

ABSTRACT

Radical Black movements in the United States are often judged according to the feasibility of their aims and practices. This tends to overlook other ameliorative and even revolutionary contributions that these movements make. While the Civil Rights Protest Movement is well acknowledged for its ameliorative contributions to the just treatment of Blacks in America, black radicals are often decried as having been impractical and unrealistic. The impracticality of black radical movements often baffles scholars when they try to rationalize the existence of these movements, and often sociological justifications are sought.

This dissertation seeks to show that the sentiments of the black radical movements were rooted in variables which are understandable and justifiable. Separatism and revolutionism, by the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party respectively, were direct responses to the situation of Blacks in America, in the past and in the future. The past was that of brutal discrimination and exploitation, the future spelled out assimilation and yet again exploitation. It made sense to the Nation of Islam that they should seek separatism and self-determination within or without America, and it also made sense to the Black Panther to seek revolution in order to end all exploitation and paternalism. The history of Black/white relations could not be erased from the collective memory. In order to denounce the past, the present was to be cursed. The callous past justified autonomy and this autonomy was sought in separatism and revolution. The proponents of these tenets were not deluded about the feasibility of the most extreme of their demands- the tenets were a denunciation of America, the American national consciousness. The mere adherence to these beliefs granted its proponents racial and class solidarity, dignity and pride. These alone are enough to justify the noise that these movements made. This is the argument of this dissertation. An attempt will be made, through textual analysis of some of the documents of the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party to extract excerpts that link to the ideals of racial solidarity, dignity and pride.