 was influenced by national events. Upset over intractable unemployment, discrimination in housing, and other forms of discriminatory behaviors, some blacks lost patience with the slow pace towards socioeconomic and political equality. Although the extent of local rioting never reached the levels experienced in Detroit, Newark, the Watts area of Los Angeles, Celveland, or New York, it produced thousands of dollars in property damage and scores of personal injuries. The civil unrest of the 1960s helped to underscore the disparity in opportunity accorded to black Minnesotans.<sup>75</sup>

Taylor specifically connects this civil disorder caused by disparity in opportunities to the Morrill Hall takeover, which was a forceful reaction to educational disparities.

In fact, the history of African Americans who attended the University of Minnesota is embedded in this larger history of black communities in the state. When more black men and women came to the University in the 1920s, the almost entirely

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., xxii.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor, 51.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 54.



white campus focused on creating separate spaces and segregated communities for African Americans. Though World War II brought the possibility of increased integration, segregation continued. In 1948, the Office of the Dean of Students conducted a survey which found that 27 student organizations, mostly fraternities and sororities, included restrictive clauses in their by-laws which prohibited “Negroes” from joining. Similarly, the University continued asking its approved roster of landlords to list religious and racial preferences for renters up until 1950 when it bowed to pressure from the NAACP.<sup>76</sup>

The university became slightly more diverse in 1958. Coach Murray Warmath and university alumnus, journalist and later Deputy Secretary of State and delegate to the United Nations for the Kennedy Administration Carl Rowan took the initiative to recruit African American players, making Minnesota one of the first major universities to do so.<sup>77</sup> Beyond that, during the years of civil rights activism of the 1950s and 1960s in America, a group formed on the University campus called Freedom Minnesota. The group held numerous conversations about sit-ins. However, given that African Americans still formed a small and isolated group and tended to live off-campus, they kept a low profile. In fact, a student in the mid-1960s and later professor, David Vassar Taylor noted that he would go days without seeing another black student. Though, getting a precise count on the African American population remained an ongoing problem.<sup>78</sup>

In the early 1960s, political science professor Mulford Q. Sibley influenced numerous students to become involved in progressive and radical movements. Sibley

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<sup>76</sup> Tim Brady, “No Other Moment Like This One,” *Minnesota* (January-February 2003), 28-29.

<sup>77</sup> Lehmsberg and Pflaum, 70.

<sup>78</sup> Brady, 29-30.

was a Quaker, and therefore pacifist, who held political views many regarded as radical. People also described him as “the unofficial conscience of the university” and “a Quaker saint.” One of his students, Zev Aelony, pointed to Sibley as a key influence in his participation in non-violent civil rights protests in Georgia in 1963 and 1964. Aelony helped organize Students for Integration at the University of Minnesota.<sup>79</sup>

Beyond just Professor Sibley, Walter Mondale stated that, “Faculty [he may have meant alumni] came off the campus totally committed to reform, internationalism, and civil rights. They did more per capita than any state in the union on civil rights.” He pointed to the strong record of University of Minnesota graduates: Roy Wilkins became President of the NAACP, Whitney Young led the Urban League, and Carl Rowan worked in the Kennedy Administration.<sup>80</sup>

The Civil Rights Movement on predominantly white, northern campuses made a significant advance in 1964 when the Big Ten Universities met in Racine, Wisconsin, for the “Third Inter-University Conference on the Negro.” Attendees urged universities to commit increased resources to aiding impoverished and minority students. On May 19, 1964, University President O. Meredith Wilson appointed Professor David Cooperman, who attended that conference, to head up a committee on “The Role of the University in Social Problems.” He charged the group, also referred to as the Cooperman Committee, to: identify programs, people and agencies in the University engaged in instruction and research related to the broad area of social policy; indicate social policy changes which should be made; and indicate programs which could form a base of inter-institutional cooperation.

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<sup>79</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 98-99.

<sup>80</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 115.

In its report, the committee noted that it concerned itself mostly with minority group relations and education for African Americans and American Indians. The Cooperman Report called for a Community Program Center that would increase involvement of the University with local communities and their problems. The Center would utilize University resources to take action to improve the surrounding city. It also called for increased enrollment of African American and American Indian students. To do so, the committee recommended dealing with “inadequate preparation of disadvantaged minority group members” and increased sensitivity “to non-white majority apperceptions of the educational process.” The authors concluded by warning that if such action was not forthcoming, criticism of the University’s lack of action on these pressing problems would increase.<sup>81</sup> This conclusion proved quite prescient.

Shortly after the release of the Cooperman Report, President Wilson appointed another committee, in December 1965, headed by Professor Warren Cheston, to consider the same questions on a broader basis. The Cheston Committee released a report on July 8, 1966, calling for the establishment of a center for urban and regional affairs. The first task of the center would be creating programs for teaching, research, and service relating to the urban and regional community. This Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), or Community Program Center (CPC), was approved by the Board of Regents in September, but did not have a director until the following year. On July 14, 1967, Professor Fred Lukermann became Assistant Vice President for Academic Administration and received assignment to serve as acting director of the new center.

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<sup>81</sup> Office of the President, University of Minnesota, “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, March 12, 1969), 23-25.

The center was set to begin extension and continuing-education work with \$120,000 approved by the legislature in 1967 for the project.<sup>82</sup>

Though it possessed funding, the center lacked a permanent director. Lukermann began searching for a permanent director upon his appointment, but it came to an unfruitful ending. So, in the spring of 1968, Professors David Cooperman and Gisela Konopka were appointed to the center to implement one aspect of the program. However, they found themselves unable to begin their work until July of 1968. Finally, on August 1, 1968, Professor John Borchert of the Geography Department was named permanent director.<sup>83</sup> The details of this process are not essential to understanding the creation of a black studies department. Rather, one essential point arises from a brief overview of this process: changes in the University bureaucracy were slow and tedious.

The University also employed other programs to reach out to disadvantaged students. The New Careers program connected the University with community agencies and individuals. While incorporating a significant number of minority students, it primarily targeted an older population. Another program, Upward Bound, connected with disadvantaged students while still in high school to prepare them for college. Finally, the University offered a program called Higher Education for Low-Income People (HELP).<sup>84</sup> After the take-over, the CURA worked closely with the Martin Luther King Program and HELP. It sponsored scholarly studies for urban issues and community outreach programs.<sup>85</sup> As the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall incident

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<sup>82</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 25-26.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>85</sup> Lehmborg and Pflaum, 124.

noted, these programs did not materialize as quickly as many had hoped.<sup>86</sup> The slow pace of change and bureaucratic hurdles blocking the creation of new programs would become recurring themes as black students organized to improve the university.

In the late 1960s, the Black Freedom Struggle really began to take hold of the University of Minnesota campus. Tim Brady writes, “The powerful legacy of Malcolm X, the emerging Black Panther movement, and a growing acknowledgement—culminating in the urban riots of the mid-1960s—that racism was not isolated to southern states led to an escalating tension that was felt deeply on the campus of the University of Minnesota.”<sup>87</sup> The Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident attempted to contextualize the event in the rise of student protest. They noted that the 1967-68 school year saw 147 “incidents” involving a wide range of issues on campuses nationwide. One-third were racial in nature.<sup>88</sup>

Most of these “racial incidents” at the University of Minnesota could probably be attributed to Students for Racial Progress (STRAP) which organized in the 1966-1967 school year. Its leadership included Bill Wilson, who later became the director of the Minnesota State Department of Human Rights. Much like other black student unions across the country, STRAP focused on the admission of more black students, curriculum reform, hiring of black faculty and staff, and sharing resources with the local community. The organization sponsored political forums featuring black power speakers which brought Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) to campus in 1967. When it became the Afro-American Action Committee (AAAC), they continued this tradition by inviting Dr.

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<sup>86</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 26-27.

<sup>87</sup> Brady, 30.

<sup>88</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 23

Herman Dillard, a medical doctor who graduated with honors from the University of Minnesota. He came to the University with two guns strapped at his sides.<sup>89</sup>

STRAP also organized a silent sit-in in the fall of 1967. The immediate cause of the sit-in was that Ida Elam, the president of STRAP, failed to receive an invitation to the fall convocation. But, it also resulted from long-term frustrations with the isolation of black students on campus and the lack of respect shown to them by the University. So, in response, STRAP occupied the front aisle of Northrop Auditorium for the convocation program, remaining silent. After that, they gave speeches in the plaza outside the auditorium.<sup>90</sup> Like student groups elsewhere, STRAP employed the strategy of visibly taking an area which impeded the smooth functioning of an organization or event. This tactic would be employed to great effect later in the Morrill Hall takeover.

In 1967, STRAP became the Afro-American Action Committee (AAAC). Horace Huntley says that the name change more specifically articulated the organization's goals. It made clear that the students were not just a "miscellaneous collection of activists," but a group of Afro-American students working for change. Moreover, the group decided that they were not fighting for racial progress, but the survival of black people and the triumph of freedom.<sup>91</sup> Beyond that, David Vassar Taylor contends that the AAAC made the movement more focused on specific goals rather than "non-directional."<sup>92</sup> While there was no religious disposition to the AAAC, the various people brought their own faith backgrounds to the movement. Marie Braddock Williams says, "God's gift was

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<sup>89</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, xviii, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Brady, 31.

<sup>91</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, xix, 11, 91.

<sup>92</sup> Brady, 31.

stirred up in us, for this was not only a struggle for equality and justice, but also a faith movement that was going to move mountains.”<sup>93</sup>

The writings of Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Kwame Nkrumah, George Jackson, and Mao Tse Tung influenced the leaders of the AAAC.<sup>94</sup> The texts the students identified most with were particularly important as they helped inculcate the black power consciousness which remained central to the group. This ideology, placed in the context of a college campus, produced ideas for programs like black studies and increased minority recruitment. As Fabio Rojas observes,

Black students did not develop the black studies proposal ex nihilo. The melding of nationalist ideologies with the college curriculum of the mid-1960s shows how activists create institutional alternatives by combining different elements from their organizational environment. Students created the black studies courses by infusing previously existing educational practices with new meanings.<sup>95</sup>

He also finds that Black Nationalism delegitimized traditional authority in the minds of its adherents. For black students, this meant that if they felt the college administration or faculty acted unjustly, they felt obligated to remedy the situation by taking forceful and visible action.<sup>96</sup> To some groups this meant violence. For example, members of the Black Student Union set nine bombs and detonated four on the campus of San Francisco State College.<sup>97</sup> But, the situation in Minnesota never reached the point of violence.

Horace Huntley notes that some in the AAAC believed in violence and some believed in non-violence. The group was not a monolith. However, they all agreed that

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<sup>93</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 136.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, 11, 91.

<sup>95</sup> Rojas, 87.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

they must change the status quo. To them, black power meant standing up to the indignities of racism and ridding society of white supremacy. Like Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X, they recognized that education played a key part in realizing this dream.<sup>98</sup>

In their history, *The University of Minnesota 1945-2000*, Ann Pflaum and Stanford Lehmberg say that the Afro-American Action Committee was formed with community representatives.<sup>99</sup> However, the AAAC was a distinctly student group. Horace Huntley points out that many people have misunderstood the relationship between the university and the community. While the students had connections to the community, they did not count community members among those in their group.<sup>100</sup>

As a student group, many considered the AAAC the voice of black people on the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus. The group stated that its purpose was to, “present a realistic view of the American Negro in relation to his cultural and social heritage with emphasis on the academic community; to provide a forum by which students may initiate programs to eliminate racial discrimination in all areas of concern; to provide the necessary leadership within the Negro community and to bring about a better understanding among all Americans.” Many black students agreed with this proposition as the AAAC’s membership remained between 50 and 60 students since its inception, an overwhelming majority of those on campus.<sup>101</sup> The AAAC formed part of a larger trend across the country where black student unions offered the primary vehicle for black power protests. Most of these organizations focused on two goals: increasing

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<sup>98</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 117.

<sup>100</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>101</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 10.



political activism among black collegians and promoting black cultural expression.<sup>102</sup>

The AAAC set their sights primarily on the former.

Horace Huntley writes,

The AAAC demands were not simply for a curriculum in Black Studies, but for the development of a mentality that challenged the benign White supremacist's status quo. We were not in school to just get an education that afforded us a good job. We demanded an education that prepared us in the development of skills that taught us how to think from a Black perspective, and to put that thought into actions that benefited our communities. We refused to settle for an institution that educated us away from our people and made us part of the problem, rather than the vanguard of solution.<sup>103</sup>

In writing this, Huntley highlights the role of black consciousness, one of the various manifestations of black power, in creating black studies departments and being passed on through them. William Van Deburg contextualizes this, saying, "If knowledge was power, then institutions of higher learning were academic jousting fields upon which key societal power relationships were decided. For the student protesters, greater control over their learning environment was vitally essential to the larger struggle for self-definition and power." Attending a white university also offered a learning experience in dealing with white majoritarian institutions. The knowledge black students gained in the struggle there could be used in the larger quest for black liberation.<sup>104</sup>

The Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident noted, in the Winter Quarter of 1968-1969, the university enrolled 39,202 students of which not more than 1% were black.<sup>105</sup> Meanwhile, the *Minneapolis Tribune* said there were fewer than 250 black

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<sup>102</sup> Van Deburg, 71.

<sup>103</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 139.

<sup>104</sup> Van Deburg, 69.

<sup>105</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 10, 13.

students among the 41,000 students on the campus.<sup>106</sup> Finally, the leaders of the AAAC claimed there were exactly 87 black students out of 47,000.<sup>107</sup> Given the lack of accurate data, one cannot be sure how many African American students attended the university, but one can be sure the number registered quite low.

Though the enrollment of African Americans remained low, it was increasing as part of a more general trend of black students attending majority white campuses. Nationwide, in 1964, there were 234,000 black college students, 51 percent of whom attended historically black colleges. By 1970, one-half million black students were attending college, with 66 percent of them at predominantly white colleges.<sup>108</sup>

Besides the creation of the AAAC, 1967 also saw the arrival of Marie Braddock (later Marie Braddock Williams) at the University of Minnesota. She came a short way from St. Paul, Minnesota, and became the Secretary of the AAAC, an important figure in the Morrill Hall takeover, and later co-wrote "*Nerve Juice*." Williams also became involved with the Inner City Youth League and the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center which was a part of the Martin Luther King Center in St. Paul. Williams felt connected to the local black community because she grew up there and continued to work with local organizations. However, she did not feel much community support on campus until after the Morrill Hall takeover, which again challenges Pflaum and Lehmborg's claim that the AAAC was a student-community organization. Through the Morrill Hall takeover, she

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<sup>106</sup> David Kuhn and Howard Erickson, "Protesters at 'U' Weight Faculty Reply," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 15, 1969, 1, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 4.

<sup>108</sup> Van Deburg, 67.

also met people from The Way in North Minneapolis.<sup>109</sup> The nexus between the community and university would become a central theme in later years.

Williams did not wish to attend college after graduating from high school.<sup>110</sup> No one at St. Paul Central, the high school she graduated from in 1967, talked to her or other black students about higher education. The staff, which included only one black teacher, did not inform black students about opportunities or scholarships. As a result, she remembers feeling ill-prepared and “out there on her own” with regard to education.<sup>111</sup> However, her parents put pressure on her to follow in her sister’s footsteps and she enrolled in the University of Minnesota’s General College in the fall.

Williams became a member of STRAP and when it was changed to the AAAC she became secretary of that organization. Her decision to get involved in the movement was supported by her parents. She wrote, “It was time for a change. It was time to take a stand to make things fairer for all students, but especially for Black students. It was time for me to attend classes where students and professors looked like me. It was time, it was our time, and we seized the moment. AAAC was the instrument.”<sup>112</sup>

Meanwhile, Rose Mary Freeman (later Rose Mary Freeman Massey) arrived in Minnesota earlier, in 1965. In 1967, she also began attending the University of Minnesota.<sup>113</sup> She originally came from Mississippi and grew up in the all-black community of Browning, founded after the Civil War by a group of ex-slaves. Freeman recalls 1955 when Emmett Till was murdered 10 miles away from her community. The

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<sup>109</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>110</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 32-35.

<sup>111</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>112</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 32-35.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Vaughan, “2 Black Student Leaders at ‘U’ Experienced in Demonstrations,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 16, 1969.

men gathered to discuss how they were going to protect their families and property from attack. For several days, the community remained in a state of high tension and kept guards posted waiting for attackers.<sup>114</sup>

Possessing a familiarity with racist violence and armed self-defense, Freeman participated in the Civil Rights Movement and worked for the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) for a year in the 1960s.<sup>115</sup> She was not afraid of speaking out, having been jailed a number of times for such action. At seventeen years of age, Rose traveled to the Carolinas to a workshop with Fannie Lou Hamer. Her first arrest came shortly thereafter when she participated in a sit-in at a lunch counter in Montgomery County, Mississippi. Though she was “banged around” in jail, she did not feel the brunt of the violence. Instead, the guards ordered her to clean the blood off of her friend June Johnson’s dress. Fannie Lou Hamer received the harshest treatment.<sup>116</sup>

In late 1963 and 1964, Rose worked on the Greenwood SNCC Project. She convinced people to register to vote and took them to become political participants. Initially, her job was very difficult. But, more and more people became willing to take the risk of engaging in the political process. While working on the SNCC project, Rose met Rachel Tilsen from the Twin Cities. Rachel told Rose if she ever wanted to attend college, she should consider coming North to the University of Minnesota.<sup>117</sup>

In Minneapolis, Freeman continued working for the advancement of black communities at The Way Unlimited, Inc. in North Minneapolis.<sup>118</sup> At the time of the

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<sup>114</sup> Rose Mary Freeman Massey, interview by author, telephone interview, 7 August 2008.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, xx, 2, 79.

takeover, she held the office of President of the AAAC.<sup>119</sup> Horace Huntley notes that as an organizer in Mississippi and an understudy of Fannie Lou Hamer, Rose was the most qualified to lead the group. Though she was a female leader of a black power organization, that was nothing new at the university where another woman from the Greenwood area had led STRAP before it became the AAAC. Horace Huntley recalls no problems with gender within the group.<sup>120</sup>

Like Rose Freeman, Horace Huntley also came from the Deep South. He traveled from Birmingham, Alabama, and arrived in Minnesota after serving in the United States military. Originally, he planned on attending the Tuskegee Institute, but his family could not afford to send him. So, he joined the United States Air Force and served for almost four years. During that time, he received assignment to the Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota, a state which had a black population of 333.

In May of 1963, after reading about the events in his hometown of Birmingham, Huntley applied for leave to go join the movement and informed his superiors he was leaving whether it was approved or not.<sup>121</sup> But, Huntley did not participate in the movement upon arriving there. Rather, he remained on the sidelines and observed.<sup>122</sup> Rose Freeman Massey wrote of him, “[He was] not born to be a leader, but chosen out of circumstances that were beyond his control, and driven by a strong sense of what was right and what was wrong.”<sup>123</sup>

Huntley initially planned to spend 20 years in the military. But, his experience in the military, including being stationed in North Dakota, led him to decide that he would

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<sup>119</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 37.

<sup>120</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>121</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 20-24; Vaughan, no page given.

<sup>122</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>123</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, xx, 2, 16.

not make it a career. After working with keypunch machines and computers in the Air Force, he decided to pursue a degree in computer technology and went to Minneapolis after being discharged in 1965.

While there, he developed connections with the Sabathani Community Center in South Minneapolis, an organization founded by militant community activists. Part of his reason for working with the community center was the lack of community on the Minnesota campus. Compared to the South, Huntley felt that black people would not speak to or acknowledge each other at the University of Minnesota. He believed they ignored the black connection and denied their African descent.<sup>124</sup> John Wright, a professor at the University of Minnesota, notes the importance of the town-grown connection to the increased politicization of black students on campus. He says that black students found encouragement and support through community organizations like the Urban League, and the Phyllis Wheatley, Hallie Q. Brown, and The Way community centers.<sup>125</sup> At The Way, Horace met Mahmoud El-Kati, an expert in black history. El-Kati sparked Huntley's interest in African American history encouraged him to read works by authors like Frederick Douglass and John Hope Franklin. At this point, Huntley says he was intellectually preparing himself to participate in the movement.<sup>126</sup>

His readings in black history through people he met at the way filled a significant gap in his education at the University of Minnesota. Huntley found his education at the university lacking in acknowledgement of the experience of African Americans. He remembers taking a course in American History at the university with a notable professor. One day, the professor took ten minutes to cover the entirety of African

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 24-26.

<sup>125</sup> Brady, 31.

<sup>126</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

American history. Horace raised his hand and asked if the professor was going to say anything more about the black experience in the course. The professor condescendingly answered, “Well, is there more?” Instances like this compelled Huntley to get involved with the AAAC to encourage the university to accept a broader range of study.<sup>127</sup> At the time of the takeover, Huntley chaired the planning committee for the black conference.<sup>128</sup>

The connection to the community remained important for black student unions everywhere. Students’ lists of demands frequently asked for projects to aid the black community. William Van Deburg finds,

The students could help community residents purge themselves of the sociocultural misinformation that they had imbibed all of their lives. On the other hand, continual interaction with local residents would assure the students that they were not straying too far from the nurturing ethic of black community life—that they were remaining close to the very wellspring of Afro-American culture.<sup>129</sup>

Black students often took their first black studies course in the form of an off-campus study group. For instance, the creation of Malcolm X Liberation University in Durham influenced the creation of black studies programs at North Carolina Central University and Duke University. Black students became more involved in the community and with non-academic African Americans on campus.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Horace Huntley’s first involvement with black studies was at The Way community organization, rather than at the University of Minnesota.

