

with revolutionary black workers. From the standpoint of organizations like DRUM, the Arabs were only one example of several racial minorities that might be persuaded to work on a fraternal basis with blacks.

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Chapter Four

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers

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A union of workers is power. They can, if they so decide, control the economy of a country as large and powerful as the USA simply by calling a general strike.

—League of Revolutionary Black Workers, in a special UAW convention issue of *Inner City Voice*, November 1969

The success of DRUM bred a score of RUMs in other factories, as well as an UPRUM (among United Parcel Service workers), an HRUM (among health workers), and a NEWRUM (among *Detroit News* workers). The elections at Dodge Main had demonstrated that a whole range of media, legal, and neighborhood support mechanisms would be necessary if DRUM and its offspring were to survive even the first counter-attacks of company and union. Almost from the first wildcat, there were discussions on how to weave an umbrella organization to unite the local RUMs and their support groups and allies. The final result was an organization named the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which was legally incorporated in June 1969 and opened its headquarters at 179 Cortland Street four months later.

The League published numerous documents and position papers and had a finely drawn organizational chart, but it never functioned with the precision of a capitalist corporation or a Marxist-Leninist party. Rather than having a strict hierarchy, the League was organized into several components which had specific areas of work. Each component had a semi-autonomous character which often reflected the particular personalities of the individuals in charge. There was a central staff which grew to 80 members, but the organization was tightly controlled by a seven-man Executive Committee made up of General Baker, Kenneth Cockrel, Mike Hamlin, Luke Tripp, John Watson, John Williams, and Chuck Wooten.

The relatively loose structure of the League did not prevent the organization from developing a clear sense of strategy. The League viewed company, union, and government as an interconnected system of power that gave an appearance of intransigence but actually did not regard any one battle as critical. The stakes were much higher than those involved in any single confrontation, and the system was flexible enough to allow ample room for error, limited failures, some accommodation of worker demands, and grudging change. The League also appeared intransigent; but it, too, viewed no single election, strike, or activity as more than one operation in a broader campaign. One reason the League was able to flourish was that its opponents, who were so precise in describing their own actions and motivations, habitually abstracted the League's actions from their historical and organizational context. They saw local League actions centering on limited demands as the sole concern of the organization. They never imagined that a leaflet at Jefferson Assembly and a poster at Northern High School and a door-to-door petition on Dexter Avenue were all part of a system of interlocked centers of power and influence. They did not understand that the League sought to create a multilevel power apparatus parallel to the power apparatus of the system it sought to destroy.

The most publicized League activity was the in-plant organizing led by General Baker and Chuck Wooten. The approach, following the pattern of DRUM, was to move plant by plant, building small core groups and perfecting models of organization, discipline, and ideology. DRUM led to the birth of ELRUM (Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement) in November 1968, and soon ELRUM had an even larger membership than DRUM. There was also a FRUM at Ford's

River Rouge complex, a JARUM at Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue Assembly plant, a MARUM at the Mack Avenue plant, a CADRUM at Cadillac's Fleetwood factory, a DRUM II at Dodge Truck, and a MERUM at the Mound Road Engine plant—as well as units at Chevrolet's Livonia factory, at Ford's Wixom plant, at the Huber foundry, at the Winfield foundry, at Chrysler's Forge plant, and at the Plymouth Assembly plant. Had each of these new RUMs been as broadly based and popular as DRUM and ELRUM, the League would have had the strength of a fledgling political party or an alternate union. The reality, however, was that many of the RUMs reflected potential rather than solid organizations. Sometimes only a handful of workers were involved. A few bulletins or a single action might be the extent of their activities. The situation at each factory was unique. At Paragon Steel in Detroit, there was no RUM organization as such, but people in contact with the League carried out a small strike. In CADRUM, at the Fleetwood Cadillac plant, there were many older workers who had a long and militant history of shop-floor activism, including struggles with Ku Klux Klan elements in the local union. Often the new RUM units contained company, union, and police spies. The ranks also contained many confused sympathizers, vacillators, and strident black nationalists. Careful work was required on the part of the top leadership to filter out these elements and to make a reliable unit. One of the ever-present dilemmas during the first year of League operations was whether to answer a new inquiry or to devote extra time to an existing RUM. The League leadership's time and energy were spread thin and the organization's structure was as fragile as a pyramid of playing cards. Funds were limited and the task enormous, but requests for aid and information kept coming in, not only from the Detroit area but from all parts of the United States. There seemed to be no limit to how far the RUM idea might reach. The League constitution itself declared, "We must act swiftly to help organize DRUM type organizations wherever there are black workers, be it in Lynn Townsend's kitchen, the White House, White Castle, Ford Rouge, the Mississippi Delta, the plains of Wyoming, the mines of Bolivia, the rubber plantations of Indonesia, the oil fields of Biafra, or the Chrysler plant in South Africa."

