CONTEMPORARY BLACK HISTORY

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Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement

Edited by

Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang

"Another Side of the Story"

Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement

Contemporary Black History

Manning Marable (Columbia University) and
Peniel Joseph (Brandeis University)
Series Editors

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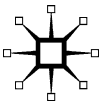

ANTICOMMUNISM AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

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To Aaron, who will one day understand this history

—R.L.

For Nile, Zoe, and the hope for a just tomorrow

—C.L.

Contents

Series Editors' Foreword

The historiography of what is still generally called the "Civil Rights Movement era" has undergone a striking transformation in recent years. Throughout the twentieth century, the most influential historians of the African American experience tended to define the civil rights movement to a narrow chronological period, roughly from the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to the 1965 passage of the Voting Rights Act. It tended to focus exclusively on political and social events taking place in the United States, and primarily in the South, in the collective efforts to overturn legal segregation. The older historiography often emphasized the roles of prominent national leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and major civil rights organizations, in the struggle for racial integration. And for many of these historians, the black nationalist-inspired protest movement called "Black Power" was perceived as a repudiation or rejection of the ethos of racial harmony and coalition-building. The mass exodus of whites from groups like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1965–1967 was seen as a nihilistic lurch into black separatism and racial isolationism by white liberal historians and journalists of the movement.

Fortunately, a new generation of scholars has emerged in the past decade and more, scholars who have rejected the tired assumptions of white privilege and have asked different, and more relevant, questions of the historical record. Many have documented how the various struggles to desegregate public accommodations, and to pass antidiscrimination laws in state legislatures, was a process that took place in the North a decade before the movement erupted in the South. The new subfield of "Black Power historiography" has amply illustrated how the ideological and political origins of what would become Black Power were established in the 1950s, not in the mid-to-late 1960s, and that militant groups like the Black Panther Party were also successful in fashioning local programs that were often pragmatic and effective in addressing the black community's needs. Outstanding feminist historians such as Barbara Ransby,

author of a major biography of Ella Baker, have provided a richer appreciation and understanding of the central roles of African American women in the successful development of the freedom struggle, in both its civil rights and black power phases.

One area the new historiography and scholarship on the post-1945 black experience has not adequately addressed, however, was the profound impact of the Cold War and the Red Scare represented by politicians such as Joe McCarthy and Richard Nixon in the 1940s and 1950s. Of course, even liberal historians have long expressed regret for the political silencing of actor/activist Paul Robeson, the federal prosecution of NAACP cofounder W. E. B. Du Bois, and the persecution and jailing of black Communists such as Harlem Councilman Benjamin Davis. But for the most part, there remains a lack of recognition of how disruptive and damaging McCarthyism and cold war terror were to the ranks of the black freedom struggle. Some historians recently have even claimed that the Cold War was on balance "beneficial" to the civil rights cause, in part because international competition with the Soviet Union and its allies forced the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy Administrations to adopt civil rights measures—such as Eisenhower's nationalizing of the Arkansas National Guard during the 1957 Little Rock school desegregation crisis.

This argument unfortunately ignores substantial evidence that anticommunism was a destructive force within civil rights groups, and more broadly, within the black community. Inside CORE, for example, some independent Marxists and communists had participated in the organization from the early 1940s. However, in 1949 when a group of Trotskyists joined the San Francisco CORE branch, the national office barred its affiliation. In 1948, CORE's executive committee approved a "Statement on Communism," which denounced all associations with "Communist-controlled" groups. Despite CORE's efforts to insulate itself from McCarthyite attacks, its members were frequently harassed as dangerous subversives. A similar dynamic occurred within the NAACP. When the Truman Administration's Justice Department filed charges against Du Bois, NAACP executive secretary Walter White ordered Association branches not to provide financial or political support to the venerable black scholar. As unions purged and expelled hundreds of black labor leaders and organizers with ties to the Left, the national leadership did nothing. It failed to comprehend that its inaction undermined the struggle for civil rights and desegregation in many profound ways.

Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang present a powerful and persuasive analysis of the fractured internal contours of the black freedom

struggle in the years after World War II. The terrible human costs of McCarthyism, the destroyed careers and private lives, all contributed to delay and retard the democratic impulse toward desegregation and racial equality within American society. Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: "Another Side of the Story," presents an extremely important dimension of recent American history.

Manning Marable

Foreword

A little over ten years ago, just as I was putting the final touches on the manuscript of a book about the anticommunist political repression of the McCarthy period, my editor told me to add a chapter on the impact of that repression. I demurred; such an assessment, I explained, would require another book at least, not a chapter, and, anyhow, it would take years of research to compile the record of all the various ways in which McCarthyism had deformed American life. The editor was adamant, so, despite my reluctance about going out on a limb with inadequate evidence, I made a provisional stab at evaluating the damage of the cold war red scare. It was sketchy, indeed. Since that time, however, scholars in a variety of fields—including African American history—have added considerable flesh to my admittedly skeletal assessment.

We now know, for example, how the witch-hunters tore through the federal government, driving out feminists, China experts, and homosexuals, as well as ordinary civil servants who sympathized with the African American freedom struggle. We still don't know all the policy implications of those purges, although historians have long suspected, for example, that, at least with regard to East Asian affairs and other aspects of American foreign relations, they were significant. And, while we should not overexaggerate McCarthyism's impact, we cannot ignore the Truman administration's concurrent retreat from its program of reform as the cold war red scare heated up.

American communism was McCarthyism's main institutional victim. As the witch-hunters intended, the multiplicity of official and unofficial sanctions they imposed dealt a near-fatal blow to the Communist Party (CP) and its auxiliary organizations. Whatever we may now think of the CP's legacy, during the Popular Front years of the 1930s and 1940s, communism had been the most dynamic political force on the American Left, with the party as the organizational core of a constellation of political causes, labor unions, and other groups that not only pressed for significant social change but also created a vibrant left-wing culture. By the mid-1950s, however, that movement was in shreds, the CP transformed into

an increasingly isolated and sectarian self-defense organization whose adherents were driven to the margins of American life. While the cold war red scare cannot claim all the credit for that devastation (the party's own rigidity and ineptitude as well as the crimes of the Soviet regime were also at fault), it certainly destroyed whatever influence communism and all the organizations, individuals, and ideas associated with it had within the rest of American society.

Moreover, because—both for better and for worse—communism had been so central to the social movements and political culture of the Popular Front era, its virtual elimination during the McCarthy era transformed those movements and that culture in ways that we are only just beginning to appreciate. In the academy, for example, where at least a hundred college and university teachers lost their jobs for refusing to collaborate with the anticommunist inquisition, scholars censored themselves; they pulled back from risky projects and emphasized the apolitical nature of their work. Besides blacklisting its leftists, the entertainment industry also shrank from controversy, avoiding subjects such as race relations or class consciousness that might carry a pinkish tinge.

But McCarthyism did more than just banish economic inequality and the plight of African Americans from the nation's cultural discourse. It also did considerable damage to the main institutions that dealt with those problems—left-wing labor unions and the civil rights movement. It destroyed organizations, compelled activists to focus on their own defense, and forced both the mainstream labor and civil rights movements to narrow the scope of their concerns. And, it is within those two movements that the anticommunist witch hunt took its main toll on American society. With only a few exceptions, neither organized labor nor the struggle for racial equality ever managed to regain the broad socioeconomic perspective or internationalist outlook that had characterized both movements before McCarthyism shrank the political spectrum.

Labor historians have been charting the impact of the cold war red scare for quite a while. Without underestimating the power of the broader antiunion forces that mobilized against labor in the late 1940s, they have noted the deleterious impact of the double-barreled assault on the labor Left by both private and public forces, not to mention the labor movement's own internal red-baiting. With its most progressive elements *hors de combat*, the labor movement turned inward, giving up any attempt to organize important, though non-prestigious, sectors of the economy and abandoning its advocacy of broad social reform.

A similar assessment of McCarthyism has occurred among the historians of the African American freedom struggle. They, too, have noted how the cold war red scare transformed that struggle—and not always, it seems, in a positive way. Besides destroying left-wing civil rights organizations,

McCarthyism isolated or silenced individual activists, broke up alliances with liberals, labor unions, and other minority groups, narrowed the movement's internationalist perspective, and deflected the struggle for racial equality toward the attainment of a limited, albeit important, set of legal, rather than economic, goals. In documenting those transformations, the following essays build upon the growing body of scholarship about the civil rights movement and the Cold War to offer a wide-ranging exploration of the multifarious ways in which the anticommunist political repression of the late 1940s and 1950s affected (and diminished) the movement for racial justice.

These original essays touch upon questions cold war historians have long been asking—in particular, whether the political situation immediately after World War II presented a lost opportunity for significant reform that McCarthyism aborted. As this volume reveals, that question engages a similar debate about continuity or rupture among students of African American history. Did the anticommunist crusade crush a diverse and promising campaign for equality or was it only a minor distraction from the overall trajectory of what has come to be known as "the long civil rights movement"? Our authors give a suitably nuanced assessment. Although McCarthyism marginalized those African American and other radicals who sought peace and economic justice along with civil rights, they did not give up and, so, bequeathed a broad-ranging agenda to a later generation of activists.

But even if it is clear, as this volume's editors assert, that the cold war red scare derailed a promising movement, McCarthyism was hardly the only obstacle to the struggle for racial equality; freedom has always been an uphill battle. Moreover, ever since the seventeenth-century Puritans threw Anne Hutchinson out of the Massachusetts Bay colony, the repression of radical dissent has been a constant in American political life. We may, therefore, need to step backward and recognize that however the suppression of the Old Left may have deformed the civil rights movement, that movement's underlying challenge to the racial status quo would still have encountered repression. As a result, when we assess the impact of the cold war red scare on the African American freedom struggle, we must look beyond the anticommunist purges and factor-in the power of that struggle's main opponents—the white supremacists and others who resisted racial equality. The talented, brave, and dedicated men and women who are the main protagonists of this book struggled against a tragically ingrained element in American life. That they were able to persevere against such formidable forces deserves our admiration. That they achieved at best a partial success only reminds us that the struggle continues.

Ellen Schrecker

Preface and Acknowledgments

The seeds for this book were planted when we first met at the Organization of American Historians (OAH) conference in 2000. Held in St. Louis, the meeting took on a special character, focused on the issue of racial discrimination, when it changed venues at the last minute. The hotel originally scheduled to host the convention was sued by the Justice Department because of a national pattern of racial discrimination that dated back more than a decade and that included the St. Louis site. Under pressure from OAH members to change the convention site, the executive board moved the meeting to St. Louis University and added some special sessions about race and racism. In addition, a number of attendees joined local people for a March Against Racism one evening. At the panel for which Robbie served as commentator—U.S. Foreign Relations, 1940–1960: The Interplay of Race, Citizen Activism and Policy—she mentioned the persecution of W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson for their outspoken opposition to U.S. cold war policies. That led to a conversation with Clarence, who had been in the audience, and we have been talking about the subject of this book ever since. The book developed out of several years of e-mail correspondence, shared panels at other academic meetings, and over occasional meals in Illinois, where we both happen to live.

We share, especially, a frustration at how little acknowledgment there has been in academic circles of the powerful ways in which the Cold War and accompanying Red Scare negatively affected the African American freedom movement. The purpose of this book is to help rectify that situation. The joy of this project, and its main challenge, has been the attempt to put into conversation two related, yet discrete, scholarly constituencies. The first, reflective of Robbie's background, is rooted in a critical engagement with cold war anticommunism and its impact on U.S. society. The second, consistent with Clarence's interests, is grounded in the area of "Black Freedom Studies," including its investigations of the chronological boundaries, breadth, and legacies of black radicalism. Our hope is that anyone who reads the following pages will come away with a better understanding of how anticommunism was used to silence black

radicals, and how those who acquiesced in this process enabled the forces of reaction to smear as subversive any and all organizations promoting black rights, economic justice, and peace. Considering the many weapons available to McCarthyites—laws, intelligence agencies, congressional committees, harassment of families, blacklisting, deportation, and so on—and the persistence of anticommunist attacks, it is equally remarkable that the movement persevered and even succeeded on some counts. Though we focus largely on the losses here, including the destruction of organizations and the suppression of ideas, we also highlight, and remain impressed by, what survived. And we know that this book is only one more small step in challenging the idea that the Cold War was beneficial to the black freedom movement.

This book would not have been possible without the financial, intellectual, and emotional support we received from a number of parties. A Faculty Seed Grant from Southern Illinois University Carbondale enabled Robbie Lieberman's initial exploration of the intersection between the history of the African American freedom movement and the history of anticommunism in the early years of the Cold War. A travel grant from the Gilder-Lehrman Foundation made possible her research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a precious collection of materials with a very dedicated and capable staff to oversee it. A fellowship from the James Weldon Johnson Institute at Emory University enabled her to complete the final stages of the book in a particularly exciting and supportive environment. She would also like to acknowledge the assistance of staff at the Columbia University Oral History Collection, the Tamiment Library at New York University, and the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Lieberman has had assistance with research over the years from a number of students, including Karen Mylan, Nathan Brouwer, and Deidre Hughes. Presentations to the American Studies Forum at SIU, and at professional meetings—the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, the Peace History Society, and the Organization of American Historians—helped her clarify many of the ideas presented here. Special thanks go to Dave Roediger and Ellen Schrecker for their support, and to her colleague Natasha Zaretsky, who has been particularly helpful in providing feedback as this project developed. Thanks also to Anne Fletcher, Harriet Alonso, Scott Irelan, Judith Smith, Gene Nesmith, Gerald Horne, Mark Solomon, Rachel Stocking, and Blanche Wiesen Cook for comments on presentations or drafts of papers. The intellectual engagement and enthusiasm of Lieberman's graduate students in a course on the modern civil rights movement in the fall of 2007 served as a constant reminder of the significance of this project; thanks

to Joseph Abney, Nathan Brouwer (again), Jessica Davis, Jerry Passon, Nathan Pedigo, Sabrina Smith, Nat Taylor, Donovan Weight, and Amber Williamson.

We both also want to express appreciation to the contributors to this volume, all of whom were passionate about their work, responsive to comments and suggestions, and terrific about getting chapters completed in the face of many other obligations (including finishing monographs or dissertations, starting new, demanding jobs, and raising children). We also thank Kerry Pimblott, who assisted in compiling the select bibliography at the end of this volume, and C. Ian White, who enabled us to get the image and permission for the cover art. Clarence is indebted to his spouse, Jennifer Hamer, for her encouragement and patience. Finally, Robbie thanks her parents, Ann and Ernie Lieberman, her husband, Richard Fedder, and her children, Katy and Jeannie Lieder, who are always there with their love and support.

Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang

Introduction

Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang

In a March 1965 *Washington Post* column, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak accused the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a major civil rights organization, of having been "substantially infiltrated by beatnik left-wing revolutionaries, and—worst of all—by Communists."[1] Such charges may sound laughable today, since in our post-cold war world, "Communists" are no longer the bogeymen. But at the time these charges were leveled, they had resonance as many people remained suspicious about the makeup and goals of the civil rights movement. In the 1960s, newly formed social change organizations such as SNCC, which emphasized democratic participation and refused to adopt policies that excluded people on the basis of their beliefs or affiliations, were all subject to such charges.

But such accusations were not new. To cite just one example from the 1930s, when a group of intellectuals, activists, and labor leaders formed the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW) to address issues of justice and equality in the South, it was immediately attacked as Communist dominated, based on the assumption that its condemnation of segregation ordinances and opposition to white supremacy made it a "Communist" organization.[2] The mini red scare of the late 1930s/early 1940s, of which the attack on SCHW was one small part, foreshadowed the full-fledged one that accompanied the Cold War.

Shortly after the defeat of fascism in World War II, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union brought anticommunism to the center of American politics. In the cold war era, however, anticommunism was not solely the property of the Right or of Southern racists; in 1946, liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger published an article in *Time* magazine claiming that the Communist Party was "sinking tentacles" into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which led to a frenzy of activity aimed at distancing the organization from the Left.[3] Charges such as the one by Schlesinger set the tone for the cold

war era, helping pave the way for the all-out Red Scare that has come to be known as McCarthyism, because of Senator Joseph McCarthy's use of the issue of anticommunism to expose and harass individuals with leftist views. (Strictly speaking, McCarthyism means accusing people without evidence, exposing and causing them harm without regard for the law or for common decency. While McCarthy held sway from 1950 to 1954, the phenomenon that bears his name was much longer-lived.) McCarthyism succeeded in breaking up reform coalitions that had formed during the New Deal years and thwarting expectations for social change coming out of World War II, and it was relentless in its harassment of black leftists. The Red Scare reached its peak during the early years of the Cold War, but as the example of SNCC demonstrates, even after the McCarthy era was over, anticommunism continued to be used as a weapon to discredit, divide, and undermine the African American freedom movement. Examples of such efforts abound in the literature.

The purpose of this book is not simply to add to the litany of accounts of anticommunist attacks on movement activists and organizations, which would make for a very long book and in the end not tell us much. Instead, we address the early cold war years in order to illuminate the significant role of anticommunism in helping to determine the scope, shape, and personnel of the post-World War II black freedom struggle in the United States. One way of viewing the chapters that follow is in terms of a dialogue between two different literatures, one that is a history of the black freedom movement, the other a history of U.S. anticommunism. We focus on the early years of the Cold War as a moment when these two histories intersected, with profound consequences. Both literatures are currently engaged in serious controversy, the latter over whether the impact of anticommunism on black social movements was positive or negative, and the former over whether there was indeed a "long civil rights movement"—an uninterrupted black freedom struggle from the 1930s through the 1970s and 1980s. By illustrating the specific ways in which McCarthyism caused a damaging rupture in the African American freedom movement, we intervene in and bring together these two historiographical debates.

The recent shift toward viewing the African American freedom struggle in a global context has led to a deeper understanding of the early cold war years, such as the important insight that the U.S. government addressed minority rights at home largely out of concern for America's image abroad. On the surface, historian Mary Dudziak's suggestion that "civil rights reform was *in part* a product of the Cold War"[4] is indisputable. There is clear evidence that international pressure and the glaring hypocrisy of the United States claiming to stand for freedom in the Cold War

while denying basic democratic rights to its own minority groups helped force some changes on the home front. But scholars such as Dudziak understate or ignore the historical links between the Old Left and the black freedom movement and thus gloss over the impact of the Red Scare in suppressing the broad outlook and goals that radicals brought to the movement. While some authors acknowledge attacks on Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois, they rarely look beyond these two figures, and many now argue that the Cold War was a positive good as far as the movement was concerned. Thus, Jeff Woods writes in *Black Struggle, Red Scare* that "anti-Communism worked as much to the movement's advantage as it did to the southern massive resisters."[5] Jonathan Rosenberg suggests "that the global competition between the United States and the Soviet Union fortified the movement in the early cold war years."[6] Manfred Berg argues that the effects of the Red Scare on the civil rights movement have been overstated. We respectfully, and strongly, disagree, thus our subtitle "Another Side of the Story." Just at the moment when African Americans' expectations were raised for achieving genuine equality—inspired by independence movements in Africa and Asia, thrilled by the creation of the United Nations, which gave them a wider forum in which to air their concerns, and cognizant of how World War II rhetoric further justified their claims—the Cold War and Red Scare destroyed many of the organizations and activists most able to articulate these claims and mobilize people to press for them. It is not enough to view the black freedom struggle in a global context while conveniently (and strangely) neglecting the fact that many of the Red Scare's prime targets were precisely those who promoted that global view at the time.

The second historiographical trend to which this volume responds, the thesis of a "long" civil rights movement, has been advocated by a diverse set of scholars, including Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Jeanne F. Theoharis, Komozi Woodard, Timothy B. Tyson, Matthew J. Countryman, Robert O. Self, and Nikhil Pal Singh.[7] Challenging the standard 1954–1965 periodization, this thesis reconceptualizes the movement's timeline, arguing that its origins (as opposed to its historical *antecedents*) were in the 1930s and 1940s, and that it extended well into the 1980s and after. This developing "long movement" paradigm has buttressed important efforts by historians such as Self, Robin D. G. Kelley, Peniel E. Joseph, and most recently Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, to recover black radical activism.[8] Self, for instance, contends that the conventional timeframe privileges the black liberal politics that predominated between the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling and the 1965 civil rights campaign in Selma, Alabama. In the process, it obscures a longer black radical political tradition that occupied both a national and international landscape

and encompassed strategies and goals far more complex than nonviolent protest, cold war civil rights litigation, and legislative reform.[9] Kelley and Joseph, moreover, emphasize the vibrant "black nationalism, Marxism, and Third World internationalism" of the late 1950s and early 1960s, as evinced by organizations such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM).[10] "For many black radicals," Kelley argues, "the Cold War represented one of the 'hottest' moments in world history. Despite the virtual suspension of democracy during the 1950s—from the wave of jailings and deportations of alleged Communists to the outlawing of mainstream organizations such as the NAACP in the South—this was *the* revolutionary moment" defined by African independence, the first gathering of the nonaligned nations in Bandung, Indonesia, and the Cuban Revolution.[11]

Unlike arguments for the Cold War's benefits to African Americans, the "long movement" thesis reflects a progressive, social-democratic desire to protect the movement's legacies from being co-opted into an American exceptionalist narrative of steady social progress. It also highlights the existence and necessity of contemporary black social movements. Thus, "long movement" proponents legitimately dispute the classical 1954–1965 civil rights periodization and refreshingly challenge the idea that black freedom struggles were chronologically and ideologically neat. Advancing into exciting new areas of scholarly investigation, they also correctly highlight the movement's ideological, political, and strategic breadth, which was maintained even during the worst periods of repression. However, this emerging paradigm jettisons historical periodization by implying a static, unbroken chain of black freedom struggle whose characteristics, limits, opportunities, and broader sociopolitical contexts differed little—if at all—from one moment to the next. Both change and continuity have defined black freedom struggles as well as African American history more generally.[12]

Curiously, the main premises of the "long movement" have been applied unevenly by its different proponents, who often contradict the very historical narratives they recount.[13] As it relates to the early cold war era, the totalizing perspective of the "long movement" conceals the violent ruptures anticommunism caused in the movement, derailing organizations and agendas, redirecting others, and eliminating individuals from public life. Self notes as much himself when he writes, in response to scholars such as Dudziak, "While the Cold War may have proved marginally beneficial to liberal civil rights activists in certain contexts, its far more profound effect was to open fissures within African American intellectual and political circles and to force black radicals on the defensive."[14] While the project of defending the long legacies of black radicalism is a vital one, the relative fortunes of the black radical tradition have varied over time.