The Afro-American Action Committee, among other black student unions, seems to mark the beginning of their activities to create a black studies department at the University of Minnesota campus with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 37.

<sup>129</sup> Van Deburg, 73.

<sup>130</sup> Joseph, 195-197.

April 4, 1968.<sup>131</sup> However, they were not the first group to respond. The following day, the Minnesota Student Association (MSA) began organizing to set up a fund to provide free tuition to poor students. The MSA acted as the student government since 1959 when it replaced the All University Congress. The University considered the MSA President the representative voice of the student body on most issues and offered him or her ready access to most administrative, faculty and student councils.<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, an ad hoc faculty group calling themselves The Committee of Fifty met to set up a Memorial Fund following the assassination. They sent letters to other faculty in search of donations. Another group of professors created a proposal much like the MSA's which requested free tuition for poor people. Furthermore, University President Malcolm Moos asked Vice President Paul Cashman to set up a task force on human rights.<sup>133</sup> The task force later included eleven faculty, ten students, and four members of the community.<sup>134</sup> Many groups responded to the assassination showing a disposition for improving race relations on campus before the AAAC took action.

Malcolm Moos, the President of the University who created the task force, came from a conservative background. He attended the University of Minnesota to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees before moving to Los Angeles to complete his doctorate at the University of California. He taught at four universities and later published the book *The Campus and the State* (1959) about the intersection of educational institutions and government. Moos' history of the Republican Party found its way to Dwight

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<sup>131</sup> Liberation Coalition, "A Chronicle of Events from April 4, 1968 to March 7, 1969 Which Occurred in and about the University of Minnesota," Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives).

<sup>132</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 9.

<sup>133</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>134</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 28-29.



Eisenhower and in 1957, Moos became his chief speechwriter penning the famous “military-industrial complex” address. Moos then wrote speeches for other notable politicians before joining the Ford Foundation in 1964, an organization that would become a key source of funds for black studies programs and departments.<sup>135</sup>

Upon taking over the presidency at the University of Minnesota in 1967, Malcolm Moos listed his goals for the campus. The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota at the beginning of Moos’ tenure, E.W. Ziebarth, later said that Moos “tried to be helpful in the Eisenhower administration in converting the president of the United States to a more sympathetic view of black problems.” One of his top priorities upon arriving at the university was creating a strong partnership between the campus and the surrounding community.<sup>136</sup> This would become a special concern of the Afro-American Studies Department upon its inception. Beyond that, Moos wanted to resolve conflicts between students and the administration. He took over the presidency at a time when campus unrest throughout the country was reaching a peak. He noted the challenge this would present during his tenure by saying, “The towering issue today, at least for the student activist on campus, is power.”<sup>137</sup>

Three days after the president’s request for a task force, the Afro-American Action Committee presented him with seven demands at a mass rally they organized. These included: 200 full scholarships for black Minnesota high school students, consideration of the proposal to eliminate tuition for underprivileged black high school students, guidance counseling and recruitment agencies geared towards black students, a board of review to examine the policies of the Athletic Department towards black

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<sup>135</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 111, 114.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 113.

athletes, serious consideration of the possibility of naming the new West Bank library after Dr. King, representation of black students on all major university policy-making groups, and a curriculum which reflected the contributions of black people to America. Moos was in attendance at the rally and addressed them in response to their demands. In essence, he stated that the demands seemed reasonable.<sup>138</sup>

Following the AAAC rally, the Task Force on Human Rights held public meetings to address complaints, dissatisfaction, and suggestions concerning the situation of disadvantaged students. Members of the AAAC attended meetings and participated in discussions concerning the University's relationship to poor and minority groups.<sup>139</sup> Cashman's Task Force on Human Rights responded to the seven demands by stating that the group would concentrate on the request regarding recruitment. The following month, the Task Force recommended that the university set up 200 full-term financial awards for disadvantaged students, begin a recruitment program, provide staff cooperation for a campaign to obtain money for the Martin Luther King Fund, and provide counseling and tutorial programs.<sup>140</sup> This tutorial program later faced problems as it set minority students apart and a stigma became attached to being a Martin Luther King Scholar.<sup>141</sup>

By the end of the Spring Quarter, the Task Force recessed after attempting recruitment in only three St. Paul schools. While some recruitment occurred over the summer, it often lacked coordination and effectiveness. Meanwhile, the board of the Martin Luther King Fund decided to supplement the one-third grant from the University

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<sup>138</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; Williams, Massey, and Huntley, xxi.

<sup>139</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 29-30.

<sup>140</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>141</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 32.

to allow disadvantaged students full grant assistance.<sup>142</sup> This decision later turned problematic as the fund fell short on money and students suffered the consequences. The recess at the end of spring was equally troublesome. The chairman later recognized this may have been a mistake as the group lost momentum in recruitment and other goals over the summer and never recovered.<sup>143</sup>

When the Task Force resumed sessions in the fall, they became preoccupied with the employment of minority workers on university construction contracts instead of looking at new curricula which would be more inclusive of minority communities. During this time, the AAAC frequently missed meetings because the gatherings lacked discussion about moving programs like black studies forward. Interestingly, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) consistently pushed the Task Force to become preoccupied with the construction issue which negatively affected the AAAC's areas of concern, though the AAAC later welcomed them to participate peripherally in the Morrill Hall takeover. It was not until December that proposals on black studies again came under discussion by the Task Force.<sup>144</sup>

The Task Force held several winter sessions to examine the curriculum offerings already available which could fall under black studies. The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Intermediary Board compiled a list of courses and recommended instituting a partial program in African Studies and a degree program in Afro-American Studies based around classes already being taught. Professor Frank Wood worked on developing a program in Afro-American Studies and sent a memorandum setting forth the progress of a committee he led on developing courses for the program. However, the chairman of the

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<sup>142</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>143</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 30.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

Task Force recognized that there would be little or no progress towards a degree program in African American studies in the 1968-1969 school year.<sup>145</sup>

Despite this, in the fall of 1968, the Task Force recommended that the university faculty and students encourage the expansion of content on minority group cultures and human relations, increase information about these course offerings, raise the availability of these offerings, and boost the effectiveness of instruction. The Task Force determined that enough courses existed to allow the creation of inter-disciplinary majors in the area of comparative minority cross-cultural and human relations studies. An inter-disciplinary faculty and student committee organized to create a proposal for a graduate program in comparative racial and ethnic studies. However, to the AAAC, this planning seemed focused on the wrong area of the college. As the Investigating Commission noted, a large percentage of black students were enrolled in the General College, a two-year college at the University. But, most of the planning for courses in black studies took place at the graduate level and in the College of Liberal Arts, a part of the University with entrance requirements that made it difficult to transfer into from the General College.<sup>146</sup>

Meanwhile, on December 11, 1968, the issue of minority grants arose again. When students awarded those grants went to pick them up, they received notification that the Martin Luther King Fund lacked money. Instead of accepting grants, the students now required loans to pay tuition.<sup>147</sup> Many students experienced confusion and dissatisfaction, to put it delicately, at finding the grants they expected to receive unavailable.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>146</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 35-36.

<sup>147</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>148</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 34.

A similar problem occurred in the fall of 1968 at the University of Illinois. The university created a set of scholarships following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., called the Equal Educational Opportunities Program (EEOP). Over the summer, the university's black student union recruited 550 black students to take part in the program. However, the administration only raised money to support a maximum of 300 students. Moreover, many personnel in the registrar's office went on extended vacations over the summer preventing the office from processing applications for the newly recruited students. Given the high number of students without housing or funds to secure temporary housing, the students occupied a building, causing some destruction. The police were quickly called in and they jailed 244 black students on charges including malicious destruction of property and illegal occupancy of public property.<sup>149</sup>

Also in December, the AAAC decided to seek financial support for a black conference to be held at the university in mid-February. On December 5, Rose Mary Freeman and Horace Huntley met with President Moos, Vice President Cashman, and other University staff to acquire financial support for the black conference to be held in February. President Moos informed them that public funds could not be used for such an event, but he would aid the group in seeking private funding. Vice President Cashman appointed Dr. Donald Zanger, Director of the University Unions, to work with the AAAC on organizing and finding outside support for the conference. Specifically, Zander worked on finding accommodations for visitors and raising funds.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> William E. Nelson Jr., "Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Academy," found in *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies* by Aldridge and Young, Eds., (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000),

<sup>150</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 38.

Events at this time were not moving in the direction or at the pace that the AAAC wished. Programs rather than departments were being developed and forming in the wrong areas of the college. Students lost out on the grants the university promised them during recruitment. The black conference lacked the funding students hoped the university would provide. Prospects for a degree program in the present school year looked dim and the students pushing for it increasingly felt they would never get to enroll in black studies courses given the slow pace of change. Frustrated by intransigent task forces and an administration that would listen but not expedite change, the AAAC took action, as their name indicated they would.

## **Chapter 2: “Taking on the Dragon in the Streets of Babylon”: The Morrill Hall Takeover of 1969**

In *From Black Power to Black Studies*, Fabio Rojas argues that protests were not carried out with the intention of forming a department of black studies, but created the opportunities for a later time. Instead, groups usually requested black housing and increased black enrollment. Moreover, community members used the campus as a stage for voicing concerns about the ways in which universities ignored or hampered the development of the neighborhoods in which they were located. Rojas points to the University of Chicago where black students occupied an administration building to demand all-black housing. Following that, a committee was created where black students presented a request for a black studies program. At the University of Illinois-Chicago, during an anti-war building occupation, fights broke out between black and white students. Following the takeover, the university created a commission to hear complaints from black students and one of the grievances concerned the lack of a black studies department.<sup>151</sup>

Alternatively, at the University of Minnesota, the central demand during the Morrill Hall takeover was the creation of a black studies program. There was no issue which served as a pretext to a later request for an Afro-American Studies Department. Moreover, the movement at the Twin Cities campus was a distinctly student movement with community members only involved in a limited consulting role. This chapter offers a detailed account of the takeover with points of comparison to and analysis of other incidents as well as synthetic works.

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<sup>151</sup> Rojas, 96-97.

The account of the Morrill Hall takeover lies primarily in three sources. The first is the official report of the University of Minnesota. The Investigating Commission on the Morrill Hall Incident produced this document. This investigating commission created by University President Malcolm Moos on January 20, 1969, included three members of the community, four faculty members, three students, and two administrators. Moos gave them the responsibility for investigating the facts, but not determining the guilt or innocence of the people involved. The commission held 22 closed meetings lasting over 70 hours which included calling witnesses to appear voluntarily.<sup>152</sup> However, this report became the subject of criticism from the AAAC. To balance problems with its bias, points of dispute have been noted. The other two accounts, created by the Liberation Coalition in early 1969 and by Williams, Freeman and Huntley in *“Nerve Juice”* (2006) are also included in the narrative to provide a more detailed account of the events and challenge the dominant narrative.

Though the university made some effort, by mid-January, 1969, the Afro-American Action Committee felt little progress had been made on their demands which they had issued almost a year ago. The AAAC faced the bureaucratic hurdles of a large university which tended to hinder the pace of progress. This daunting administrative structure coupled with the use of task forces and special commissions to solve specific problems meant anyone seeking change required extreme patience.<sup>153</sup>

Similar conditions were present at San Francisco State College, the site of one of the most famous and studied black student revolts. Black students there made up only four percent of the population on campus. They were also seeking a black studies

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<sup>152</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 3-5.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 14-15.



department and a plan for the university to increase minority enrollment. Though the college agreed to the students' demand for a black studies department in 1966, the administration at San Francisco spent two years developing the proposal and hiring staff. The students faced bureaucratic hurdles as administrators kept changing deadlines and rules regarding the needed paperwork for the department. Moreover, the administration refused to ask for extra money from the legislature and other departments were unwilling to cooperate with the creation of a black studies department.<sup>154</sup> So, like Minnesota, though the administration stated their intention to create a department, the slow pace of change combined with bureaucratic blockades led to a student revolt.

On January 13, 1969, seven black representatives of the AAAC at the University of Minnesota entered the Office of the President to meet with him. With the president away at a meeting in Duluth, Vice President Cashman met to talk with the students along with Assistant Vice President Lukermann, Mr. Reeves, and Mr. Learn.<sup>155</sup> The students voiced primary concern with their financial aid difficulties as the university changed their grants to loans. Secondly, the AAAC expressed frustration about the slow progress in obtaining funding for a proposed black conference. They felt they had been promised full support earlier and had not received it. Cashman referred them to an earlier meeting where the administration informed the AAAC that they needed to provide a budget before headway could be made on financing the conference. Finally, the students expressed a desire for an Afro-American Studies Department and asked why the

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<sup>154</sup> Rojas, 51, 71-72.

<sup>155</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 18.

university did not employ Milt Williams (Mahmoud El-Kati), who would later become an important and controversial figure at the university.<sup>156</sup>

The meeting took place in a tense environment. In reporting to the Investigating Commission, Vice President Cashman noted at one point someone suggested “entrapment.” One student stood guarding one door and two students stood blocking the other. Someone asked the reporter for the *Minnesota Daily* to leave. Though a student suggested holding him there until he met their demands, Dr. Cashman indicated he had no desire to leave.<sup>157</sup>

After almost two hours of discussion, the AAAC grouped together in a corner of the office and developed a list of demands.<sup>158</sup> They requested the following:

1. Establishment of a Department of Afro-American Studies by the fall of 1969, with the AAAC controlling the planning of the program.
2. Contribution by the university of one-half the expenses of the proposed national conference of black students to be held on the campus.
3. Placing the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund in the hands of an agency of the black community.<sup>159</sup>

Cashman responded to the demands by saying that the university would continue the search for private funds for the conference. He also noted that plans were in development for a graduate program in comparative racial and ethnic studies, which would include black studies. At 3 P.M., President Moos called but the students declined to speak with him over the phone. Moos asked to attend the AAAC’s morning meeting

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<sup>156</sup> President’s Investigating Commission, “Minutes from January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting at 2:00 P.M.,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969), 1-2.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

the following day. The students denied his request and agreed to meet him at 1 P.M. instead.<sup>160</sup>

At their Tuesday meeting, the AAAC held intense debates for more than an hour about what to do in the event their demands received a rebuke. Two basic factions formed in disagreement over whether a takeover was the proper response. By the time 1:00 P.M. approached, the students left for Morrill Hall without deciding on a definite course of action.<sup>161</sup>

According to the Investigating Commission, 60 to 70 black students met President Moos in Morrill Hall. The president did not expect so many people to attend. However, Horace Huntley insists that only approximately 40 students attended and that the commission as well as the *Minnesota Daily* exaggerated the numbers because they feared “a mighty army.”<sup>162</sup> Rose Mary Freeman described her group as “Black and angry” that day.<sup>163</sup> Freeman herself took the President’s chair and Vice President Paul Cashman asked her to move. She refused. Instead, she stayed in the seat to let the administration know that the members of the AAAC were in charge and to eradicate the mental attitude of submissiveness.<sup>164</sup>

Moos, along with Assistant Vice President Lukermann and Professor Hyman Berman, met with the students in hopes of exploring the substance of their demands and explaining the progress the University made in each of the areas. Moos attempted to clarify the University’s position on each of the demands. However, Horace Huntley,

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<sup>160</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 18.

<sup>161</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 29.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

leading the meeting for the AAAC, wanted a “yes” or “no” response to each of their demands.<sup>165</sup> The meeting ended after only 20 or 25 minutes. Feeling a total lack of progress, the AAAC stated that it appeared the administration said “no” to each of the demands. Seeing the meeting come to an impasse, President Moos departed for St. Paul to give a speech.<sup>166</sup>

Meanwhile, the AAAC began occupying the two offices on the main floor on Morrill Hall. Rose Mary Freeman wrote,

It had cages with White faces behind every cage. In fact, it was a huge monster, complex and frustrating, especially if you needed to execute some business. We, the Black students, members of the Afro-American Action Committee, moving collectively, high on revolutionary rhetoric, deeply motivated by a proud sense of pride in our Blackness, decided to take on the dragon in the streets of Babylon. We decided they had to let us in.<sup>167</sup>

Marie Williams suggests that the AAAC chose the Bursar and Admissions and Records offices to stop the flow of the university. Though they felt that the administration blocked progress on their demands, taking the president’s office would have lacked impact on the system as a whole, especially considering he was often gone. They needed to hit where it would hurt the most and those two offices were the place.<sup>168</sup>

Ann Pflaum and Stanford Lehmborg cite John Wright in their history of the university, who said, “Our basic plans, and the list of demands and requirements, were in part patterned on those stratagems and ideas that were fairly consistently being presented to universities and colleges around the country.”<sup>169</sup> However, Marie Williams recalls no

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<sup>165</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 19; Liberation Coalition, no page given; President’s Investigating Commission, “Minutes from January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting at 2:00 P.M.”

<sup>166</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 20.

<sup>167</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 14.

<sup>168</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>169</sup> Lehmborg and Pflaum, 117.

models for their plan to take over Morrill Hall. She, Rose Freeman, and Horace Huntley all agree that the decision to occupy a building until their demand for a black studies program was met was a decision made in the moment and theirs alone.<sup>170</sup>

Upon entering the offices, the AAAC announced that staff could continue working.<sup>171</sup> The students sat on desks and in chairs of the office. Dean Summers, head of the Office of Admissions and Records, and Charles Liesenfelt, Assistant to the Recorder, attempted to reassure the staff. The two of them instructed the staff to put papers and records away and depart for the day. They requested that employees leave in small groups rather than all at once. One of the students heard this order being given and asked why the administration ordered staff to leave when the students planned on sitting-in and not harming anyone.<sup>172</sup>

Shortly after the occupation began, a white student named Philip Upton approached the doors of Morrill Hall. In his khaki army jacket, he broke through the west doors by smashing the coat hangers which held the doors shut. Upon arriving inside, the Investigating Commission reported that Upton was met by “a black student of heavy build” who told him that the school was closed.<sup>173</sup> Upton insisted that he wanted to go to the Bursar’s Office to pay some fees and attempted to go around the man.<sup>174</sup> But, the man pushed or threw him to the ground. He hit the outer door and injured his back.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008; Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008; Rose Mary Freeman Massey, interview by author, telephone interview, 7 August 2008.

<sup>171</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>172</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 40.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 42

<sup>174</sup> University Police Department, “Complaint No. C69-1-101: Assault on Phillip Richard Upton,” Morrill Hall Takeover, Office of the President Papers, box 236 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, January 14, 1969), no page given.

<sup>175</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 42

After falling to the ground, a black student told him, “You shouldn’t have tried to do that.” Upton shouted angrily, “It’s my university, too!”<sup>176</sup>

Joseph Kroll, President of the MSA, and Robert Ross, a member of the Student Advisory Board (SAB) staff, aided him in his injured state. They called a doctor over and an ambulance took Upton to the University Health Service. After being examined, the doctor sent him home. He dealt with some soreness and stiffness in his back but otherwise suffered no harm. The Investigating Commission reported that anywhere from 30 to 45 black students left after this event expressing disapproval and “saying that they did not want to be involved in that kind of thing.”<sup>177</sup> Though, Horace Huntley says this number seems a bit high. Given the number of students in the AAAC, not all of whom participated in the takeover, this would mean that almost everyone left.<sup>178</sup> At the same time, the incident allowed students outside to break the coat hangers and broom handles which secured the doors. They began entering and exiting at their own will without anyone stopping them.<sup>179</sup> The Investigating Commission reported that until 5:30 P.M., the AAAC takeover was a peaceable occupation, despite this event.

When a police officer again interviewed Phillip Upton later in the month, he reported that he still felt back pains. He told the officer he had experienced problems with his back since a retreat the previous summer when he sustained a minor back injury playing football. The altercation at Morrill Hall seemed to aggravate that injury. He also stated that he could not identify his assailant. At the time, Lester Cannon of the AAAC

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<sup>176</sup> David Kuhn and Howard Erickson, “Protesters at ‘U’ Weigh Faculty Reply,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 15, 1969, 6.

<sup>177</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 42; Liberation Coalition, no page given; University Police Department, “Complaint No. C69-1-101: Assault on Phillip Richard Upton,” no page given.