The Baker group heavily emphasized the need to galvanize the new RUMs into tough and dependable units. They wanted all out-of-plant activities subordinated to this primary task. A number of other

League leaders believed that it was just as essential to organize people outside the factories—in the neighborhoods, schools, and places of recreation. These leaders stressed the interrelationship and interdependence of all League activities. Mike Hamlin, in particular, was concerned about the possibility of the individual RUMs becoming isolated. Perhaps the most patient and low-keyed personality in the leadership, Hamlin spun a web of alliances and relations for the purposes of creating a good public image for the League and strengthening the links between the various League components. Hamlin emphasized the need for student and community groups which could carry on public demonstrations when court injunctions and other considerations barred workers from public activity. Hamlin also was anxious to see the white radicals in the city form some organization which could act in concert with the League, and he wanted to find a device to link up Detroit activities with those of the similar groups emerging in other locations. Hamlin recalled some of the early League days in an interview given to the authors in 1972:

We came to believe that the working class had to make the revolution, had to lead the revolution, and that we had to concentrate our energies on workers. We didn't really understand what making a revolution entailed, what a proletarian revolution was, how it took shape, and how it developed. . . . I began to feel we must broaden our contacts within the community. We needed support to continue the struggle. I also felt we should build several kinds of resources to serve the struggle. We needed a printing operation, a legal apparatus, and stepped-up political education. . . . The League began to recruit large numbers of students and professionals. I think that our understanding of proletarian consciousness at that time was very low, and we did not do a good job of transforming the understanding of our new members. We were held together by personal loyalties rather than ideology. People were coming to us for the same reason we had started. They wanted to find ways to struggle. They would come in and we would do work, but our ideology remained unclear. Word of what was happening in Detroit got to workers in other cities. They began to wage similar struggles and they began to communicate with us. We started to discuss ideas about coalitions, affiliations, national caucuses, black worker organizations, and so forth. . . . Community organizing and industrial organizing are linked up. They go together. The working class should lead the community effort.

Watson shared Hamlin's views and added his own ideas on the use of media to build a secondary leadership and to combat the ideological underdevelopment of many rank-and-file League members. Watson considered it impractical and wasteful to have a few individuals scurrying from one plant to another in what amounted to a permanent state of frenzy. He had already demonstrated, with *ICV* and the *South End*, that a revolutionary newspaper could be an organ of mass political education. He wanted to extend that education by moving into films, radio, printing, and television. Watson felt that if the League could acquire its own media facilities, it could conduct mass political education on a scale unprecedented in Detroit or elsewhere. In a speech delivered on June 8, 1971, at a public meeting held in Detroit's Central Methodist Church, Watson gave his views of the need for political education:

I want to emphasize that education and knowledge are the most powerful tools that we have available in engaging in the struggle to make a better world. It is through the control of knowledge that the ruling class maintains its power. The struggle over the control of knowledge itself is a political struggle. The ruling classes have for many centuries understood this very clearly. Back to the days when the typical statement that you might hear from a slaveowner was, "Hell no, I don't want my slaves to learn how to read and write because educated niggers become uppity." That's exactly correct, and the man understands it very clearly today.

Ken Cockrel, who was admitted to the Michigan Bar in 1968, was closely associated with Watson and Hamlin. Outsiders tended to view Cockrel as the League's "intellectual in residence," but his biography was similar to that of the other League leaders. His parents had come from the Deep South during World War II, and his first home was in one of the army barracks thrown up around 8 Mile Road, the northern city limit, to house blacks brought to work in the factories. Cockrel's father had a job at Ford, and his mother was the first black woman to graduate from Lincoln High School in Ferndale. Both parents died when Cockrel was 12, and he was brought up by an aunt who worked as a supermarket cashier and an uncle who worked in various industrial plants around the city. Cockrel quit high school in the 11th grade and hung around the streets for a while. His state of mind at that time was

like that of many Detroit blacks; he was quoted in an October 14, 1973, article in the *Detroit News* as saying: "I just knew I wasn't going to bang metal in some factory all my life. But I was in a general course in school and wasn't aimed at anything particular. So I joined the Air Force, like my brother Sye had done."