At some historical moments, its role in the struggle was a hegemonic one, at others, its pulse was faint, if consistent. Although later organizations such as the Black Panther Party may have reflected the continuity of black radicalism, it was a line marked by sharp turns and breaks, of which, significantly, such organizations were themselves unaware.[15]

Taken together, these two historiographic trends—one rooted in the literature on anticommunism, the other in the area of "Black Freedom Studies"—have created the impression that the Cold War was, on balance, a period of progress, either through civil rights reforms shepherded by the White House and State Department, or through a black radicalism that blossomed in tandem with anticolonial movements in the global South. This volume engages both interpretations of the African American freedom movement's relationship to the Cold War. We complicate the historical record by highlighting the discontinuities between the movement of the 1930s—which was dominated by the Left and brought together issues of labor and economic justice, antiracism, and internationalism—and that of the McCarthy era, in which such broader issues were subordinated as the movement distanced itself, or was severed, from the Left.

This is not the first book to address the silencing of black radicals and the movement's shift to a domestic and more legalistic focus; we build on the work of Gerald Horne, Penny Von Eschen, and others who have written about the schisms in the black freedom movement caused by the Cold War.[16] As Kelley, Joseph, and others have documented, black radical internationalist trends certainly persisted in the 1950s, yet, they remained subordinate and underground tendencies until the domestic and international political transformations of the mid-1960s created the context for their full reassertion.[17] Our intent is to explain how that subordination and distancing came about as a result of the Cold War and Red Scare, offering a complex picture of how changing national and international contexts structured and limited the ways in which the movement was able to express itself and its aims. Hence, even those black radicals able to weather the early cold war years were unable to engage in the type of organizations and activism that had been common during the thirties and early forties, especially the left-liberal coalitions that worked on a broad range of issues affecting African Americans.

In emphasizing the discontinuities in the African American freedom movement, our intent is not to take anything away from the black struggles familiar to many, including the enormous sacrifices made, the courage displayed, and the progress achieved in the form of civil rights, voting rights, and more intangible social transformations. Neither do we aim to detract from the integrity of the black radical tradition. Nonetheless, we argue that the Cold War and the accompanying Red Scare caused a

rupture that profoundly affected the shape of the struggle that is popularly known as the civil rights movement. It was precisely the broader notion of black freedom—a global struggle for human rights encompassing anticolonialism and economic justice—that had to be downplayed in order to achieve "civil rights." More specifically, leftist individuals, organizations, and analyses had to be stifled. Here we explore some of the casualties, but also many of those who resisted this process. By returning black radicalism to its rightful place in the story, we challenge the notion that, on balance, the Cold War benefited the black freedom movement, seconding Michael Goldfield's contention that "The policy of equating all concern for civil rights with subversion, and of disabling and destroying all of the most committed and militant activists and organizations, must in the end weigh the balance sheet heavily in the negative direction."[18]

Much of the scholarship that defends the black freedom movement's distancing itself from the Left focuses on the national level, drawing conclusions from the actions of national organizations and their leaders. Thus, for instance, Berg argues that the NAACP's anticommunism was both necessary and restrained.[19] But the hostility to the Left that he and others posit was most evident at the top. While prominent mainstream black leaders—Walter White, A. Philip Randolph, Ralph Bunche—whether for strategic or ideological reasons, increasingly linked opposition to communism with their advocacy of civil rights in the postwar era, rank-and-file members of their organizations were more ambivalent, remaining convinced that fighting racism in Mississippi and Georgia, or California, Michigan, and New York for that matter, was more important than fighting communism in Greece or Korea. As in the peace and labor movements of this era, if we focus more attention on the grassroots level—and particularly on women, young people, and rank-and-file activists—we see a greater openness and willingness to cooperate with others who shared their goals, regardless of affiliation and ideology. But black grassroots criticism of the NAACP's national leaders' antagonism toward Robeson and Du Bois, and interest in global affairs such as Gandhi's leadership of the independence movement in India and later the Bandung conference and African independence movements, became more difficult to express as organizations dissolved, individuals were harassed, deported, or denied the right to travel, and the press faced pressure to conform to the view that the Cold War took priority over all other issues. It is noteworthy that while some African Americans celebrated the desegregation of the armed forces, mandated by President Truman's executive order in 1948, others questioned whether black people should fight the Cold War on behalf of a country in which they still lacked basic democratic rights, where a black person could be killed for exercising the right to vote.[20]

In carefully addressing questions about the continuities and discontinuities of the African American freedom movement, we uncover and analyze specific opportunities destroyed by the Red Scare for building a strong broad-based movement that tied together issues of economic justice, racial equality, and peace. In ferreting out continuities, it becomes clear that women played a central role in sustaining grassroots activism and links between issues, and, indeed, one of the contributions of the Left was to point out the triple oppression of poor black women (long before the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s discovered this point). The fate of organizations and individuals is central to our discussion, but so is the way in which black leftists tried to work around or challenge the Red Scare, and the ways such challenges were interpreted, when they were heard at all. In teasing out the impact of anticommunism on the African American freedom movement, we analyze local and individual stories that offer insight into larger national and international issues. At the same time, we highlight the often neglected or understated human costs of the Red Scare.

In taking up these historiographic tasks, we also ask what programs and agendas of the Popular Front (e.g., fair employment, antifascism, support for colonial independence, battles against racial apartheid in the American labor movement) persisted and shaped the postwar civil rights struggle? Which threads of black radical activism were destroyed? What were some of the organizational and theoretical links among the causes of human rights, peace, economic justice, and civil liberties, and how were these links severed? How were other struggles for democratic rights affected by the Red Scare? These are not questions that a single collection of scholarly work can answer definitively, and we hope to inspire others to continue the conversation—the dialogue between two different literatures—that frames this book.

The chapters that follow give us a clear picture of the multifaceted impact of the Red Scare, which not only destroyed organizations and marginalized individuals with the most expansive agendas, thereby delaying the civil rights movement and forcing it to restrict its goals. Anticommunism also gave segregationists a powerful language with which to attack the black freedom movement and gave cover to the FBI as it continually harassed and worked to undermine the movement. Black radicalism in the 1930s and 1940s was part of a broad Popular Front that united liberals and leftists around issues such as organizing unions, campaigning against lynching, working to abolish the poll tax, and opposing colonialism and fascism. Indeed, prior to the Cold War, African Americans generally were more favorably disposed toward the Left than was the population at large, and there was significant, if not

unproblematic, cooperation between black radicals and the CP on a broad agenda based on "class-based insurgency, interracial radicalism, anti-racism, and the…appeal of the American Left to a broad multiracial constituency."[21] The old notion that black people were "used" by the Communist Party as it sought to achieve its own goals has been widely discredited, and rightfully so. Challenging that idea are claims from St. Clair Drake, among others, that the process went both ways. Drake cites Ralph Bunche and A. Philip Randolph as examples of those who "used" the Communists and then "deftly disengaged."[22] We can explain this relationship in a less cynical way, however, first by explicating the shared interests of black radicals and the Old Left, second by acknowledging that many black activists—liberals and leftists alike—worked with the Communist Party in the 1930s, and third that such activists, party members or not, were not tools but active agents in the struggle against oppression and injustice. Most of them broke with the Communists, at different times and for varied reasons, but in any case black radicalism was never synonymous with communism, despite the efforts of racists and anticommunists to erase the distinction between the two.[23]

In the immediate post-World War II years, leading black newspapers expressed reservations about the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, U.S. support for apartheid South Africa, and domestic anticommunist measures. But expectations of greater equality following the defeat of fascism and the rise of independence movements in Africa and Asia clashed with ongoing racial violence. Such violence included what Earl Ofari Hutchinson calls "the worst lynching atrocity in American history," the 1946 execution style murder of two black couples in Georgia, among them a decorated World War II veteran and his wife, a crime for which no one was ever convicted. Contemporaneous episodes of racial injustice in the courts included the imprisonment of Rosa Lee Ingram and her sons for the "crime" of self-defense against a white attacker.[24] (The Ingrams, pictured on the cover of this book, and many other victims of racial injustice were defended by the Civil Rights Congress, which became a casualty of the Red Scare.) Black expectations were also stymied by the defeat of legislation that would guarantee fair employment, a severe housing shortage, and, increasingly, the demands of the Cold War. As the Left was purged from labor unions and demands for economic justice and peace became associated with communism, the broad Popular Front view became difficult to maintain. The purge of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) meant the demands of labor became narrower, as negotiations over wages and benefits replaced broader demands for racial equality, among others. Prosecution of Communists under the Smith Act put some of the most diligent and determined black activists in jail. The provision

of the McCarran Act that organizations deemed subversive register with the government or face severe penalties was the last straw for many left-wing organizations struggling to survive in the increasingly conservative postwar political climate. Deportations, made easier by the McCarran-Walter Act, (since they were taken out of the court system and assigned to boards that did not have to concern themselves with due process), sent other activists into exile. Strict control over the right to travel—enforced by the State Department, which denied passports to anyone whose travels it deemed "not in the best interests of the United States"—hurt individuals, but also limited exchanges of information and transnational connections that had fortified the movement.

Even more moderate groups suffered the effects of the Red Scare. The NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were not protected by their own anticommunist measures and, along with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, were under constant surveillance and attack. The broader paradox of the Red Scare, of course, is that the U.S. government limited the rights of its own citizens in the name of defending freedom. The legal pillars—the Smith Act, the McCarran Act, and then the Walter-McCarran Act—allowed the government to jail or deport those it deemed dangerous radicals, while encouraging others to exile themselves to places where they could act more freely. The political culture, more generally, followed the government's lead, and many organizations dissolved or purged themselves of those alleged to have Communist ties (or ties to any of the organizations on the attorney general's list of "subversive" organizations).

Among the casualties by the late 1950s were the Council on African Affairs, American Labor Party, National Association of Mexican Americans, National Negro Labor Council, and the Civil Rights Congress. Physical attacks on those who campaigned for Henry Wallace at desegregated meetings in the South in 1948 or who attended the Paul Robeson concert at Peekskill in 1949 may have paled in comparison to more murderous acts of racial violence, but the message sent by these attacks was clear: challenging cold war priorities by fighting racial injustice and criticizing U.S. foreign policy were out of bounds if one wanted a comfortable place in the postwar world. Those who challenged the cold war consensus—which put national security based on anticommunism and military preparedness above all other considerations—would face a strong reaction, both from the government and at the grassroots level. People testified against coworkers, suspecting them of being Communist because they "believed the colored ought to be equal,"[25] while the State Department worked to control African Americans' contact with the outside world. The message of those who were allowed or

encouraged to travel would be that the United States was making good progress in addressing the issue of racial equality, even as resistance to equality stiffened and the economic status of African Americans declined in the 1950s.[26] It is extremely difficult to measure the impact of the Red Scare with any precision. We can perhaps account for organizations that dissolved and individuals who were jailed, deported, or exiled. Nonetheless, to paraphrase Ellen Schrecker, we cannot count or measure the effect of books that were not written, plays and films that were not produced, ideas that were not discussed, and reforms that were not enacted.[27]

Toward the end of his life, Martin Luther King spoke about the "triple evils" of racism, poverty, and militarism. But the links between these issues were not discovered for the first time in the 1960s when Dr. King and others fought not only for civil rights and an end to racial discrimination but also for economic justice and an end to the war in Vietnam. These connections, made decades earlier by the Left, had been severed by the Cold War. There was a moment of opportunity for black radicalism, borne of the hopeful, expectant atmosphere coming out of World War II—a moment in which issues, organizations, and people on the Left might perhaps have come together in a broad-based progressive movement.[28] Without romanticizing the Popular Front or simplifying the problematic relationship between independent black radicals and the Old Left, several of the contributors to this volume acknowledge the positive links between the Communist Party—which attracted support in the 1930s because it took action on pressing issues such as poverty, put forth an analysis that explained and connected such issues with worldwide struggles for justice, and took a strong stand against racism (from urban CIO locals to sharecroppers in Alabama)—and the African American freedom movement, with its long history of resistance to oppression, significant roles played by women, and tension between traditions of self-defense versus pacifism. When we acknowledge these ties to the Left as a starting point, we get a more clear view of what was lost as the Cold War took hold and a better appreciation of the meaning and courage (and sometimes foolishness) of attempts to resist the limitations imposed by the Red Scare.

Robbie Lieberman explains how the concern with peace was suppressed from without and within the African American freedom movement because of its ties with the Left. While individuals such as St. Clair Drake, Eugene Gordon, and Lorraine Hansberry continued to be vocal about the links between peace and freedom, their expressions were misunderstood or rejected to such an extent during what Bruce McConachie calls "the era of liberal containment" that such connections had to be

rediscovered by young people in the black freedom movement in the latter half of the 1960s. Jacqueline Castledine sheds light on how this same concern with peace and freedom played out on a more local and organizational level as women in the American Labor Party (ALP) struggled to hold these issues together in the face of mounting opposition within their own progressive organizations. The ALP dissolved, the causes of peace and freedom divided, but grassroots networks of women remained to continue these struggles another day. Erik S. McDuffie's chapter on Esther Cooper Jackson reminds us of the difficult times and lost opportunities faced by one individual, in this case an African American woman who had to downplay her own strengths as an activist in the fight to defend her husband, who was convicted and jailed under the Smith Act. Cooper Jackson was hardly the only black woman forced by McCarthyism to obscure a long personal history of activism and pose as a sympathetic victim.[29] In the face of great odds, her marriage survived and she went on to become one of the founders of *Freedomways*, but the costs included putting issues such as feminism on the back burner and preventing experienced organizers from participating fully in movements that, arguably, their activism had made possible.

Demonstrating that it was not just activists with roots in the Communist Party who had a vision of radical social change and whose activities were severely limited by the Cold War and Red Scare, Rachel Peterson illuminates the fate of *Correspondence*, a newspaper started by C. L. R. James and his contemporaries who had little respect for the CPUSA. Viewing the paper as a substitute for the sort of activism that was no longer possible because of the Red Scare, the *Correspondence* collective, despite its anti-CP outlook, was nevertheless hounded by the authorities, attention that, as in many other cases, served to magnify the internal differences of the members, ultimately leading to debilitating divisions. Clarence Lang's chapter on the National Negro Labor Council gives us one example of a black radical organization that could not survive the early cold war years, and yet the links it made between the struggle for economic justice and an end to racial discrimination did not entirely disappear. Lang's account illustrates the government's determination to get rid of such groups, the ambiguous role and shifting position of the Communist Party, and the way in which former liberal allies not only helped destroy the organization but also "freely grazed on its carcass."

Using "Operation Wetback" as an example, Zaragosa Vargas's chapter on the Mexican American freedom movement offers particular insight into the ways that racism and anticommunism worked together. Vargas explains the left-wing roots of the more militant wing of the Mexican American movement and the results of its suppression, which was not

simply to give more power to moderate and conservative groups but also, significantly, to sever the ties between Mexican American and African American activists who had fought together against racism and economic inequality in an earlier era. The story Vargas relates parallels the one told by Lang; organizations such as ANMA fell by the wayside, but even though the focus shifted for a time from economic justice to voting rights and desegregation, the ties between fighting for labor rights and against racism were not altogether lost. Thus, what we are left with is a complicated picture that places the roots of a broad movement for social change squarely in the Left of the 1930s and 1940s, followed by a moment of division and rupture in the early years of the Cold War as organizations and individuals faced repression and the ties between causes were severed; however, pockets of resistance survived, keeping radical ideas alive to be rediscovered in the late 1960s.

Notes

1. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 181–182.
2. Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 184–189.
3. Doug Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 214.
4. Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 12.
5. Jeff, Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948–1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 10.
6. Jonathan Rosenberg, "How Far the Promised Land?" in *World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement From the First World War to Vietnam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 175.
7. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233–1336; Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jeanne Theoharis, "Black Freedom Studies: Re-imagining and Redefining the Fundamentals," *History Compass* 4 (2006): 348–367; Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

8. Robert O. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams, eds., *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 15–55; Robin D. G. Kelley, "Stormy Weather: Reconstructing Black (Inter)Nationalism in the Cold War Era," in Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., ed., *Is It Nation Time?: Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 67–90; Peniel E. Joseph, "Waiting till the Midnight Hour: Reconceptualizing the Heroic Period of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1965," *Souls* (Spring 2000): 6–17; Joseph, "Black Liberation without Apology: Reconceptualizing the Black Power Movement," *The Black Scholar* 31 (Fall–Winter 2001): 2–19; Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006); and Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).
9. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, ed. Lazerow and Williams, 17–18.
10. Kelley, "Stormy Weather," in *Is It Nation Time?*, ed. Glaude, 69.
11. Ibid., 69–70.
12. Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African American History* 92 (Spring 2007): 265–288.
13. Ibid., 269.
14. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, ed. Lazerow and Williams, 24.
15. Dowd Hall expresses this well in discussing discontinuities: "Many young activists of the 1960s saw their efforts as a new departure…not as actors with much to learn from an earlier, labor-infused civil rights tradition. Persecution, censorship, and self-censorship reinforced that generational divide by sidelining independent radicals, thus whitening the memory and historiography of the Left and leaving later generations with an understanding of black politics that dichotomizes nationalism and integrationism." Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement," 1253.
16. Gerald Horne has a number of books addressing this point, including *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988). Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
17. Clarence Lang, "Between Civil Rights and Black Power in the Gateway City," *Journal of Social History* 37 (Spring 2004): 748.
18. Michael Goldfield, *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 272.
19. Manfred Berg, "*The Ticket to Freedom*": *The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 116–119. Berg's claim that "The NAACP followed a pattern of gradual and

defensive accommodation to the anticommunist zeitgeist that was typical for the American public at large" may be accurate, but it avoids the issue of how acquiescing to the suppression of civil liberties of radicals enabled the attacks on others who shared their goals. Moreover, his categorical condemnation of "Marxist historians" seems an unnecessary, ad hominem, attack.

20. See Elliott Minor, "Answers Sought in 1946 Ga. Killing," February 13, 2007, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/13/AR2007021300121_pf. Accessed July 9, 2008. Maceo Snipes, who served in the Pacific during World War II, was the first black person to vote in Taylor County, Georgia. Relatives said he was shot in the back by four white men the next day, and he died two days later. The murder has never been solved.
21. Bill Mullen calls these the "best features" of "Chicago's Negro People's Front." See *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935–1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 206.
22. St. Clair Drake, "A Note on the Intellectual Climate among Black Americans Between 1929 and 1945 with Special Reference to their Relations with the Communist Party and Kwame Nkrumah's Probable Relations With Them," unpublished manuscript, in St. Clair Drake Papers, Box 23, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.
23. See Alan Wald's discussion of the agency of black radicals in "Narrating Nationalisms: Black Marxism and Jewish Communists through the Eyes of Harold Cruse," in *Left of the Color Line*, ed. Bill Mullen and James Smethurst (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 141–161.
24. Earl Ofari Hutchinson, "Feds Should Revisit America's Most Heinous Lynching," June 27, 2005, www.huffingtonpost.com/earl-ofari-hutchinson/feds-should-revisit-ameri_b_3264.ht. Accessed July 9, 2008. The Ingram case, depicted in the cover drawing by Charles White, is one of several cases of racial injustice from the early cold war era that are discussed at length in Horne, *Communist Front?* Charles Martin suggests that such cases "heightened fears that the old, extralegal practice of lynching had been replaced by a new, more sophisticated version of racial injustice through the courts." See Charles H. Martin, "Race, Gender, and Southern Justice: The Rosa Lee Ingram Case," *American Journal of Legal History* 29 (July 1985): 251–168.
25. David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 278.
26. Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes: The NAACP and Black Communists in the Early Cold War, 1948–1952," in Brenda Gayle Plummer, ed., *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs 1945–1988* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). See also Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*.
27. Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1994), 92–93.
28. As James Smethurst elaborates in his study on the Black Arts Movement, many of these left-wing cultural forms were rekindled in the late 1960s.

See Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

29. Andrea Friedman, "The Strange Career of Annie Lee Moss: Rethinking Race, Gender, and McCarthyism," *Journal of American History* 94 (September 2007): 445–468.

I

"Another Side of the Story": African American Intellectuals Speak Out for Peace and Freedom during the Early Cold War Years

Robbie Lieberman

In a July 5, 1958, column called "The Ashes of Death," writer Eugene Gordon exhorted fellow African Americans to take an active interest in the Geneva conference on nuclear testing. "I submit," he wrote, "that as Negroes you and I are concerned in at least two terribly important ways. . . . The calcium properties of strontium 90 tend to introduce it into the body's bone structure—be it a black or a white or a yellow or a brown body—and certain quantities produce bone cancer and leukemia." The second "terribly important reason" he cited was that "Britain and the U.S. explode their 'dirtiest' atomic and hydrogen devices as far away from centers of white population as possible. It was a colored people, too, whom our country used as guineapigs for the first atomic bombs in 1945."[1]

African Americans had a long history of interest in foreign policy, especially where issues of social justice were concerned.[2] Yet Gordon had problems finding an audience for his "Another Side of the Story" column, as opposition to U.S. cold war policies became viewed as subversive. In the previous decade, movements for peace and freedom had begun to divide, as the role of the Left in both causes was limited by cold war anticommunism. Government propaganda, lists of subversive organizations, laws restricting free speech and association, and denial of the right to travel

had a significant impact on both the peace and civil rights movements and also had long-term consequences on the relationship between the two. By acknowledging the challenges to linking peace and freedom during the early years of the Cold War, we get a clearer picture, for instance, of why civil rights leaders were reluctant to speak out against the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s. Many African American critics of U.S. foreign policy had been silenced by fear, intimidation, and repression, while others, for strategic reasons, had accepted the narrower ground that the Cold War and Red Scare afforded civil rights activists.[3] In order to highlight a history that was lost to later generations of activists and students of social movements, this chapter is particularly attentive to activists and intellectuals who, like Gordon, fiercely resisted the cold war consensus and the Red Scare, insisting that peace and freedom were inextricably linked.

There were a few brief years of hope for progressives in the United States following World War II. They looked forward to a renewed popular front that, in conjunction with the newly formed United Nations, would lead to a more peaceful world, an end to colonialism, and an expansion of democratic rights at home. But their hopes were dashed by a growing conservatism, and by the time of the presidential election of 1948 in which their standard bearer Henry Wallace's third party "fight for peace" was soundly defeated, the narrowing of public political discourse was readily apparent. Organizations fell apart under the pressure of the Cold War and Red Scare. Progressive party activist Virginia Durr described the period succinctly: "Everything split, split, split."[4]

One consequence of the divide between peace and freedom was that Americans who worked for peace—as in peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union and opposition to nuclear weapons, far-flung military bases, and imperialist wars—were viewed as Communist agents or dupes, while at the same time the U.S. government was forced to address the issue of civil rights in order to lend legitimacy to its claims to be the leader of the "free world." Government support for civil rights came at a very high cost, however. The State Department refused to allow the black freedom struggle to be defined as a human rights issue subject to the oversight of the United Nations, while insisting that race relations in the United States were improving.[5] More to the point, mainstream civil rights leaders downplayed their criticism of U.S. cold war policies, excluded Communists and suspected subversives from their organizations, and distanced themselves from any talk of peace. In 1947, for example, the NAACP Board of Directors adopted a policy denying local branches the right to pass resolutions on foreign affairs, figuring, as did leaders of many organizations in this era, that "branch militancy showed communism at work."[6] Thus a critical perspective on U.S. foreign policy

was muted—particularly the idea that peace, freedom, and anticolonialism were linked, and that peace could mean something other than order achieved through nuclear strength.

A number of scholars, most recently Glenda Gilmore, Thomas Jackson, and Michael Honey, have addressed the emphasis on economic rights that was central to the black freedom movement. Many others, including Peniel Joseph, Robin Kelley, Penny Von Eschen, Nikhil Singh, and Kevin Gaines, have discussed the U.S. government's attempt to divide the movements for black freedom at home and abroad, including the silencing or exiling of African American anticolonial and black nationalist voices. Yet there has been little acknowledgment or discussion of these same activists' ideas about peace.[7] That is the focus of this chapter. I argue that we gain a fuller understanding of the import of the suppression of the Black Left by paying attention to the separation of black freedom from global peace in theory and practice; teasing out the resistance to this separation affords us a more complete view of what was lost. Following a brief discussion of the divisions brought on by the Cold War and Red Scare, I survey a variety of African Americans who were concerned with peace and freedom, all of whom paid a price for their beliefs. This is followed by an extensive analysis of Eugene Gordon's and Lorraine Hansberry's ideas about peace and resistance to the Red Scare, which have not been discussed at length elsewhere. The chapter ends with some conclusions about the legacy of this period.

Popular Front Unity to Red Scare Divisions

In the period before World War II (and for a few years afterward as well), it was widely accepted among those concerned with black rights that peace and freedom, based on social justice, were closely linked. This was primarily a function of the Popular Front of the 1930s, but it is worth emphasizing the range of people and organizations who took these connections for granted. These included not only the many people who passed through or worked with the Communist Party in the 1930s, but also black activists in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) who pushed their colleagues to seriously address the issues of race and colonialism; founders of the Highlander Folk School, whose concern with labor and civil rights was based on a broad notion of human rights and democratic citizenship as the foundation of peace and justice; and Bayard Rustin, whose pioneering work with Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation helped spread his view that the concept of human rights encompassed peace and

civil rights.[8] For many of these activists, justice in the form of greater equality and lack of discrimination had to come first, but it was by no means the only goal. In the mid-1930s Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), was among those who spoke of the connections between issues: "The principle of justice is fundamental and must be exercised…for there can be neither freedom, peace, true democracy, or real development without justice."[9] In the post-World War II era, Bethune strongly believed black people should be part of the struggle for peace.[10]

A wide array of black activists had contact with the Left, specifically the Communist Party, in the 1930s, and many acknowledged its seminal importance in offering them a broad analysis that linked class, race, and foreign policy, and connected local issues to the international scene. Hosea Hudson, who traveled from Alabama to be educated at the Workers School in New York in 1934, came home talking about "political economy, about the society itself, how it automatically would breed war and fascism. I'm discussing about the danger of imperialist war."[11] Dorothy Height, at the time a leader of the Christian youth movement and later president of the NCNW, was always certain she would not be a Communist, but she appreciated the openness and unity of the 1930s: "to me the important thing was that in the early thirties, we were in an era of the United Front." In that context Height got to know and work with leaders in the Young Communist League. Her comments—"I learned so much from the Communists. Those were some of the best minds that I ever came upon"—reflect the experience of many black activists of the time. The Cold War and Red Scare destroyed that United Front and discouraged people generally from speaking out on issues they believed were important, as Height explains: "[E]verybody was getting silenced, everybody was afraid to say anything, and people would know that things were wrong, but they would just not speak because they didn't want to be attacked." People were even afraid to join or contribute to the NCNW, they condemned each other because of guilt by association (Height herself was accused of being a Communist), and they were very cautious about what they taught in school, leading to "a kind of killing off of any kind of creativity and learning."[12]

Many organizations split or dissolved as the Cold War and Red Scare decimated the Left and cemented the division between peace and civil rights. The casualties went beyond organizations associated with the Communists, such as the Civil Rights Congress, Council on African Affairs, Sojourners for Truth and Justice, Congress of American Women, and so on. More established institutions suffered as well; the Highlander

Folk School was forced to close its doors, while numerous other organizations, including the NAACP and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, struggled to survive the impact of anticommunist attacks.[13]

Certain ways of conceiving of "peace" became widely viewed as subversive, thus speaking out in favor of peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union and opposing the nuclear arms race and wars in which the United States was involved became out-of-bounds for civil rights activists. The dividing line was between those who maintained their commitment to these sorts of peace issues (and who challenged the red-baiting that inevitably followed) and those who appeared to accept silence about U.S. foreign policy as the price of progress on civil rights.

A Range of Voices for Peace and Freedom

A range of left-wing African American artists and activists eschewed what they saw as a bargain in which they were supposed to avoid criticizing U.S. foreign policy in return for incremental gains on the domestic front. These people saw peace and freedom as inseparable, and they rejected the government's and the cold warriors' way of defining these terms. Actor Ossie Davis was among those to challenge black leaders who treated foreign affairs as "the province of white folks only.... There were other blacks," he suggested, "who argued differently. To them our struggle here at home was part and parcel of the worldwide struggle against capitalist exploitation.... I was on the side with Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois."[14] Being on that side necessitated defending the right to speak out for peace *and* freedom and challenging those who sought to suppress such views.

Robeson and Du Bois not only played a central role in linking the struggle against colonialism to the fight against racial oppression at home, especially through their work with the Council on African Affairs, they also led the way in speaking out for peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union and opposing U.S. cold war policies. Government attacks on W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson have been discussed at length by scholars;[15] I mention these attacks here to underscore both men's commitment to peace and their determination not to be silenced, as well as to highlight the risks taken by those who supported them. Both men were denied their passports; Du Bois was indicted by the Justice Department for circulating the Stockholm peace petition, which called for the outlawing of nuclear weapons. Robeson was called up in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee for questioning the cold war consensus and being

too friendly with the Soviet Union. Supposedly there to discuss passport legislation, he was bombarded by questions about communism. Arguing that HUAC members were the real un-Americans, in his prepared statement Robeson said, "By continuing the struggle at home and abroad for peace and friendship with all the world's people, for an end to Colonialism, for full citizenship for Negro Americans, for a world in which art and culture may abound, I intend to continue to win friends for the best in American life."[16] Despite his defiant attitude, Robeson's voice was silenced as he was refused concert venues and, in the wake of the Peekskill riot, attacked by both cold war liberals and ultrapatriotic conservatives. While John Lewis would later assert that "In many ways we of SNCC are Paul Robeson's spiritual children,"[17] clearly Robeson's legacy—particularly his commitment to peace—was circumscribed by the Red Scare.

Du Bois ran for U.S. Senate in New York on the American Labor Party ticket in 1950 mainly because "this campaign would afford a chance for me to speak for peace which could be voiced in no other way."[18] Du Bois ran on a platform of peace and civil rights, giving speeches for the purpose of defiantly linking the issues. In a speech given in October 1950, Du Bois posed the question, "Where does Harlem stand in the battle for Peace and Civil Rights?" and then went on to give a "calm and clear" answer: "Harlem stands for Peace and Civil Rights; for Peace among all nations, before and behind the Iron Curtain; for Civil Rights for all men, Chinese, and Koreans, Russians and Poles, black, brown and yellow peoples, as well as for Englishmen and Americans."[19]

Defending himself against the indictment by the Justice Department, Du Bois elaborated on his views about peace before a large audience:

> Today, in this free country, no man can be sure of earning a living, of escaping slander and personal violence, or even of keeping out of jail—unless publicly and repeatedly he proclaims that:
>
> He hates Russia.
>
> He opposes socialism and communism.
>
> He supports wholeheartedly the war in Korea.
>
> He is ready to spend any amount for further war, anywhere or anytime.
>
> He is ready to fight the Soviet Union, China and any other country, or all countries together.
>
> He believes in the use of the atom bomb or any other weapon of mass destruction, and regards anyone opposed as a traitor.[20]

While Du Bois was honored at the 1963 March on Washington, some of his central concerns, especially his ideas about peace, were notably absent.

In the early cold war years, many activists paid tribute to Du Bois and Robeson for paving the way, defining peace in such a way that it meant opposing U.S. cold war policies, including the building of atomic weapons and the development of the national security state, but also supporting anticolonial struggles, linking these to the struggle for racial and economic justice at home. It is hardly a coincidence that activists who promoted this view of peace drew the government's attention or that many of them ended up in prison or exile. A handful of names suggests the pattern : Claudia Jones, convicted under the Smith Act (for conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the government) was deported and ended up in England, where she continued the struggle but died at a young age; other Smith Act victims—Ben Davis, Henry Winston, Pettis Perry—served jail sentences. Many others found themselves the targets of constant government surveillance, including Charlotta Bass and Lorraine Hansberry. But it was not just Communists and fellow travelers who linked peace, freedom, and economic justice.

Bill Sutherland, a black pacifist and World War II conscientious objector, was a founder of New York CORE and worked with Peacemakers to oppose the Korean War. While not a Communist, he found the atmosphere for political work in the United States stifling and moved to Ghana, spending the next several decades there because he thought it was where the cause of liberation was most important. Sutherland worked closely with George Houser, including helping to initiate the anticommunist American Committee on Africa, which filled the void left when the Council on African Affairs (led by Robeson, Du Bois, and Alphaeus Hunton) was forced to dissolve because of harassment by the government. He also played a central role in the antinuclear movement in Africa, viewing the nonviolent protests against French atomic testing in the Sahara as a "joining up of the European antinuclear forces, the African liberation forces, and the U.S. civil rights movement [that] could help each group feed and reinforce the other."[21]

Sutherland was not alone in his optimism about the possibility for the nonviolent liberation of Africa.[22] St. Clair Drake, who grew up influenced by Quakers, and admiring Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, and Japanese pacifist Toyohiko Kagawa, shared a similar outlook; his analysis of anticolonialism in Africa rested on a strong interest in nonviolence coupled with a determination about independence. He wanted Africa to be kept out of the Cold War, especially from being a spark for a third world war. Attacked on all sides for his work in Africa, Drake argued, in contrast to Sutherland, for cooperating with Communists as long as their aims included racial and economic justice, civil liberties, and peace. He believed that red-baiting only hurt the cause of black liberation.[23]

Another activist, Robert S. Browne, worked from inside and outside the political establishment to change U.S. foreign policy. Of his meeting with Paul Robeson in 1942, Browne wrote, "his presence electrified us as had no one else's," and "the consternation he caused in Washington" only seemed to give more credence to his anti-imperialist message.[24] At the same time, Browne was a founding member of the American Committee on Africa who criticized the United States for passing up the opportunity to help black South Africans obtain their freedom, leaving it to the communists to do so. He spent the latter half of the 1950s and the early 1960s in Southeast Asia, writing to the *New York Times* in early 1962 criticizing U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. In one letter he compared Algeria to Vietnam, claiming that the State Department "is busily engaged in fighting the wrong war at the wrong time with the wrong tactics." For airing such views Browne was investigated by the CIA in 1963 when he was on the faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.[25]

Closer to the Communist movement was Julian Mayfield, who spent the early 1950s in Harlem until the writers group of the Committee for the Negro in the Arts, in which he was an active participant, dissolved in the face of anticommunist repression. He spent several years in Puerto Rico, with government agents still tracking his activities, working as a journalist and writing novels. Inspired by the Cuban revolution and by Robert F. Williams's commitment to armed self-defense, Mayfield went into exile, fleeing a federal manhunt after helping Williams escape the United States.[26] He ended up in Ghana, working closely with Kwame Nkrumah until the latter's overthrow in 1966. While Mayfield is normally associated with black nationalism and the seeds of the black power movement, he is included here precisely because of his symbolic importance; not only does he represent well the missing voices of exiles who fled the domestic scene under pressure, but he clearly shared with his contemporaries an internationalist view and a desire for world peace, and he consistently criticized U.S. foreign policy and the caution of mainstream African American leaders. In a 1959 essay, "Into the Mainstream and Oblivion," Mayfield criticized creative writers for their apparent lack of concern "for the great questions facing the peoples of the world. The most important of these, and the most obvious, is the madness of war."[27] Mayfield edited *The World Without the Bomb*, a collection of papers from a 1962 meeting in Accra concerned about world peace, especially the nuclear arms race (the range of speakers at this meeting included St. Clair Drake, cold war architect George Kennan, who came to oppose the arms race, secretary general of the United Nations U Thant, peace researcher Johan Galtung, philosopher and antiwar activist Bertrand Russell, Kwame Nkrumah, and others). A few years earlier, Mayfield had written of a black American

mother who lost a son in Korea and said, "I don't care if the army is integrated; next time I want to know what kind of war my boy is being taken to." Discussing the early cold war years in a paper he presented at Howard University in 1979, Mayfield said, "The older leaders had long discouraged our taking an interest in controversial foreign policy matters, or even traveling to socialist countries on the disapproval list of the State Department. But we went to those forbidden countries anyway."[28]

One journalist who visited those countries was William Worthy, an African American pacifist who had been a conscientious objector in World War II. His reporting from Bandung and later Cuba and Vietnam was unique in linking anticolonialism and peace with the domestic black freedom movement. A strong opponent of the Red Scare, Worthy had to work hard at evading the government's efforts to limit his travels. He could not get his passport renewed after he returned from China in 1957, and a few years later he became the first American sent to jail for defying the government ban on travel to Cuba.[29]

One could go on and on noting African Americans concerned about peace and freedom who were targets of the Red Scare, among them entertainers who commanded large audiences: actor Canada Lee, singer Josephine Baker, dancer Katherine Dunham.[30] But many people who were not so well-known also paid a price for their commitment. Hugh Mulzac, the first African American to command a ship in the American Merchant Marines and an early challenger of segregation in major league baseball, was blacklisted in the 1950s for having associated with Communists in such organizations as the National Council on American-Soviet Friendship, the Council on African Affairs, and the Council for West Indian Federation. In his autobiography, he denounced the blacklisting practices that left him struggling to make a living as "attempts to suppress independent political thinking, compel conformity, and to mobilize the people of America to support the adventures of a war-minded group of leaders who in their desperation can think of no way out of their dilemma but nuclear war to annihilate all mankind."[31]

Resisting the Red Scare

The remainder of this chapter is focused on writings of African Americans who were close to the Communist movement for a significant period, people who articulated their positions forcefully and consistently and paid a price for their efforts. My concern here is not whether these individuals were party members, and, contrary to the still popular view that African Americans were "used" by the CP for its own purposes, I have taken

people's expressions of interest in peace and freedom as well-thought-out and genuine. My aim is not to defend the outlook or actions of the CP—which were frequently quite problematic—but to locate the intersection of its ideas with those of black radicals, an intersection about which the U.S. government had always been concerned.[32]

The black press generally was critical of U.S. cold war policies at first, pointing out the hypocrisy of worrying about democracy in Eastern Europe but not in the U.S. South. But by 1948 national black newspapers focused far more attention on world communism than European colonialism.[33] These papers printed little criticism of the Korean War, as the idea of peaceful coexistence became associated with communism and the domestic freedom struggle was decoupled from foreign policy issues.

Black journalists who expressed a more critical view were pressured to conform or lose their positions of influence. In addition to William Worthy, mentioned above, government harassment affected several others. Charlotta Bass was forced to discontinue publication of the *California Eagle*, while Carlton Goodlett, publisher and editor of the *San Francisco Sun Reporter*, lost his position on the board of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. Goodlett, who also participated in the 1962 world peace meeting in Accra, speaks plainly in his oral history of the limits on black protest, suggesting that civil rights was "a domain in which we were supposed to be vocal," but that this was not the case for problems of economics, politics, and foreign policy. It was not acceptable to talk about peace, in particular. Goodlett suggests he was forced off the publishers' board "because of my world peace interests and my efforts to get the black press to make a fact-finding trip to the Soviet Union and to study the socialist countries as well as to visit the Middle East." Such views marked him as a "red" and he became "a burden they didn't want to bear."[34]

The Communist Party emphasized peace above all else during the early cold war years, years in which the Soviet Union was at a clear disadvantage in the arms race and the two superpowers fought for influence in the colonialized world. John Pittman put forth the CP position on the relationship between peace and black freedom in a 1952 *Masses and Mainstream* article called "The Long Struggle for Peace."[35] He does so by reviewing the historical record of African American opposition to what he calls "unjust, predatory wars" waged by the U.S. government, arguing that black Americans have always had one test for whether a war was just or not: would it bring more freedom or less freedom to the Negro people? He quotes Frederick Douglass's opposition to the Mexican War, and, among others, Douglass's son Lewis, who opposed the United States taking over the Philippines, stating that "it is a sorry but true fact that whatever this government controls, injustice to dark races prevails."[36] He goes

on to describe the disillusionment of black Americans after World War I and their lack of enthusiasm in the early stages of World War II. Following his review of black opposition to U.S. wars from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, he addresses the early cold war era, citing both the NAACP and the Civil Rights Congress petitions to the United Nations, which linked the oppression of black people at home to imperialist actions abroad. Pittman was not alone in noting the deteriorating conditions of African American life during the Korean War. Studies by the Urban League and the NAACP documented this as well, but the evidence did not lead them to take a position against the war. By contrast, in a rare questioning of U.S. policy, the *New York Times* reported on a pastor who suggested in a sermon that in light of the brutal murder of Harry T. and Harriet Moore in Florida, "American Negroes should not be asked to give their lives in Korea."[37] It was black Communists who added the link to colonialism, asking rhetorically, "Who is supplying the guns so that the imperialists can continue to shoot down the natives of French Indo-China, Malaya, and Kenya?"[38] While mainstream black leaders by that point avoided connecting U.S. policies with "this slaughter of colonial peoples," black leftists argued that their silence was self-defeating.