<sup>178</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>179</sup> University Police Department, “Complaint No. C69-1-101: Assault on Phillip Richard Upton,” no page given.

told an officer that he did not believe anybody in his organization had anything to do with the incident and was willing to help out. Philip Upton had left school at the end of the winter session for financial reasons and taken up a full time job. But, he told the officer he planned to return to the university when he was financially able.<sup>180</sup>

At 3 P.M., Vice President Donald Smith convened a committee of faculty and students in the Regent's Room of Morrill Hall to determine whether the occupation violated the University's demonstration policy. However, the talks shifted over to possible negotiations with the AAAC when the student group sent them a message that they would be interested in meeting. Five members of the AAAC later discussed their demands with the committee.<sup>181</sup>

Meanwhile, only Liesenfelt was left in the Records and Admissions Office. The students barricaded one of the sets of doors to the inner lobby area with large wooden tables. They closed the outer doors on the west side, jammed the south and middle pairs of doors with coat hangers in the panic bars while guarding the northern doors. Though a number of students came through the doors into the outer lobby in the early afternoon, the AAAC and SAB advised them that the building was closed. At 5:30, a group of five black students entered Liesenfelt's office and shouted that he must leave.<sup>182</sup>

Shortly thereafter, a small group of staff began operating the Civil Service Office in Morrill Hall which opened on Tuesday evenings. A number of applicants waited in the corridor to meet with staff. However, the AAAC sent students to close the office and guard the south doors. While some of the applicants immediately left, the staff ignored

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<sup>180</sup> University Police Department, "Complaint No. C69-1-101: Assault on Phillip Richard Upton," no page given.

<sup>181</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 45.

<sup>182</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 41, 44.

the black students. Fifteen minutes later, the students returned with a janitor to tell the staff the building had been closed. In accordance with instructions left by the head of the department, the staff decided to end testing and other operations and close. Normally, they would have remained open until about 8:30 or 9:00 P.M.<sup>183</sup>

After nightfall, sixty white members of Students for a Democratic Society and other organizations appeared at the west doors to join the AAAC takeover. The Minnesota SDS had been organized in the spring of 1965 to “create a sustained community of educational and political concern...bringing together liberals and radicals, activists and scholars, students and faculty.” Their membership fluctuated between 20 and 50 members. White members of other campus organizations attended as well but not in a capacity to represent their organizations.<sup>184</sup>

The AAAC told them to take up positions in the outer lobby. Black students wanted to carefully limit the role of whites and asked them to stay out of the inner offices.<sup>185</sup> Marie Williams notes no animosity toward SDS despite the fact that they interfered with the progress of the black studies program while the Task Force on Human Rights was in session. She appreciated their support in the takeover, but noted that they had to remain in a limited role because they were not members of AAAC and the takeover “was a black thing.”<sup>186</sup>

The white radicals made speeches, gave instructions on methods of resistance to police, and sang songs. Also, the SDS brought large quantities of Vaseline and used fire hoses to fill waste baskets with water in the event of a tear gas or mace attack. This act

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<sup>183</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 46.

<sup>184</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 10-11.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11, 47, 50-51, 57.

<sup>186</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.



caused damage to records as water spilled on the floor where records lay. These actions might also have contributed to the more confrontational mood which developed.<sup>187</sup> The Grand Jury report which preceded the indictment of three participants in the Morrill Hall takeover noted that later in the evening, a discussion took place among the protesters over whether or not to burn down Morrill Hall.<sup>188</sup> However, the AAAC denied this claim arguing that the police put a rag into a bottle which contained duplicating fluid to make it look like a Molotov Cocktail. They then photographed it and presented it to the Grand Jury as proof that students considered burning the building down.<sup>189</sup>

The AAAC also allowed community members in. The Investigating Commission reported that the community split along two lines. One encouraged restraint, order, and avoiding damage while the other pressed the students to take action to hurt the University. Though the students were agitated by the thought of police arriving, by about 4:00 A.M., the community members preaching restraint won out.<sup>190</sup> Alternatively, Marie Williams claims that no one pushed for violent action. There may have been one or two people who got haphazardly carried away at the time, for example a student who called for burning the building, but no open discussion took place about using violence as a planned strategy.<sup>191</sup>

In their history of the university, Pflaum and Lehmborg say the occupation of Morrill Hall represented a joint effort involving activists from the campus and community groups and conclude that the pressure to create a black studies department

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<sup>187</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 10-11, 47, 50-51, 57.

<sup>188</sup> Bob Schranck, "Grand jury findings on 'U' sit-in revealed," *Minneapolis Star*, October 2, 1969.

<sup>189</sup> "The People Versus Malcolm Moos, Paul Cashman and James Reeves," Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969).

<sup>190</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 49.

<sup>191</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

came from the outside.<sup>192</sup> However, community members were not part of the planning for the takeover and only showed up later. Pressure for black studies clearly came from students on the inside of the university.

At the same time, the community members offered a variety of ideas to the students. One of the community members present was the Reverend Dr. Matthew Eubanks, who was director of the Citizens Community Center. He discussed survival tactics in the event that police stormed the building.<sup>193</sup> Milt Williams (Mahmoud El-Kati) spoke about past struggles for freedom. Rose Mary Freeman wrote, “Brother El-Kati talked about the relevance of our history as a people. He suggested that history is man’s compass by which he finds himself on the map of human geography. The message was, and is, ‘We are Who We Were.’ The students sat quietly listening, giving all due respect to their elders.”<sup>194</sup> Other community members who came to Morrill Hall included Syl Davis of The Way and Spike Moss.<sup>195</sup> The *Minneapolis Tribune* also identifies Harry Davis, executive director of the Minneapolis Urban Coalition and Charles Smith, a social work aide at North High School. They cite one anonymous University administrator who mentioned five staff or faculty members who helped including Eugene Briggs, Frank Wilderson, Laurence Harper, Gloria Williams and Cynthia Neverdon.<sup>196</sup> A reflection on the event by Minnesota Public Radio in 2006 stated that Matthew Stark, a white assistant professor, also stayed with the students and encouraged them to refrain from vandalizing offices. He also convinced them to keep the focus on racial issues by not aligning with

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<sup>192</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 117.

<sup>193</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 38.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>196</sup> David Kuhn, “Compromise Ends Negro Takeover of Morrill Hall at ‘U,’” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 16, 1969, 12.

the SDS.<sup>197</sup> Finally, Marie Williams suggests that Bobby Higman from the Inner City Youth League may have been present.<sup>198</sup> Clearly, the community showed a great deal of support and offered assistance to the students after the decision was made to occupy the building.

During this occupation, the students made long-distance telephone calls to other colleges including at least one to Berkeley, California.<sup>199</sup> Apparently, the University recorded the conversations because President Moos noted in a later speech that the tapes of the calls were being examined.<sup>200</sup> The Grand Jury's Investigation produced a list from the telephone company records which recorded 95 long-distance calls made during the 24-hour occupation.<sup>201</sup> Marie Williams does not recall any students making phone calls, but presumes that students involved in the takeover might have been calling friends or relatives elsewhere to let them know what was happening.<sup>202</sup> These calls suggest the possibility that the students were connected to other black student unions in their struggle, but Williams, Massey and Huntley deny this.

By 10:00 P.M., a group of administrators and faculty members had drawn up a Memorandum of Understanding in response to the three demands and President Moos approved it. However, the black students found problems with all three of the university's answers and rejected the memorandum. Negotiations broke up around 12:30 or 1 A.M. The group decided to convene a meeting of the Administrative Committee at

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<sup>197</sup> Art Hughes, "The legacy of the Morrill Hall takeover," *Minnesota Public Radio*, April 21, 2006.

<sup>198</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>199</sup> David Kuhn, "Panel Will Probe 'U' Incident: Moos Will Name Fact-Finding Study Committee," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 17, 1969, 1.

<sup>200</sup> Ted Smebakken, "Moos Almost Called Police in Protest," *Minneapolis Star*, January 21, 1969.

<sup>201</sup> Bob Schranck, "Grand jury findings on 'U' sit-in revealed," *Minneapolis Star*, October 2, 1969.

<sup>202</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

9:00 A.M. in Johnston Hall and a meeting of the University Senate at 11:00 A.M. in Murphy Hall. The AAAC allowed them to leave without interference.<sup>203</sup>

Around 2:00 A.M., when the last administrator left, the students used desks to construct a barricade in front of the west entrance and blocked the doors to the outer lobby. The barricade reached from wall to wall, near the ceiling, and was two desks deep. The Investigating Commission said this likely caused much of the damage.<sup>204</sup> The departure of the University administrators, in part, led many of the students to believe that the police were on their way. This view was perpetuated by the rumor that the vault in the Bursar's Office was on a time lock and would open automatically at 8:00 A.M. Rose Mary Freeman described a scene in which one student stood on a desk and called for the group to burn the building to the ground.<sup>205</sup>

Many students at this time wanted to leave to avoid the police or white students storming the building. Freeman said that "fear had gripped the souls, minds and bodies of these young warriors" with most wanting to leave and few desiring to soldier on. Holding *The Wretched of the Earth* in her hand, she seized the moment and spoke to the group reminding them that they had declared they would stay until their demands were met. Freeman called for them to search their hearts and make the right decision. Ollie Shannon, a student athlete, responded first and said he would stand by Rose. Eventually, everyone made the decision to stay.<sup>206</sup>

On Wednesday morning, white students began to gather in front of Morrill Hall as a form of counter-protest. While about 150 white students appeared outside the building

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<sup>203</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 20, 48.

<sup>204</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 48, 50.

<sup>205</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 48-49.

<sup>206</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 48-49.

on the day prior, they mostly watched or attempted to conduct business inside. The Investigating Commission described their mood as relatively quiet and calm. However, the crowd which formed on Wednesday morning exhibited hostility. The group attempted to remove the barricade of the west doors and caused concern among University administrators. The school officials attempted to calm the group outside and dissuade them from trying to enter the building.<sup>207</sup>

Despite this, a large crowd collected outside the north doors and appeared to be preparing to rush those guarding the entrance. The guards on the inside increased their numbers and took up fire hoses and fire extinguishers to hold back any on-rushers. Others inside armed themselves with broom handles and hoes used to clear ice from the sidewalks. Likely discouraged, the crowd shifted over to yet another side of the building.<sup>208</sup>

It also appears that some students succeeded in breaking into the building. Some white students opened a window and were able to crawl inside. The Investigating Commission said that two or three white students entered the building and then unwired the doors on the north side of the east end of the building. Though the accounts remain blurry, the report also mentions that a news crew might have gained entry and taken pictures of the inside of the Admissions Office area. It is suggested that black students and their white allies chased out the few who did enter the building. After this, it is likely that the AAAC used desks and cabinets to barricade the Admissions Office from further entrance.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 52-53.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

As the morning passed, the crowd outside reached nearly 600 and became increasingly vitriolic. Evidence shows that white students threw ice and, in one case, a rock, breaking at least two windows. Verbal exchanges also took place between those inside and those outside. Rose Freeman writes that small groups of white students moved from one entrance to another shouting, “Niggers, come out, come and get me.” One black student responded by spraying a fire extinguisher out the window onto a crowd of white students. Thankfully, near the noon hour, the crowd began to diminish before much beyond rhetorical violence could occur.<sup>210</sup>

Meanwhile, talks between representatives of both sides resumed that morning. The two sides produced a second Memorandum of Understanding which representatives of both sides signed around 12:30 P.M. on Wednesday afternoon effectively ending the takeover.<sup>211</sup> The new agreement included the development of an academic program to allow students to obtain a bachelor’s degree in subjects reflecting the experience of black Americans. A committee of four students, four faculty, and two other individuals would develop recommendations for the program. The university also agreed to give \$5,260 from private university funds to cover half the cost of the February conference. Finally, seven seats reserved for community members would be added to the 14 member board controlling the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Fund. The AAAC would be allowed to name four of the seven community members as well as four of the seven students who sat on the board.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 54-55; Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 50.

<sup>211</sup> “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 52; Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>212</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

A half hour later the students were escorted out of Morrill Hall via the tunnel system to avoid the crowd of hostile white students.<sup>213</sup> As they triumphantly crossed a bridge, a photo of them was taken which would later play a role in criminal indictments.

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<sup>213</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 52.

### **Chapter 3: “Let’s Stop Kissing the Boots of Minorities”: Public Outcry, The Morrill Hall Bills, and the Trial of the Morrill Hall Three**

Many groups responded harshly to the takeover, especially the state government. Sen. Donald Sinclair, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Richard Fitzsimmons, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, stated that a failure by university officials to discipline the black students responsible for property damage would “not sit kindly with them or other legislators.”<sup>214</sup> Representative John Skeate said he intended to introduce a bill which would make it unlawful for a student to engage in any type of demonstration that resulted in injury or damage to public property. Anyone in violation of this statute would be barred from public colleges and universities for one year.<sup>215</sup> At the same time, Representative Warren Chamberlain introduced a bill which would deny state scholarship money to any student taking part in demonstrations.<sup>216</sup> Though the dominant sentiment was one of disapproval, the legislature occasionally expressed other reactions to the takeover. For instance, Representative Rodney Searle, who sat on the Higher Education Committee, said the demands of black students remained impossible to implement because of the scarcity of black college professors.<sup>217</sup>

Governor Harold LeVander indicated that any disruption in the university administration would not be tolerated in the future, though disciplinary action would be a

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<sup>214</sup> David Kuhn, “Panel Will Probe ‘U’ Incident: Moos Will Name Fact-Finding Study Committee,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 17, 1969, 1

<sup>215</sup> Ted Smebakken, “State Lawmakers Criticize Black Takeover at University,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 15, 1969, no page given.

<sup>216</sup> David Kuhn, “Panel Will Probe ‘U’ Incident,” 1.

<sup>217</sup> Ted Smebakken, “State Lawmakers Criticize Black Takeover at University,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 15, 1969, no page given.



university matter.<sup>218</sup> At the same time, LeVander praised President Moos at a press conference for ending the takeover quickly and peacefully. Though he did qualify his statement saying he was satisfied with the administration's handling of the incident to the extent that it ended the dispute without violence. He did not want students to believe that forceful action brought results, which is how he felt they might interpret it.<sup>219</sup>

Interestingly, at the same conference LeVander told reporters that he planned to ask Nixon to give states a chunk of the federal surplus projected by Johnson. He estimated that the current surtax would cost Minnesota \$40 million over two years.<sup>220</sup> This would be a factor later as public universities like the Twin Cities campus experienced funding shortages which led to disputes over cutting programs and faculty, especially relatively new programs like black studies.

While LeVander generally praised Moos, the legislators expressed some anger and disappointment with his decisions. Moos was the first University of Minnesota graduate to become president and, in their history of the university, Stanford Lehmborg and Ann Pflaum say that allowed him to bring an understanding of the state and its politics.<sup>221</sup> But, in this particular instance, it did not stop him from coming under fire. Representative Louis Murray said, "I think Moos has bent over backwards in trying to please these people. If they're going to continue, I'm in favor of the university people making the Chicago police look like a bunch of amateurs." Other legislators like Vernon Sommerdorf and Helen McMillan, however, opposed such a hard-line stance on the

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<sup>218</sup> David Kuhn, "Panel Will Probe 'U' Incident," 1.

<sup>219</sup> "LeVander: Student Disorder Must Stop," *Minneapolis Star*, January 17, 1969, no page given.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> Lehmborg and Pflaum, 110.

grounds that it would make martyrs of rebels.<sup>222</sup> Most legislators, including the chairmen of the two finance committees, opposed penalizing the University as a whole “because of the actions of a militant minority.” However, Senator Donald Sinclair Stephen said the University would likely lose prestige in the eyes of the average Minnesotan, especially since the administration capitulated to lawbreakers.<sup>223</sup>

The House Subcommittee on Higher Education ended up holding public hearings on the three bills which legislators proposed in the wake of the Morrill Hall takeover, dubbed the Morrill Hall Bills. One bill would have cut off state financial aid to any student involved in any riot or demonstration. Another would have permanently expelled any teacher or student who caused damage to any public property during a demonstration. The third would have expelled any student participating in a demonstration that resulted in personal injury or property damage for one full school term and make that student ineligible to enter another state public school for at least one year. A fourth bill which made it a gross misdemeanor to commandeer a public building had already passed the House 111 to 18.<sup>224</sup>

C. Robert Morris, a law professor at the university as well as a representative of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, spoke to the committee and labeled the bills unconstitutional because they restricted freedom of speech and assembly and violated the due process clause. Moreover, the legislature used vague wording making the scope of the laws unclear. He specifically attacked the bill which would have withheld state

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<sup>222</sup> Smebakken, no page given.

<sup>223</sup> “Legislators: Don’t Penalize ‘U’,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 16, 1969, 6C.

<sup>224</sup> Stephen Hartgen, “Students protest at hearing on penalties for disorder,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 19, 1969, no page given.

financial aid and said it discriminated against the poor and proposed arbitrary punishment.<sup>225</sup>

Dr. Paul Cashman, vice president for student affairs, opposed the bills in another hearing on the proposed legislation. He argued that the requirement that students be expelled or lose scholarships might increase violence rather than decrease it. Moreover, incidents of planned violence remained limited and adequate legal remedies existed to respond to them. Instead, “cause-related events” prevailed and started with peaceful demonstrations based on valid complaints. He felt the school would be wrong to suppress such speech. Alternatively, Cashman suggested the legislature provide money for scholarships for disadvantaged students, for discretionary funds for colleges to deal with special problems, and for hiring more personnel to handle student affairs. Finally, he felt that the student demonstrations of the 1960s resembled the labor unrest of the 1930s. As those protests were met by defining the rights of laborers, so modern legislation should define the rights of students, rather than eliminate them.<sup>226</sup>

Besides attacks from the state government, students also faced repercussions from federal organizations. President Nixon actively worked to block aid to students involved in demonstrations. The 1969 appropriations bill for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare stated that no funds could aid any student or faculty member convicted by any court of general jurisdiction of the use of or assistance in the use of force, trespass, or seizure or property under control of a college to prevent officials or students from engaging in their duties or pursuing studies. Moreover, students who participated but were not arrested could be denied aid under the Higher Education Act of 1968. A school

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<sup>225</sup> Hartgen, “Students protest at hearing on penalties for disorder,” no page given.

<sup>226</sup> Charles Whiting, “Administrators oppose student disorder bills,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 26, 1969.

would need to determine that a student willfully refused to obey its lawful regulation or order and that the refusal was of a serious nature and contributed to substantial disruption of the administration of the institution.<sup>227</sup>

The public reaction resembled the legislature's response. Citizens flooded the University of Minnesota with letters responding to the takeover and the administration's decisions. One letter quoted in the *Minneapolis Star* said, "Dr. Moos: You have lost our respect by kissing the boots of a disgusting, belligerent minority."<sup>228</sup> Nationwide, a Gallup Poll quoted in the *Minneapolis Tribune* revealed the public attitude toward "student disorders" on university and college campuses. It found that 8 out of 10 Americans favored expelling and taking federal loans away from students who broke laws in campus demonstrations. Seven out of 10 opposed giving students a greater voice in running colleges. However, public perception of disorder did not match the facts which, in California, showed that only 210 of the 29,000 publicly-aided students at 18 state colleges had been arrested as a result of demonstrations. This disproved Governor Reagan's statement that "a disproportionate number of students receiving federal aid have been involved in disruption."<sup>229</sup>

The public reaction to the Morrill Hall Takeover was likely exacerbated by the "freedom of speech" controversy which occurred at the University months earlier. The Office of Student Affairs found,

Much of the general public seemed to regard the Morrill Hall take-over as but another example—though more disgraceful—of failure of the University to be mindful of and responsive to the traditional values and proprieties which the public expects to be upheld. As expressed by the University Director of Alumni Relations, numerous friends of the

<sup>227</sup> "Aid to be withheld from convicted protesters," *Minnesota Daily*, March 31, 1969.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Vaughan, "'U' Handling of Black Takeover Criticized," *Minneapolis Star*, January 18, 1969.

<sup>229</sup> "Legislatures and the Universities," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 23, 1969.

University were shocked and saddened by what had occurred during the autumn quarter when the use of vulgar language in the *Minnesota Daily* had gone unpunished; but the Morrill Hall episode, coming on top of this, incensed many and produced a deep feeling of indignation and outrage.<sup>230</sup>

In response to the criticism, the University of Minnesota administration began a coordinated public relations campaign in defense of their decisions. They drafted a letter which they sent to 15,000 people to help them understand the event and its handling. The letter made the argument that, "In no other case we know had the issue been resolved more peaceably, with less violence and property damage, with more rapidity, and with more satisfactory outcome than this one at Minnesota."<sup>231</sup> Communication was particularly important in improving the situation. R. Eugene Briggs, student union program consultant noted, the sit-in was the result in a breakdown in communication.<sup>232</sup> The negotiations during the takeover focused on resolving this problem. The Investigating Commission reported,

The progress made on January 14 and 15, 1969 in furthering both understanding by AAAC of the efforts the University was making and was prepared to make in the curriculum area and understanding by the University of the needs of black students in this area suggests to the Commission that better communications have been worked out and that faculty activity has been galvanized toward planning curriculum development in Afro American studies leading to an undergraduate [sic] degree.<sup>233</sup>

At the same time, Malcolm Moos attempted to advance the notion that the peaceful resolution was a one-time deal. In a speech likely meant to cater to angry legislators and the upset public, Moos said, in any repeat of the incident, he might resort

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<sup>230</sup> Thue O. Rasmussen, "Observations and Comments Concerning the Occupation of Morrill Hall by Representatives of the Afro-American Action Committee and Others," Office for Student Affairs Student Life Studies, Morrill Hall Disturbance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, August 29, 1969), 1-2.

<sup>231</sup> Peter Vaughan, "'U' Handling of Black Takeover Criticized," *Minneapolis Star*, January 18, 1969.