In the Air Force, Cockrel got top security clearance and trained as a nuclear weapons technician. When he got out, he thought he might try college. Turned down by Highland Park Junior College because he was a high school dropout, he was admitted to Wayne in 1959 as a conditional adult student in a special program for those who had not completed high school. Cockrel got a B.A. in 1964 and a law degree in 1967, just one month before the Great Rebellion. He soon joined a racially integrated law firm headed by Harry Philo. Cockrel and some of his law partners acted as the League's de facto legal component. In spite of the numerous criminal and civil actions involving League members, it was Cockrel's boast that no one, including himself, was ever convicted. Much of this remarkable record was a result of the brilliant courtroom performance of Cockrel himself, but various League policies were also helpful. The League discouraged inflammatory statements that could not be backed up, and it made a practice of investigating the past personal history of anyone wanting to join the League, especially anyone expressing extreme political views. Cockrel understood better than anyone else in the League the gamut of legal ploys that could be used against the organization. He was convinced that to survive and prosper it was essential to have a powerful presence within the media and within the community. In a retrospective interview given to the authors of this book in 1972, Cockrel said:

If you are only dealing inside [the] trade union context, then you are not able to have the kind of pressure from the people who are affected by working-class struggle who are not workers. You don't have any criteria that are developed. . . .

The situation at the point of production itself is such that the kind of controls, the kind of political discipline that is necessary for struggle to advance doesn't seem to me to be susceptible of being developed at the point of production independently of some interaction with other struggles inside the community and broader, more class-conscious, more programmatic input. . . .

We had to develop a concept of what to do when workers are fired for doing organizational activity, and you are not in a position to feed

them, and you are not in a position to force the management to take them back, and you are not in a position to relate concretely to any of their needs. We had to confront incredible tactical questions. You are confronted with the questions of whether to try to force the union to get their jobs back; and if the union succeeds, then the union is assisted and your influence diminished. On the other hand, if you make no response, you are in a position of having led workers out of the plant on the basis of an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist line, and having the man respond, and you can't do anything. . . .

When Chrysler is attacked in America, it pushes a buzzer and gets the Hamtramck Police Department. The whole city structure goes into action. At Ford, you are dealing with Dearborn. The fact that we closed down Dodge Main, the basic assembly plant for Chrysler operations in this entire country, means we got a response. We got police. We got injunctions from the courts. They tried to destroy our organization. They tried to kill leaders like General Baker and Chuck Wooten. Most all of the members of our central staff had to go to trial sometime in the year of 1969.

Luke Tripp and John Williams held a middle position between those emphasizing in-plant organizing and those who saw the different League activities as equally important. Tripp and Williams were concerned about the political level of the average League supporter, but they were hesitant about moving too rapidly in too many different directions. They thought that political education might be best served by a more intense contact with individual workers in small social and study groups, rather than by the ambitious plans Watson, Hamlin, and Cockrel began to advance. Tripp and Williams were the initial leaders of the Detroit Black Panther Party and did not want to see the mistakes of the BPP repeated. They were not pleased by talk of spreading the League to other cities, and they did not always approve of the interviews given by Watson, Cockrel, and Hamlin in which DRUM and the League were projected in glowing terms. As members of the Detroit BPP, one of their quarrels with the California headquarters was over the issue of working with John Sinclair, a white local counter-culture poet with a flair for publicity on the issues of marijuana, psychedelic drugs, and the new music. They feared that the growing involvement of the League with white radicals might give rise to similar mismatches of interest and commitment. Tripp kept saying that the local organizational model must be perfected before it was ballyhooed around the nation. He summed up his view in the January 23, 1969, issue of the

South End by saying that political education should "cultivate a firm and correct political orientation, an industrious and pure style of work, and flexible strategy and tactics."