Smith Act victim Pettis Perry also focuses on criticizing U.S. foreign policy in his letters from prison, though in far more colloquial language. As the CPUSA did at the time, Perry puts the issue of peace first, but connects it to the struggle against colonialism and racism. In one example among many, he contrasts U.S. government concerns about freedom in Hungary with its support for apartheid South Africa and for the French war in Algeria. Here Perry asks what the United States will do at the U.N., how will it maintain prestige among African and Asian people? "[W]ithout a doubt," he concludes, "the US is now between Hell and Harper's Ferry."[39]

Eugene Gordon's series of columns, "Another Side of the Story," written for the black press in the late 1950s, and Lorraine Hansberry's writings and speeches convey the defiance of both writers in the face of government surveillance and harassment, while the reception of their work demonstrates how criticism of U.S. foreign policy had become anathema in the political culture of the 1950s. Gordon was a journalist and fiction writer born in 1891 in Florida; in a draft of his autobiography he writes about growing up in New Orleans, describing the flooding and fears about malaria. Gordon served in France in World War I, then wrote for the *Boston Post*. He published fiction and nonfiction in *American Mercury*, *Scribners*, and *The Nation*, among others. He joined the Communist Party in 1931, spent the mid-1930s in the Soviet Union as a reporter for the *Moscow Daily News*, then worked as reporter and

editor for the *Daily Worker* from 1938 to 1946. He was on the staff of the *National Guardian* in the mid-1950s, during which time he covered the Bandung conference. One of the few African American journalists to attend the conference, which brought together African and Asian nations opposed to the Cold War and colonialism, he later suggested it was an accident that his passport was renewed for the occasion.[40] Gordon had difficulty finding a job or an audience by the late 1950s, yet he refused to temper his writing.

In a letter to former president Harry Truman in March 1960, Gordon responds to Truman's criticism of the Southern sit-ins; "A man who boasts years after the crime that, yes, he did order atom bombs dropped on hundreds of thousands of innocent and defenseless children, women and old men and that, no, he does not regret it—such a man could hardly be expected to defend the right of Negro school children and college students even peacefully to defy white supremacist barbarity." Gordon goes on to say that at Bandung he learned "that the Africans and Asians had not forgiven the United States' extending its domestic policy on its Negro citizens to Asia and Africa by testing your atom bomb on a colored people. Though you, the peppery and outspoken Harry S. Truman, don't give a damn, many millions of others of us do. We care not only for our country as an object to exploit for personal gain; we care for people."[41]

Gordon does not mince words in his column, either, where he links peace, freedom, and anticolonialism in provocative ways. While some African American newspapers published "Another Side of the Story," it seems not all of them paid Gordon for his work.[42] His first column, offered as a free trial sample, and dated June 10, 1958, was "The Free World Myth." In this piece Gordon criticizes the increasingly common use of the words "free world," but he claims to be especially upset about their use by African Americans: "Nausea overcame me when the *Baltimore Afro-American's* anonymous Washington correspondent . . . used the phrase as if it were a part of his people's vernacular."[43] It turns out Gordon wasn't the only one disturbed by the phrase, though. As he points out, the *New York Times* of May 30 reported that the United Presbyterian Church (secretary of state Dulles's denomination) "in issuing a 2500 word message to its 9462 congregations of 3,000,000 members, was disturbed over the 'contemporary myth of the free world.' The message said: 'This nation counts among its allies some nations which are in no sense free. By our actions we proclaim to the world that lands where human freedom is utterly dead can qualify for membership in the free world simply by supplying military bases or strategic commodities. This kind of hypocrisy should be abhorrent to Christians, and in its presence the church dare not keep silent.' "[44]

In his June 18, 1958, column, "Good-Will Ambassadors," Gordon comments on the Supreme Court's decision to ease passport restrictions; the court's 5-4 decision ruled that the secretary of state had no legal authority to withhold passports because of an applicants "beliefs and associations." Gordon explains that Dulles objects to citizens traveling abroad if their travel conflicts with his cold war foreign policy; he only cooperates if people sign anticommunist affidavits, and he becomes very cooperative if travelers first drop in at the State Department for a briefing. Gordon writes, "The State Department and Mr. Dulles suspect all Negroes of being Reds who don't drop in for briefings before going to Africa or Asia. Having, myself, failed to go for a briefing before flying to the Bandung Asian-African conference in April 1955, I had no right to be surprised when a man who said he was a State Department agent came and demanded my passport when I returned from Southeast Asia. (He didn't get it.)"[45] Though the State Department could still reject a passport request if it were deemed not to be in the best interests of the United States, Gordon argues that the Court's decision is still significant, especially to African Americans because "it interferes . . . with State Department policy of allowing only its 'good-will ambassadors'" to travel to certain countries. Since there was now increasing "pressure from awakening Negroes" at home, "backed by vast numbers of colored peoples abroad," and more black people could travel to Africa and Asia, Gordon claimed that "an important change is inevitable in this country's official bearing toward 'uncommitted' Africans and Asians. The U.S. government will be forced to stop trying to win 'the hearts and minds' of Africans and Asians with lies and leave these people to their 'neutrality,' or it will tell the truth and face the consequences. One of the consequences of telling the truth," Gordon suggested, would be "to prove to Africans and Asians that it does not *promise* the non-white peoples outside the U.S. anything it will not *give* the non-whites within the U.S."[46] (emphasis in original). He goes on to joyfully describe the sorts of questions that will be thrown at travelers, such as "how is it that not one of you 17 million negroes in the free-world U.S.A is a governor of a state, or a senator in the Congress, or mayor of an important city?" Or "Why is it that Negro per-capita income is still only 53% that for whites?" Not only will it be fun to answer these questions, Gordon concludes, but the United States will have to eliminate the basis of such questions. Thus, he argues, "it will turn out in the end that the real good-will ambassadors were you and I."[47]

"Good-Will Ambassadors" is about as lighthearted as Gordon's columns get. More typical is the July 5, 1958, column called "The Ashes of Death," which draws explicit connections between peace and freedom. His subject, the conference at Geneva to discuss nuclear testing, especially

methods of detecting nuclear explosions, reflected the growing public concern with the effects of nuclear fallout. This was the issue around which the peace movement revived in the late 1950s, leading to the signing of the limited test ban treaty in 1963. Yet here, Gordon asks why *black* Americans failed to demonstrate much interest in the Geneva meeting, in contrast with the interest they showed in the Bandung conference and the 1957 Afro-Asian Solidarity conference in Cairo. "Perhaps most of us don't realize," Gordon writes, "that the independent African and Asian countries represented at each of those conferences are profoundly interested in what goes on at Geneva."[48]

The column is somewhat pedantic in tone, but the questions he raises are important ones that were not being asked in most newspapers. The lengthy quote below illustrates well Gordon's style and substance:

> Why aren't U.S. Negro newspapers as quick to report on and to stir up excitement around the worldwide anxiety over the fallout of ashes of death as these papers are—and should always be—to report and editorialize on lynchings and denials of civil rights? Don't our editors and publishers want us to know that a generation of Negro children with bone cancer and blood diseases would be less able to continue our fight for human rights? Or less able to enjoy those rights when won? Shouldn't we therefore pay some attention to less tangible but more sinister evils than those we meet daily face to face?
>
> Something is going on which you and I had better look into when the U.S., having scared up enough votes in the United Nations to defeat resolutions demanding suspension of nuclear test explosions in the far Pacific, [*sic*] the daily commercial press crows as if we had won a great moral victory.[49]

Clearly Gordon wanted African Americans to consider what was so great about defeating a ban on nuclear testing and to understand why they should be concerned about the issue. The fact that leading African American newspapers failed to report on the protests against France's nuclear testing in the Sahara in the fall of 1959—protests organized and led by African American pacifists, which were covered by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*—underscores the self-censorship of the black press and the reason for Gordon's frustration.[50]

Lorraine Hansberry was capable of righteous anger that matched Gordon's, but at the very time that Gordon, by then in his late sixties, was struggling to peddle his column to the black press, she was not yet thirty years old and had a hit play running on Broadway. Hansberry shared many of Gordon's concerns, and while she may have been sophisticated beyond her years, her youthful optimism was irrepressible. It bubbled

over in a letter she wrote to her mother about *A Raisin in the Sun* on the eve of its opening in New Haven (before it went to Broadway): "Mama, it is a play that tells the truth about people, Negroes and life and I just think it will help a lot of people to understand how we are just as complicated as they are—and just as mixed up—but above all that we have among our miserable and downtrodden ranks—people who are the very essence of human dignity."[51] It is in the spirit of Hansberry herself that I turn to exploring a dimension that is rarely discussed in the critical writing on her work: her commitment to peace.[52] This gap in the scholarship is itself an excellent example of what was lost when the causes of peace and freedom became divided.

Hansberry's writing and legacy is currently undergoing a dramatic rethinking. For example, Mary Helen Washington writes: "Contrary to the mainstream image of the award-winning Broadway author of *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry…was a militantly left-wing, antiracist, anticolonialist, socialist feminist, whose activities in the 1950s earned her a three-binder FBI file."[53] Thus her ties to the Left are acknowledged, but not her commitment to the struggle for peace, a major reason the government was so intensely interested in her activities. She represents well those who wanted to unite anticolonialism, peace, and freedom.

As Washington's comment indicates, Hansberry's passionate concern for social justice encompassed a wide range of issues, including anticolonialism, black liberation, feminism, and socialism. She was an idealist with a notion of structural violence; ghetto life was murder, meaning there was a need for structural change (social justice) in order to bring genuine peace.[54] Along with many black radicals of her time she saw the fate of black people in Africa and the United States as inseparable, and she was strongly opposed to U.S. policies in the Cold War, including the development of nuclear weapons and the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere. She was not a pacifist, but neither was she an advocate of violent revolution. She claimed to believe "most of all in humanism" and she abhorred violence. At the same time, she refused to "equalize the oppressed with the oppressor." Archbishop Desmond Tutu would express this same idea years later: "All violence is evil but not equal."[55]

Particularly due to her expressions of black nationalism, some scholars have tried to use Lorraine Hansberry to argue that there is continuity in the black freedom movement in the United States from the 1930s to the 1970s, that the Cold War and Red Scare do not cause a serious rupture.[56] But this argument only works if you overlook how much her work represents the intersection of black radicalism and the Communist Left, the shared commitment to peace and freedom, and the way the Red Scare contributes to breaking these apart.[57] The point here is not to

reduce Hansberry to a peace activist but to acknowledge such work as a significant part of her activity. She was quite clear about being on the side of the oppressed, but hoped, along with St. Clair Drake and others, that Africa could be liberated without violence. Her articles in *Freedom* included, for instance, "Kenya's Kikuyu: A Peaceful People Wage Heroic Struggle Against British." She ends a review of the Japanese produced film *Hiroshima*, with the comment, "Coming out of the movie house into the American streets one repeats it with feeling: No more Hiroshimas—anywhere, ever." One of the scripts she was working on before her death was *What Use are Flowers?* a warning to humanity not to blow up the world ("The uses of flowers are infinite," the play tells us).[58]

Much of the basic outline of Hansberry's life and work is well-known: she grew up on the south side of Chicago, but her family was not poor. One of the things she struggled with at the moment of her greatest success was the pull of comfort, and the issue of class loyalty is present in her creative work as well. Leading black intellectuals, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, were family friends. Her parents were active in the NAACP, and her father, Carl Hansberry, won an important Supreme Court case that challenged restrictive covenants. Her Uncle Leo was a scholar of Africa at Howard University who brought African students with him when he came to visit. Steven Carter dates her interest in world peace back to her youth, when she was both alarmed and outraged by world war and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan.[59]

Bill Mullen characterizes the Chicago in which Hansberry grew up as "the preeminent site of African American activism, exchange, and affiliation with the organized Left in America in mid-century."[60] It was the organized Left to which Hansberry turned for support and a means to express her concerns about the world, but it is not widely acknowledged that this turn was in large part due to her concern about peace.[61] While Hansberry was unsure about the Communists at first because of their reputation for taking over organizations, her doubts had been dispelled by 1948 "for one reason in particular: We are quite sternly begging for another war and say what you will against the reds…*they do not advocate war of any nature*."[62] (emphasis in original). Just as many people had turned to the Communist movement in the 1930s because of its aggressive activity on behalf of labor and economic rights and against racism, Hansberry joined because of the Communists' peace activism.

Literary scholars note that while at the University of Wisconsin, Hansberry saw a production of Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*, which had an enormous impact on her vision of what theater could accomplish. But before she dropped out of school and left for New York to seek an "education of another kind," she also worked on Henry Wallace's

1948 presidential campaign, chairing the UW chapter of the Young Progressives. Wallace's campaign for "peace, freedom and abundance" strongly opposed U.S. cold war policies and supported racial equality, positions Hansberry would hold for the rest of her life. These views were reinforced in the early 1950s when she moved to New York. There she continued to learn about the black freedom struggle in an international context, serving as reporter and associate editor of Paul Robeson's newspaper *Freedom* and studying Africa under Du Bois's tutelage at the Jefferson School. All of these experiences influenced her writing of *A Raisin in the Sun*. But what she found in New York in the early 1950s was crucial; this was, as Judith Smith explains, "the *Freedom* milieu of black cultural and political activism within the interracial and international left [that] set the terms in which Hansberry conceived the Younger family drama."[63]

She also discovered McCarthy-era repression, and along with many on the Left believed she could "smell it [fascism] in the air…and how foul it is.…I know many of those who have already been lapped up by this new Reich terror, know about the arrests in the early morning, the shifty eyed ones who follow, follow, follow…and know the people who are the victims, the quiet and the couragious [*sic*]."[64] The FBI was trailing her as well, making "pretext calls" to her house to keep tabs on her residence and place of employment and tracking her activities and affiliations, surveillance that continued all the way until her death in 1965. She did not lose her optimism or belief in humanity—"Frankly, I would not have thought the caliber of humanity to be so sturdy after such spheres of corruption have surrounded it. But it is so"—yet clearly these had been tempered by experiences such as "the picketlines and demonstrations I have seen and been in…the horsemen I have seen riding down human beings in Times Square, because they were protesting…lynching." Such sobering experiences seemed to only increase her determination to resist injustice. She wrote to a friend, "Quite simply and quietly as I know how to say it: I am sick of poverty, lynching, stupid wars and the universal mal-treatment of my people and obsessed with a rather desperate desire for a new world for me and my brothers. So dear freind [*sic*], I must perhaps go to jail."[65]

While *Raisin* is not an expression of Hansberry's concerns about global peace as such, the misreading of it is still pertinent here. The Cold War shaped the response to the play in significant ways, as Bruce McConachie explains: "The culture of liberal containment had no place for an image of a Chicago black family that could stand in for oppressed peoples everywhere struggling for liberation against capitalism and imperialism."[66] The play bears discussion here because of how it was misinterpreted, which likely lessened Hansberry's potential influence on the up-and-coming sixties generation and certainly was critical to the narrowing of her legacy

until quite recently. Equally important is that Hansberry herself saw the play as helping to signal the end of McCarthyism.

A Raisin in the Sun won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best dramatic play of the 1958–1959 season, beating works by Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill, among others. Hansberry was the youngest playwright and first African American woman to win the award. Brooks Atkinson praised the play in the *New York Times*, writing that Hansberry had no "axe to grind."[67] He was among the many critics who missed the political meaning and protest of the play. White critics reduced *A Raisin in the Sun* to a family drama with a universal message to the point where Hansberry had to tell Studs Terkel that Raisin was a "Negro play" about a Southside Chicago family, and that Joseph Asagai, the student from Nigeria who dreams of a liberated Africa, was her favorite character.[68]

Black nationalists also missed the point, criticizing the play as an example of "a failed and degrading integrationist philosophy."[69] Amiri Baraka saw it as a middle-class play, part of the passive resistance phase of the movement that in his view couldn't hold its own against Malcolm X's penetrating insights. But Baraka changed his assessment in the 1980s, saying "we missed the essence of the work—that Hansberry had created a family on the cutting edge of the same class and ideological struggles as existed in the movement itself and among the people. What is most telling about our ignorance is that Hansberry's play still remains overwhelmingly popular and evocative of black and white reality, and the masses of black people dug it true."[70]

The FBI agent who watched the play also missed its essence, reporting that it "contains no comments of any nature about Communism but deals essentially with negro aspirations, the problems inherent in their efforts to advance themselves, and varied attempts at arriving at solutions." The agent was perhaps more on target in observing that of those in the audience "relatively few appeared to dwell on the propaganda message."[71] Judith Smith offers a succinct explanation of *Raisin* as much more than a drama about a family seeking to move up in the world or even a universal story of the need for human dignity: "Those aware of the recent political debates within black communities noticed what the FBI agent missed: a critique of the materialistic and imperialistic aspirations of the American Century, as well as of segregation, and an alternative vision of change drawing on the collective resources of black working-class women and families, African American labor, and worldwide anticolonial agitation."[72]

Such critiques "of the materialistic and imperialistic aspirations of the American Century" were few in any form, including theater, during the early cold war years. Yet even though she was puzzled by the

misinterpretations of *Raisin*, Hansberry believed that its positive reception reflected a new mood in the country. She told Terkel, "We went through 8 to 10 years of misery under [Joseph] McCarthy and all that nonsense, and to the great credit of the American people they got rid of it. And they're feeling like: Make new sounds! I'm glad I was here to make one."[73]

Hansberry's reference to McCarthyism is another important clue to her concerns, including her awareness of "the shifty-eyed ones who follow, follow, follow." Throughout her all too brief period of fame she did not hesitate to criticize government agencies that worked to undermine social movements and discredit them as Communist. Indeed, the FBI not only homes in on her links to movements on behalf of peace and racial equality, it also documents her opposition to agencies that tried to discredit such movements. William Maxwell points out that "Hoover's FBI never treated African American writing as an ineffectual fad and never forgot its heavy traffic with the twentieth-century Left."[74]

It was Hansberry's "traffic" with the Left that interested the FBI, more so than interpreting the substance of her writing. As it did with many other activists, the FBI single-mindedly focused on documenting Hansberry's affiliations and activities, including her participation in the Labor Youth League, People's Artists, Women's Committee for Equal Justice Delegation to the U.N., New York Peace Institute, Greenwich Village Section of CPUSA, New York Council to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee, and so on.

The FBI's method, in addition to surveillance and pretext calls, was to collect what the Left had already documented in newspapers, bulletins, and other printed sources. Ironically, when it came to demonstrating people's ties to the Left, which marked them as threats to national security, the FBI seemed to believe everything it read in the *Daily Worker* and the *National Guardian*. In 1952, Hansberry took Paul Robeson's place at a peace conference in Montevideo after he had been stripped of his passport. Her own was confiscated upon her return. In this case, the Bureau uses the *Daily Worker* as evidence of Hansberry's peace activism, including her reporting on the conference in Montevideo at the Frederick Douglass Education Center in Harlem and speaking at a peace festival at which a mother of a Korean POW made a plea to Truman to bring the boys home. (The woman said she had received hundreds of letters from other mothers since making her first appeal to Truman.) In 1963 the *National Guardian* was the source for the list of sponsors, including Hansberry, of the tour of Japanese peace leader Professor Kaoru Yasui.[75] It is clear that the ultimate purpose of gathering such information is to prove Communist control over

the black freedom movement and the peace movement while protecting the identity of the FBI's informants, many of whom had infiltrated the Communist Party by that time.

The history of this era is incomplete if we do not acknowledge the ties of many black writers and artists to the Left, including their commitment to peace, and how the government worked to sever these ties. Lorraine Hansberry was among an impressive group of cultural workers who strongly opposed colonialism, hoping it could be abolished, as in India, with a minimum of violence, and who also opposed U.S. cold war policies that led to the buildup of nuclear arsenals that threatened the very existence of humanity.