<sup>232</sup> John Greenwald, "Aide Says Gap Grew Between 'U,' Blacks," *Minneapolis Star*, January 21, 1969.

<sup>233</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 37.

to force within hours. In contradiction, he claimed that speculation about the use of force in response to future disruptions was provocative and did not belong in the discussion. Moos also argued that “a newfound sense of student-faculty responsibility” represented the best defense against future incidents, not increasing the number of campus police. He followed that by saying, “I can assure you if we get another one I guess we will have to reach for the police.”<sup>234</sup> These back-and-forth statements were part of Moos’ attempt to cater to both crowds: those who favored the use of force and those who felt the right move lay in nonviolent resolution.

Despite these contradictions, part of what allowed Malcolm Moos to retain his position as president was his ability to communicate with the faculty, students, politicians and public. The *Minneapolis Star* noted,

Moos has a keen, even charming public relations instinct. He relishes bantering with reporters, reflecting his Baltimore Sun editorial writing days, his Eisenhower speech-writing stint, and other academic and Ford Foundation positions where information dissemination was part of the job. This contrasts with many aspects of the university’s routine functions, which seem to be conducted in endless obscure meetings from which officials with information affecting taxpayers cannot be summoned. And the public regents’ meetings are no more than mumbled ratification of an agenda, presumably previously debated to strip it of any controversial items.<sup>235</sup>

Moos’ response to protest came to define his presidency. As the authors of *The University of Minnesota 1945-2000* find, leading the university through civil rights, anti-war, environmental, and women’s activism represented the greatest challenge during

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<sup>234</sup> Ted Smebakken, “Moos Almost Called Police in Protest,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 21, 1969.

<sup>235</sup> “University ‘News Management’,” *Minneapolis Star*, January 19, 1969.

Moos' tenure from 1967 to 1974.<sup>236</sup> He did not end up going the way of 72 other college presidents nationwide who had resigned their posts as of May 15, 1969.<sup>237</sup>

In an effort to improve communication with the state legislature, Moos met separately with eight House Conservatives, the Democratic Farm Labor minority caucus, and with the majority House Conservatives. At these meetings, he explained why the administration chose to take the actions it did and what they planned to do to investigate the incident and discipline those involved.<sup>238</sup> Though, Moos later rejected the request that lawmakers be included on the panel investigating the occupation.<sup>239</sup>

Communicating the university's position was not the only response. The administration also took concrete action. President Moos announced that he would start an investigation into disciplinary action against demonstrators even though he earlier informed the Faculty Senate that the administration never proclaimed an official violation of university policy on demonstrations.<sup>240</sup> Moos' action was in keeping with the University of Minnesota Commission on Campus Demonstrations recommendations of May 23, 1968, which included a call for an investigatory body divorced from the hearing and adjudication process.<sup>241</sup> This body became the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident which produced a key report documenting the takeover.

The damage to Morrill Hall became a critical issue in the eyes of the public and legislature as well as a point of interest for the investigation. Citizens questioned Moos for agreeing to give the AAAC funding for their conference after they caused the school

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<sup>236</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 69.

<sup>237</sup> Van Deburg, 66.

<sup>238</sup> Ted Smebakken, "'U' Seeks to Check Capitol Grumblings," *Minneapolis Star*, January 18, 1969, 7A.

<sup>239</sup> Peter Vaughan, "Moos Names Panel of 12 to Probe Student Takeover," *Minneapolis Star*, January 22, 1969.

<sup>240</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>241</sup> "Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident," 3-5.

monetary loss by damaging the building to the tune of \$11,000. The president defended himself by saying that he was not aware of the extent of the damage at the time of the agreement and that those responsible for the loss would be held accountable for the cost.<sup>242</sup>

However, on January 23, the university lowered the cost of the damage from the original estimate of \$11,000 to \$7,300. This figure did not include the costs associated with putting the records back in order. Moos made clear that all records either remained intact or contained a corresponding back-up copy. As mentioned previously, damage to records and property was incidental to the barricading and preparation for a police attack. Some theft occurred including small sums of money, an adding machine, and some personal property. Rose Mary Freeman wrote of returning after a meeting with the administration to find, "The AAAC was in the midst of total anarchy. Desks had been overturned, files were scattered all over the floor, Morrill Hall had met with havoc."<sup>243</sup>

The Investigating Commission reported that some students intentionally damaged property to interfere with university affairs or to release tension and anger. But, they pointed out that if the AAAC planned to cause serious loss to the university, the damage would have been much clearer and more severe. Instead, the protesters left many valuable machines untouched and no incidents of arson took place. Moreover, the rumor of black students urinating or defecating on files and desks appeared completely unfounded. No one presented any photographic evidence that such a thing took place. The person who reported to police that someone had defecated in two desk drawers was

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<sup>242</sup> Peter Vaughan, "'U' Studies Discipline Alternatives," *Minneapolis Star*, January 17, 1969.

<sup>243</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 48.



never named and never came forward to verify the claim. By January 27, most services in the Office of Admissions and Records were functioning as usual.<sup>244</sup>

The public also posed the question, “Why did the University concede to the black students’ demands?” A University Memo issued shortly after the takeover stated that the administration settled for a variety of reasons: the demands matched plans already moving forward in the University, to avoid bloodshed, to continue normal University functions as soon as possible, and to build community understanding. The Faculty Senate also emphasized that all of the demands from the AAAC had been under discussion for a long time. The University explained its position as follows,

The University did not agree to a Department of Afro-American studies – it did agree to press forward with its developing plans for afro-studies programs in a more general program of ethical [sic] studies. The University did not agree to support a black conference without control. It did agree to provide funds for a conference, as it does for other groups, provided a budget and conference plan is developed. The University did not give control of the MLK fund to outside control. Since the University does not control the fund, it could not do so. The University did agree to assist in recommending the adding of community members to the MLK Board. The University believes all of these steps are educationally sound and in the interest of all students.<sup>245</sup>

In the opinion of administrators, the university had not acquiesced to force, but moved forward with things they planned to do all along.<sup>246</sup>

Moreover, they emphasized that calling the police would not have been a courageous step. Such an action would have removed the administration from the process and would have escalated or prolonged the controversy. Instead, the

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<sup>244</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; “Report of the Investigating Commission of the Morrill Hall Incident,” 59-60.

<sup>245</sup> “14 Questions for the Administration,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969).

<sup>246</sup> “The events of January 13-15, 1969, at the University of Minnesota,” 2; W. Donald Beatty, “Minutes of the University of Minnesota Senate, January 15, 1969,” Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969), 44.

administration's use of negotiation would create an open communication line and mutual trust which would work to prevent future protests by opening up the path to discussion so major protests would be unnecessary for students to get their viewpoint heard.<sup>247</sup> Their case was convincing to the Board of Regents. On February 11, the Appropriations Committee of the University Board of Regents met and backed President Moos' handling of the Morrill Hall takeover. Regent Fred Hughes stated that their approval was unanimous.<sup>248</sup>

The University held many public conferences on the event so the public could develop a full understanding of the various aspects of the situation. However, in reporting on these conferences, Thue O. Rasmussen of the Office of Student Affairs found that the conferences offered evidence of the lack of mutual respect and lingering rift between black students and their allies and their mostly white critics. He came to the "sobering realization" that social relations between groups of different racial or ethnic backgrounds still lacked understanding or friendliness.<sup>249</sup>

Besides being questioned by local people, the campus takeovers around the country were questioned by national figures like Roy Wilkins, the head of the NAACP and 1923 graduate of the University of Minnesota. While he agreed that the history and problems of African Americans needed to be part of University curricula, he opposed the method of takeover and the goal of autonomy. He felt that having black students picking the teachers and having the control of a department budget "represent[ed] setting up Jim Crow schools." He also declared that "autonomous racial schools" would be challenged in court by the NAACP. Finally, he suggested black students would serve their race

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<sup>247</sup> "14 Questions for the Administration," no page given.

<sup>248</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>249</sup> Rasmussen, 3.

better by getting back into the classrooms, earning their degrees, and helping the NAACP.<sup>250</sup>

The University administration adopted a reflective mood in light of all this criticism. On the positive side, they claimed that the event demonstrated the effectiveness of negotiation, achieved accord without violence, improved communication and understanding with African American students, and showed the effectiveness of friendly and instantly available relationships of university leaders with the leaders of the black community. On the negative side, the university noted the temporary disruption of administrative functions, damage and loss of money, public demand to avoid future disruptions, and wide off-campus anger at the methods employed by the university in the emergency.<sup>251</sup>

Besides conducting an investigation, the university immediately began implementing a new Campus Demonstrations Policy in response to the takeover. This seemed to be a result of widespread opposition to tactics used. Many felt that in order to gain their rights, the AAAC infringed on other students' rights by halting the business of the University. Moreover, an editorial in the *Minneapolis Tribune* noted that extremism was antidemocratic and may invite an extremist reaction harmful to the original cause.<sup>252</sup>

A week after the takeover, Rose Freeman read a prepared statement to the press commending the administration for their handling of the Morrill Hall takeover. The press asked her about the damage to property and Freeman made clear that the damage was incidental to the creation of barricades. The alternative would have been potential loss of life when white students rushed the building. Some also asked Freeman about

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<sup>250</sup> James Reston, "Negro Moderates vs. Campus Extremists," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 16, 1969, 4.

<sup>251</sup> "The events of January 13-15, 1969, at the University of Minnesota," 3.

<sup>252</sup> "The University-Black Student Agreement," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 17, 1969, 4.

disciplinary action against those responsible. She agreed that action should be taken and that the University and society should be held responsible.<sup>253</sup> Alternatively, Freeman thanked community organizations including The Way, the Minneapolis Urban Coalition and the St. Paul Urban League as well as the Department of Civil Rights.<sup>254</sup>

At the same time, the AAAC condemned press coverage of the takeover. They specifically excluded the reporters of one television station from the press conference because of their negative coverage. The AAAC said that the banned station exaggerated damage to the building. More broadly, news reports ignored the hostile attitude of whites outside the building and the problems they created by attempting to break in.<sup>255</sup>

Overall, student reaction to the takeover was mixed. The Pioneer Hall Council passed a motion of censure claiming that the AAAC disrupted the normal functioning of the University and caused considerable inconvenience. They recommended punishment and restitution for any damage caused. Similarly, a group calling themselves the Student Committee for Peaceful Dissent collected signatures for a petition which called for the suspension or expulsion of all students who took part in the takeover.<sup>256</sup> Alternatively, the Minnesota Students Association (MSA) Senate passed a resolution supporting the AAAC's efforts. They called for the Task Force on Human Rights to investigate problems of institutional racism, the MSA Human Relations Commission to hold a briefing for students on the Morrill Hall takeover and to establish an educational program

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<sup>253</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 99.

<sup>254</sup> "Negro Students Commend 'U' Officials, Assail Press," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 18, 1969, 20.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

to increase racial sensitivity, and for students involved to speak to campus groups about the event.<sup>257</sup>

Roughly a week after the event, Malcolm Moos chose his 12 member committee of faculty, students, administrators and community members who would investigate the takeover of Morrill Hall. He requested they pull together a factual account of the takeover and the events preceding it, produce a report which would help determine whether and which charges should be brought against those participating in the takeover, and issue their report at the earliest possible time consistent with thorough exploration.<sup>258</sup> Rose Mary Freeman, among others, opposed the commission for meeting behind closed doors. She felt this allowed them to reveal only those pieces of evidence which they felt were important and become the sole interpreter of events in question.<sup>259</sup>

Not surprisingly, the commission came to many conclusions that seemed to lay blame on black students, though the intent of the commission was not to identify guilty parties. The commission said that the black students did not understand the purpose of starting a black studies program with the creation of a graduate degree in comparative racial and ethnic studies and then working backwards to an undergraduate degree. Similarly, they failed to realize that financial aid included loans and work, not just grants.<sup>260</sup> However, the minutes of the January 30 meeting of the Investigating Commission show that Dr. Cashman testified that some recruiters might have been

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<sup>257</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 53-55.

<sup>258</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>259</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 64.

<sup>260</sup> "Summary of Investigation Body's Report on Morrill Hall Incident," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 13, 1969.

deliberately exploiting or distorting the phrase “full financial assistance,” misleading potential students as to its true meaning.<sup>261</sup>

The report also blamed the AAAC for not effectively using the channels available to them, did not understand university requirements for conference planning and budgeting, failed to comprehend that the faculty was responsible for developing a program in black studies, and that a program takes a long time to come to fruition in a large university. Finally, while the report stated that the damage resulted from defensive efforts to barricade, it pointed out that some barricading was done during the night before the crowd became a threat.<sup>262</sup> They failed to note that at least one student attempted breaking in the day before and that students felt the police would be called in at night and barricaded for that reason as well.

In spite of Rose’s opposition to the commission, Horace Huntley led the AAAC towards a decision to appear before the investigating body. He convinced others that it would be possible to keep the state from taking legal action against the organization if they offered their cooperation. In opposition, Rose Mary Freeman argued that appearing before the commission would not keep the state from taking legal action and based her argument on the experiences of groups elsewhere. Moreover, she stated that testifying could place some AAAC members in jeopardy if the state took action. But, the group decided to appear before the commission despite the disapproval of their president.

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<sup>261</sup> President’s Investigating Commission, “Minutes from January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting at 2:00 P.M.,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969), 4.

<sup>262</sup> “Summary of Investigation Body’s Report on Morrill Hall Incident,” no page given.

Horace Huntley and Anna Stanley went as representatives of the AAAC and offered a prepared statement to the commission on February 28, 1969.<sup>263</sup>

Meanwhile, the University Athletic Department announced the week after the takeover that no action would be taken against the nine black football players who participated in the occupation. The Athletic Director, Marsh Ryman, noted that the department had no written policy governing athletes' participation in demonstrations or protests. Similarly, the football coach, Murray Warmath, stated that athletes retained the right to demonstrate and, if physical violence or force is involved, the law would govern that.<sup>264</sup>

In February, the AAAC held their conference entitled "Which Way Black Students? The Role of Black Students in the White University." The idea for the conference came from discussions within the organization about the issue of blackness.<sup>265</sup> Rose Mary Freeman and Marie Braddock had attended a conference at Howard University where James Turner spoke. This "eye-opening experience" provided inspiration for the black students at the University of Minnesota to hold their own conference.<sup>266</sup> The event served a very concrete purpose for those of the AAAC: they intended to integrate the knowledge gained from the conference with their goals of establishing an Afro-American Studies Department and improving the Martin Luther King Scholarship Program.<sup>267</sup> Whites were excluded from conference workshops because their presence was said to discourage open disagreement and free discussion

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<sup>263</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 65-66.

<sup>264</sup> Athletic Department, "No action seen on black protest," *Minnesota Daily*, January 21, 1969.

<sup>265</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 61.

<sup>266</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>267</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 61.

among blacks.<sup>268</sup> Also, groups like the AAAC tended to operate under Carmichael and Hamilton's notion of black power which insisted that before a group can enter open society, it must first close ranks.<sup>269</sup>

Numerous presenters including nationally recognized speakers and local organizers offered ideas at the conference. Brother James Turner, a graduate student at Northwestern, had been traveling to campuses throughout the country sharing his knowledge of black history and culture. He offered tactics that could entice administrations to aid black students on college campuses. Rufus "Catfish" Mayfield of Pride, Inc. in Washington, D.C., had a syndicated column called "Voice From the Ghetto." He worked on dealing with many problems facing the black community in D.C. Val Gray founded the Kuumba Theater and participated in the Black Arts Movement in Chicago. She presented a lecture on the "Voice of the Black Writer." Playthell Benjamin, a historian and social commentator from Philadelphia, spoke on "Revolution and Black History." He was noted for his encyclopedic knowledge of revolutionary writings. Though also scheduled to present, Fannie Lou Hamer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party found herself unable to attend due to illness. The conference also featured the Black Rose Dance Troupe from New York City. They performed African drumming, song, and dance. In the end, though, the most charismatic and recognized speaker at the conference was Muhammad Ali. He presented a speech that was described as "informational, inspirational, comical and myth shattering."<sup>270</sup>

The university administrators remained aware of the possibility of violence at the conference. They compiled a series of confidential documents outlining their plans to

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<sup>268</sup> John Greenwald, "Aide Says Gap Grew Between 'U,' Blacks," *Minneapolis Star*, January 21, 1969.

<sup>269</sup> Rojas, 5.

<sup>270</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 58-61.



prevent or control violence. Since only 200 to 300 people were expected, they believed the University Police and Student Affairs personnel could handle law enforcement problems. The police would minimize visibility while increasing their patrolling of the area around the Union where the conference would be centered. The administrators laid out four scenarios for violence: the appearance of large numbers of militants from the community or outside the state, development of a substantial backlash, sudden enlargement of the conference with large numbers of conferees without housing or food, and/or precipitation of an incident by white radicals.<sup>271</sup>

Following the conference, the administration congratulated itself for its strategic planning to avoid violence. In one instance, Donald Zander of the Department of University Student Unions wrote to the director of the University Police Department that their patrol of the Union with at least two detectives from 7 A.M. to 2 A.M. offered crucial support.<sup>272</sup>

Besides policing the activities of the AAAC, legal action was also being taken. Though the date is unclear, it is likely that following the Morrill Hall takeover, when certain segments of the white population were upset with the organization, the AAAC faced charges that it violated Section 363.03, Subdivision 5 of the State Act Against Discrimination by excluding white people from membership. However, the Department of Human Rights could not substantiate that any white student ever applied for membership in the organization in question and could not prove discrimination.

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<sup>271</sup> Paul Cashman, "Confidential Memorandum to President Moos," Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, February 10, 1969), 1-2.

<sup>272</sup> Donald R. Zander, "Letter to C.B. Hanscom," Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, February 17, 1969), 1.

Moreover, the organization's constitution and bylaws did not prohibit membership on the basis of race, creed, color, religion or national origin.<sup>273</sup>

At the same time, the Commissioner of Human Rights did express concern because it was highly improbable that any white student would be accepted into the organization. The investigation also showed that "considerable pressure is put on all black students to participate and it has been a problem to some black students who have no desire to join AAAC." Moreover, people expressed reluctance to complain about the AAAC for fear of their identity being known.<sup>274</sup>

The report also questioned whether the university might be allowing segregation. Since it allowed an exemption for religious organizations to exclude members, the university opened the door for groups to exclude members on other bases. Also, the policy of the Student Activities Bureau stated its intent to "preserve individual differences." The commissioner argued that this condoned or implied consent of separate organizations based on individual or group differences which may impede desegregation and encourage rebellion on the part of minorities.<sup>275</sup>

The AAAC dealt with further legal consequences. Shortly after their successful conference, three members of the AAAC underwent indictment and arrest. The President of the Minneapolis Police Officers' Federation had indicated on January 20 that he would write the Chief Judge of the Hennepin District Court, Judge Rolf Fosseen, and ask him to convene a grand jury to investigate the Morrill Hall incident.<sup>276</sup> On Monday, March 3, the Hennepin County Grand Jury issued an indictment against Horace Huntley, Rose

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<sup>273</sup> "Commissioner's Findings: ED20-SGR5-4," Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives), 1.

<sup>274</sup> "Commissioner's Findings: ED20-SGR5-4," 1.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>276</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

Mary Freeman, Warren Tucker, Jr., as well as Richard Roe and Jane Doe. The last two indictments allowed them to reserve the right to indict other persons involved whose identities were unknown at the time.<sup>277</sup>

Horace Huntley believed that the prosecutors picked those three because of a published picture showing them walking triumphantly over a bridge after the sit-in.<sup>278</sup>

The indictments charged: aggravated criminal damage to property, including “mutilating, defacing, breaking, destroying, tearing, smashing, littering, scattering, piling, and barricading” equipment, supplies and the building itself; riot, including destruction of property and “taking exclusive possession of a portion of said Morrill Hall, and by acts, force, threats and unauthorized commands”; and two counts of unlawful assembly.

Though the students assembled with lawful purpose, once there, they supposedly conducted themselves in a disorderly manner which disturbed and threatened the public peace.<sup>279</sup>

On Wednesday, police arrested Horace Huntley and Warren Tucker, Jr., at their homes (which were two houses apart) around 6:30 A.M. Huntley asked an officer why they needed so many police to apprehend two people and the officer told him it was a protective measure. Next time, he would come alone. The two were taken to jail and their attorneys Kenneth Tilsen, a friend of Rose Mary’s, and Joyce A. Hughes, requested and received a continuance until April 3.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Maurice Wozniak, “U Black Student Group Notes Some Gains,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 15, 1970, 26.

<sup>279</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; “The State of Minnesota vs. Horace Huntley et. al. Indictment—Form CA-2,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969).

<sup>280</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given; Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 85.