A concrete example of what the out-of-plant organizers had in mind occurred during the period of 1969-1970 when the Detroit Board of Education announced a plan to decentralize control. The West Central Organization (WCO), a coalition of neighborhood groups based at first on the ideas of Saul Alinsky, had appointed John Watson as its director. WCO was concerned about whether the decentralization plan would be an improvement or a backward step for blacks. Watson organized a conference attended by 300 representatives from 70 organizations. Some of these were black groups and some were white or integrated groups willing to work under black leadership. They formed another coalition called Parents and Students for Community Control (PASCC). The immediate issue was community control of schools, a matter which involved community groups in almost every major American city; but, under League urging, PASCC began to be more than a community-control group. PASCC came to see itself as the beginning of a permanent citywide network of communications and action. Hundreds of rallies and meetings took place, and PASCC representatives made regular appearances on radio, on television, and in schools. PASCC soon found itself in strong opposition to the Detroit Police Officers Association, Donald Lobsinger's Breakthrough, the homeowners' associations, and citizens' councils.

A Black Student United Front came into being, with Mike Hamlin as its adviser. The organization soon developed branches in 22 high schools and published a citywide newspaper. The same ideological mixture of socialism and black nationalism which was found in RUM publications characterized the work of the students. One example of the organization's activity was a campaign launched to revoke the suspension of students who had taken part in a revolt at Northern High School in September 1969. Some of the demands were purely nationalist, such as the one that a black, red, and green liberation flag be substituted for the stars and stripes at the daily flag raising. Other demands dealing with curriculum, police in the schools, and selection of faculty amounted to calling for full student and community control of the schools, which was an educational counterpart of workers controlling the factory. More important than any specific struggle, Black Student

United Front was a municipal student organization which served as a youth section for the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. It extended downward to junior high schools and had connections with college groups. Students sometimes did leafleting and picketing chores at plants, and some were in training at the print shop and other League facilities. The publications of Black Student United Front stressed self-reliance. One original comic book which was given wide circulation contained a strong attack on substituting the heroism of a few individuals for action by masses of people. The student organization had a role independent of PASCC, but, at the same time, it was an integral part of the plan to gain control of the public school system.

PASCC struggled continuously with the Detroit Board of Education, which was controlled by white liberals and was presided over by Abe Zwerdling, who had close ties to the UAW. Unable to reach a satisfactory compromise with the board, PASCC was forced to organize for the local school board elections. Summer programs were set up in black history, photography, printing, and journalism to build skills. Three PASCC offices operated in Detroit and one in Highland Park, a suburb adjacent to Hamtramck. The PASCC plan was to have production line workers as candidates for the community boards and to have students do most of the actual campaigning. Although 70,000 votes were recorded for PASCC slates, the effort ended in failure. In addition to the chronic problems of insufficient cadre, insufficient funds, and insufficient experience, PASCC faced the opposition of UAW and Democratic Party officials who understood that if PASCC succeeded it would create a political machine comparable to their own. Some members of the League's central staff argued that the PASCC bid for control of the schools was premature and only drained off resources. Others, like Watson and Hamlin, were disturbed that not all of the executive board responded with sufficient enthusiasm to a plan that would have given them a foothold on local political power. Even in failure, PASCC illustrated the depth and vision of the League's approach.

PASCC activity had counterparts in other areas with greater and lesser success. John Williams headed a Catholic school complex in the North End for a time; Ken Cockrel was research director for a religious foundation; and Larry Nevels, a League stalwart, headed UNICOM, a neighborhood group which dealt with youth and various areas of social service. Edna Watson, John Watson's wife, initiated a hospital organiz-

ing drive which involved her with the predominantly white Medical Committee for Human Rights. Solid relations were built with the Guardians, a black policemen's association. Bridges were built to white radical organizations such as the local branch of the National Lawyers Guild and indigenous Detroit groups such as Ad Hoc, People Against Racism, and the Detroit Organizing Committee. Meetings were held continuously with other black militant organizations and with sympathetic black trade union leaders who were willing to cooperate with the League on one level or another. The rudiments of an overall revolutionary strategy were present in the League's policies from the outset, but it was not always clear how the embryo was to develop to the point of contending for power.

2

We demand \$500,000,000 in reparations.