Peace was an important part of Hansberry's vision. She once told an interviewer, "I would like very much to live in a world where some of the more monumental problems could at least be solved; I'm thinking, of course, of peace. That is, we don't fight. Nobody fights. We get rid of all the little bombs—and the big bombs."[76] In order to do this, Hansberry believed activists had to challenge agencies of the U.S. government that tried to silence voices for peace. She wrote in *Freedom* that at the Inter-Continental Congress for Peace, where she appeared in Robeson's stead, thousands of people "stood cheering the man who could not himself be with them, because the same State Department that wished there were no peace congresses at all, anywhere, refused to grant him his passport."[77] At a rally to abolish the House Committee on Un-American Activities, held in New York City in 1962, she concluded: that "it is imperative to say 'NO'…no to war of any kind, any where. And…therefore, and it is my reason for being here tonight, that it is imperative to remove from the American fabric any and all such institutions or agencies such as the House Committee on Un-American Activities which are designed expressly to keep us from saying—'NO!' "[78]

Hansberry was well aware of the impact the government had on the black freedom movement in the United States, particularly the silencing of the Left's global perspective on the issues. Thus she ended her tribute to W. E. B. Du Bois in 1964 with an attack on the Red Scare, which had effectively ended Du Bois's leadership and suppressed his perspective by, among other things, indicting him (at age eighty-three) for circulating a peace petition. Hansberry wrote that "…never, never again must the Negro people pay the price that they have paid for allowing their oppressors to say who is or is not a fit leader of our cause."[79]

The constant surveillance and harassment of Hansberry and her mentors—Du Bois, Robeson, Louis Burnham, Alice Childress, and others—bring home the point that the government saw voices for peace and freedom, especially those of black leftists, as a serious threat to

national security. It was their critique of U.S. foreign policy, the most significant dividing line among activists in this era, which set them apart. They did not ask why are we fighting for democracy abroad when we don't have it at home—instead they argued that the United States was not fighting for democracy at all. Thus Hansberry, who had written critically about U.S. involvement in Korea, among other issues, in the 1950s, did not shrink from public criticism of cold war liberals as the Vietnam War heated up. "…I can't believe that a government that has at its disposal a Federal Bureau of Investigation which cannot ever find the murderers of Negroes, and by that method shows that it cares very little about American citizens who are black—*really* is off somewhere fighting a war for a bunch of other colored people, several thousand miles away."[80]

In addition to her challenge to the U.S. government, Hansberry's plea to black writers that they not refrain from writing about pressing political issues further demonstrates both her concern about peace and her awareness of the damage caused by the Red Scare. In a speech delivered at a conference of black writers, Hansberry argued, "If the world is engaged in a dispute between survival and destruction…then we, as members of the human race, must address ourselves to that dispute."[81] A close reading of Hansberry's FBI file and her writing and speeches highlight her view of the links between peace and freedom, which the U.S. government actively worked to sever. Hansberry reminded people not only of the global nature of the black freedom struggle, but also, significantly, of the connection between freedom and peace, which could only come through justice.

Legacy for the 1960s and Beyond

It is, of course, impossible to document precisely what was lost when intellectuals and activists who refused to divide these issues were harassed by the government. In addition to outright repression there was much self-censorship, and many people denied they had any ties to the Left, or had those ties denied for them.[82] What disappears, then, from the history of this era are important expressions of opposition to colonialism, to U.S. support of European colonial powers and of the apartheid regime in South Africa, to the buildup of nuclear weapons. Also notably absent are the questions that were raised about the purpose of the Korean War, the early opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the Left's broad view of the freedom struggle on the home front, a view that included economic and labor issues in a global human rights context.

Looking backward from the Vietnam War, one segment of a television series produced by John Henrik Clarke in the late 1960s—*Black Heritage:*

A History of Afro-Americans—spells out the Left's view of the "bargain" that was made during the early cold war years: "…the experience of the Vietnam War largely crystallized…black America's relationship to the other non-white peoples of the world. The tacit agreement that blacks would keep their noses out of foreign relations in exchange for a slow but steady expansion of civil rights and economic opportunities or as Dr. Du Bois put it so aptly, quote, the bribe betrayed to the Negro equal status in the United States [in exchange for] the slavery of the majority of mankind, unquote, was being disavowed by the younger generation of blacks. Korea planted the seed, and Viet Nam fertilized the soil."[83] The writers and activists discussed herein were among those who planted and nurtured that seed, but it did not grow very much during the Red Scare, which had dramatic consequences for the development of the politics of peace. In fact the seed was largely invisible to youthful activists in the 1960s who were, as Penny Von Eschen has argued, "compelled to reinvent the wheel as they developed their own critiques of American capitalism and imperialism," and, I would add, as they explored anew the links between peace and freedom.[84]

More work remains to be done on this subject—the interest in peace of young New Left and civil rights activists before the Vietnam War has been obscured: note for instance that in its origins Students for a Democratic Society hoped to show "the political and economic connections of such issues as peace, civil rights, civil liberties, and university reform, etc."[85] Bob Gore, a black pacifist who participated in the Committee for Nonviolent Action's 1963 Quebec to Guantanamo Walk for Peace, which drew some links between peace and freedom as the walkers went though the South, suggested that for some time he had been "trying to cajole fellow pacifists into taking a more direct part in the civil rights movement, not as individuals—for that is an easy enough decision—but by consciously including civil rights as part of the peace platform."[86] In this case, there was resistance on both sides to joining the two causes together, but the point is that such possibilities have not received much attention. Another area worthy of fuller exploration is the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a third of whose founding members were African American, suggesting that the organization perhaps could have served as a bridge between black radicals, the Old Left, and the New Left.[87]

In other words, this chapter only scratches the surface of what was lost. Some 1960s activists have argued that the New Left and civil rights movements had few mentors or models from an older generation because of the Red Scare, but this point could be made more precisely. The suppression of the Left, and particularly its ideas about peace in the early cold war years, made certain connections and ideas off-limits. Thus

young activists received counsel from liberal elders about avoiding leftist connections and for a time followed their lead, focusing on desegregation as a domestic issue and putting economic and peace issues on the back burner.[88] Robeson's and Du Bois's ideas about peace (and the ideas of their associates) had been widely discredited, associated with government harassment of an "un-American" movement. This is one important reason many civil rights organizations were initially reluctant to speak out against the Vietnam War, even when both their leaders and members believed it was wrong.[89]

It is worth noting here that many young activists who became identified as civil rights leaders in the 1960s started out with a strong interest in peace issues. John O' Neal and Elizabeth Martinez are two of these whose stories offer some clues to what may have been lost when criticism—and critics—of U.S. foreign policy were suppressed as being subversive. O'Neal registered as a Conscientious Objector in 1958; he was involved in civil rights causes but also was a member of the Student Peace Union. "[N]uclear questions were big," he says, "First Amendment stuff was big."[90] When O'Neal first met Bayard Rustin, he was hoping Rustin could help him resolve his pressing dilemma about whether to focus his energies on peace or civil rights; civil rights seemed less nebulous, while peace seemed more important and fundamental in his view. But when he asked Rustin how he handled this question, Rustin brushed him off. O'Neal also found it disturbing that Rustin refused to come out against the Vietnam War because he didn't want to get involved in "the McCarthy thing" again. Of Rustin's split with SNCC, O'Neal says, "so we lost our teacher."[91] O'Neal argues that the movement deteriorated after 1965 because of a lack of analysis, perhaps an oblique way of criticizing it for distancing itself from the Left.[92]

Elizabeth Martinez also was clearly galvanized by the issue of peace. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, she thought "the most important thing to do was to guarantee that there would never be another war, because it could be a nuclear war, and a dreadful one." She believed that "the collective goal should be world peace. I felt strongly about those things."[93] Martinez got a job at the United Nations after college, which opened her eyes in many ways, exposing her to "empires and the evil things they do to people of color in various parts of the world," and expanding her understanding of how such issues were tied to questions of war and peace. Then her boss in the research section was fired as part of a "McCarthyist purge" at the UN.[94] Martinez resigned and went on to work on a variety of issues, including involvement in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and doing the photos for a book with Lorraine Hansberry on the civil rights movement.

Like O'Neal, she thought the movement lacked ideological direction and clear leadership.

Surely the pressure on SNCC—with which O'Neal and Martinez both became involved—and other organizations to avoid the Left had something to do with the fact that peace issues took a back seat and there was so much controversy within the civil rights movement about whether to come out against the Vietnam War. Precisely because the civil rights movement was cut off from older radical traditions, its success predicated on acceptance of the cold war consensus, broader notions of racial equality and human rights were suppressed, on occasion, as in Bayard Rustin's case, by those who had expressed them most clearly.

The most visible example of how difficult it became to challenge the separation between peace and civil rights is the controversy that erupted over Martin Luther King's challenge to the Vietnam War. When King finally decided to take an unequivocal stand against the war, he went against the advice of many close colleagues, including the board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He discussed this opposition in his April 1967 speech at Riverside Church, stating, "Peace and civil rights don't mix, they say. Aren't you hurting the cause of your people, they ask."[95] As it turned out, King's speech led to increased surveillance by the government and attacks not only from the right wing press but also from liberal activists and organizations. Liberals, of course, were concerned about alienating Lyndon Johnson, who in their view had done a lot for the cause of civil rights. But King's critics were also concerned that taking on the cause of peace would hurt their struggle by giving it a subversive taint, associating it with left-wing traditions and issues that had become taboo because of the Cold War. King defended his position by arguing that the issues were connected; the fight "to save the soul of America" had to take on the "triple evils" of poverty, racism, and militarism. This was, indeed, a subversive position because it challenged the civil rights movement's seeming acquiescence to the demands of cold war anticommunism; in retrospect, this is the most salient meaning of King's statement that "peace and civil rights don't mix, they say." The history related in this chapter helps explain the intensity of the reaction to King's speech. The debate that was already taking place over the civil rights movement's position toward the Vietnam War, and the controversy that followed King's 1967 speech, had roots in the cold war consensus that "peace" was subversive, civil rights was a domestic issue, and African Americans should not criticize U.S. foreign policy. By the late 1960s, however, this history itself was so unknown that most observers were unaware there was "another side of the story."

Notes

1. Eugene Gordon, "The Ashes of Death," July 5, 1958, Eugene Gordon papers, Box 5, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation (hereafter Schomburg Center). The columns are sample copies, not reprints from newspapers.
2. Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Simon Hall suggests that the response of black America to the Vietnam War was "part of a long tradition of critical engagement with U.S. foreign policy." Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 6.
3. Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang suggest that from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, "the civil rights mainstream crafted a counterhegemonic patriotism, celebrating putative American values, while simultaneously struggling to transform them." What made this period different was that "civil rights leaders did not actively contest the prerogatives of American empire for fear of attacks by anticommunist crusaders." See Cha-Jua and Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire," *Journal of African American History* 92 (Spring 2007): 280.
4. Virginia Foster Durr, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1976, 144–147; Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. For a concise explanation of McCarthyism as a broad attack on the American Left, see Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). The effects of the Red Scare on individuals and organizations concerned with black freedom are spelled out in many of Gerald Horne's books, including *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1988) and *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1994). The effects of the Red Scare on the peace movement are documented in Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945–1963* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000). In *Peace and Freedom*, Simon Hall offers important insights into the obstacles to uniting the two movements during the Vietnam War, but he does not adequately address the ways in which the preceding Red Scare had already shaped their relationship in crucial ways.
5. Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
6. Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 184. As she points out, threats of Communist infiltration were exaggerated. Carol Anderson demonstrates how some prominent African Americans even worked with the Truman administration to

refute "'Soviet propaganda' about the oppressive conditions under which black Americans lived." Carol Anderson, "Bleached Souls and Red Negroes: the NAACP and Black Communists in the Early Cold War, 1948–1952," in *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs 1945–1988*, ed. Brenda Gayle Plummer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 93. CORE was among numerous civil rights and peace organizations that explicitly forbade Communists from becoming members, but it still faced anticommunist attacks. See Lieberman, *Strangest Dream*, 184.

7. Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Michael Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Thomas Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Nikhil Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006); Robin D. G. Kelley, "Stormy Weather: Reconstructing Black (Inter)Nationalism in the Cold War Era," in *Is It Nation Time?* ed. Eddies S. Glaude (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
8. On WILPF activists see Joyce Blackwell, *No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1975* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004). For a discussion of those who united the issues and resisted the Red Scare, see Lieberman, *Strangest Dream*. Highlander's founder, Myles Horton, was anticommunist but linked concerns for the welfare of local people with international affairs, especially in the face of atomic weapons. Horton's speech at UN Workshop at Highlander, August 3, 1954 (Highlander Folk School Audio Collection, Tape 8b), Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee. Rustin's premise that race relations and international relations were inseparable issues of human rights is discussed in Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski, eds., *The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1987), 157.
9. "'Closed Doors': Mary McLeod Bethune on Civil Rights," in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 19.
10. Dorothy Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 234.
11. Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 95. Even many who ended up being very critical of the Communist Party talked about its importance in their political development. Thus, for example, Queen Mother Moore talks about joining the Communist Party in the 1930s and

learning how to analyze society: "I learned a lot…I was educated in the Communist movement." Reminiscences of Audley Moore (1978), on page 16, in the Columbia University Oral History Research Office Collection (hereafter CUOHROC); Black Women Oral History Project Records, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute.

12. Reminiscences of Dorothy Height (1974), on pages 17, 18, 20, 66–70, in the CUOHROC; Black Women Oral History Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute. Many other black activists worked with Communists in the 1930s, including several who went on to play prominent roles in the postwar era, such as Ralph Bunche. The CP was also ahead of the curve on women's issues as discussed in Robert Shaffer, "Women and the Communist Party USA, 1930–1940," *Socialist Review* 45 (May 1975): 73–118; Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). Claudia Jones, Eugene Gordon, and Pettis Perry were among those who wrote in the 1950s about the "triple oppression" of black women.
13. As Jacqueline Castledine discusses in the next chapter, reluctance to join the issues of peace and civil rights was evident on both sides; old alliances broke down, financial resources dwindled, and joining the two issues seemed to make one doubly vulnerable. On peace organizations' hesitance to address racial inequality, see Blackwell, *No Peace without Freedom*, and Marian Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
14. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, *With Ossie and Ruby* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1998), 177.
15. Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1953* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988); Lieberman, *Strangest Dream*.
16. Eslanda Goode Robeson, "Paul Robeson Goes to Washington," n.d., Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Box 1, Schomburg Center.
17. John Lewis, "Paul Robeson—Inspirer of Youth," *Freedomways* 4 (Summer 1965): 370.
18. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 233.
19. The text of Du Bois's speech, dated October 5, 1950, is in Ewart Guinier Papers, Box 10, Schomburg Center.
20. Ibid., 243.
21. Lisa Brock, "The 1950s: Africa Solidarity Rising," in *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists Over a Half Century, 1950–2000*, ed. William Minter, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb Jr. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008); Gaines, 104–106; Bill Sutherland and Matt Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 36–37.
22. Jean Allman suggests that Africa was the center of the global peace movement in this era, a movement in which African Americans such as Sutherland, Bayard Rustin, and St. Clair Drake played important roles. See her "Nuclear

Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom," *Souls* 10 (April–June 2008): 1–20.

23. St. Clair Drake, autobiographical notes, n.d., Box 2; "The African Revolution and the Accra Assembly," Box 27, St. Clair Drake papers, Schomburg Center. The development of Drake's views is discussed in Gaines, 44–51. Drake exemplifies the point that for many black Americans the link between nonviolence and anti-imperialism came from an interest in foreign affairs, beginning with Gandhi's work in India and South Africa, rather than being a gift bestowed by white pacifists, a point noted in Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 222–223.
24. Browne is quoted in *No Easy Victories*, 78.
25. Robert S. Browne to Editor, *New York Times*, February 15, 1962 and August 22, 1962, Robert S. Browne Papers, Box 20, Schomburg Center. Robert S. Browne to Editor, *New York Times,* January 25, 1964, Robert S. Browne Papers, Box 21, Schomburg Center. The issue of communism in South Africa is also addressed by Gaines and by Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 232–233, where she describes how the anticommunist American Committee on Africa replaced the Council on African Affairs. See also Chapter 2 of *No Easy Victories*.
26. Mayfield's activities in the 1950s and early 1960s are discussed in Gaines, 144–147. Mayfield wrote about his "CP days" in an unpublished autobiography, Julian Mayfield Papers, Box 1, Schomburg Center.
27. Julian Mayfield, "Into the Mainstream and Oblivion," in *The American Negro Writer and His Roots* (New York: American Society of African Culture, 1959). Along with several other intellectuals discussed in this chapter, Mayfield was not an advocate of nonviolence, but self-defense was more commonly accepted than the traditional narrative of the civil rights movement would have it, as much recent scholarship points out. In any case, it was not just pacifists who were concerned with peace and justice.
28. Julian Mayfield, ed., *The World without the Bomb*: *Selections from the Accra Assembly* (Ghana: Government Printer, 1963). The quote about [the] Korean War is from Julian Mayfield, DLB Yearbook 1984, 184, Box 1; Mayfield's paper at Howard, "The Foolish Consistency of Saunders Redding and Others," was given at the 1st African Diaspora Studies Institute Conference; the transcript of his talk is in Box 21, and the quote is on page 7; Julian Mayfield Papers, Schomburg Center.
29. Carol Polsgrove notes Worthy's strong opposition to McCarthyism; see *Divided Minds: Intellectuals and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 74. See also Fitzhugh Mullan, "Cuban Travel," *The Harvard Crimson*, November 15, 1963.
30. Mona Z. Smith, *Becoming Something: The Story of Canada Lee* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2004); Joyce Ashenbrenner, *Katherine Dunham: Dancing a Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 150–151; Mary Dudziak, "Josephine Baker, Racial Protest, and the Cold War," *Journal of American History* 81 (September 1994): 543–570.
31. Hugh Mulzac, *A Star to Steer By*, as told to Louis Burnham and Norval Welch (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 234–243. At his appeal

hearing after he was declared a security risk, Mulzac was asked by the Coast Guard representative if he had associated with people whom he knew to be Communists, and he answered truthfully, "No." In her oral history, Queen Mother Moore says she got Mulzac to head a committee that launched a campaign to break Jim Crow in major league baseball, an issue in which Communists did play an important role. See also, Irwin Silber, *Press Box Red* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003).

32. The introduction to this book discusses the complex relationship between the CP and black radicals. The government's concerns were evident long before the McCarthy era; see, for example, William J. Maxwell, "F. B. Eyes: The Bureau Reads Claude McKay," in *Left of the Color Line: Race, Radicalism, and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States*, ed. Bill Mullen and James Smethurst (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 39–65.
33. James L. Roark, "American Black Leaders: The Response to Colonialism and Cold War, 1943–1953," *African Historical Studies* 4 (Spring 1971): 265. See also James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 87–89. In *Popular Fronts*, Bill Mullen tracks the *Chicago Defender's* shift as emblematic of black America's "increasing devotion to a black species of cold war liberalism." See *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935–1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 182–184.
34. The Reminiscences of Carlton Goodlett (1995), on pages 5, 30–31, in the CUOHROC.
35. John Pittman, "The Long Struggle for Peace," *Masses and Mainstream*, February 1952, 37–43.
36. Ibid., 42.
37. Ibid., 37–38. Here Pittman quotes from the *New York Times* of December 31, 1951.
38. Hugh Bradley, *Next Steps in the Struggle for Negro Freedom* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1953), 6.
39. Letter from Pettis Perry to Rose, January 20, 1957, Pettis Perry Papers, Box 1, Schomburg Center. The relationship between peace and civil rights was an important and contentious issue for the CP in this era. Perry writes elsewhere that "we still encounter in the ranks of the Party confused notions that the fight for the correct line of the Party on the Negro question at this time 'interferes' with the fight for peace." Pettis Perry, *White Chauvinism and the Struggle for Peace*, (New York: New Century Publishers, 1952), 7.
40. Eugene Gordon, "Seven Years Since Bandung," *Freedomways* 2 (Summer 1962): 301, Eugene Gordon Papers, Box 1, Schomburg Center.
41. Eugene Gordon to Harry Truman, March 26, 1960, Eugene Gordon Papers, Box 1, Schomburg Center.
42. Gordon's papers include several letters to newspapers in which he asks for payment, feedback on his columns, and copies of the newspapers that published them, but there are few responses in his files. One from the *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch* says it has published two of his columns and asks for more. See Eugene Gordon Papers, box 5, Schomburg Center.

43. Eugene Gordon, "The Free World Myth," June 10, 1958, Eugene Gordon Papers, Box 1, Schomburg Center.
44. Ibid.
45. Eugene Gordon, "Good-Will Ambassadors," June 18, 1958, Eugene Gordon papers, Box 5, Schomburg Center.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Eugene Gordon, "The Ashes of Death," July 5, 1958, Eugene Gordon papers, Box 5, Schomburg Center.
49. Ibid.
50. Allman, "Nuclear Imperialism," 19, n. 52.
51. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*: *Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words*, Adapted by Robert Nemiroff (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 91.
52. Steven Carter writes about her commitment to the cause of world peace and Margaret Wilkerson mentions it as an issue about which she was concerned, but neither goes into much detail nor links this clearly with her other passions. Steven R. Carter, "Commitment Amid Complexity: Lorraine Hansberry's Life in Action," *MELUS* 7. 3, Ethnic Women Writers I. (Autumn 1980): 39–53. Margaret Wilkerson, "The Dark Vision of Lorraine Hansberry," *Massachusetts Review* 28 (Winter 1987). It is understandable that the guardians of her legacy avoided the issue of communism to prevent her from being marginalized as a writer. But as literary and historical scholarship begin to acknowledge her ties to the Left, it makes little sense to continue to avoid the fact that her interest in peace was nurtured by intellectuals tied to the Communist movement.
53. Mary Helen Washington, "Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, and Claudia Jones: Black Women Write the Popular Front," *Left of the Color Line*, 194.
54. See, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, 117, where she says, "We must come out of the ghettoes of America, because the ghettoes are killing us.... It is not an abstraction to us that the average American Negro has a life expectancy of five to ten years less than the average white. You see... that is murder."
55. Carter, "Commitment Amid Complexity," 49. Carter draws from Lorraine Hansberry, "The Beauty of Things Black—Towards Total Liberation: An Interview with Mike Wallace, May 8, 1959," *Lorraine Hansberry Speaks Out: Art and the Black Revolution*, Caedmon, TC 1352, 1972. Bishop Tutu's quote is in Sutherland and Meyer, 12.
56. See for instance, Fanon Che Wilkins, "Beyond Bandung: The Critical Nationalism of Lorraine Hansberry, 1950–1965," *Radical History Review* 95 (Spring 2006): 191–210. Wilkins's provocative article claims that Hansberry's work served as a bridge between the Old Left and the New Left. While he makes a compelling argument, he understates the ways in which the Red Scare limited the potential impact of her work, along with that of her contemporaries.
57. Judith Smith, *Visions of Belonging: Family Stories, Popular Culture, and Postwar Democracy, 1940–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 303. It is worth noting that the night before her wedding Hansberry was

out protesting against the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Marvel Cooke had her passport taken away after taking Robeson's place at a peace conference in Vienna; she was also subpoenaed to appear before McCarthy's senate committee, events she discusses in Reminiscences of Marvel Cooke (1989), in the CUOHROC.