Rose Mary Freeman was arrested later in the day, at 1 P.M., at the Citizen's Community Center. She received call from Horace in the morning when the police showed up at his house. They did not come to her house, so she went to campus to the AAAC office. She was told about a rally protesting the arrests. Organizers asked her to speak to the group in front of Coffman Union. But, she responded, "I'm not interested in educating White people about Black people."<sup>281</sup>

Rose Mary Freeman turned to Kenneth E. Tilsen, a prominent St. Paul attorney, for help following the indictments. Tilsen, along with his wife, Rachel, had adopted her into their family. Ken and Rachel Tilsen had been involved in "radical" activity throughout the 1950s and 1960s with Ken being investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee.<sup>282</sup> Eventually, Freeman went to the police station when Tilsen informed her that a judge made himself available to hold an arraignment right away preventing her from spending a night in jail. Still, many community leaders remained concerned about her safety because to get to the arraignment, the police car would drive through a tunnel under the courthouse. In that tunnel, the police were known to "crack heads." So, it was agreed that a man named Randy Staten would ride with her through the tunnel and she passed unharmed.<sup>283</sup>

The decision to indict and arrest the students met with severe criticism from many groups. A document, most likely written by the Liberation Coalition, a group formed in the wake of the arrests, called the indictments of Richard Roe and Jane Doe a blank check allowing the arrest of anyone on campus. Moreover, they questioned the timing of

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<sup>281</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 70-71, 74-75.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 67, 76.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 75-76, 83.

the indictments which came the week before final exams in a likely attempt to punish the students academically for standing up for their rights.<sup>284</sup>

In response to the arrests, a spontaneous demonstration began in the history class of Allan Spear. The class focused on race and nationality. It began at 11 A.M. and soon after, some students began talking about the arrests of three black students. After talking for a half-hour, they decided to march. Professor Spear, the university's teacher of black history and a member of the committee drawing up a proposal for a major in black studies, accompanied the students.<sup>285</sup> Joe Kroll, president of the Minnesota Student Association, led the march.<sup>286</sup> It grew to about 300 students as it moved to the office of President Moos and then to the fourth floor courtrooms of City Hall. The student leaders saw Hennepin County Attorney George Scott and protested the grand jury indictments which they felt were ill-timed, ill-conceived, and without regard to the sensitivity of the situation on the university campus.<sup>287</sup> Scott held a brief question-and-answer session so students could get a response to their grievances. The protest ended without incident.

Shortly thereafter, the Minnesota Student Association and many other student groups agreed on a resolution condemning the grand jury's action.<sup>288</sup> Beyond that, another march took place. On March 6, roughly 500 students met on campus at noon and marched to the courthouse to present a petition with about 700 signatures to George Scott. With him out to lunch, they presented the petition to Alderman Gerald

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<sup>284</sup> "An Outrageous Violation of Our Rights as Citizens – Whether Students or Faculty – Is Taking Place!" Morrill Hall Disturbance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives).

<sup>285</sup> "March Is Called Spontaneous," *Minneapolis Star*, March 6, 1969.

<sup>286</sup> Bob Schranck and John Greenwald, "March on City Hall Began in 'U' Class," *Minneapolis Star*, March 6, 1969.

<sup>287</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

Hegstrom.<sup>289</sup> Peter Vaughan of the *Minneapolis Star* noted that, “The indictments accomplished what radicals on the campus have been seeking vainly to bring about for the past two years. Students, both radical and politically uncommitted, have rallied together in a spontaneous reaction to the indictments.”<sup>290</sup> In fact, even right-leaning groups joined the Liberation Coalition. The Young Republicans of Minnesota and the New Republicans both announced their support.<sup>291</sup>

Students planned a 24-hour-a-day sit-in at the Hennepin County Courthouse to continue until the indictments were dropped. However, the sit-in would have taken place during the week of final examinations. Moreover, radical students, especially those from Students for a Democratic Society, opposed the sit-in because it was likely to sap the considerable support which had built up in favor of the movement. Despite this, the decision to stage the sit-in was made. However, it faced problems in organizing when few students showed up to hand out leaflets and a study day meant many people were not out-and-about on campus.<sup>292</sup> Soon, the prospects of a long sit-in derailed.

Similarly, University officials felt dismayed at the indictments, especially considering the University’s Investigating Commission report remained forthcoming. The Faculty Senate voted to condemn the Grand Jury’s interference with university proceedings.<sup>293</sup> The Minnesota Urban Coalition, led by Harry Davis, also adopted a resolution condemning the action taken by the Grand Jury. Even further, the director of the Hennepin County Office of Economic Opportunities, a black member of the Grand

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Quoted in Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 109.

<sup>291</sup> Liberation Coalition, “End Legal Oppression, Support the Liberation Coalition,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives), 2.

<sup>292</sup> Peter Vaughan, “Sit-in to Protest Arrests of Blacks,” *Minneapolis Star*, March 7, 1969.

<sup>293</sup> Liberation Coalition, no page given.

Jury, the Commissioner of Human Rights for Minnesota, and the Council of Religious Advisers, all condemned the action.<sup>294</sup>

Given the widespread opposition, campus and community groups formed the Liberation Coalition to bring together groups against the indictments. The Liberation Coalition sent out a message to faculty declaring the indictments politically motivated and revealed their intention to mobilize the greatest possible support to oppose the charges.<sup>295</sup> The AAAC experienced some tension with the Liberation Coalition as one leader, Anna Stanley, insisted that the AAAC have veto power over the coalition. In the end, the Liberation Coalition gave the AAAC veto power over press releases, but nothing further.<sup>296</sup>

The coalition also organized Liberation Week from March 31 to April 3, the day Rose Mary Freeman was scheduled to appear in court. The Liberation Coalition asked faculty to free their students to participate in the week's events. They also held a meeting of all faculty who wished to contribute to the week's events and open up their classrooms for meetings.<sup>297</sup> The week included speeches by nationally known leaders, discussions, workshops, and films. A man named Nathan Wright spoke on "Experimental Liturgy" and Ron March, a black labor leader from Detroit, also addressed supporters of the accused. Two rock groups performed to raise money for the defense. The coalition also showed films on Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Panthers.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 105-106.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>296</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 110-111.

<sup>297</sup> Diana Johnstone, "Letter to Faculty Members," Liberation Coalition, Morrill Hall Takeover, Office of the President Papers, box 236 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969)

<sup>298</sup> Walter Lide, "Liberation Week begins Monday," *Minnesota Daily*, March 26, 1969.

A Wednesday night rally saw 250 people attend to support the defense of the Morrill Hall Three. Bill Tilton spoke and worked to raise money. The coalition also accrued funds by selling posters and buttons with the images of the three indicted students. A teach-in took place and featured Henry Jack of North American Red Power.<sup>299</sup> The week culminated in a march and demonstration of more than 5,000 people at the courthouse, representing one of the coalition's greatest successes. Horace Huntley wrote, "Without this grouping of committed persons from all walks of life, ethnic groups, diverse political persuasions, and races, it is clear to me that the three of us could have very well become criminal justice statistics of a long duration."<sup>300</sup>

Though some were concerned that the trial would take place during the summer when the student body was not there to support the accused, it ended up being scheduled for the fall. The defense's legal challenges might have helped in delaying the trial. First, the students' lawyers challenged the indictment by saying it violated the state law forbidding the inclusion of multiple claims which were not part of the same "behavioral incident." Since the occupation extended over two days, it constituted more than one incident. Second, any defendant in a criminal case possessed the right to dismiss a judge by filing an affidavit of prejudice without specifying why he or she believed the judge harbored prejudice. The court transferred the case from Judge Dana Nicholson to Judge Douglas K. Amdahl.<sup>301</sup>

At the end of the school year, Tom Gilsenan took over the presidency of the Minnesota Student Association and the Chair of the Liberation Coalition. At this point, the coalition concerned itself primarily with raising money. Initially, Tilsen projected the

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<sup>299</sup> Dave Hoium, "Liberation Week programs to protest indictments," *Minnesota Daily*, March 27, 1969.

<sup>300</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 108, 113-114.

<sup>301</sup> Gwenth Jones, "Indictment challenge to delay court appearances," *Minneapolis Star*, April 1, 1969.



defense would cost \$7,500. However, the prosecution later proposed calling 200 witnesses, raising the cost of the trial to \$30,000. The Coalition initiated numerous fundraising activities including dances, selling buttons, and soliciting donations around campus and in the community as they did during Liberation Week.<sup>302</sup>

In the fall, the Afro-American Action Committee called for a student strike beginning on October 20, 1969, until the end of the trial.<sup>303</sup> The AAAC also issued their own indictment. They charged Malcolm Moos, Paul Cashman, and James Reeves, Richard Roe, Jane Doe, the University, the city of Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota for institutional racist practices. This included denying students of various races a meaningful education, ignoring the contributions of African Americans, Chicano Americans, the Sioux, Chippewa, and other Native American tribes, “creating a propaganda machine which they so label as education” but which is “merely a finishing school for robots,” creating and releasing biased information that the state used for repression, and for obscuring the real reasons behind the Morrill Hall takeover.<sup>304</sup> The AAAC also pointed out that the Grand Jury issued no indictment against white students inside Morrill Hall or white students who broke several windows. Moreover, the school accepted no funds from the white community for damage done to Morrill Hall but did take them from the African American community.<sup>305</sup> The Liberation Coalition reported that the black community paid for at least fifty percent of the damage.<sup>306</sup> They demanded

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<sup>302</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 113.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>304</sup> “The People Versus Malcolm Moos, Paul Cashman and James Reeves,” Office of the President Papers, box 236, Morrill Hall Takeover folder (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969).

<sup>305</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 117-118.

<sup>306</sup> “End Legal Oppression, Support the Liberation Coalition,” 1.

that all money collected to repair the building be added to the Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund.<sup>307</sup>

On October 20, 1969, the trial proceedings began. Roughly 800 to 1000 people, mostly students, marched in support of the Morrill Hall Three. The AAAC and African Americans from the community also committed to having a strong presence inside the courtroom each day in support of the students.<sup>308</sup> During jury selection, of the thirty prospects, only one identified himself as an African American. Such a racially imbalanced panel led Rose Mary Freeman to think of Peter Poyas, who was placed on trial in 1822 for participating in a slave rebellion. Poyas said to the judge, “You have predetermined to shed my blood; why then this mockery of a trial?” She clearly expected the trial to be a farce as neither her, nor Horace or Warren damaged any property or rioted. Since they were registered students of the University, she also believed they could not be convicted of unlawful assembly.<sup>309</sup>

The destruction of property again became a central issue. The prosecution called a university policeman who went through an inventory of the upturned desks, damaged typewriters, and dismantled machines. However, the officer never conducted an inventory prior to the takeover, so the prosecution lacked proof that the students brought about these alterations while participating in the takeover. The prosecution also called two clerks who said that records were “urine colored” and other papers were ripped, dirty, or wet. Witnesses took the stand to tell of human feces left in wastebaskets. Yet, no witness could present any documentation, nor could they identify any of the three

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<sup>307</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 117-118.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 121, 123.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 121, 125.

defendants as the perpetrators of any of these acts.<sup>310</sup> The prosecution did not end up calling 30 people to the stand.

In response, the defense called just three witnesses and presented three salient points. First, numerous white students took part in the occupation yet the prosecution's witnesses testified that only black students participated. Moreover, no witness linked any of the defendants to the damage. Finally, the three defendants went to other parts of the building for negotiations for at least 11 of the 24 hours of the sit-in.<sup>311</sup>

In the end, the jury deliberated for about a dozen hours. They acquitted Warren Tucker of all charges. However, the jury convicted Horace Huntley and Rose Mary Freeman of unlawful assembly while acquitting them of the other charges.<sup>312</sup> The conviction of misdemeanor unlawful assembly carried a possible 90-day sentence or a \$300 fine. Huntley and Freeman received 90-day suspended sentences and the judge placed them on one year of supervised probation.<sup>313</sup> In light of the trial, Malcolm Moos opted not to take any disciplinary action on behalf of the university. He noted that the three leaders lived under stressful and anxious conditions for a number of months. Given these circumstances, he found no need for further punishment.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 126-127.

<sup>311</sup> Williams, Massey, and Huntley, 129.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>313</sup> Gwenyth Jones, "Felony, riot charges rejected by jury," *Minneapolis Star*, November 7, 1969.

<sup>314</sup> "'U' not acting now against sit-in group," *Minneapolis Star*, November 8, 1969.

## **Chapter 4: “The Department of Humanization at a Finishing School for Robots”: The Early Years of Black Studies at the University of Minnesota**

The University administrators deferred responsibility for creating a new department.<sup>315</sup> As was often the case, President Malcolm Moos named a committee to establish a program for students to earn a bachelor of arts in African American studies. Among the members included on this committee were Allan Spear, a professor of history and advocate for black studies, Warren Tucker, a sophomore and participant in the takeover who was later put on trial and acquitted, and Milton Williams (Mahmoud El-Kati) of The Way. The agreement for the creation of the committee stated that the president’s office would fully support the development of a program to offer “a full reflection of the experience of Black people in America” by the fall of 1969, but the faculty would have the final decision regarding the new curriculum and degree program.<sup>316</sup>

The first course dealing with black culture offered at the University of Minnesota began on March 24, 1969. It was an evening education program run through the extension division of the university. Non-traditional students comprised the student body for this course. The class formed part of a four-section sequence called “Inter-Cultural Education” and aimed at equipping teachers who worked in racially mixed schools. Each of the four courses focused on a different minority group. The first course examined “Negro culture” and emphasized transferring that information and effectively teaching African-American children. The University and local education officials felt that many

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<sup>315</sup> W. Donald Beatty, “Minutes of the University of Minnesota Senate, January 15, 1969,” Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969), 43.

<sup>316</sup> “10 Named to Establish Afro-American Studies,” *Twin Cities Observer*, February 13, 1969.

African American students exhibited low self-esteem causing them to function poorly in the classroom. So, this course intended to make white teachers more confident in teaching about black culture and boost student knowledge and esteem as well.<sup>317</sup>

Meanwhile, the president made the report of the committee on the creation of a black studies program available in early May. After the president approved the proposal, he submitted it to four bodies within the College of Liberal Arts for approval. The committee chair, Frank Wilderson of the University's Education Department, approved of the report and felt that the university should be proud of its efforts to develop a black studies program.<sup>318</sup>

The report began with a preamble recognizing the origins of the document. The committee wrote, "The political and social events of the past few years have finally awakened certain segments of the academic community to the need for comprehensive consideration of black history, culture and society as an integral part of the university curriculum." It also argued, "Black studies need no more justification – on intellectual and academic grounds – than do Asian studies or European studies; the only serious question is why they have been for so long neglected and how this neglect can now best be rectified."<sup>319</sup>

The proposal called for a degree-granting Department of Afro-American Studies rather than a program which would draw together courses from various departments and lack autonomy, an independent budget, ability to initiate course suggestions, or a separate

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<sup>317</sup> Maurice Wozniak, "How Do Whites Teach Afro-American History?" *St. Paul Dispatch*, March 13, 1969.

<sup>318</sup> University of Minnesota News Service, "Afro-American Studies Department Proposed by U of M Committee," Afro-American Studies info file, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives), May 9, 1969, 1.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

faculty. The report deemed a separate department necessary in order for the professors and students of black studies to become a cohesive group rather than be divided among various departments.<sup>320</sup>

Though the department would remain independent, it would be closely connected to other departments which offered cross-listed courses and interdisciplinary studies. The department would include current offerings with new classes on “Economics of the Black Community,” “Patterns of Black Social Relationship in the United States,” and “Introduction to African Philosophy.”<sup>321</sup> It would provide a minimum of 38 courses.<sup>322</sup>

The report made specific suggestions about the curriculum of this new department. It called for an intensive junior year devoted to “helping the student ‘correlate the richness and diversity of Afro-American culture.’” Students would absorb the history, development, and current status of African and African American culture and society at this time. In his or her senior year, a student would take a practicum which would allow him or her to pursue an independent project outside of the university setting. Examples of this would include community service in an economically deprived area or studies abroad in Africa.

In *From Black Power to Black Studies*, Fabio Rojas identifies two versions of black studies: community education and academic black studies. Community education aimed at training individuals to become teachers or social workers in a black community. Such programs focused more on educating African Americans rather than whites. The other option was academic black studies. These interdisciplinary programs served the

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> University of Minnesota News Service, “Afro-American Studies Department Proposed by U of M Committee,” 1-2.

<sup>322</sup> “Plan Goes to Regents: ‘U’ faculty OKs Afro-American division,” *Minneapolis Star*, May 20, 1969.

entire university offering courses to all students. Rojas also notes that these were not mutually exclusive alternatives.<sup>323</sup> At the University of Minnesota, there was certainly an inclusion of community education, as evidenced by the first course offered, though the department often leaned more towards academic black studies.

Groups that proposed community education had to maneuver carefully. At the University of Illinois-Chicago, the black students' request for external control of a university program was rejected by the school. Though administrators deemed training people to work in Chicago schools acceptable, the proposal for community governance exceeded the limits of acceptability. Rojas argues that framing remained the key issue: students needed to present their department and course proposal as an extension of the existing curricula. He writes, "The long-term evolution of black studies within specific universities is as much a function of institutional rules as it is of activism and mobilization."<sup>324</sup> At the University of Minnesota, the department was framed primarily as an extension of existing disciplines like economics, philosophy, history and languages.

Sometimes students pressed for the wrong courses as extensions of existing disciplines. Students at Cornell asked for approval of "Physical Education 300C: Theory and Practice in the Use of Small Arms and Hand-to-Hand Combat."<sup>325</sup> In cases like these, black students often experienced backlash when their demands went beyond the normal academic bounds.

Moreover, requests that departments be black-controlled and autonomous, or controlled by the black community, were often met with clear rebuke. Some groups also demanded that professors be committed to the movement; community activists were

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<sup>323</sup> Rojas, 100.

<sup>324</sup> Rojas, 104, 108-109.

<sup>325</sup> Van Deburg, 74

preferable to doctors. Many students wanted courses taught with a distinct black power ideology, rather than an “objective” or “impartial” framework. Finally, some student movements requested that white students be excluded from black studies courses or taught in separate sections.<sup>326</sup> With the exception of partial community control, none of these demands were made at the University of Minnesota. This may in part explain the department’s acceptance and durability: it intended to operate within acceptable academic bounds.

On May 19, 1969, the College of Liberal Arts All-College Council, which was composed of 105 elected faculty members, met to approve the creation of the new department. A one hour debate preceded the vote. One opponent argued that a black studies department should be low on the university’s list of priorities as they already faced overcrowded classes and understaffing in existing departments. He also argued that the creation of this new department would create the illusion that the university complied with its duty to black students. In response, a student member of the committee argued that the department would end delusions by challenging beliefs that black people possess a distinct odor, that Tarzan led all Africans, that nothing more than massive jungles cover Africa, and more.<sup>327</sup> Despite this argument, a few opponents criticized the department for “building black mythology.” Though, no report elaborated on this criticism.<sup>328</sup>

The University also faced questions about whether the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department meant there would be ones for Swedish-Americans,

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>327</sup> Marilyn Becerra, “Afro-American Studies Unit Is Approved at ‘U’,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 20, 1969, 1, 6.

<sup>328</sup> John Kelly, “Regents Next Hurdle: U OKs Black Studies,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 21, 1969.



Norwegian-Americans, and others. When this question was raised to the Faculty Senate, one administrator responded that the goal was the creation of a graduate program in comparative racial and ethnic studies that would look at all groups.<sup>329</sup> Moreover, the university already had a program in Scandinavian Studies. The black studies programs in Chicago were similarly criticized for not focusing on the large Polish population.<sup>330</sup>

The opposition also argued that the department was hastily conceived and would drain resources from other departments.<sup>331</sup> Many of these opponents felt that an interdepartmental program would be preferable to the creation of the new department. However, these concerns never appeared to be a significant threat to the proposed department. In fact, supporters were already looking to the next step: the creation of a Native American Studies Department which would combine with African American Studies to allow graduate students to complete a program in comparative ethnic and racial studies.<sup>332</sup>

Richard N. Blue wrote an extensive justification for the department in *N.B.*, a publication of the College of Liberal Arts. He began by identifying the lack of attention to the contribution of African Americans and juxtaposed it with the University's programs in Scandinavian Studies which looked at the contribution of Swedes and Norwegians. In presenting his justification, Blue explained why a department was preferable to a program. He argued that many black people harbored profound distrust of the ability of existing faculty to adequately understand and teach about the experience of African Americans. Only a department would have control over the selection of faculty

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<sup>329</sup> W. Donald Beatty, "Minutes of the University of Minnesota Senate, January 15, 1969," Student Protests, folder 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1969), 44.

<sup>330</sup> Rojas, 105.

<sup>331</sup> "Plan Goes to Regents: 'U' faculty OKs Afro-American division," *Minneapolis Star*, May 20, 1969.

<sup>332</sup> John Kelly, "Regents Next Hurdle: U OKs Black Studies," no page given.

and the development of a curriculum which would represent the history and culture of African Americans.<sup>333</sup> In fact, a department was key to the survival of black studies nationwide. For example, the University of Chicago lacked a department. Instead, its program required yearly approval and remained constantly embattled.<sup>334</sup>

At the same time, Blue pointed to the difficulty of creating an Afro-American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota and elsewhere. He identified the lack of an institutionalized association which defined the criteria for the selection of specialists. Moreover, the lack of a communication network presented a problem for new practitioners and departments. As a group, no consensus existed regarding what the work of professors of black studies should be. Also, because most black studies departments were just being created, they lacked many people who had an academic degree in the field to teach. All of this contributed to the increasing likelihood that faculty members would be opposed to the creation of a new department.<sup>335</sup>

While justifying the program for the faculty, advocates of black studies also explained the department's necessity to the public. In one article, Earl Craig, Jr. argued that "the most pervasive single fact of the history and contemporary life of the United States is white racism." He continued, "every person born and raised in this society learned to make judgments about others on the basis that white is good and black is not – or at least not quite as good. And none of us has escaped this malignant tumor. It is manifested in the hostility of whites toward nonwhites and the self-hatred of blacks toward themselves and other blacks." In response, the department would lay the

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<sup>333</sup> Richard N. Blue, "Afro-American Studies – 'A Contribution to a Redefinition of the American University,'" *N.B.*, November, 1969.