—*Black Manifesto*, issued in Detroit, Michigan, May 1, 1969

A specific instance of how the League dealt with strategic and tactical problems was its role in the Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC) held in Detroit, April 26-29, 1969. Financing for the conference was obtained through a grant from the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations (IFCO), a nonprofit foundation begun in 1966 by one civic foundation and nine Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish agencies. BEDC (pronounced "bed-c") was to explore various economic strategies for black people in America. League personnel had major roles in inviting guests, arranging panels, and influencing the ideological direction of informal discussions. The Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations may have hoped for a kind of black capitalism or black welfare state approach from the conference; and Michigan Congressman John Conyers and Georgia State Representative Julian Bond got most of the official media limelight. But the real tenor of the meetings was articulated by speakers such as James Boggs, who talked on "The Myth and Irrationality of Black Capitalism." What finally emerged from the conference was a call for black socialism. BEDC was to become a permanent independent national organization guided by a 24-member steering committee. Ken Cockrel,

Mike Hamlin, Luke Tripp, John Watson, John Williams, and Chuck Wooten were named to that committee. Most of the others on the committee were people associated with James Forman, who had been a major leader in SNCC for six years and had recently resigned from a brief membership in the Black Panther Party. Forman had been instrumental in bringing the BEDC proposal to the attention of the League, and he was given the task of reading the *Black Manifesto* on May 1, 1969.

The *Black Manifesto* called for \$500 million in reparations to be paid by white religious institutions to BEDC to provide blacks with economic self-sufficiency. The sum was considered an atonement by the moral guardians of white America for the way "white America has exploited our resources, our minds, our bodies, our labor." The *Manifesto* asserted that the mammoth sum came to only \$15 per black person based on the official government figure of a black population of 30 million, a count which most blacks considered a low estimate. The churches and synagogues were expected to pay up at once or black militants would enter places of worship all over the country to disrupt services by reading the *Manifesto* directly to the congregation.

The economic proposals of the *Manifesto* itself were divided into ten specific projects whose radical political purposes were left unstated. Of the \$500 million in reparations, \$200 million was to be used to set up a Southern Land Bank which would establish cooperative farms throughout the South. \$80 million was to be divided between four new publishing ventures to be located in Detroit, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and New York and four audiovisual centers to be located in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Washington, D.C. \$30 million would be spent to create a research skills center and \$10 million for a training center in communication industry skills. \$130 million would be spent to establish a black university in the South. \$10 million would be granted outright to the National Welfare Rights Organization to further its work with welfare recipients. \$20 million would be used to establish a National Black Labor Strike Fund, and \$20 million more would go to the United Black Appeal (soon to be called International Black Appeal), which would be charged with developing additional funds for BEDC. A final demand of the *Manifesto* was that whatever sums were left over from the conference budget should be used to get the permanent BEDC organization started.

Shortly after the first reading of the *Manifesto*, James Forman entered New York's Riverside Church to make the first disruption of a religious service. Although there was all but universal disapproval of the tone of the *Manifesto* and the tactic of disruption, many of the churches affiliated with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations promised to make some payments to BEDC to avoid such pressure and to satisfy insurgents within their own ranks. The American Jewish Committee was the sole exception. That organization refused to be intimidated into contributing toward an enterprise it did not approve of and it withdrew from IFCO altogether, citing the *Manifesto* and BEDC as the causes of its departure. The monies that eventually went to BEDC did not begin to approach the multimillions demanded, but they were considerably more than most radical groups had to work with. BEDC itself was awarded \$80,000 by IFCO, and its allied research group got an additional \$79,000. Local organizations in every part of the United States received IFCO grants following BEDC approval. Many of these organizations were worker caucuses or groups with former SNCC activists personally associated with Forman. DRUM got an \$8,000 grant for its work at Dodge Main, and several other Detroit groups got similar aid. The West Central Organization received close to \$30,000 to organize block clubs and neighborhood councils and to provide a citywide police-community relations program, food co-ops, employment services, and related programs. Eventually, IFCO earmarked an additional \$200,000 for BEDC use in 1969.

In spite of the funds generated by the *Manifesto*, many of the in-plant League organizers considered BEDC a lot of pie in the sky. General Baker was suspicious of the political line of those who tried to con the system through a spectacular media campaign rather than sticking to the arduous task of organizing workers, and he refused to be on the BEDC steering committee. Baker was also wary of famous "outside" individuals who did not love DRUM the way Detroiters did and who had no permanent stake in the city. Cockrel, Hamlin, and Watson dismissed the objections of Baker as short-sighted and provincial. For them, BEDC was a way of acquiring the funds needed to orchestrate the full range of League possibilities. Others in the leadership shared some of Baker's misgivings but were willing to go along with BEDC for the same reasons as Cockrel, Hamlin, and Watson.