58. Lorraine Hansberry's articles in *Freedom* include, "Kikuyu: A Peaceful People Wage Heroic Struggle Against British" (December 1952): 3; "No More Hiroshimas" (May–June 1955): 7; see also "Illegal Conference Shows Peace as Key to Freedom" (April 1952): 3. "What Use Are Flowers?" is in *Lorraine Hansberry: The Collected Last Plays* (New York: New American Library, 1972), edited by Robert Nemiroff.
59. Carter, "Commitment Amid Complexity," 48–49.
60. Mullen, *Popular Front*, 5. Mullen goes on to contend (page 8) that "the Popular Front/Negro People's Front in Chicago might best be understood as a climactic 'black' moment in the history of U.S. radicalism when African American political culture actively and willingly engaged, revised, reformed, and deployed 'Communism' in a manner generally consistent with official party policy, yet primarily derived from and utilized in relation to the 'objective conditions' of life in Black Metropolis."
61. Bruce McConachie says that Hansberry joined the Communist Party, but he does not document this claim. See his *American Theater in the Culture of the Cold War* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 179. Steven Carter writes about her interest in peace but does not connect this to the Left. Margaret Wilkerson mentions a mentor who was a Communist, but she goes no further in discussing Hansberry's explicit ties to the Communist movement; see her "Excavating our History: The Importance of Biographies of Women of Color," *Black American Literature Forum* 24 (Spring 1990): 78–79. Discussion of these ties is also avoided in recent work that is quite open about Hansberry's leftist views, including that of Fanon Che Wilkins, Judith Smith, and Mary Helen Washington.
62. Lorraine Hansberry to "Dear Friend," postmarked December 4, 1948, Lorraine Hansberry Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 2, Schomburg Center.
63. Smith, *Visions of Belonging*, 304.
64. Lorraine Hansberry to "Dear Edythe," New York City 1951, Lorraine Hansberry Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 2, Schomburg Center.
65. Ibid. It is worth noting that while some parts of this letter are quoted in *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, 82–83, the last part of the paragraph was not. The sentence about going to jail was omitted, as was the next sentence, which asked that the next time her friend listened to red-baiting at a meeting she "remember this 'Communist'!"
66. McConachie, *American Theater*, 195.
67. Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times*, March 12, 1959.
68. "Make New Sounds: Studs Terkel Interviews Lorraine Hansberry," *American Theatre* (November 1984): 4. The interview took place on May 12, 1959. A few days before, she had told a *New Yorker* interviewer, "One of the reasons I

feel so free is that I feel I belong to a world majority, and a very assertive one." See "The Talk of the Town," *New Yorker,* May 9, 1959, 33–35.

69. Margaret B. Wilkerson, "Political Radicalism and Artistic Innovation in the Works of Lorraine Hansberry," in *African American Performance and Theater History*, ed. Harry J. Elam and David Krasner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40–42.
70. Ibid. Peniel Joseph writes that the play "captured the complexity of black existence that went beyond integrationist and nationalist poles…" *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 28. The confounding of integrationist and nationalist poles is one hallmark of the CPUSA's approach to the issue of racial equality. As Harold Isaacs wrote in 1960, "Miss Hansberry described herself as 'a strong Negro nationalist,' who also believed that all peoples and cultures must eventually merge in a common humanity." See his "Five Writers and their African Ancestors," *Phylon* (Fourth Quarter 1960): 333.
71. Lorraine Hansberry File, 100-440990-8 (Philadelphia, FBI, February 5, 1959), 1–4, Lorraine Hansberry Papers, Box 68, Schomburg Center.
72. Smith, *Visions of Belonging*, 283.
73. "Make New Sounds," 41.
74. William J. Maxwell, "F. B. Eyes: The Bureau Reads Claude McKay," *Left of the Color Line*, 39.
75. See, for example, NY 100-93572 in Vol. 4 of Hansberry's FBI file, which quotes the *National Guardian* of October 31, 1963, describing the sponsors of Yasui's tour; these included Dr. Benjamin Spock, Linus Pauling, W. H. Ferry, Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, Dagmar Wilson, and many others. This tour and its consequences for peace activists are discussed in Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 183–184.
76. Ibid., 253–254.
77. *Freedom* (April 1952): 3.
78. Lorraine Hansberry, "A Challenge to Artists," *Freedomways* (Winter 1963): 35.
79. Hansberry made these remarks at a memorial for W. E. B. Du Bois held at Carnegie Hall, February 23, 1964. It was one of her last public speeches. See *Black Titan: W. E. B. Du Bois*, an anthology by the editors of *Freedomways*, John Henrik Clarke, Esther Jackson, Ernest Kaiser, and J. H. O'Dell, 17. W. Alphaeus Hunton sent greetings from Ghana for a program in memory of Du Bois, ending with the hope that the memorial tribute would mean, "above all else the reaffirmation of our determination to carry on his battle for peace." See Souvenir Program in Memory of Dr. William E. Burghardt Du Bois, 11–12, Lorraine Hansberry Papers, Box 54, Schomburg Center.
80. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, 239. Hansberry challenged white liberals to become radicals, suggesting that she would then be prepared to accept their leadership.
81. Lorraine Hansberry, "The Negro Writer and His Roots: Toward a New Romanticism," *The Black Scholar* 12 (March–April 1981): 3.
82. Reading biographies and obituaries can be an enlightening exercise when one looks for what is left out. Mullen's work is useful here as well, since his

descriptions of the exile, repression, and self-censorship of individuals and institutions in Chicago after World War II, with the connections of black artists and intellectuals to the CP being erased in many cases, clearly are applicable to other places and people. See for example his story about Fern Gayden in *Popular Fronts*, 193.

83. "Black America Fashions Its Foreign Policy," 13, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Box 28, Schomburg Center.
84. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 187.
85. "An Introduction to Students for a Democratic Society, Vol. I," prepared by the San Francisco Regional Office, n.d., New Left Collection, Box 61, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.
86. Bob Gore, "The Walk in the South," *CNVA Bulletin*, September 23, 1963, 1, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Friends Peace Committee, Box 48, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. While CNVA suggested that the walk clearly showed that peace and freedom were one cause, there were some problems with this claim. See Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, Chapter 5.
87. Van Gosse writes that there was "hardly a fellow traveler of the Old Left" among the original sponsors of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, but this may not be an accurate claim. Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are* (New York: Verso, 1993), 141.
88. As an aide to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Andrew Young cautioned SNCC leaders James Bevel and Diane Nash Bevel against working with Anne Braden and the Southern Conference Educational Fund because their work would then be tainted by their association with known subversives. See Catherine Fosl, *Subversive Southerner: Anne Braden and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Cold War South* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 289. How well young activists had imbibed the cold war atmosphere is indicated by Diane Nash's remark during the desegregation struggle in Nashville that if black people were offered equal education they could work to invent nuclear missiles; see Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 13.
89. Simon Hall argues that African Americans consistently held the most "dovish" views on the war but were not the most active opponents, a trend that [continued] beyond the Vietnam era. Hall, *Peace and Freedom*, 11.
90. Reminiscences of John O'Neal (1984), on pages 37, 104, in the CUOHROC. O'Neal was surprised to find that Rustin was black, because of the latter's involvement with the Student Peace Union.
91. Ibid., 43, 144.
92. Ibid., 155.
93. Reminiscences of Elizabeth Martinez (1985), on pages 2–3, in the CUOHROC.
94. Ibid.
95. Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Time to Break Silence," *Freedomways* 7 (Spring 1967): 104.

2

Quieting the Chorus: Progressive Women's Race and Peace Politics in Postwar New York

Jacqueline Castledine

Declaring that "freedom and peace are interdependent," in the spring of 1955, representatives of twenty-nine Asian and African nations met in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss the historical effects of colonialism and its inherent racism. This unprecedented act of unity was spurred by postwar decolonization movements and a scramble by the United States and the Soviet Union to woo newly independent countries to their respective camps. Acknowledging shifting geopolitical winds, conference attendees underscored the need to establish cooperation among nonaligned developing or "Third World" nations. To that end, they shrewdly relied on the United Nations Charter as a guide, calling for universal disarmament and claiming that "all nations should have the right freely to choose their own political and economic systems."[1] People of color and their allies around the world, including members of the leftist American Labor Party (ALP), watched hopefully as events unfolded in Bandung; a telegram to conference organizers offered the party's "warm greetings" and expressed its support.[2]

At the same time that U.S. leftists drew inspiration from this burgeoning international movement, they suffered one bitter defeat after another in the effort to unite peace and freedom at home. Since the beginning of the Popular Front in the 1930s, leftists had worked with liberal organizations equally committed to economic and racial equality, and to international peace.[3] As political dissent by groups such as the ALP became

viewed as disloyal in the early cold war years, coalition-building between liberals and postwar leftists, those described by Paul Buhle as "left-of-center and vigorously opposed to the agenda of Cold War liberalism," began to unravel.[4] Liberals who saw the defeat of the Soviets as key to American security argued the peace movement's association with Soviet communism required that civil rights leaders distance themselves or face the red-baiting and government harassment peace activism drew.[5] Leftist peace workers who had embraced civil rights decades before as an integral piece of the social justice agenda now argued that the immediacy of the threat of atomic warfare necessitated a focus on peace, at least for the time being. Perhaps most importantly, peace leaders did not enjoy the leverage that cold war politics offered leaders of the freedom movement. The U.S. government's fear of international embarrassment over race relations became a bargaining chip for civil rights activists, with which peace organizers could not compete.[6] As the once mutually beneficial relationship between Popular Front inspired peace and civil rights movements frayed, leftists increasingly fought the perception that peace was their concern and racial justice the concern of liberals.[7]

Deliberations taking place within liberal groups disassociating with leftist organizations in the early cold war period have been well documented, most recently by such scholars as Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, Simon Hall, John D'Emilio, and Manfred Berg. These important studies bring to light the sometimes contentious debate among liberal organizers who sought to avoid government harassment by rejecting continued collaboration with leftists.[8] Missing in the historiography of postwar social movements is examination of the debates taking place on the other side of this significant political divide. Thus, the narrative of victimization in which leftists are not actors but merely acted upon dominates cold war histories.

But leftists did not fold their tents when anticommunist politics led liberals to exit organizations like the ALP in the early postwar period. From 1948 to 1956, in response to this often painful split, New York Communists and fellow travelers grappled with the issue of how to continue to link peace and freedom in their political campaigning and community volunteering. Documenting the work of organizational networks associated with the ALP, often led by African American and Jewish women, this chapter examines the process of negotiation taking place as they considered whether peace and civil rights were in fact interdependent, and if they were not, which was the more pressing cause in the McCarthy era. Despite the party's dissolution in 1956, the ALP's vision of social justice—along with unresolved tensions inherent in its agenda—lived on in the organizing carried out by these New York women. Moreover,

the difficulties women leaders faced in their efforts to rebuild a united peace and civil rights movement in post-McCarthy America represents an unexamined legacy of cold war politics.

Women, Peace, and Freedom in the Popular Front

Peace and freedom were central to the ALP's founding when a New York coalition united to help ensure Franklin Roosevelt's 1936 reelection. Progressive women were drawn to the new party because of its emphasis on community issues; as Cynthia Harrison notes, "women often play a primary role in community action because it is about things they know best."[9] Unlike most political groups in which women were primarily foot soldiers and not decision makers, prominent figures such as former National Labor Relations Board director Elinor Herrick held key positions in the party from the start. Indeed, using their social authority as mothers, or potential mothers, to enter political debates, leftist women claimed that peace and civil rights were not only inextricably linked but were in fact essential to family well-being across the globe.[10] Although some historians argue that in the postwar period anticommunism precipitated a shift in progressive politics, with labor and peace increasingly overshadowed by racial justice concerns, ALP members stubbornly held on to a Popular Pront agenda linking all three.[11]

Nationally known African American women helped to shape this agenda by rhetorically joining the threat of annihilation by atomic warfare to the violence of Jim Crow. In calling for a future where children would live in peace, "without battleships, atomic bombs and lynch ropes," acclaimed author Shirley Graham connected international events to the welfare of local communities.[12] Future wife of progressive icon W. E. B. Du Bois, Graham's writing attempted to elevate the status of African Americans by emphasizing their historical accomplishments; in quick succession in the 1940s and 1950s, she published well-received biographies of major black figures including George Washington Carver, Paul Robeson, Frederick Douglass, and Phillis Wheatley.[13] Writer Eslanda Goode Robeson, activist-wife of entertainer Paul Robeson, joined Graham in linking peace to race relations. In *African Journey*, published in 1945, Robeson examined historical similarities in the condition of African Americans living under Jim Crow and black South Africans living under colonial rule. As she explained in "A Call to the Negro People," a 1951 speech, "there are no points which do not refer back to Peace."[14]

ALP members such as Graham and Robeson were not alone in expressing anxiety about the prospect of peace in the nuclear age; concerns about

the use of atomic energy spanned the political spectrum. In late 1947, polls showed that 77 percent of Americans believed that "within the next twenty years or so" the United States would be engaged in another war.[15] Fears that this would be a nuclear war led one New Yorker to proclaim, "The atomic age is here, and we're all scared to death."[16] In response, local organizational networks that included such African American ALP activists as Ada B. Jackson and Thelma Dale (Perkins), along with Jewish allies Annette Rubinstein and Irma Lindheim, led the struggle "on the ground" in New York to carry on an agenda forged in the crucible of the Popular Front that linked the threats posed by atomic warfare to the issue of racial violence. While Jackson, Dale, Rubinstein, and Lindheim moved between national and local leadership circles that included Robeson and Graham, it was the former women's vital work at street level in neighborhood school committees, interracial community groups, and citywide elections that provided them a voice in political deliberations taking place in the early cold war years. Through these networks, they and their liberal counterparts formed productive relationships based on a shared concern about the well-being of American families.

Attempts by women to link racial justice and peace to create a global community were not new to the post-World War II era. Harriet Alonso writes that many women working in the nineteenth-century abolition movement believed that they "must be responsible citizens, not only locally, but nationally and internationally as well."[17] It was such conviction that inspired the 1915 founding of the Woman's Peace Party (WPP) by, among others, Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt. Organizations like the WPP were committed not only to cooperation on the issues of race and peace, but also on the issue of political and social rights for women. By the mid-twentieth century, the desire of U.S. women reformers to participate in the construction of what Leila Rupp terms "an international collective identity" concerned about global peace and connected through "transnational women's organizations" already enjoyed a long and notable history.[18]

Nevertheless, important differences distinguished the work of mid-century leftist women from those who worked in liberal interwar and post-World War II movements. Most obviously, women of the ALP, many of whom also belonged to single-sex or, for African Americans, single race organizations, chose to work within a mixed sex, racially integrated political party to further their peace agenda.[19] Equally important was their insistence that race issues were not peripheral but central to the issue of international peace, and that peace could not be achieved without addressing "the Negro question." Unlike the WPP and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which grew out

of it, members of the ALP maintained that civil rights was as important to their mission as antimilitarism. While WILPF would attempt to incorporate racial justice into its peace agenda, it still experienced deep racial divisions in its ranks.[20] In contrast, African American women were prominent in the ALP, and their work in the decolonization movements of the Popular Front era kept them in dialogue with not only European but also Asian and African peace organizers.

Since the Popular Front's rise in the thirties, the cause of racial equality, along with worker's rights and peace, had been central to the Communist Left in America. Not surprisingly, some of the women who joined the ALP at its founding or supported it with their vote had ties to the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA). Still more were fellow travelers who had worked with CP members in such organizations as the Civil Rights Congress, the Congress of American Women, and the National Negro Congress. Despite these associations, leftists often found common ground with liberals, and they worked effectively together for progressive social change. Political events of the 1940s, however, laid important groundwork for a left-liberal split that would take place in the 1950s.

In the immediate postwar years, Franklin Roosevelt remained the benchmark of progressive leadership and many women credited FDR's New Deal for inspiring their political activism. When Roosevelt's vice president, John Nance Garner, declined to run for a third term with FDR, progressive Iowan Henry Wallace filled out the ticket. Following the president's decision to pursue a fourth term, opponents of Wallace's politics saw an opportunity in 1944 to replace him with a more centrist candidate. For the sake of party unity, Missouri Senator Harry Truman became the president's running mate. In return for faithfully campaigning for the ticket, Wallace became Secretary of Commerce. In the view of many, at Roosevelt's death Wallace took up the mantle of U.S. progressivism. When he criticized Truman's anticommunist foreign and domestic policies, however, Truman asked him to resign from the government. Wallace's resignation in September 1946 set the stage for the dramatic election of 1948 when he led the Progressive Party's (PP) challenge of Truman. Basing his presidential candidacy on the intention to negotiate peace with the Soviets, Wallace became the "peace candidate." Perhaps more historically significant was the PP's support of civil rights, including Wallace's refusal to speak to segregated Southern audiences, which forced Truman and the Democratic Party to the left on issues of race.

Over a decade before Henry Wallace and the PP proposed a platform for "Peace, Freedom, and Abundance," the ALP had worked for those same goals in the state of New York. The shared agenda of the two parties assured their alliance, and in early 1948 the American Labor

Party became the New York state organization of the Progressive Party. Hesitant to confuse voters at the time of the merger, the ALP decided to retain its name but endorse Wallace and establish a Wallace for President Committee. As convention reporting in 1948 highlighted, women "conspicuously and actively shar[ed] major positions" in the PP campaign, making up nearly one quarter of the platform committee, one half of state party directors, and almost half of the 2,500 delegates in 1948.[21] A number of these women were first ALP members. Thus, the PP promoted a national agenda, including women's political participation, while the ALP provided Progressives with a well-established organizational base in New York.[22]

Aligning with the PP meant that the ALP benefited from the support of Progressive financial backers, most notably philanthropist, political patron, and peace activist Anita McCormick Blaine. The daughter of the McCormick reaper inventor was by far the party's largest contributor, donating over one million dollars to its coffers. In fact, Blaine wielded so much power within the party that strategists concerned about Wallace appearing unmasculine concealed the extent of her influence on the candidate.[23] Leftist women such as Blaine saw in Henry Wallace a champion who would lead their efforts to protect families across the globe from the threat of nuclear holocaust, end the neglect of social welfare programs posed by cold war saber rattling, and support antisegregation legislation at home and decolonization movements abroad. Clearly hoping to attract the woman vote in 1948, Wallace wrote, "Today too much of the American housewife's dollar is buying guns," and argued that peace with the Soviets would insure global stability, and thereby the strength of the family.[24]

To support their program, some Progressives looked to the writings of a founder of the emerging field of peace studies, University of Chicago political scientist Quincy Wright. A professor of International Law, Wright argued that war was a process largely preventable through the attainment of "positive peace." According to Wright, an "unsophisticated" definition limited peace to a negative meaning: the *absence* of physical violence; positive peace was defined by the *presence* of justice. In a radio address announcing his candidacy in December 1947, Wallace stressed that "a new party must stand for a *positive peace* program of abundance and security, not scarcity and war."[25] At the creation of the Progressive Party, he argued for a peace that looked beyond the simple absence of violence to include the presence of social justice defined by civil rights and liberties. Like Wright, Wallace endorsed the idea that injustice created war. In response to Wallace's campaign announcement, leading liberal Eleanor Roosevelt dismissed the notion of "positive peace," claiming "there is no country in the world where the people would not agree they wished to

organize for peace and abundance and security" and accused Wallace of "oversimplify[ing] the problems" faced by postwar America.[26]

Not merely an ad hominem attack on Wallace, Roosevelt's comments reflected the growing animosity between former Popular Front allies in the postwar period, animosity that would find its way into women's organizational networks. Unlike leftists of the ALP, who fought to draw attention to the relationship between U.S. foreign and domestic racial policy, Roosevelt sided with those cold war liberals who feared criticism of the United States would embarrass and weaken the nation in its battle with Soviet communism. Historian Carol Anderson argues that in order to gain the support of Southern Democrats for the United Nations Declaration and Covenant on Human Rights, written by a committee chaired by Roosevelt, the former first lady supported elimination of provisions calling for the inclusion of social and economic rights. Southern legislators feared that such provisions would potentially open the door for UN interference in U.S. racial matters. While ALP women emphasized the fact that black Americans had yet to achieve their basic human rights, Roosevelt joined liberal organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in "trying to keep the UN and human rights away from the struggle for black equality."[27] Progressives' belief that domestic race relations contributed to global discord was perhaps most aptly expressed by Eslanda Goode Robeson, who claimed that cold war U.S. policy resulted in "a white supremacy civil war at home" and "an American superiority world war" abroad.[28] In Progressive thinking, Jim Crow, European colonization, institutional racism, and international imperialism grew from the same seed and represented forms of violence. The notion that only a positive peace that included racial justice would reverse the damage created by such national and international policies guided women's leftist peace and civil rights activism in the PP and ALP.[29] Still, although they often disagreed on strategies for attaining peace and on its relationship to civil rights, both leftists and their liberal allies remained focused on social justice in the postwar period, giving significant attention to racial issues in New York City.