<sup>334</sup> Rojas, 111.

<sup>335</sup> Blue, no page given.

foundation for the education of leaders and citizens of American black communities, free the minds of white students from racism, and humanize an American university. At the same time, Craig argued that black studies was not a panacea for black freedom and should not allow itself to become a tool of white radical student movements. Instead, the department should focus on the production of scholarly material and instruction which affirms the black experience.<sup>336</sup>

The Afro-American Studies Department celebrated its inauguration in November, 1969, with a performance of the play, “The Beauty of Blackness,” at Coffman Union.<sup>337</sup> However, the department still required continual justification in its early years. In February of 1970, a lengthy article entitled “Black Studies: ‘U’ Department Is Establishing Its Legitimacy,” appeared in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. The author, Roger Bergerson, pointed out that the department had grown to a faculty of ten teaching nine courses to 250 students, including nine students majoring in black studies. He also drew attention to the need for continual legitimation: many of the 300 black studies programs or departments recently established nationwide now faced trouble because of clashes with the administration and some had already met their demise. However, he pointed out that the Department of Afro-American Studies at the U of M confronted few problems. One of the primary issues was that students found courses they wanted full and needed special permission to take them. This was the kind of problem many departments would have liked to have. But, finding a permanent chairperson represented an even greater concern.

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<sup>336</sup> Earl Craig, Jr., “Why ‘U’ Starts Black Studies Department,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 9, 1969.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

Bergerson reported that though the search committee found applicants, none seriously wanted to move to Minnesota given the small black population.<sup>338</sup>

In talking to Lillian Anthony, a faculty member of the Department of Afro-American Studies, Bergerson learned that humanization stood at the center of the department's objectives. Anthony pointed to other departments which simply taught "how to get through life." Instead, faculty and students in black studies knew each other on a first name basis. Beyond that, junior Anna Stanley noted that the department promoted the view that everyone possessed something to contribute to the learning process regardless of their academic degree.<sup>339</sup>

In terms of race, classes generally split equally between black and white. All instructors desired the presence of white students in black studies courses. Mahmoud El-Kati said of white students, "I don't expect them to vibe with everything, because there's a socio-cultural difference between whites and blacks. But after a while, a frame of reference develops for them." He and Josie Johnson both stated that they did not intend the classes to be therapy for guilt-ridden white students. At times, Johnson said white students might feel uncomfortable with the tough subject matter, though white students denied any feelings of uneasiness. Black students' opinions of white students in their courses ranged from definite approval to indifference.

Black professors also deemed the two white professors, Howard Schneider and Darrell Shreve, competent and sensitive in their teaching. At the same time, Lillian Anthony pointed out, "Whites often have the knowledge and methodology to teach black studies, but not the black consciousness, the black ethos. They haven't lived what they're

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<sup>338</sup> Roger Bergerson, "Black Studies: U Department Is Establishing Its Legitimacy," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, February 22, 1970.

<sup>339</sup> Bergerson, "Black Studies: U Department Is Establishing Its Legitimacy," no page given.

teaching.”<sup>340</sup> Horace Huntley, a student during the first year of the department’s existence, says that white professors in black studies were sometimes a topic of discussion. But, it was probably less important a topic at Minnesota than elsewhere. For him and many others, it was more about what a person had to offer as a teacher: that they respected the discipline and told the whole truth.<sup>341</sup> There is one documented instance where race may have affected a decision on hiring, but that is in dispute.

In 1973, the department was looking to acquire a visiting professor. George King nominated Theodore Courier of Fisk University. His supporters in the department felt that those in opposition to Courier wanted to deny him because he was white. However, Earl Craig argued that he opposed Courier, not on the basis of race, but because he was quite conservative and called Martin Luther King, Jr. a communist. Moreover, he pointed out that the department had recently approved the appointment of Victoria Coifman, proving that race was not the issue. In the end, Courier had enough votes to secure his appointment as a visiting professor despite dissent.<sup>342</sup>

To Horace Huntley, the most important professor in the new department was Mahmoud El-Kati. Since their days at The Way Community Center, El-Kati had sparked an interest in black history for Huntley.<sup>343</sup> Horace Huntley became one of the first graduates of the University of Minnesota with a degree in Afro-American Studies and is today a professor of history in Birmingham. El-Kati has a Distinguished Lectureship in American Studies at nearby Macalester College named after him.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

<sup>342</sup> “Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee,” 50.

<sup>343</sup> Horace Huntley, interview by author, telephone interview, 16 July 2008.

Finding qualified people to teach African American Studies represented a significant problem in the early years. While there were people in the Twin Cities who possessed deep knowledge about black history and culture, they often lacked the proper academic degrees. Even El-Kati did not have the requisite graduate degree. However, this did not prevent the department from offering challenging courses. Huntley found the history courses to contain both breadth and depth of material which challenged the students. But, Huntley thought the most daunting task was learning Swahili.<sup>344</sup>

Along with its humanizing mission, the department connected with the community by establishing education and black culture groups at Stillwater Prison and St. Cloud Reformatory. The prison educations of Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver inspired such programs. Though the department involved itself in the community, most faculty members felt that more must be done to develop a connection between the two.<sup>345</sup> This became a larger problem in the next few years. The department hired one of the men at the center of the later conflict that January. John Preston Ward, a black civil rights attorney, was named a visiting professor to teach a class called “Law and Society – a Minority Point of View” and conduct seminars. At the time, he was completing his Ph.D. dissertation and directing the Law Reform Division of the Legal Services Organization of Indianapolis, Inc.<sup>346</sup>

January 15, 1970, marked the one year anniversary of the takeover. The Afro-American Action Committee issued a statement from its Communications Committee noting the achievement of small, but positive gains at the university. But, they noted that the response had been severely limited by the nature of the university itself. An editorial

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Bergerson, no page given.

<sup>346</sup> “Black Attorney Named Visiting Professor at U,” *Twin Cities Observer*, January 15, 1970.

in the *Minnesota Daily* concurred noting that the Afro-American Studies Department was not a result of institutional willingness to accept change but a small group of students, faculty, and community members acting in defiance of the university. Rose Mary Freeman stated that the university had not changed much in a year. Communication difficulties still existed between African Americans and the administration. Moreover, the university was still a site of institutionalized racism.<sup>347</sup>

In 1983, Philip Daniel and Asmasu Zike completed a survey report of black studies programs and departments in America. They found between 130 and 160 programs or departments were created between 1968 and 1971. Older universities (those founded prior to 1928) represented the site of greatest growth. Moreover, undergraduate offerings composed the bulk of these programs rather than research training and advanced degree coursework. During this time, black studies faced “three strenuous resource draining and goal displacing requirements”: generating interdisciplinary expertise, experimenting with independent black studies programs, and building viable departments. Often times, established departments refused to cooperate in the creation of black studies departments which would likely compete with them for limited resources. Instead, the authors concluded, “The bedrock foundation for the emergence of contemporary Black Studies was laid by Black urban, lower-class students as they tried to get better Black Studies courses from traditional departments.”<sup>348</sup>

Daniel and Zike’s general conclusions reflect much of the experience at the University of Minnesota in the early years. Certainly, black students played the decisive role in the creation of a black studies program as evidenced by the work of the AAAC

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<sup>347</sup> Maurice Wozniak, “U Black Student Group Notes Some Gains,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 15, 1970, 25-26.

<sup>348</sup> Brossard, 280-281.

and the Morrill Hall takeover. While the two researchers point out that older universities represented the site of greatest growth, they overlook the fact that a predominantly white student body could be found at these universities. There was nothing unique about a university being older which spurred the creation of black studies programs. However, a specific trigger could be found in the fact that these schools were majority white and, correspondingly, seemed to ignore the contributions of African Americans in their curriculum, forcing a reaction.<sup>349</sup>

The authors also point out that the black studies programs primarily offered undergraduate degrees. In the experience of the University of Minnesota, the reasoning for this becomes quite clear: it was primarily, if not solely, undergraduate students who were calling for a black studies department and they wanted courses that they could take immediately. While the university wished to create a graduate program in comparative and ethnic studies first, the AAAC opposed this because it would not improve the education of their current members.

Finally, Daniel and Zike cite three problems faced by black studies. The University of Minnesota certainly faced problems with generating interdisciplinary expertise. Given the limited number of people with advanced degrees in black studies and the trouble of attracting them to Minneapolis, the university had to turn to local people who may have possessed competence, but not the academic degrees which some would argue were requisite to effective teaching.

Carlos A. Brossard confirmed a nationwide trend, writing that because of a shortage of finances and competition for resources caused by a recession, newly created black studies programs often looked to graduate students and new doctorates to staff their

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid.



programs. This created a perpetual problem. Since most black studies programs did not begin by organizing courses and degrees at the graduate level, the shortage of qualified educators would continue. Moreover, the dearth of resources also meant black studies programs lacked research funds. So, the field often fell short in producing significant new scholarship.<sup>350</sup>

Minnesota's Afro-American Studies Department, in particular, lacked the funds to gain professors expert in specific fields, like economics. As Daniel and Zike mention, many black studies departments found other departments unwilling to cooperate with them. The opposition to black studies at hearings on the department's creation certainly provides evidence of this at the University of Minnesota. Though a situation mentioned later complicates the idea that other departments were resistant to black studies. Finally, the two authors note difficulties in building viable departments. Minnesota faced this with regard to finding qualified faculty, as well as a director. But, the evidence does not show that the Afro-American Studies Department encountered any seriously troubling concerns in the early years.

In fact, by the fall of 1970, 600 students were taking courses in the Afro-American Studies Department. This was more than double the 250 students taking courses in the spring of 1970. The university also expanded its offering to 13 courses. Though, the number of students majoring in black studies fell from nine to six. Part of the rise in enrollment in black studies may have been connected to the fact that the department had finally found a leader.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Brossard, 282.

<sup>351</sup> Judy Vick, "'No Mystique in Black Studies' Says U of M Department Head," *University of Minnesota News Service*, November 10, 1970, 1.

George King took the position as head of the department saying, “There is no mystique in black studies. What we are all about is serious work that will contribute to the solution of today’s problems.” King came from the Institute for Services to Education in Newton, Massachusetts, where he developed an interdisciplinary social science curriculum with emphasis on the African American experience. Receiving his Ph.D. from Indiana University, King went on to be a part of the faculty at Florida A & M, Indiana University, Southern University, St. Augustine’s College, and Paine College before coming to Minnesota.<sup>352</sup>

The university reported, “Under the new leadership this year of scholar and historian Dr. George King, the department is functioning as a sound academic unit, a channel of communication for students who are interested in social reform and as a resource for black students who are facing personal problems.” The staff focused specifically on the academic problems of students, many of whom lacked the necessary college preparation in high school. To meet this challenge, many faculty came in on Saturdays to provide tutoring, made themselves available for academic and personal counseling, and met in the department’s all purpose room for after-class discussions.<sup>353</sup>

Carlos A. Brossard noted, in a larger survey of black studies, that faculty often found themselves too drained by the rigors of teaching to devote much time to research. Many undergraduate students in black studies required compensatory education and support services because their high school education left them lacking in appropriate academic skills. Faculty needed to work on testing new curriculum ideas which exhausted much of their time and effort. This affected them on performance evaluations

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 1, 3.

which took place as if normal academic conditions applied. In light of this, some professors focused more on publication at the expense of compensatory education and improving the department to heighten the results of their evaluations.<sup>354</sup>

At the same time, the department faced structural problems. With only \$200,000 a year, the department was unable to add specialists in communication and economics as they desired. Moreover, the department's involvement with the community remained limited. Though, the faculty did continue to offer non-credit classes in black studies at Stillwater Prison. The department also considered offering workshops for community leaders who wished to become involved in politics.<sup>355</sup>

The department reached an important turning point in May of 1970. This time saw a nationwide strike to protest U.S. involvement in Cambodia. Following Nixon's announcement of the attacks, five thousand students and faculty members at the University of Minnesota voted to strike. The following day, slightly fewer people gathered for a Memorial Service for the slain Kent State students. Several hundred strikers utilized the AAAC's tactic and occupied Morrill Hall until President Moos agreed to speak to the crowd outside. In another parallel to the 1969 takeover, protesters presented five demands to Moos, which included an end to all University actions which aided the military and the closure of campus.<sup>356</sup>

African American students met to discuss whether they should participate in the strike. They concluded that, though they opposed military action in Cambodia, they would not strike. They offered the rationale that black people had been on strike for 300

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<sup>354</sup> Brossard, 283-285.

<sup>355</sup> Vick, "'No Mystique in Black Studies' Says U of M Department Head," 3.

<sup>356</sup> Lehmborg and Pflaum, 119-120.

years and it was now time to study to find better ways to handle problems.<sup>357</sup> The department seemed to be moving from protest to academics. This coincided with its shift away from community involvement.

The following spring, the Afro-American Studies Department held “An Evening with Muhammad Ali,” to benefit the department’s newly developing scholarship fund.<sup>358</sup> The department secured a second visit from him through two faculty members, George D. King and John Preston Ward. Both had attended Ali’s Supreme Court hearing on April 19, 1971, concerning his conviction for violation of the Draft Law and persuaded him to include a stop in the Twin Cities on his already heavy lecture tour.<sup>359</sup>

Later, in February of 1972, the Afro-American Studies Department again held events to highlight Black History Week. In this iteration, they focused on “Africa and Our African Heritage.” The department wished to honor those ancestors who made it possible for them to say “black power.” The newly organized Community Arts Productions (CAP) sponsored a variety of community-wide arts and cultural activities.<sup>360</sup>

While these events were signs of progress and distinction in the department, it faced its biggest crisis in the fall of 1972 and spring of 1973. On August 24, 1972, a group of eight black community leaders met with President Malcolm Moos to present a list of 12 concerns about the department. Primarily, they charged that the local black community was not sufficiently involved in the department. They also demanded better teaching which included the elimination of excessive absenteeism among faculty and the

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<sup>357</sup> Vick, “‘No Mystique in Black Studies’ Says U of M Department Head,” 4.

<sup>358</sup> Judy Vick, “Muhammad Ali to Speak at Afro-American Studies Scholarship Benefit,” *University of Minnesota News Service*, May 17, 1971.

<sup>359</sup> “World-famous boxer Muhammad Ali will appear in a benefit performance...” Afro-American Studies info file, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, May 25, 1971).

<sup>360</sup> “U Black studies dept. to organize plans for Black History Week,” *Twin City Observer*, February 2, 1972.

inappropriate teaching materials and methods they employed.<sup>361</sup> The group also requested that the tuition and fees for minority students eventually be waived. Finally, they asked that the demands be implemented before school resumed in September.<sup>362</sup>

The group's core criticism dealt with the lack of community involvement on the parts of Professors King and Ward. They attempted to set a meeting with the two professors but King was out of town and Ward remained difficult to reach. Feeling they were being ignored, the group took their grievances to President Moos. However, Moos did not take any action and the situation only got worse over the course of the school year.

In the month of January, King called community members to plan events for Black History Week. The procedure was described as tardy and haphazard leaving many community members confused, unable to make useful suggestions, and unsure if a sufficient budget even existed. The other, more grievous incident occurred when Professor King decided not to rehire Earl Craig and informed Mahmoud El-Kati that he was being let go only a few days before Martin Luther King Day in January. George King's decision to hold an open meeting at a church on that day to hear concerns from the community only produced an outpouring of outrage.<sup>363</sup>

After King arrived one and a half hours late, without apology, he faced a barrage of questions about the failure to reappoint Craig and El-Kati as well as incessant heckling. In spite of being called a "black exploiter" and "motherfucker," among other things, King calmly attempted to explain the situation. However, he found it impossible

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<sup>361</sup> "Blacks critical of U Afro-studies department," *Twin City Observer*, August 30, 1972, 1, 3.

<sup>362</sup> Richard Gibson, "'U' Afro studies given poor grade by black leaders," *Minneapolis Star*, September 1, 1972.

<sup>363</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 24-25, 28-29, 30.

to overcome criticism and may not have been much concerned that he was unable to do so.<sup>364</sup>

The group of complainants held Moos personally responsible for the failure of the department to meet its original commitments to the black community. However, Moos responded by saying that it would be as inappropriate for him to interfere in the internal affairs of the Afro-American Studies Department as it would with any other. Once again, it would take conflict to spur the administration to take action.

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<sup>364</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 31-33.

## Chapter 5: Traditional Scholars or “Race Hustlers”? The Crisis of Community

### Involvement

The black studies department claimed to be unaware of any dissent in the black community. Enrollment in black studies courses had increased to 1500 students though the number of professors fell to seven.<sup>365</sup> Similarly, the membership of the Afro-American Action Committee grew to 200.<sup>366</sup> Thus, it came as a surprise when, on January 18, 1973, shortly after 5 P.M., an undetermined number of persons walked in to the Afro-American Studies Department meeting to break it up. Led by Mahmoud El-Kati, the group demanded to see his personnel file. Professor King was taken to the department office to look for it. Meanwhile, a few others broke the door to John Ward’s office and tore the receiver off the phone to prevent him from calling for help. Moreover, the group physically attacked Ward, who was completely blind, and George King.<sup>367</sup> King claimed that El-Kati grabbed him by his tie and, along with Francisco Lloyd, struck him with closed fists, while Ward suffered injuries to his shoulder.<sup>368</sup>

The Central Steering Committee of the AAAC reported that about thirty youth were present, some of whom were armed.<sup>369</sup> The CLA Ad-Hoc Committee found later on investigating that “there is substantial evidence suggesting that he [Mahmoud El-Kati] went to the meeting prepared to use violence to secure his object.” Though he only took

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Judy Vick, “AAAC Opposed Attack on Afro-American Faculty,” *University of Minnesota News Service*, January 22, 1973.

<sup>367</sup> Vick, “AAAC Opposed Attack on Afro-American Faculty,” no page given; “Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee,” 47.

<sup>368</sup> Gary Urban, “King testifies against six in municipal court,” *Minnesota Daily*, May 17, 1973, 3.

<sup>369</sup> Carl Brown, “For Immediate Release,” Afro-American Studies info file (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Archives, 1973).

five people with him, many others gathered in the hall.<sup>370</sup> The number of people involved and the use of violence shook the department as many people expressed continual fear for their personal security or that of their families.<sup>371</sup>

Francisco Lloyd, an executive officer of the Minnesota Student Association and president of the AAAC the previous year, denied the AAAC's account of events. He said he was there from beginning to end and no more than six or seven people participated including himself. They simply entered the office to discuss the dismissal of El-Kati.<sup>372</sup>

The community group who presented the 12 demands to Moos said that if he did not take steps to meet their proposals, more violence would be likely.<sup>373</sup> In response, the AAAC vowed to protect the faculty from attack or intimidation.<sup>374</sup> However, University Police guarded the department offices for the rest of the week. Ward and King had not decided by the following week if they wanted to press charges.<sup>375</sup> In fact, King did not give a written statement about the incident to University Police until almost a month later.<sup>376</sup>

The incident resulted after King and Ward supposedly fired Earl Craig, Jr. and Mahmoud El-Kati over a dispute regarding community activism by faculty members. However, the two department administrators stated that the department just did not have enough funds to rehire Craig.<sup>377</sup> He continued to teach at the School of Public Affairs on

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<sup>370</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 47.

<sup>371</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 48.

<sup>372</sup> Valerie Cunningham, "Black Student Denies Violence Charges at 'U'," *University of Minnesota News Service*, January 23, 1973, 1.

<sup>373</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 52.

<sup>374</sup> Brown, no page given.

<sup>375</sup> Vick, "AAAC Opposed Attack on Afro-American Faculty," no page given.

<sup>376</sup> Gwenyth Jones, "'Minor Pentagon Papers?' Tape of 'U' incident turns up in court," *Minneapolis Star*, May 17, 1973.

<sup>377</sup> Brian Anderson, "'U' black-studies faculty drifted from community, differed over proper role," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 30, 1973.



the Twin Cities campus.<sup>378</sup> While El-Kati's file had been lost, the department stated that he was let go because he was overly active in the community and refused to comply with the department's request to obtain a master's degree. Alternatively, El-Kati argued that the department failed to uphold the spirit of its founding which included "going its own moral way" and not giving too much respect to white institutions.<sup>379</sup>

This event took place in the midst of black studies being questioned across the country. Some departments were being downgraded and others threatened with abolition by administrations which found them irrelevant.<sup>380</sup> In response to the incident at the University of Minnesota, Malcolm Moos set up an advisory committee (The Wilderson Committee) to counsel him on the controversy. He told the committee to meet with faculty, students and administrators of the department and with members of the community. Following that, they were to report their recommendations for resolving the conflict to the administration of the College of Liberal Arts and himself by the end of the week.<sup>381</sup>

At the end of the month, the president relieved Ward and King of their administrative duties as per the recommendation of his committee, though he allowed them to continue their teaching duties.<sup>382</sup> The committee report charged that King and Ward's refusal to meet with the community showed that the department disrespected its community constituents, preventing it from meeting its mission and goals.<sup>383</sup> The committee also suggested that the administration do something more to provide for the

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<sup>378</sup> Michael Shelby, "Afro-American studies chairman relieved of administrative duties," *Minnesota Daily*, January 29, 1973, 1, 12.