All the League leaders did agree that the proposal for an International Black Appeal (IBA) was one of BEDC's most important contributions. IBA was to become a national tax-exempt charity on the scale of Detroit's annual Torch Drive or the United Jewish Appeal. Factory workers and other hourly employees could allocate tax-deductible donations for IBA directly from their paychecks. Cockrel began a successful effort to get IRS approval for IBA's tax-exempt status at once, and John Williams was named its director. The UAW was approached about the possibility of taking contributions directly from paychecks and proved less hostile than expected. The UAW may not have realized that IBA would put potentially enormous financial resources into the hands of black revolutionaries, or the UAW may have been gambling that IBA was the first step toward the incorporation of League militants into the established system. IBA meant something quite different to the League. If each of the 250,000 black members of the UAW gave only \$1 a month, the League would have a monthly budget of a quarter of a million dollars. This money could be used as a strike fund if it was funneled to friendly charitable agencies that could hire fired workers and support strikers. The possibilities were as broad as imagination could make them, and imagination was one ingredient the League had never lacked.

The *Black Manifesto* and IBA actually represented two contradictory approaches to financing. The *Manifesto* was an attempt at an outright "rip-off," depending upon white guilt for its success, and essentially it meant going back to the master's table for a handout. IBA was a self-financing approach dependent only upon the goodwill of black working people. The League considered BEDC and the *Manifesto* useful primarily because they started other projects capable of self-sufficiency. The ultimate peril of BEDC was that it had no organized mass base either to keep pressure on the churches or to control its leadership. The possibility that black clergy, "professional organizers," and others might usurp control of local or national BEDC operations was a clear and present danger. IBA, on the other hand, would be dependent on and responsible to a mass base.

One of the immediate concrete benefits of BEDC was the establishment in Detroit of Black Star Publishing under the leadership of Mike Hamlin. Black Star bought a building, purchased some equipment of its own, and shared in purchasing other equipment which was

housed at a white printers' cooperative run by Fredy Perlman. Helen Jones, a League member, was in charge of the day-to-day operations at Black Star and had considerable decision-making authority, although she was ultimately responsible to Mike Hamlin. Black Star's major duties were to publish the newsletters and periodicals of the League's various components. Helen Jones also initiated a program to train League members in printing skills. She and Hamlin hoped to develop Black Star to the point where it could do commercial work well enough to become financially self-supporting. Black Star would then not only be able to carry on the League printing chores, but also to provide paid employment for League activists.

The printing and folding equipment shared with Perlman was another indication of the good and honest relations the League was able to maintain with many Detroit whites. Perlman had been greatly affected by his experiences in the French uprising of May 1968 and had set up the Detroit cooperative printing center to advocate libertarian principles. One of his goals was to make the print shop more than a service and convenience for radicals. Like Helen Jones, he wanted to train people in the various skills associated with printing in order to make them independent of commercial printers. Upstairs from the print shop were the offices of the Radical Education Project, a spin-off from SDS which distributed low-cost radical literature locally and nationally. Perlman also printed *Radical America*, a journal edited first in Madison, Wisconsin, then in Boston, which began as an SDS publication and came to advocate a nonauthoritarian, worker-controlled communism. Other individuals in the cooperative were associated with the Detroit Organizing Committee, another SDS spin-off, which was trying to organize white workers into RUM-type groups. The haphazard connections between the various radical forces in the city puzzled government and police agencies. In August 1970, a Senate subcommittee headed by Senator James Eastland and Senator Thomas Dodd investigated the Detroit radicals and tried to tie in BEDC, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the Radical Education Project, and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations with the activities of the American Communist Party and an alleged Cuban plot to subvert the stability of the United States through terrorist bombings.

The fantasies and paranoia of the U.S. government aside, participation in BEDC was a significant step for the League. It was the first

time the League had helped convene an important national gathering, and it was the first time it had reached out for substantial funding. IBA promised to become an instrument that could solve any number of financial problems on a permanent basis within a structure that would further develop the League base. BEDC had also given the League its first nationally famous "convert" in the person of James Forman. Following the April conference, Forman promised to move his personal residence to the Motor City, and he was named to the central staff of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.