Grassroots Organizing in Postwar New York

Blacks had been drawn to New York in the early- to mid-twentieth century by the promise of full citizenship including equal access to jobs, housing, and education. Their expectations were heightened during World War II by the rhetoric of freedom and democracy, and by their own contributions to the Allied victory. When the promise of equality

was not realized, they sought redress through civil rights campaigns for fair political representation at all levels of city and state government, from Boards of Education to the State Supreme Court. Leftist organizations like the ALP were at the heart of many of these campaigns. In Popular Front fashion, these movements drew radical activists and members of such mainstream groups as the NAACP who had tired of more moderate approaches in the fight against discrimination. Whether more recent arrivals or native-born New Yorkers, leftists and liberals challenged racial inequality in postwar New York by building networks of activists committed to bringing about social justice.

The strength of a black-Jewish alliance and the increasingly contentious relationship between leftists and liberals were clearly visible at the PP's largest gathering of the 1948 political season, sponsored by the ALP. The "Yankee Doodle Rally" notably featured women's voices and, according to Progressives, the September Yankee Stadium fundraiser was the largest paid political event in American history. As its name suggests, organizers sought to evoke an image of progressive patriotism by wrapping themselves and the issues of peace and racial justice in the American flag. Yet this did not slow their sharp attacks on President Truman's cold war policies. Following an invocation by the Reverend John Howard Melish, PP speakers, including African American activist Ada B. Jackson and Jewish candidate for Congress Irma Lindheim, crucified Harry Truman.

Truman's recent conversion to progressive racial politics was a rally topic for African American candidates such as Jackson. The vice chair of the New York State Wallace for President Committee took advantage of her Yankee Doodle appearance to paint the president as a traitor to the cause. Criticizing what she saw as Truman's newfound interest, she quipped that "We still live in the age of miracles." Challenging him to enforce his recent executive order desegregating the armed forces, Jackson displayed skepticism that Truman intended to follow through on initiatives inspired by the President's Commission on Civil Rights.[30] She called on the president to dismiss "the lily-white" Secretary of the Army, Kenneth Royall, who had at first defended segregation of the armed forces and then, under pressure, advised a gradual approach to desegregation. Calling Truman a "paper progressive," Jackson dared him to emulate Wallace and refuse to speak to segregated audiences.[31] This was bold rhetoric coming from a black woman at a time when fraud and violence denied most African Americans the vote. Apparently too intrepid for New York voters, Jackson placed last in her congressional race—a fate shared by other ALP candidates.

When all was said and done, New Yorkers accounted for nearly half of Wallace's national vote total. Indeed, observers noted that with the help

of the ALP organization, the PP had drawn enough votes from Harry Truman to guarantee the Republican presidential candidate, Governor Thomas Dewey, victory in his home state.[32] Although the ardent support of ALP women could not prevent the absolute electoral defeat of Wallace, who earned less than 3 percent of the national vote and not a single electoral vote, 8 percent of New York voters cast their ballots for him. From the 1948 election until the national party disbanded in 1955, the ALP would remain the most active PP state organization in the country, vigorously promoting a "peace and freedom" agenda.

Despite Eleanor Roosevelt's dismissal of Henry Wallace's arguments for negotiation with the Soviets, and Wallace's resounding defeat at the polls in 1948, progressive women's networks continued to embrace the peace and freedom agenda. The web of organizational connections spun by such women as Georgia native Ada B. Jackson is emblematic of the way that these activists worked within mainstream and leftist groups to promote their agenda. Both an ALP and NAACP member, Jackson was well-known as a civic and political leader when in 1945 the *Brooklyn Eagle*, citing her community work, honored her with the title "Brooklyn's Fighting Lady."[33] When Jackson's children reached school age in the late 1920s, the mother of four had joined a local parent-teacher association. Gaining promotions "as rapidly as her children," by 1940 she was its president.[34] A 1942 letter to progressive Republican mayor Fiorello La Guardia suggests the confidence Jackson gained through her community work. Writing as president of the Parents Association, she informed the mayor that school overcrowding in "underprivileged" areas of the city, including her community of Bedford-Stuyvesant, had led to juvenile delinquency, and she called on La Guardia to act quickly to address the problem.[35] The following year Jackson was appointed president of the newly formed Brooklyn Interracial Assembly, an umbrella organization uniting activists from civil rights groups, churches, trade unions, and parent-teacher organizations who shared a concern about depictions of their community as "crime and disease ridden." Next she was appointed chair of the Brooklyn YWCA's Negro Communities Committee; she would also serve on the Y's Committee on Interracial Education.[36] It was this strategy of organizational networking, so successful for leftists in the interwar period and during World War II, that would become increasingly difficult as the Cold War escalated.[37]

Jackson's focus on interracial organizing was no doubt related to a wave of unrest that crested in American cities in 1943, first in Detroit and later in Harlem and Los Angeles. Indeed, her committee work says as much about the racial politics of the city and nation as it does about Jackson's growing confidence. The summer's riots were the culmination of tensions

brought on by whites' resistance to the migration of African Americans to urban centers to work in industries supporting the war effort. Although the riots were not as widespread as those that had erupted after World War I, black leaders nonetheless turned to interracial organizing to calm unrest. Following the riots of 1943, such groups came together in more than 130 U.S. cities. By winter, the Brooklyn Interracial Assembly was one of several organizations in New York publicly demanding that Mayor La Guardia establish an interracial committee to address tensions in the city, a move he finally took in March 1944.[38] Not merely interracial, both liberal and leftist activists served on the committee.

Jackson's interest in race relations had deep roots set in the clay of Georgia. Speaking to youth groups in New York, she recounted that as a child she witnessed the horrors of lynching first hand when a mob attacked and destroyed part of her family's home. The extent of the attack and the circumstances surrounding it are unclear.[39] Still, this was a powerful memory that Jackson drew on in her political organizing; the issue of violence and its consequences would remain a leit motif in her life. If the capacity of violence to intimidate was a dominant theme of her early life, Jackson's faith that education was the key to ending racial violence guided her as an adult. In the early 1920s she left Savannah for Oklahoma to attend Langston University, and she was undeniably proud of earning a degree in nutrition. A career as a dietitian led her to study the effect of poverty on black communities.[40] Her understanding of the correlation between education and the eradication of racial inequality infused Jackson's community work, while the reluctance of government to legislate solutions to social injustice moved her from community activism into the political arena—and soon into contentious debates with liberal opponents.

Jackson first ran for public office in 1944, campaigning as a Republican for a New York Assembly seat and coming in last in the three-way race. Like many African Americans, she had rejected the Democratic Party, believing that the "party of Lincoln" would take the lead on civil rights. In 1946 she again ran in the Republican primary for the Assembly, this time with ALP endorsement. Her opponent Maude Richardson, also a black woman, prevailed by 300 votes. Not ready to concede, Jackson then ran in the general election as an ALP candidate. By this time, however, the campaign had taken a nasty and personal turn, with Richardson accusing her opponent of being in league with "outsiders and Communists" because of her ALP support.[41] Possibly even more troubling to her rival than Richardson's red-baiting was her repeated charge that Jackson was "nothing but a cook," a slight best understood in light of the history of black women's exploitation in domestic service.[42] Indeed,

Richardson's comment diminished Jackson's educational accomplishments and her rise above the social and economic oppression experienced by many, if not most, black women. In return, Jackson questioned her opponent's commitment to racial equality by claiming that a vote for Jackson would send a message to racists around the nation, thus implying that Richardson, although black, was not a suitable representative for the interests of African American New Yorkers.[43] While Jackson did not win her battle with Richardson, she did win nearly 4,000 votes, and, some suggested, was the deciding factor in Richardson's loss to the white Democratic incumbent by seventy-seven votes. As many African Americans had done since the political realignment brought on by the New Deal, Jackson soon left the Republican Party, convinced of its lack of support for civil rights and its unwillingness to integrate racial equality into its agenda.[44]

Not yet soured on the political process, in 1947 Jackson made a bid for a seat on the Brooklyn City Council, emphasizing the issue of peace in her campaign appeals. A flyer distributed by the Committee to Elect Ada B. Jackson explained that "man does not live by bread alone"; besides racial and economic justice, "he needs peace in which to eat his bread."[45] Although she failed to persuade voters to support a peace and freedom platform, coming in fourth in a five-way contest, the liberal New York newspaper *PM*, which endorsed Truman the following year, favored Jackson over her Democratic and Liberal party opponents. Significant too was support she received from the Jewish community. When a Jewish war veteran withdrew from the primary in favor of Jackson, he did so echoing Jackson's previous campaign claims that it would "strike a blow at all discrimination" if she were elected.[46] The important black-Jewish alliance evident in the veteran's comments was also apparent when Jackson and fellow ALP member Annette Rubinstein served as chair and secretary, respectively, of the party's Negro History Week subcommittee.

Like Jackson, Rubinstein was deeply involved with educational issues, yet their paths to political organizing were strikingly different. The daughter of Jewish immigrants, Rubinstein too was familiar with racial intolerance; accepted to Barnard College as a precocious fifteen-year-old, she was ultimately denied entrance because the school had met its Jewish quota. Undeterred, after receiving her bachelor's degree from New York University in 1929, Rubinstein went on to earn a Ph.D. at Columbia University and to teach at NYU before taking a position as principal of the progressive Robert Louis Stevenson High School. Adopting her parent's radical politics as well as their career paths—both her parents, mother Jean and father Abraham, were teachers—in

the mid-1930s Rubinstein became a socialist, and in the early 1940s she began teaching adult learners at the Communist led Jefferson School of Social Science.

At the ALP's founding in 1936, Rubinstein became a key figure and close advisor to the party's charismatic leader, Congressman Vito Marcantonio. In 1949 she ran unsuccessfully in two special elections; one to fill an empty seat for Congress and another for a place on the State Assembly. Although she had been a fervent supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, in 1950 Rubinstein ran on the ALP ticket against Liberal Party candidate Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. At street-corner meetings she singled out "Peace, civil rights and elimination of discrimination" as the pressing issues facing New Yorkers. At the same time, Rubinstein blithely claimed to have done more to get FDR elected than his son had, "and if elected I'll do more to carry out his program."[47] Membership in the leftist Teachers Union as well as the more mainstream National Council of English Teachers suggests that Rubinstein built a broad network based on educational issues. What Rubinstein could not know in 1950 was that her prominence in local and national organizations promoting peace and freedom, including in the CP, would soon lead to three appearances before the House Un-American Activities Committee and her dismissal from the New York school system. Before she and Jackson became targets of the Red Scare, however, a shared concern about education and belief in the ability of government to create social equality brought them together in 1950 to serve on the ALP subcommittee.[48] For both women, nonpartisan community organizing had led to leftist political activism with the support of a comprehensive network of organizations.

Even before the subcommittee's first meeting, such ALP women as Eslanda Goode Robeson and Shirley Graham had laid the foundation for discussion of African American culture through their writing and nationwide speaking. While these women worked on a national level, Jackson and Rubinstein used their subcommittee to focus on the work that could be done at the grassroots to draw attention to blacks' meaningful contributions to American life. Their report argued that making the ALP the home of black voters would "spell liberation and civil rights for White as well as Negro," but was possible "only on the basis of our party's honest hard hitting 365 days a year concern with the struggle for Negro rights and Negro-White unity." With that in mind, their report addressed ways to build important political alliances throughout New York, including monthly state meetings to foster black-white relations, and extending celebration of Negro history from a single week in the month of February to the entire month.[49]

The high-water mark for ALP civil rights activism would come several years after Jackson and Rubinstein submitted their report, with the 1955 publication *Negro Representation Now*. Largely the project of activist Elaine Ross, the pamphlet spread the party's message well beyond the borders of New York. Ross's writing was in response to the Mississippi lynching of fourteen-year-old African American Emmett Till, accused of whistling at a white female store owner, and the acquittal of his murderers. After a brief history of black Reconstruction politics, Ross focused on the more recent record of black-white unity fostered by FDR's New Deal. Such Popular Front groups as the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Southern Negro Youth Congress, and Southern Conference for Human Welfare each received praise for their efforts to forge a black-white coalition in the fight for African Americans' full citizenship. Notably, Ross also linked the ALP's peace and civil rights campaigns, writing that efforts to "defend and expand democracy and prevent war" required the defeat of the Dixiecrats and their Northern supporters.[50]

Till's murder had become a catalyst for the modern civil rights movement, and response to the pamphlet encouraged ALP members. A mass mailing to hundreds of civil rights leaders and newspaper editors across the country resulted in scores of requests for additional materials. Running short of funds, the party sent out letters appealing for donations for another printing. ALP correspondence suggests the myriad ways supporters used *Negro Representation* to promote voting rights. Requesting a thousand brochures, the publisher of the *Knoxville Sun* hoped that the pamphlet would encourage blacks to vote, writing, "It's election time in Knoxville [Tennessee] and we have several Negroes aspiring for office."[51] An Oklahoma teacher wrote the ALP to request copies for use in her classroom, while the host of a Madison, Wisconsin, radio program asked for copies for possible discussion on his show.[52] Their requests suggest that leftists across the nation viewed the ALP as a leader in the emerging civil rights movement.

"The Big Target": Peace or Freedom?

Precisely because of the party's success at drawing attention to issues of racial equality, some ALP supporters worried that its civil rights message might distract from commitment to other issues. Indeed, one member sent his donation for a second printing with the following note scribbled on the back of a fund letter appeal:

> Enclosed find $10 to help Till pamphlet distribution. That is a very good work in that field. Even more important is the sector of Disarmament.

> During next ten years that is the big target. Concrete. Hammer at it. Give it Publicity.[53]

Evident in the letter writer's plea is the concern that ALP leaders had forgotten their commitment to peace activism. Also evident is a small but growing fissure in the party's ranks.

Working in conjunction with the PP, since the 1948 election the ALP had in fact "hammered at" the issue of peace in well-organized campaigns that included "peace mobilization meetings" to train "Peace Fighters" for neighborhood canvassing during the Wallace campaign. In Brooklyn in 1949, "Peace Stations" were set up on city sidewalks to announce the ALP's Peace Day activities. Promising "the most vigorous campaign in its history," in 1950 party leadership announced that it was "out to win the peace vote" in the midterm election.[54] A Mothers Day rally that same year used the slogan "PEACE: THE BEST GIFT FOR MOTHER," revealing the party's maternalist strategy and making its message to New York voters clear: a vote for the ALP was a vote against U.S. cold war policy.[55] The U.S.S.R's detonation of its own atomic bomb in late summer of 1949, however, had made the issue of peace with the Soviets an increasingly hard sell.

By the mid-1950s leftist women's work was far more difficult due to the unmistakable success of anticommunist politics. While Annette Rubinstein was called to appear before HUAC, Eslanda Goode Robeson had her own encounter with Senator Joseph McCarthy's permanent Committee on Government Operations.[56] These and such events as the indictment of W. E. B. Du Bois by the Justice Department forced those working at the grassroots to reevaluate the prospects of a peace agenda encompassing both civil rights and antimilitarism. Among those New Yorkers working persistently to keep the issues of peace and freedom linked was African American activist Thelma Dale, who, like many leftists both before and after the war, worked within a network of progressive groups. Like Ada B. Jackson, Dale was also a member of the PP, ALP, and Congress of American Women, a postwar left-feminist organization with women's rights, international peace, and racial equality at the center of its agenda.

Despite anticommunist tensions, activists such as Dale continued to seek out opportunities to work in organizations that promoted broad progressive agendas. Yet others in the ALP assessed the difficulties faced by those working in organizational networks that united peace and freedom and suggested that alternating single-issue campaigns for civil rights and against militarism might produce greater results for a movement whose dwindling membership reflected nearly a decade of harassment.[57]

Indeed, as early as 1949 the ALP had initiated recruitment drives to bolster its noticeably declining ranks; a December memo noted that the Kings County club in Brooklyn had lost 29 percent of its members in the previous year.[58] Uncertainty regarding the possibility of a positive peace encompassing both national and international objectives, therefore, fueled debates over how to conduct simultaneous campaigns for both social justice within nations and international peace among them. As discussion of the "gravity of the financial situation" faced by the party came to dominate executive meetings, attention to the allocation of shrinking financial resources preoccupied party organizers in the final year of the ALP's existence.[59]

For what little comfort it might have given ALP members, the national Progressive Party confronted many of the same dilemmas faced by its state organizations. The situation was reflected in a frank and revealing pamphlet entitled *Politics for Progress 1954*, in which PP secretary C. B. Baldwin wrote, "Although I know that there were those among us who felt that when we organized we could become the dominant political party, I doubt that many now harbor such illusions." Acknowledging the "serious losses" the party had suffered since the 1948 election, he argued that as early as 1951 party leaders recognized that the PP's role in the American system would be to help forge—but not lead—a political realignment serving the interests of progressive labor, civil rights, and antiwar forces. Claiming, "For years, I have heard from many of my progressive friends, 'Is the Progressive Party a political party or a pressure group?' " Baldwin answered, "To me it is obviously both."[60] With little hope of electoral success, state organizations such as the ALP continued to endorse candidates who "put peace on the ballot" locally. But increasingly they concentrated their energies on lobbying state and federal officials as a pressure group for peace and social justice.

In a March 1955 report on the party's status to the executive committee of the ALP, Chairman Peter Hawley discussed the effects of anticommunism, laying out the situation the party confronted in its organizing. Influenced by Baldwin's report, Hawley acknowledged the obstacles facing the ALP concerning its future role in New York politics and concluded, as Baldwin had earlier, that the political climate was not ripe for a third party "peace ticket" like the Wallace campaign. Instead, progressives needed to consolidate their energies until the time that a "national labor-based peace and people's party" could succeed. Their efforts, Hawley argued, should be directed toward promoting the ALP's "specific electoral role" as a pressure group for "peace and progress," meaning geopolitical peace and civil rights.

Suggesting that the party could increase its membership by enlisting black New Yorkers in its peace campaigns, following the 1954 *Brown* decision on desegregating the nation's schools, Hawley wrote:

> A powerful voice in the chorus for peace is the voice of the Negro people in defense of their inalienable right to equality. Their present great struggle to end discrimination in education . . . their persistent and increasingly effective struggle for representation, is worthy of stauncher allies than have as yet rallied to their banner.[61]

While Hawley's rhetoric effortlessly joined the issues of racial equality and peace, it did not solve the problem of how to integrate a growing modern civil rights movement, led by such anticommunist liberal groups as the NAACP, with long-standing leftist initiatives.

Perhaps because of the recent success of *Negro Representation Now*, some ALP members continued to see hope on the horizon. Even Hawley perceived "a lessening of hysteria—a growing boldness in speaking out" in 1955 against the anticommunism that gripped the nation in the immediate postwar years.[62] An ALP anti-McCarthy campaign just a year earlier had sponsored "Defend Our Freedom" rallies and street-corner meetings where activists distributed "Joe Must Go" buttons and lollypops while calling on voters to reject reactionary candidates.[63] Opposition to McCarthy had in fact galvanized ALP activists who believed that the politics of the Wisconsin senator had irreparably tarnished the anticommunist project. To capitalize on the seemingly improving climate, Hawley proposed goals for the coming years. He suggested that for 1955 the party's focus should be on increased judicial representation for not only blacks but also for women and Puerto Ricans, and an increased ALP presence in municipal politics in such New York cities as Buffalo. Hawley argued that the party's work must take into account the significance of the recent Supreme Court ruling desegregating U.S. schools.[64] Yet his proposal also presented the issues of civil rights and international peace independently, now suggesting that they required not only separate campaigns but, despite the ALP's long-standing strategy, separate years for implementation.

With 1955 targeted as the year to focus on civil rights, the ALP chairman proposed that in 1956 the party set peace as its major electoral objective. A memo written by executive secretary Morris Goldin explained the goal was to "make coexistence a major issue in the campaign between parties and candidates, in a manner which will influence the choice of candidates and parties' votes" in 1956.[65] To that end, the executive committee approved a "Peace Action Campaign" to offer American voters an alternative to the U.S. government's "war drive," and the committee

announced the campaign was based on the grounds that "the fight for peace is the central issue facing the American people today."[66]

The strategy to formally disengage the issues of peace and freedom in order to prioritize one over the other in alternating years tested the long-held belief of many leftists that progressive change, or positive peace, required simultaneous attention to both civil rights and global peace. A primary focus on antimilitarism in 1956 challenged the 1950 Jackson-Rubinstein Negro History committee's conclusion that civil rights would be achieved only through a "hard hitting 365 days a year" effort by the party.[67] Leadership no doubt intended to continue its support of campaigns for civil rights and international peace, as it had done since its founding. Just how "hard hitting" their efforts would be at a given time was the issue they confronted. Although the strategy promised to allocate the party's dwindling resources more efficiently, it also opened the door to debate about whether the party needed to focus not on peace *and* civil rights, but rather peace *or* civil rights.