<sup>379</sup> Michael Shelby, "Moos appoints committee to hear King, El-Kati controversy," *Minnesota Daily*, January 23, 1973, 3.

<sup>380</sup> "2 in 'U' black studies will only teach," *Minneapolis Star*, January 29, 1973.

<sup>381</sup> Vick, "Moos Appoints Advisory Committee on Afro-American Controversy," no page given.

<sup>382</sup> "2 in 'U' black studies will only teach," *Minneapolis Star*, January 29, 1973.

<sup>383</sup> Shelby, "Afro-American studies chairman relieved of administrative duties," 1, 12.

safety and freedom of movement of all members of the university. The report seemed to indicate that the attack on King and Ward was not an isolated incident. The committee wrote, “one of the important issues brought to the attention of this committee is the matter of alleged threats, physical intimidation and harassment of faculty members.”<sup>384</sup>

The *Minneapolis Tribune* elaborated on the controversy in the department which came about over a dispute over the proper role of the department in the community which had occurred over a period of years. The department began with faculty members like Lillian Anthony, Josie Johnson, Earl Craig, Jr., and Mahmoud El-Kati, who prided themselves on being very active in the community. The common sentiment was that “the Ph.D. degree was often an artificial standard of achievement, and that individuals with major non-academic accomplishments could be a real asset to the program.”<sup>385</sup> But, those activist members gradually left for various reasons and a rift between the department and the community grew. El-Kati stated that King and Ward justified his dismissal by claiming he involved himself too much in community affairs. He argued that King and Ward exemplified “the old school of traditional, scholarly individuals who are content with their positions and are unwilling to recognize the modern black man” calling them “classical Negro race hustlers.”<sup>386</sup>

Meanwhile, the Afro-American Studies Department objected to interference by some of the black community. An anonymous faculty member said, “There is a difference between service to the community and control by the community, between

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<sup>384</sup> “‘U’ panel ends probe of Afro department,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 28, 1973.

<sup>385</sup> “Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee,” 22.

<sup>386</sup> Brian Anderson, “‘U’ black-studies faculty drifted from community, differed over proper role,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 30, 1973.

being responsive to the community and being responsible to them.”<sup>387</sup> King responded to El-Kati and the rest of the community by saying, “The department, as an intellectual and scholarly entity, does not see itself teaching any specific ideology. That would be academically dishonest, anti-intellectual and, even more serious, indoctrinating rather than liberating the minds of students. The department has the responsibility of teaching a range of ideologies.”<sup>388</sup> The AAAC also objected to complaints from the community which citizens made without asking for student opinions.<sup>389</sup>

On January 17, a committee of black community representatives led by Ann Darby of the Minneapolis Urban League presented 12 demands to the College of Liberal Arts in an 8-page letter. The three major proposals outlined in the document were: to establish a community board to advise the department, to eliminate all tuition and fees for “third world students” and to include local black people as part of the teaching staff. The initial department charter included no provision for a community advisory board, but one existed until the department dissolved it in April, 1970.<sup>390</sup> Similarly, local people like Mahmoud El-Kati composed the initial teaching staff of the department. Essentially, the letter called for a return to the way things were when the department began.

In early February, John Webb, associate dean of the CLA and acting chairman of the Afro-American Studies Department, said that the department would open itself to criticism and advice from outsiders but retained the right to determine its own policies. He stated that the department wished to give more attention to the community and

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Richard Gibson, “Squabble over Afro studies began small, but it’s growing,” *Minneapolis Star*, February 1, 1973, 4A.

<sup>389</sup> Anderson, “‘U’ black-studies faculty drifted from community, differed over proper role,” no page given.

<sup>390</sup> Mike Shelby, “Afro-American Studies department acting chairman responds to ad hoc committee from Black community,” *Minnesota Daily*, February 1, 1973, 1.

eliminate tuition and fees for students in need. The latter, however, required the attention of the regents and the state legislature. He also pointed out that five of nine black faculty members in the department considered themselves members of the local community as they had resided in the Twin Cities for a number of years.<sup>391</sup>

The faculty stood fully behind King and Ward on the issue of community involvement. Some faculty members said that the staff was prepared to resign en masse if the two were not reinstated. They also pointed out that King and Ward had been working for months to establish an Afro-American Studies Center in the black community which would lend itself to more direct community involvement, research, and action. Moreover, the department had been training school personnel for the pending desegregation of the Minneapolis public schools.<sup>392</sup>

Darrell Shreve, a member of the Department of Afro-American Studies faculty, wrote an editorial in the *Minnesota Daily* entitled, "A case of institutional racism?" He charged that the Department of Afro-American Studies was receiving different treatment than any other university department would in this kind of dispute. He accused President Moos of crusading to eliminate King and Ward from the department. He pointed out that Moos did not condemn the violence against King and Ward. Furthermore, the president acted to remove George King, the department chairperson, without allowing him a chance to respond to the charges. And, he did so under the advice of a committee that included one of the complainants against the department, Harry Davis. King had stated in a meeting at Zion Baptist Church on January 15 that he would respond to the concerns if the group of complainants would send them to the department. The group had

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<sup>391</sup> Mike Shelby, "Afro-American Studies department acting chairman responds to ad hoc committee from Black community," *Minnesota Daily*, February 1, 1973, 1.

<sup>392</sup> Richard Gibson, "Squabble over Afro studies began small, but it's growing," no page given.

presented the concerns to President Moos last August, but not to the department.<sup>393</sup> The feeling of mistreatment among members of the department continued through the month as the *Minnesota Daily* reported on February 20 that the department faculty was still totally dissatisfied. They did not trust Webb, the temporary chair, and felt no other department would be treated as they had been.<sup>394</sup>

The following month, George King accused the university of institutional racism in an interview with the *Minnesota Daily*. King responded to the Wilderson Committee's assertion that part of the reason he was removed from his chair was that he and other department faculty refused to participate in the investigation. King stated that he and other department members made known that they would cooperate when they knew what charges were being made against them. He had submitted three questions to the Dean of the CLA which went unanswered. King welcomed community input but emphasized that the department retained the right to chart its own course. On the issue of community involvement, he concluded, "When we hear the term 'Black community,' that's a misnomer. There are communities and then there is what we call the 'silent majority' that supports and upholds our intent to be a quality, academically excellent department of Black Studies at the University."<sup>395</sup>

George King also responded specifically to the dispute over the firing of Mahmoud El-Kati. He said that the department's Personnel and Tenure Committee decided to dismiss El-Kati and, given that he was a temporary faculty member, they required no reason for letting him go. Personally, King felt that El-Kati had spread

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<sup>393</sup> Darrell Shreve, "A case of institutional racism?" *Minnesota Daily*, February 2, 1973, 7.

<sup>394</sup> Pearl Bakken, "AAUP to investigate controversies in Afro-American studies dept.," *Minnesota Daily*, February 20, 1973, 2.

<sup>395</sup> "King charges 'institutional racism' in Afro department controversy," *Minnesota Daily*, March 13, 1973, 5.

himself too thin by taking a position at the University of Minnesota while also working at nearby Macalester College and at a school in Wisconsin.<sup>396</sup>

Lastly, King noted the deleterious consequences of this dispute for the department. He argued that prior to the disruption,

there was no other Afro-American studies program in the country that had the status, the prestige, the reputation and the staff that the program at Minnesota had. However, because of the accusations, violence, and firings, the department found itself unable to follow through on a number of important projects...the success of which depend[ed] on [King's] own personal status, character and reputation, all of which [were] in danger now; some of which [he had] already lost.<sup>397</sup>

He concluded with a foreboding statement, saying, "I think what needs to be pointed out is the fact that the department is somewhat in limbo. In a time of financial stringency, of retrenchment and reallocation, that means virtually death for a department."<sup>398</sup>

In his broader survey of black studies, Carlos Brossard points out that, of all the barriers, interpersonal disputes over ideological differences and national backgrounds appeared to be the most unexpected and hardest to address. While he points out that this had the benefits of dispelling the myth of racial unification and offering a variety of models of black studies, these conflicts produced increasingly fragmented programs and departments.<sup>399</sup> The statement certainly held true for the University of Minnesota.

The removal of King and Ward from their administrative duties led to an investigation by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The committee intended to "clear the air of irresponsible rumor," study the actions of administrators lacking in accountability, and look at the influence of groups outside the

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Brossard, "Classifying Black Studies Programs," 286.

university.<sup>400</sup> The AAUP later expressed three concerns based on its investigation: university officials should guard against permitting outside groups to attempt to dictate to a department, they need to follow procedural regulations with regard to suspension and firing, and they must clarify procedures for relieving department chairs of their duties.<sup>401</sup> At the same time, Mahmoud El-Kati attempted to appeal the decision to not re-hire him. However, as a temporary faculty member on a 9-month appointment, he possessed few routes for reconsideration.<sup>402</sup>

Though the AAAC opposed the ad hoc community group that presented the demands, a student ad hoc committee was created called Concerned Black Students. They felt, much like the community group, that the department had changed and needed to return to its original charter. They argued that many community members had valuable teaching resources to offer even though they lacked the usual academic degrees. Finally, they called for the creation of two community offices to reach out to African Americans in the Twin Cities.<sup>403</sup>

On March 16, almost two months after the incident, George King filed charges against six people for the January assault and on March 20 they were arraigned in Hennepin County Municipal Court. The grand jury charged Milton Williams (Mahmoud El-Kati), Francisco Lloyd, and George Taylor (Zulu Vusumuzi) with assault and breach of the peace while they charged Willa Mae Dixon, Wade Mann, and Felix Welch (Cojo Iodienga) with the latter.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Bill Huntzicker, "AAUP to Investigate Black Studies Issue," *University of Minnesota News Service*, February 20, 1973, 1.

<sup>401</sup> Pearl Bakken, "Faculty committee adds no news about afro studies controversies," *Minnesota Daily*, May 15, 1973, 5.

<sup>402</sup> "El-Kati requests U officials check possible appeal routes," *Minnesota Daily*, February 2, 1973.

<sup>403</sup> "Black students advocate Afro dept. return to original objectives," *Minnesota Daily*, March 8, 1973, 3.

<sup>404</sup> Judy Vick, "Six Arrested," *University of Minnesota News Service*, March 20, 1973.

At the same time, an Interim Advisory Committee on Afro-American Studies was established as per the recommendation of the Wilderson Committee.<sup>405</sup> Seventeen people composed this group, which included faculty, community members, and students. Interestingly, two people at the center of the initial dispute, Ward and El-Kati, both sat on the advisory committee. The department responded to the creation of this committee by passing a resolution which stated that if the College of Liberal Arts considered a committee composed of members outside the department and outside the university a valid method for evaluation, then they must apply that rule to all departments.<sup>406</sup> Again, they felt the effects of institutionalized racism.

In April, King was reinstated as chairman for the balance of his term which ended on June 15. The CLA committee recommended his reinstatement because of the procedural problems surrounding his removal. King had not been afforded due process when suspended, meaning Moos and others failed to notify him of the charges, give him an opportunity to reply, and complete a full investigation before his removal. The CLA committee noted that such impropriety could open the university to legal action. In recommending his reinstatement, the committee also suggested that he not be reappointed at the end of his term because of his insensitivity in dealing with members of the black community. In regards to John Ward, the committee pointed out that he did not actually hold the position of Assistant Chairman of the Department, so Moos had no position to remove him from to begin with. At the same time, the committee recommended that Ward not be appointed to succeed King.

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<sup>405</sup> Judy Vick, "Russell Hamilton Heads Afro-American Advisory group," *University of Minnesota News Service*, March 9, 1973.

<sup>406</sup> "Group of 17 to advise Afro Studies dept.," *Minnesota Daily*, March 9, 1973.



The committee also found no evidence of misconduct with regard to the firings of Craig and El-Kati. With respect to community involvement, they found a number of ways to interpret the mission of the department and concluded that it should make efforts to bridge the gap with the community but this should not extend to “direct service to specific problems at hand (in the community).”<sup>407</sup> On June 15, King was asked by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts to continue to serve as chairman until an appropriate recommendation could be made by committees regarding his reappointment.<sup>408</sup>

The case against El-Kati and others ended up going to court in May. One piece of evidence was an hour-long audio tape of the event. Though unintelligible at times, El-Kati could be heard pleading with King to give him his personnel file, which still had not been found since the incident.<sup>409</sup> The tape showed that King agreed to allow El-Kati to look at his file, but only after the meeting concluded. However, El-Kati insisted on seeing his file immediately.<sup>410</sup> King refused and testified that El-Kati and two students, one of whom was Francisco Lloyd, grabbed him and manhandled him to the door of the room where files were kept.<sup>411</sup> El-Kati agreed that King had been roughed up but that he and the other two defendants were not the ones responsible.<sup>412</sup> The tape also revealed a

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<sup>407</sup> Pearl Bakken, “King to be reinstated, won’t be recommended for re-appointment,” *Minnesota Daily*, April 20, 1973, 1, 23.

<sup>408</sup> Judy Vick, “Committees Recommend Community Outposts for Afro-American Dept.,” *University of Minnesota News Service*, August 6, 1973.

<sup>409</sup> Gwenth Jones, “‘Minor Pentagon Papers?’ Tape of ‘U’ incident turns up in court,” *Minneapolis Star*, May 17, 1973.

<sup>410</sup> Harley Sorensen, “Three found guilty of hitting ‘U’ department head,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 1, 1973, 16B.

<sup>411</sup> Gwenth Jones, “‘Minor Pentagon Papers?’ Tape of ‘U’ incident turns up in court,” no page given.

<sup>412</sup> Harley Sorensen, “Three found guilty of hitting ‘U’ department head,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 1, 1973, 16B.

woman's voice indicating she wanted to hide or destroy El-Kati's file before the police arrived.<sup>413</sup>

The defense attempted to prove King's lack of credibility. They contended that King presented a false description of the relationship between the department and the community. Even worse, they argued that he and Ward attended department faculty meetings under the influence of alcohol. King admitted on the stand that he had a glass of port at lunch, but nothing more.<sup>414</sup> They also questioned King's motives because he waited so long to file charges. King said he waited "because of the highly charged atmosphere and for fear for my own life." He also argued that state property had been destroyed. In instances like that, the university usually took the initiative to investigate and file charges. Vusumizi Zulu, defending himself, argued that King brought charges because he was embarrassed by criticism from the community and wanted to fight back in some way. He also argued that King exaggerated the disruption caused by the confrontation asking, "Are you aware that meetings tend to be loud when groups of Black people are discussing Black issues and that abusive language is often used?" King rejected the premise of the question entirely.<sup>415</sup>

After only three-and-a-half days of testimony, both sides in the case agreed to submit evidence and sworn statements to the Judge Patrick W. Fitzgerald rather than continue oral testimony. The judge would then decide the case by the end of the month. Alongside King, Ward was the only other person to testify before the oral arguments ended. He asserted that he could identify all six assailants, though he was blind. Ward

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<sup>413</sup> Steve Johnson, "Tape played during El-Kati trial suggests file was hidden," *Minnesota Daily*, May 18, 1973, 5.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> Steven Johnson, "Afro studies suit delayed by 'fear for life,' King testifies," *Minnesota Daily*, May 21, 1973.

said he could pick them out based on voice, footsteps, and other aural qualities. He also described injuries to his left arm and shoulder. In response, the defense argued that Ward provided biased testimony because of his close connection to King.<sup>416</sup>

Finally, Mahmoud El-Kati presented a general statement to the court rather than bench testimony before the decision went to the judge. He said he did not want to create more chaos in the community by continuing the open trial. El-Kati argued that the trial should not have taken place to begin with. Rather, the black community should have judged the issue and had the means to settle disputes such as this.<sup>417</sup>

At the end of the month, Judge Fitzgerald presented his verdict in the trial. He called it “far and away the most important case that [he had] been called upon to resolve.”<sup>418</sup> The three men accused of simple assault were found guilty. All six were found innocent of breach of the peace. The judge ordered a pre-sentence investigation of the three convicted men which was expected to take about two weeks.

El-Kati had hoped to use the trial as a forum to publicize the lack of community involvement and the failure of the department to fulfill its charter. Judge Fitzgerald allowed testimony which ranged beyond the limits of the incident on January 18 which accommodated this purpose. However, El-Kati felt that the trial did not meet his objective.<sup>419</sup> Cojo Iodienga was equally upset as the trial did not resolve political problems between the department and the black community. Like El-Kati, he stated that the court could not determine guilt or innocence and that assault was not the issue.

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<sup>416</sup> Steven Johnson, “Defense, prosecution agree judge will decide El-Kati case,” *Minnesota Daily*, May 22, 1973.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Steven Johnson, “El-kati, 2 others found guilty of assault,” *Minnesota Daily*, June 1, 1973, 1, 9.

<sup>419</sup> Harley Sorensen, “Three found guilty of hitting ‘U’ department head,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 1, 1973, 16B.

Rather, the primary problem was King's accountability and the black community must decide what should be done.<sup>420</sup>

In analyzing the conflict over community involvement, the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee to Recommend Action with Respect to the Status of Professor George D. King found a number of conflicting approaches to black studies. The committee first examined the department's charter which called for the program to be designed to meet current social and community needs. Many community leaders interpreted this to mean that the department would provide direct community service. However, many professors in the department in 1973 took this to mean that they would train students to work on problems facing black communities.<sup>421</sup>

Besides looking at the charter, the committee also looked over the proposals which led to the creation of the department. They found, "The proposals do not disclose any special emphasis upon continuing faculty services to the black community other than in training students for eventual service there, nor upon any structured educational programs to be conducted by the Department within the black community. Nor is there the slightest reference to a special role for leaders of the black community in policy direction of the Department."<sup>422</sup> However, that could be altered with changes in the department's charter.

The CLA committee isolated three different approaches to community involvement for black studies departments and recommended what they viewed as the

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<sup>420</sup> Steven Johnson, "El-kati, 2 others found guilty of assault," 1, 9.

<sup>421</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee to Recommend Action with Respect to the Status of Professor George D. King, Chairman, Afro-American Studies Department," April 9, 1973, Black History Project Materials 1902-1983, University of Minnesota Department of Afro-American Studies, box 1 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society), 6, 8.

<sup>422</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 7.

best option. First, the department could act as service agency to give advice and assistance regarding a number of community problems. Second, black professors and students could interact with the local black community to better understand problems and adjust their courses to account for them. This would help the students become more attuned to important issues in the process of training to become leaders, teachers, and social workers in black communities. Third, the department would be almost entirely academically oriented. Though it would train intellectual leaders of black communities, there would be no institutional bridge to the community beyond individual contacts that faculty maintained and wished to incorporate. In no case would the department be obligated to take direction from the black community. The committee felt that the second approach represented the best balance, though it was not necessitated by the department's current charter.<sup>423</sup>

The committee found that the department seemed to start out with the second approach but was moving towards the third under the direction of faculty like King and Ward. The community, which felt a strong connection to the department in the first few years, slowly watched that connection disappear. Initially, an Advisory Committee existed which included members drawn from the community. But, after the first year, it dissolved on its own accord and handed the reins entirely to the department leadership. Similarly, the department began with many faculty drawn from the local community. But, as those instructors left for other endeavors and new teachers with the requisite academic degrees became available, the situation changed.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 8-12.

<sup>424</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 14.

The Committee came out strongly against the community requests for “black liberation ideology as the focal point of black studies,” community education, and especially community control of the department. They argued that black liberation ideology and community control would “compromise the constitutionally autonomous position of the University as an agency of the State serving the entire population.” These proposals would also open the university to embarrassing questions by accrediting agencies and hurt the academic freedom of professors in the department. Finally, community education programs would quickly diminish resources intended for students enrolled in the university.<sup>425</sup> The CLA report directed that the department re-write its charter using language which clearly stated its relationship to the community. The report strongly suggested that the department focus on training students to work in black communities and build a connection with the local black community to improve that training.

In August, the Interim Advisory Committee, along with an external review committee which had been formed, released their recommendations for the improvement of the Afro-American Studies Department. One of the foremost suggestions was that the department establish at least two community extension offices, one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul. These centers were to “provide a situation for black people to come together to revitalize their cultural heritage as African people.”<sup>426</sup> Of course, this had already been in King and Ward’s planning. Moreover, the department was advised to draft a new statement of purpose, increase the number of tenured faculty, and mandate

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<sup>425</sup> “Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee,” 16, 18-19.

<sup>426</sup> Gregor W. Pinney, “Panel recommends improvements in ‘U’ Afro-American department,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 8, 1973.

research for faculty members.<sup>427</sup> The report also noted other academic limitations saying that the department was not getting enough cooperation from other departments, its curriculum was too narrow, and that its morale was low.<sup>428</sup> In order to meet these goals, the committee recommended that the department's \$150,000 budget be doubled. The Dean of the CLA, E.W. Ziebarth, at the end of his tenure, said some of the recommendations would be implemented but did not specify which ones.<sup>429</sup>

Though they made a complaint about the lack of support from other disciplines, the report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee points out that the department, on at least one occasion, rejected interdepartmental cooperation. Professor Philip Porter of the Geography Department brought forth a proposal for a program in African Studies to be operated jointly with the Afro-American Studies Department. However, most members of the department wanted their own "all-black program of African studies" and rejected the proposal. They did not wish to allow another department to gain control of an area they thought should be housed solely in their department. Moreover, some felt that working with another department would send the message that the Afro-American Studies Department lacked the competence to handle the program on its own. Other departments also attempted to form cooperative relationships but found the professors of in Afro-American Studies unresponsive.<sup>430</sup> This represents an interesting point for departure. Many scholars point out the failure of other departments to support black studies departments. However, it would be useful to find the instances in which black

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<sup>427</sup> Judy Vick, "Committees Recommend Community Outposts for Afro-American Dept.," *University of Minnesota News Service*, August 6, 1973.

<sup>428</sup> Pinney, no page given.

<sup>429</sup> Pinney, no page given.

<sup>430</sup> "Report of the CLA Ad-Hoc Committee," 34-36.

studies departments rejected cooperation in a desire to maintain autonomy, which also remained a central concern of many new departments.

To the dismay of many in the community, the new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Frank J. Sorauf approved King's appointment to another term as Chair of the Department of Afro-American Studies. He commended King's leadership in shifting the department from activism to academics saying, "It's beginning to behave like an academic institution." This approval was not shared by Gleason Glover of the Urban League who warned that "to isolate the Afro-American department from the community at this time would be detrimental to the present black students on campus, the entire black community and the future of the black struggle." Mahmoud El-Kati again stated his opposition to "reactionary Negroes" who hustle blacks and remain aloof to the needs of the black community. Many black students also opposed King's reappointment and planned to form a committee for a protest that they said could be bigger than Morrill Hall. However, there is no evidence this ever materialized. King remained the chair for another year.<sup>431</sup>

In the fall of the following year, Geneva Southall took over as head of the department after King resigned for personal reasons that summer, completing one year of his three-year appointment. He remained a professor in the department. His replacement, Geneva Southall, was a musicologist who received her Master's Degree from the American Conservatory of Music and a Ph.D. degree in music literature and piano performance from the University of Iowa. Southall began her term by saying she was optimistic. From her perspective, most of the problems between the community and

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<sup>431</sup> Orrin Jones, "King reappointment raises concern," *Minnesota Daily*, November 7, 1973, 1, 8.



the department resulted from misinformation or no information which was exploited “by some people who could care less about black folks being together.”<sup>432</sup>

Southall seemed committed to increasing the community connection to the department. She stated that she was not a “no comment” person and would be happy talking to people about the department’s programs. Moreover, she combined her religiosity with community involvement by visiting a different church in the black community each week to let them know what the department was doing. Finally, she stated that her administrative philosophy was to keep all parts of the department working together.<sup>433</sup>

At the time Southall took over, the department had 14 faculty members and 2500 students enrolled in courses, 90 percent of whom were non-black.<sup>434</sup> Though black studies at the University of Minnesota and elsewhere was originally conceived by and for black students, the primary beneficiaries at these predominantly white universities were white students. Clyde C. Clements, Jr. declared in the *Negro American Literature Forum*, “The legitimate functions of black studies for black students embracing a realization of ethnic identity, creation of black leadership, and remedy for white studies have been pronounced. But white students, fed by stereotypes from past literature and history and stimulated by reporting in the newspapers and television which focuses on the riots and sit-in of the racial crisis, need black studies just as badly.”<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Judy Vick, “Geneva Southall---New Head of ‘U’ Afro-American Dept.,” *University of Minnesota News Service*, July 24, 1974.

<sup>433</sup> Vick, “Geneva Southall---New Head of ‘U’ Afro-American Dept.,” no page given.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Clyde C. Clements, Jr., “Black Studies for White Students,” *Negro American Literature Forum* 4, no. 1 (March, 1970), 9.

Besides appointing Southall as chair, in 1974, the department also restructured its senior seminar. The program was originally intended to expose students to local and national visiting scholars concerning the black experience and help them acquire greater research skills by working on a senior paper. They continued to work towards this goal. However, the alterations helped to make the senior seminar more inclusive of staff and local community resources.<sup>436</sup>

Under the leadership of Southall, the community connection grew even stronger the following year. The department applied for funds to hire a full-time community program assistant and appointed Gary Hines. The Afro-American Studies Department did not want to create a position tied up with teaching responsibilities. Instead, they wished to hire someone who could devote their full work time to maintaining the bond between the department and the community. In doing this, they modeled the Indian Studies Department which had two community program assistants and the Chicano Studies Department which employed one. Beyond that, the department offered a free course entitled “Central City Community Development” which held classes at the Black Cultural Resource Center in St. Paul. Finally, they worked to add more merit-based scholarships to attract more majors.<sup>437</sup>

In a further effort at building a stronger community connection, in the winter of 1976, the Afro-American Studies Department released the second issue of its newsletter, *Outreach*. The 10-page document included detailed information on each of the faculty members, senior seminar topics, the role of oral data in black studies, alumni profiles, Black History Week, and community consultants in the department’s classes. At the

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<sup>436</sup> Alice C. Bledsoe, Ed., “Senior Seminar...” *Outreach* (Vol. 1, No. 2), Winter 1976, 1.

<sup>437</sup> Mary Klein, “Afro studies seeks to fund community assistant position,” *Minnesota Daily*, October 28, 1975, 4, 8.

beginning of the newsletter, Dr. Frank Wilderson, the Vice President of Student Affairs, noted, “The University of Minnesota’s Afro-Department, like others throughout the country, has gone through a period where serious questions were asked concerning its viability – I am happy to say that it answered in the affirmative...Others have come and gone, but there is evidence that this one is growing and is here to stay.”<sup>438</sup>

In the newsletter, Geneva Southall pointed out the numerous ways in which the department was increasing community involvement. During Black History Week, faculty and black studies majors went to several public schools to act as speakers and resources consultants. The department was involved in getting signatures on petitions for responsible Police Firearms Use Policy to stop the killing of blacks in the Twin Cities’ communities. She elaborated on the course “Central City Community Development.” It was offered in the Fall Quarter in St. Paul and in the Winter Quarter in Minneapolis. Students in the course presented their projects at Zion Baptist Church in Minneapolis so they could get feedback from persons with expertise in the community development and those in the community who would be affected by such policies.<sup>439</sup>

Unfortunately, at that time, the department also faced a dispute over autonomy. King and Ward became vocal opponents of the appointment of five adjunct faculty by the administration. Though the two were not opposed to the people appointed *per se*, they took exception to their approval by administrative fiat rather than departmental consideration. King and Ward argued that the five adjuncts would have a say in the department despite being outsiders. The department would lack any control over them. The two concluded by charging institutional racism saying such action would never be

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<sup>438</sup> Alice C. Bledsoe, Ed., *Outreach* (Vol. 1, No. 2), Winter 1976, 1-10.

<sup>439</sup> Geneva Southall, “From the Chairman’s Desk: Winter Quarter Update,” *Outreach* (Vol. 1, No. 2), Winter 1976, 2.

taken with a predominantly white department. Alternatively, Geneva Southall, the department chair, approved of the appointments saying they would add prestige to the African Studies program. She felt the new adjunct faculty had their “hearts, souls, and guts with [the] department for a long time.”<sup>440</sup>

Fabio Rojas observes that black studies departments still have not yet achieved autonomy. He writes this in reference to the fact that the professors in black studies departments are trained in many disciplines and teach non-black studies courses.<sup>441</sup> However, he seems to overlook the more overt ways in which black studies programs lacked or still lack autonomy. This example from the University of Minnesota, as well as others, shows that administrative fiat could still violate departmental autonomy in ways that would be quite unusual for long-standing, more “traditional” departments.

By 1980, William David Smith and Albert C. Yates reported in the *Journal of Black Studies* that many African American studies programs had died over the last twelve years. In their analysis, lack of financial resources served as the main reason for discontinuing such programs. But, they also noted the lack of community support, lack of student interest, poor politics, incompetent teachers and incompetent and uncommitted administrators as contributing factors. In regard to teachers and administrators, the authors identified the common misconception that “blackness” provided the qualification for one to teach black studies. They also pointed to institutionalized sexism which meant

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<sup>440</sup> Linda Sanderson, “Afro studies profs charge ‘racism’ in faculty appointments,” *Minnesota Daily*, January 16, 1976, 1.

<sup>441</sup> Rojas, 210.

few black women occupied administrative positions in black studies. Overall, black studies had not achieved the desired success and respectability.<sup>442</sup>

Though the department at the University of Minnesota remained exempt from most of these problems, it faced financial difficulties like other departments nationwide. An article in the school newspaper during the final month of 1981 presented a striking figure: each day, the state spent \$1.3 million that it did not have.<sup>443</sup> This made the department fearful of their budgetary future.<sup>444</sup> This was fairly typical of black studies program. Rojas finds that black studies programs atrophied in the 1980s, but as long as they had departmental status, they could later be rehabilitated.<sup>445</sup> Delores Aldridge and Carlene Young agree, writing, “Departmental status has proved to be the most efficacious for achieving desired goals of scholarship, faculty autonomy, institutional stability, and student support networks.”<sup>446</sup> Alternatively, William E. Nelson Jr. points out,

On campuses where programs were not undergirded by the impact of a strong student movement and were not linked to broader community interests, Black Studies frequently took the form of non-autonomous coordinating units, with the bulk of the faculty and the courses associated with the program being institutionally lodged in a traditional department. Many of these programs have been greatly stifled with regard to their continuing growth and progress. A number of them have not been able to surmount institutional barriers to their survival. Faced with budgetary retrenchments and increased pressure from students for institutional reforms, many colleges and universities have decided to dismantle their Black Studies units.<sup>447</sup>

The following January, 1982, Fred Lukermann, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, proposed scaling back the Department of Afro-American Studies and other minority

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<sup>442</sup> William David Smith and Albert C. Yates, “Editorial in Black Studies,” *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 3 (March, 1980), 271-275.

<sup>443</sup> Brett Smith, “An MPIRG alternative to Quieconomics,” *Minnesota Daily*, December 8, 1981.

<sup>444</sup> Jon Tevlin, “Black studies fearful of unpredictable budget future,” *Minnesota Daily*, December 8, 1981, 4, 9.

<sup>445</sup> Rojas, 209.

<sup>446</sup> Aldridge and Young, 6.

<sup>447</sup> Nelson, 84.

studies departments. He argued that since black students frequently majored in other areas, the funds needed to be sent elsewhere. Lukermann proposed that the department take on a faculty that held shared appointments instead of isolating itself and engaging in “de facto segregation.” The dean also stated that he could not guarantee that department requests for courses would be met. In response, the chair of the department, Earl Scott, noted his concern that such a system would hurt the program as home departments would be hostile to their faculty holding joint appointments with Afro-American Studies and work to eliminate the department. Moreover, the professors holding joint appointments would be more loyal and committed to their home departments where the job security lay.<sup>448</sup>

Scott argued that the true concern should not be cutting the department’s budget in response to state financial problems and low enrollment, but to encourage increased enrollment. He claimed that the low number of black students majoring in Afro-American and African Studies was due to the difficulty in identifying the subfields available. Scott said that many people remained unaware of the department’s existence and often thought it was just a counseling center.<sup>449</sup>

The flagging interest in black studies at the University of Minnesota was quite typical. Fabio Rojas finds that most schools experienced a burst of enthusiasm following black student revolts, but the departments and programs later found themselves with only a core group of students. At Harvard, the department saw significant interest following the triumphant student revolt, but by 1972, enrollment had already noticeably dropped and the faculty felt embattled. However, black studies survived and was later resurrected

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<sup>448</sup> Phyllis M. Metcalf, “Afro-African studies target for restructure process,” *Minnesota Daily*, January 14, 1982.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

because it had departmental status, rather than simply being a program.<sup>450</sup> The same held true at the University of Minnesota. Though interest remained high until the late 1970s, the department faced budgetary setbacks and waning interest in the early 1980s.

Fortunately, because it held departmental status, it was able to survive.

In response to proposed cuts, minority students banded together to publicly protest and testify to the Board of Regents. Though the administration announced cuts in April of 1983, by July they announced renewed support for these departments. Officials said they would strengthen minority studies programs by hiring new professors and working to increase student enrollment. Afro-American and African Studies were fortunate in these times of budget shortages that they were departments rather than programs, which protected them from easily being cut. At the same time, the department still required protection and promotion.<sup>451</sup> A movement still proved necessary to ensure its existence.

The administration presented four techniques it would employ to increase the visibility and enrollment of its minority studies departments: cross-crediting courses, having professors offer courses outside their home departments, having minority studies departments which did not have graduate programs work with the aid of graduate students in other departments to complete research, and have faculty from other departments join minority studies as adjuncts. Regarding black studies specifically, the administration offered funding for two visiting professors and a search committee for a joint English and Afro-American Studies professor. The department survived the early 1980s. Alternatively, the American Indian Studies Department had lost its last tenured

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<sup>450</sup> Rojas, 115-116.

<sup>451</sup> Joanne Leis, "Administration report outlines support of ethnic studies," *Minnesota Daily*, July 8, 1983, 3.

faculty member and was composed entirely of visiting professors and professors from other departments. That department was facing elimination.<sup>452</sup>

The case of the University of Minnesota proves Fabio Rojas' conclusion from studying the University of Chicago. He writes,

The lesson from the decline of African American studies at the University of Chicago is that being consistent with an organization's culture is not enough to ensure the long-term survival of a movement outcome. Bureaucratic neglect and confusion can easily erode a policy or work unit... Without the constant pressure generated by a social movement, the outcome withers.<sup>453</sup>

A black studies department required the constant pressure of a black student movement to ensure it remains intact.

It seems that the Afro-American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota was the exception to the harsher trends which eliminated departments and programs at other colleges and universities. The program is still going strong. As John Wright points out, the department found the needed financial support. While other departments around the country dealt with institutionalized sexism, a black woman often chaired the department (though this does not offer conclusive proof). Rather than dealing with a lack of community support, the department often faced concerns with too much community involvement in the department. The number of students enrolling in black studies courses indicated that student interest was renewed and the program would be there to stay.

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<sup>452</sup> Leis, "Administration report outlines support of ethnic studies," 3.

<sup>453</sup> Rojas, 112.



## **Chapter 6: “A Small Revolution”: Assessment and Conclusions about Black Studies at the University of Minnesota**

This case study offers many interesting affirmations and exceptions to broader trends in the black studies movement, particularly as documented by Fabio Rojas. In his work on black studies, Rojas takes a sociological and historical approach to social movement efforts for change. He finds that, “Disruptive protests have no impact on structural change”; non-disruptive protest has a significant effect. Rojas lists sit-ins as an example of disruptive protest. He writes, “Perhaps the largest schools respond negatively to protests. It is possible that administrators at schools with an extremely large number of academic programs might try to institute African American studies within existing programs as a quick response to protests. Future research can address this conjecture.”<sup>454</sup>

In looking at the University of Minnesota, one of the largest in the country, one can conclude that the overall response to the disruptive sit-in protest was positive, rather than negative as Rojas’ work presumes. While a significant contingent of largely white detractors existed, the university administration implemented the AAAC’s demands. In fact, their actions before the sit-in suggested they planned to implement black studies within existing courses. Only after the Morrill Hall takeover did they take clear steps to create the Afro-American Studies Department. Moreover, once three students faced indictment for their actions, the public sentiment shifted to strong support for them. In this respect, Rojas’ work would benefit from looking beyond the public reaction to black student takeovers to how support might have shifted in instances where students faced harsh punishment for their protest efforts at places like the University of Minnesota and

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<sup>454</sup> Rojas, 172, 178-181.

San Fernando Valley State. It is perhaps because the takeover did not become an “extreme disruption,” which Rojas says can prevent elites from acting on behalf of black students, that the AAAC was able to see their goals met.<sup>455</sup> The absence of violence, because of both the AAAC non-violent action and the administration’s decision not to involve the police, allowed many elites to support the organization in its efforts. The university leadership could defend their decisions to the public and in front of the legislature. One can imagine that, had the takeover turned violent, the administration could not have justified sealing an agreement with the students.

Rojas’ finding that the proportion of students who were black failed to have a significant impact on program or department creation is definitely affirmed by the events in Minnesota.<sup>456</sup> With less than one percent of the student body, African Americans represented a small minority of the campus population. Yet, like their counterparts at other universities, they were able to achieve the creation of a black studies department. The common connection among the various groups was not that they commanded a significant force on campus, but that they were organized and willing to fight for their department.<sup>457</sup> Because of students’ dedication to change, Peniel Joseph calls black studies one of the most successful manifestations of black power. He argues that it increased the number of African American students, staff and faculty, raised political consciousness among many African Americans and some white students, and contributed to making the university a site of political and ideological struggle.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid., 179-181.

<sup>457</sup> Rojas, 181.

<sup>458</sup> Joseph, “Dashikis and Democracy,” 197.

Alternatively, William Van Deburg writes of the process of change during the black student revolts,

Whereas the process of implementing change in the university curriculum traditionally moved at a snail's pace, student activists demanded immediate action. Shrillness, confusion over priorities, and the militants' unbending stance muddled the relevant educational issues they raised. As a result, the implementation phase of the Black Studies revolution became a case study in the creation of academic chaos, misunderstanding, and mutual ill will.<sup>459</sup>

Fortunately, the University of Minnesota found itself exempt from many of these broader conclusions. Van Deburg's claim about the confusion over priorities may have applied to the AAAC. The group wanted a department that its members could become a part of immediately. While this desire is understandable, such an unbending position led them to refuse the creation of a graduate program first which would have trained people to become educators in undergraduate courses which lacked qualified professors. However, the argument that this led to academic chaos does not hold. The department remained quite stable in its early years and only faced serious conflict and ill-will during the dispute over community involvement.

At the University of Minnesota, enrollment of minority students rose, more black faculty members joined the school, and black and white students alike were made more conscious of the role of race in American life through courses offered by the department. Stanford Lehmberg and Ann Pflaum argue that the Morrill Hall takeover was "the demonstration that created the strongest legacy and clearest outcome" at the University of Minnesota. It led directly to the creation of the Afro-American and African Studies departments and paved the way for American Indian Studies and Chicano Studies in

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<sup>459</sup> Van Deburg, 74.

Minnesota.<sup>460</sup> This ripple effect also extended over time as more and more people were educated in black history and culture.

The necessity of teaching white people about black history and culture was noted in a university report at the time of the takeover which concluded, “One belief expressed by these men [representatives of the Office of the University President] is that the extent of racist sentiment at the University--and by implication, throughout the state of Minnesota—had not been realized by most white people before this confrontation.”<sup>461</sup> A black studies program likely helped to ameliorate this situation. William E. Nelson Jr. speaks to the impact of black studies when writing,

Black students with a substantial grounding in Black Studies have tended to leave the university with a greater grasp of the realities of American life than those who have not been trained in Black Studies. Students trained in Black Studies are less susceptible to manipulation by negative racial stereotypes, and manifest a higher degree of racial consciousness and pride. Armed with in-depth information about the worldwide black experience, they are motivated to establish enduring commitments to the advancement of the interest of the black community. Given the black community’s need for trained and dedicated leadership, the role of Black Studies in instilling a high sense of racial consciousness in black students represents a noteworthy contribution of inestimable value. Many white students have also profited from the Black Studies experience. These students have gained a greater appreciation of the contributions of blacks to world society, and the artificial barriers placed in the way of black progress by racism and economic exploitation. Consequently, they have left the university with a more realistic perception of the black community; this fact has enabled them to more effectively cope with the demands and requirements produced by a multiracial society.<sup>462</sup>

Marie Braddock Williams contends that the importance of the Morrill Hall takeover and the creation of a black studies department lay in the increased recognition and respect accorded to African Americans at the University of Minnesota. Black people

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<sup>460</sup> Lehmberg and Pflaum, 116.

<sup>461</sup> Rasmussen, 3.

<sup>462</sup> Nelson, 86.

began to feel more like a part of the university and humanized in the eyes of their fellow students. Though the action may have been extreme, Williams wonders how long it would have been before black people were recognized at the university had the takeover not occurred.<sup>463</sup>

Finally, Fabio Rojas asserts that “universities are one of the most difficult institutions to change in modern society.” Because the creation of a new department requires the approval of faculty, administration, as well as external supervising boards, change is often halted by one or many hurdles.<sup>464</sup> Given this, the fact that a group of less than 100 students managed to change a bureaucratic behemoth for the intellectual and social benefit of themselves and others becomes all the more remarkable. It might well be deemed “a small revolution.”

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<sup>463</sup> Marie Braddock Williams, interview by author, telephone interview, 8 June 2008.

<sup>464</sup> Rojas, 211.

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