The proposal of some ALP leaders, that to be politically effective in future elections the party's energies must be concentrated on one issue at a time, had its supporters—most favoring the peace issue. Minutes of a special "emergency" meeting of the executive committee reveal responses to the reevaluation of strategy as well as anxiety over the health of the party. Morris Goldin spoke at the meeting in support of the separate-year strategy, arguing that the antimilitarism campaign was the reason for the ALP's existence and might serve as its "saviour" [*sic*] because of the potential for the peace issue to unite party membership. Another member agreed that earlier drives for African American political representation, often focused on elections held in New York City, left some county clubs feeling isolated from the party. Still another agreed with the proposal to emphasize peace, because, in her experience, it was a good fund-raising issue.[68] Not coincidentally, peace was also the primary focus of the CP's postwar agenda. Robbie Lieberman writes that many American Communists at the time "were unable to draw a distinction between genuine interest in peace and defending the interests of the Soviet Union."[69] This increasing focus on peace activism reflected the growing influence of Communists in the ALP, as liberals and non-Communist leftists abandoned the party. The damning perception of the ALP as being led by Communists had become firmly fixed with most New Yorkers, and with some good cause. As Annette Rubinstein recalled decades later, by the mid-1950s half of the ALP's members *were* Communists.[70]

Political constraints led some executive committee members to view peace and civil rights as competing, not complementing, issues. These members may have believed that the threat to international peace posed

by U.S. cold war policy at that moment superseded all other progressive causes, necessitating such a view. African American Thelma Dale, however, was not among those who saw the party's civil rights organizing as a distraction from peace initiatives. Notes from the emergency meeting reveal that, arguing for the complementarity of peace and civil rights, she advised her fellow ALP members to consider the importance of the recent Bandung Conference when debating party strategy.[71]

Scholars write that the historic Indonesia conference was as significant to international race relations as the *Brown* decision, handed down just the year before, was for the U.S. freedom movement.[72] Not surprisingly, it received wide coverage in the black press as the *Afro-American* argued that Bandung "could be the birthplace of a workable and honorable plan for world peace." The *New York Amsterdam News* also weighed in, writing, "Negro Americans should be interested in the proceedings" because they "had a vested interest in the outcome."[73] In raising the issue of the international conference during the ALP meeting, Dale attempted, in the spirit of Bandung, to keep peace and freedom linked in the party's activism. Concerned about the long-term prospects that the ALP could lead such a movement, Dale suggested that, like the PP, the ALP had a role to play in U.S. politics despite the fact that neither had the membership to operate any longer as viable third parties. Furthermore, she addressed the need for ALP leadership to remain positive about its prospects, a nod to the repeatedly expressed belief that Hawley's committee report was far too negative to inspire confidence in the organization's future.[74] Dale's optimism proved unfounded.

The dilemma over whether to uncouple the issues of peace and civil rights and to prioritize one over the other illustrates the overwhelming obstacles state organizers faced in the McCarthy era in keeping their emphasis on "battleships, atomic bombs, *and* lynch ropes." By the mid-1950s the lyrical oratory of national Progressive leaders, while inspiring to many, clearly did not reflect the very real limitations of local organizers. Disagreement among members about whether militarism or white supremacy was the most immediate threat to U.S. citizens; red-baiting by politicians seeking political advantage; and dwindling membership and financial resources, all complicated and interrelated issues, contributed to fears among ALP members that the progressive moment had passed. Just as officers of the national PP organization had decided in 1955 that it could no longer operate effectively and chose to disband, the following year the executive committee of the New York state organization faced similar choices about its future. Indeed, Hawley's reading of the ALP's state of affairs, which he predicted would lead to "dire consequences" if problems with morale, finances, and organization were not overcome, was largely on target, leading the party to dissolve.

Two Movements: Legacies of the Left-Liberal Split

As the fate of the ALP suggests, battles waged within and between leftist and liberal groups destroyed many postwar women's organizational networks, as formerly productive coalitions broke apart. The dissolution of left-led groups such as the Congress of American Women, and the expulsion of Communists from more liberal organizations such as the Parent-Teacher Association, marked the end of broad alliances that had lobbied for significant change in local communities.[75] A New York School Board meeting illustrates the volatility of the early cold war period in dramatic fashion. In an atmosphere "marked by shouting and vituperation," the nine-member board met to vote on the firing of an elementary school teacher suspected of lying about her involvement with the Communist Party. With 250 attendees, largely in support of the teacher's firing, squeezed into the board room and another 300, mostly favoring the teacher, picketing outside the building, members began the process of dismissal. At the center of the fracas was a representative from the leftist New York Teachers Union. Ada B. Jackson and Mrs. Mary Jane Melish, wife of Episcopal priest William Howard, were the only two present to speak on behalf of the embattled teacher. The *New York Times* reported that two Japanese school officials, probably in the United States during the occupation of Japan to learn about the American educational system, were witness to a scene so explosive that ten police officers and their captain were sent to keep the peace. Before the police arrived, the union representative refused to take her seat as directed by a board member and was met with "boos, hisses, and shouts," while other spectators "hurled insults at each other."[76] Although the newspaper credits the police with preventing the outbreak of physical attacks, Jackson may well have been reminded of the violence of her Georgia childhood.

For some women, such red-baiting precipitated a reconsideration of their leftist activism. Jackson's travel to an international peace conference in Bucharest, Romania, in 1948, and to the Soviet Union in 1949, coupled with her long-standing ALP membership, had led such organizations as the Brooklyn Home for Aged Colored People to question her suitability to sit on its Board of Directors. As newspapers at the time reported, Jackson fought persistently to maintain her position in the community, including her leadership role.[77] Yet while the *Brooklyn Eagle* and the *New York Times* left a valuable record of Jackson's pre- and early postwar activism, her newspaper trail virtually ends by the mid-1950s. Although her commitment to activism may not have wavered, in the face of red-baiting she apparently no longer sought leadership positions that warranted local press coverage. Jewish liberal Elinor Gimbel, founder and chair of the

1948 Progressive Party's women's division, also rethought her leftist leadership. After leaving the PP in 1950, she had a visible role in the New York State Democratic Party.[78] Her 1983 *New York Times* obituary described Gimbel as a leader in "civic, educational and business affairs," listing her membership in such liberal organizations as President Kennedy's Council for the Arts and the Women's Division of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropy. The *Times* ignored her role as a founder of the more radical Congress of American Women and of Women for Wallace.[79]

Still, not all leftist women retreated from view as Jackson apparently did or eschewed radical organizing like Gimbel. Without the Congress of American Women, National Negro Congress, Council on African Affairs, American Labor Party, Progressive Party, and other groups that had nourished their networks, the organizational links between peace and freedom movements dissolved. What remained in their place were informal networks largely based on personal friendships that had survived the era of political repression. Unlike formal organizations, these social networks did not leave minutes of meetings, copies of committee reports, or membership lists for historians to pore over, making their work all but invisible to social movement scholars.[80] Progressive women nonetheless continued to seek channels for their political activism, although their work was sometimes sporadic, fitted into busy schedules, and dependent upon financial circumstances.

In the late 1950s, Eslanda Goode Robeson reflected on her postwar activism, including her attendance at United Nations women's conferences in Moscow and Peking, and a Pan-African conference in Accra, Ghana. She wrote that she eagerly awaited the imminent end to white supremacy, when colonized peoples would "take full control of their countries," and "the United States would belong to all American citizens, including me." Ever the activist, she explained, "Of course I don't sit around and wait for The Day… I continue to study, read, consult, write and lecture about the importance of Civil Rights, Human Rights, Freedom and Self Government for all peoples everywhere."[81] Even without an organizational base, Robeson continued her attempts to shape U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

Similarly, in the summer of 1960, Shirley Graham Du Bois spoke to the women of Ghana at a symposium sponsored by the Convention People's Party, the ruling political party of the newly liberated nation. Enthusiastically commenting on the promising government of her friend President Kwame Nkrumah, Graham Du Bois declared that women had an important role to play in the nation-building mission underway.[82] She suggested that they would nurture peace and freedom in Ghana through their maternal role, but also cautioned that "We Negro women cannot

talk of maintaining Peace when Peace does not exist for the women of South Africa, for the women of Algeria, not even for Negro women of certain sections of our own United States." As she affirmed that "Peace like Freedom is indivisible!," Graham Du Bois spoke for national black leaders who asserted that racial justice, or freedom, was the road to peace.[83] In the spring of 1961 Graham Du Bois joined friend and fellow activist Esther Cooper Jackson as a founding editor of a "quarterly review of the freedom movement," the journal *Freedomways*, making it an influential forum for discussion of both civil rights and Pan-African movements. In her turn to publishing, she helped to create a space for leftists to consider the emerging civil rights movement and its ties to international liberation movements. Contributors to the journal included Eslanda Goode Robeson.

On the local front, as women such as Ada B. Jackson exited broad organizational networks in New York, other women, such as Vermont native Helen MacMartin, joined those carrying on their work for progressive change in the city. MacMartin, a Burlington grandmother, had headed the Vermont state organization for Wallace in 1948 and remained its secretary following the election. Her outspoken support of the PP, including prolific letter writing to the editorial boards of Vermont newspapers, led to increased difficulty finding employment in her home state. Although college educated, after the 1948 election the onetime counselor for government-funded employment programs was able only to find work as a caretaker of children and the elderly. In 1955 she supported herself working in New York as a paid companion for the notable leftist Dr. John Howard Melish, connecting her to a prominent activist network.

In the spring of 1949, Melish, who months earlier had delivered the invocation to the PP Yankee Doodle Rally, was removed from his position as rector of Holy Trinity Church of Brooklyn, New York, for refusing to fire his assistant, his son Dr. William Howard Melish. Husband of activist Mary Jane, the younger Melish was, probably rightly so, suspected of being a member of the Communist Party. The lengthy "Melish case" was covered extensively by the *New York Times* and included a protracted court battle over the eviction of John Howard from the Holy Trinity rectory. Always up for a battle, MacMartin wrote to a friend about her pleasure "at be[ing] in the middle of a good fight at Holy Trinity Church."[84] After serving a year with the Melish family in the city, MacMartin returned to Vermont but remained the senior Melish's caregiver during the family's yearly summerlong vacations at Lake George.

MacMartin's entry into New York activism suggests the fluidity of networks during this turbulent time; in correspondence, she commented on the relative vitality of the New York scene in comparison with the isolation

she felt in Vermont. Still, even the excitement of the high-profile Melish case, although a bridge to later activism, did not offer a sustained outlet for MacMartin's energies. Friend and former Progressive Party member Curtis MacDougall shared her distress, writing, "I can well understand your feeling of isolation . . . I wish I could recommend some organizational connection but I don't know any that provides the same kind of satisfaction we all used to find in so many places."[85] Without liberal alliances, the productive coalition-building of the pre-cold war era left progressives outside the mainstream of American politics. MacMartin eventually concluded, as others had, that following the split with liberals, leftists could best influence the U.S. government on social and political issues by working as "individuals and [in] small groups."[86] Despite her interest in civil rights, however, she now directed her considerable energies to activism addressing the threat of nuclear proliferation. Thus, by the 1960s Eslanda Goode Robeson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and other African American leftists supported the peace and freedom agenda by focusing most intently on freedom, while MacMartin chose peace as her primary issue.

Efforts to rekindle left-liberal alliances and forge a united peace and freedom movement again started in the early 1960s as political repression lessened, U.S. involvement in Vietnam heightened, and concern about fallout from nuclear testing politicized women. Rejecting those organizations that had purged Communists and their sympathizers, MacMartin joined organizations such as Women Strike for Peace (WSP), which had refused to impose a political litmus test for membership. Attempts to introduce race issues into WSP suggest the continuing impact of cold war politics, as emerging women's coalitions grappled with long-standing political issues.

Threats that, following a moratorium, the U.S. government might again start nuclear testing in response to testing conducted by the Soviets inspired WSP founder Dagmar Wilson to organize a "hue and cry" against the escalating arms race.[87] Envisioned as a one-day event for the housewives and mothers of Washington, DC, the idea spread across the country, and a single day of protest in the fall of 1961 reinvigorated women's peace activism. Former PP supporters who joined WSP included New York grassroots organizers Frances Boehm and Edith Pollach, and folk singer Ronnie Gilbert of the Weavers.[88] As leftists entered the organization, they again raised the issue of the relationship between peace and civil rights. At WSP's first annual conference held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1962, Wilson explained, "We realize that the two movements are different aspects of the same problem and that eventually the two will meet and merge."[89] However, historian Amy Swerdlow describes debate surrounding the issue of civil rights that took

place in WSP as "bitter and painful."[90] The tone was set early by discussion of a dispute between opposing Detroit groups over whether black WSP protesters should be allowed to carry signs reading "Desegregation not Disintegration," which white Detroit members had rejected. Several years after the incident, an organizer claimed, "Everyone felt very deeply about civil rights but, I think, most women there also felt deeply that WSP should be a peace-issue movement only."[91] Not surprisingly, African American activist Grace Lee Boggs writes that at the time of WSP's founding, "Most blacks saw the bomb as a 'white issue.'"[92] It was not until the late 1960s, when WSP aligned with a burgeoning welfare rights movement, that the organization made its first tentative steps toward uniting peace and freedom.

WSP's experience offers insight into the legacy of the early cold war rupture of Popular Front alliances in women's organizing. Although many joining the organization believed that the civil rights movement was indeed a worthy cause, they did not believe that it was *their* worthy cause. These women either did not see a correlation between "battleships, atomic bombs, and lynch ropes," did not believe that it was the responsibility of a single organization to take on such a comprehensive agenda, or, with good cause, feared rekindling anticommunist fires.[93] For a number of former Progressive Party women who joined WSP, the organization provided a base for renewed collective action, as social networks were once again formalized.[94] Yet the fact that few of these women were African American illustrates the degree to which continuity and discontinuity operated side-by-side in women's mid-twentieth-century organizing; the issues of peace and freedom were now seen by many as related but no longer, in the language of Bandung, "interdependent."

Historians cannot know how the postwar civil rights movement may have been different had the rupture between Left and liberal organizations been averted, and any claims to the contrary are purely speculative. In a full cost accounting of social and political gains made by African Americans in postwar New York, however, advances in civil rights must be weighed against the loss of progressive coalitions that had effectively worked in the city toward a broadly defined agenda incorporating both peace and freedom.

Notes

1. "Review of the Asian-African Conference," May 1955, *Spotlight on Africa*, Box 49, Folder Asia/Africa, ALP Papers, Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey (Hereafter ALP Papers).
2. ALP Press Release, April 20, 1955, Box 49, folder Bandung, ALP Papers.

3. Historians have documented the significant influence of the political alliance known as the Popular Front, active from the mid-1930s through the mid-1950s. Uniting progressive Republicans, Democrats, and Communists and their fellow travelers with other community activists who shared a social democratic vision for America, Popular Front organizations such as the ALP supported many New Deal initiatives. Recent scholarship on the movement has examined the concept of a "Black Popular Front," which in the immediate postwar years fought for leadership of the burgeoning modern civil rights movement. Those figures most commonly associated with the national leadership of a black front are W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson, whose comprehensive agenda linking peace to social justice issues was viewed as subversive, making them targets of government persecution in the postwar era. See, Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Also see Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988) and *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986).
4. James E. Cronin describes cold war liberalism as "the elaboration of liberal anticommunism…that sought to maintain the Democrats' commitment to reform and social justice while distinguishing the party from the ideological left." See *The World the Cold War Made: Order, Chaos, and the Return of History* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 80.
5. While the distinction between what has become known as "Cold War liberals" and progressives became increasingly clear in the late 1940s and early 1950s, even Progressives occasionally used such terms as "liberal" and "leftist" interchangeably. See Paul Buhle, "Progressive," *The Encyclopedia of the American Left*, eds. Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 596–99.
6. See Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle For Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Penny von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946–1994 (*Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).
7. For more on tensions between the civil rights and antiwar movements, see Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). On the unraveling of progressive coalitions, see Horne, *Communist Front?* and *Black and Red*. Also see Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism and the U.S. Peace Movement 1945–1963* (New York: Syracuse

University Press, 2000). Lawrence Wittner writes about liberal peace organizing in the postwar period, "From 1950 to 1957…the peace movement consisted of little more than a small band of isolated pacifists." See *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 228.

8. See Cheryl Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), Hall, *Peace and Freedom*, Manfred Berg, *"The Ticket to Freedom": The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), and John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (New York: Free Press, 2003). For discussion of the pressures McCarthyism placed on liberal peace groups, see Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 212–275.
9. Quoted in Karen J. Warren and Duane L. Cady, "Feminism and Peace: Seeing Connections," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 11.
10. Leftist women had a long tradition of using maternalist rhetoric and strategies in their activism, and the women of the ALP and PP were no exception. For more on the role of maternalism in leftist organizing, see Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 5; Kathleen Brown, "The 'Savagely Fathered and Un-Mothered World' of the Communist Party, USA: Feminism, Maternalism, and 'Mother Bloor,'" *Feminist Studies* 25 (Fall 1999): 539; and Lisa D. Brush, "Love, Toil, and Trouble: Motherhood and Feminist Politics," *Signs* 21 (Winter, 1996): 429–454.
11. Susan Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times: Racial Justice, Peace, and Feminism, 1945 to the 1960s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 3. Also see Zachary Karabell, *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won the 1948 Election* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 16.
12. Shirley Graham, "Speech Delivered at National Founding Convention of the Progressive Party, Philadelphia, Convention Hall, July 23, 1948," Box 25, folder 21, SGD speeches, Shirley Graham Du Bois Papers. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University (Hereafter SGD Papers).
13. See Jacqueline Castledine, *Gendering the Cold War: Race, Class, and Women's Peace Politics, 1945–1975*, Ph.D. diss. Rutgers University, New Brunswick, 2006, 18–20; Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
14. Robeson, "Call to the Negro People," Box 8, Papers of C. B. Baldwin, Special Collections, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA (Hereafter Baldwin Papers). See Maureen Mahon, "Eslanda Goode Robeson's *African Journey*: The Politics of Identification and Representation in the African Diaspora," *Souls* (September 2006): 101–118. Robeson and Graham Du Bois were ALP members and also active in PP leadership.
15. Quoted in Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 335.
16. Quoted in Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*, 21.

17. Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 12.
18. Leila J. Rupp, *World of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3.
19. Even the Woman's Peace Party was not directly involved in electoral politics. Formed before most women in the United States had the vote, it was limited to issuing a platform stating its official positions.
20. For a discussion of WILPF's efforts to promote civil rights, see Joyce Blackwell, *No Peace Without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1975* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004).
21. Clipping, Mary Padgett, "Women Active in Wallace Ranks," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Women for Wallace Scrapbook, Special Collections, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.
22. For a discussion of Blaine's contributions to the PP and ALP, see Attorney Richard Bentley to C. B. Baldwin, February 14, 1950, Box 3, folder Blaine, Anita McCormick 1947–1949, Baldwin Papers.
23. See Castledine, "Gendering the Cold War."
24. Henry Wallace, *Toward World Peace* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1948), 1.
25. Emphasis added. "Text of Wallace's Radio Talk Announcing His Candidacy," *New York Times*, December 30, 1947, 15.
26. Eleanor Roosevelt, "Plain Talk About Wallace," *Democratic Digest* 25 (April 1948): 2.
27. Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize,* 275.
28. Eslanda Goode Robeson, "Progress Backward," Writings by Eslanda Goode Robeson, Paul and Eslanda Goode Robeson Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC (Hereafter Robeson Papers).
29. Twenty years after Henry Wallace articulated his vision for postwar peace, scholar Johan Galtung presented a comprehensive concept of positive peace, defining differences between structural and state sanctioned violence. See "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (1969): 167–191.
30. Established by executive order in late 1946, the committee was formed to submit recommendations for improving civil rights for Americans. For a discussion of the historical significance of the report, see Steven Lawson ed., *To Secure These Rights: The Report of Harry S. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2003).
31. "Mrs. Ada B. Jackson," Box 8, folder Yankee Doodle Rally, ALP papers.
32. Curtis MacDougall, *Gideon's Army* (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1965), 838–852.
33. John K. Weiss and Amos Landman, "PM Prefers Ada Jackson for City Council," *PM*, October 23, 1947, 14.

34. *Congress of American Women Bulletin*, "CAW Candidates for State Legislature," Women's International Democratic Federation Records, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.
35. "Teachers Charge Pupils Beat Them," *New York Times*, November 28, 1942, 15.
36. "Named to YWCA Post," *New York Times*, March 25, 1944, 9. Also see Julie Gallagher, *Women of Action, In Action: The New Politics of Black Women in New York City, 1944–1972*, Ph.D. diss, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 2003, 24–26.
37. Weigand, *Red Feminism*, 31.
38. Rufus E. Clement, "Educational Programs for the Improvement of Race Relations: Interracial Committees," *The Journal of Negro Education* 13 (1944): 316–328 and "YMCA Policy Criticized," *New York Times*, December 1, 1943, 23.
39. "Chit-Chat, Society, Fashions: We Honor," *People's Voice,* August 17, 1946, 21.
40. Flyer: "Ada B. Jackson: This Woman's Place is in the City Council!" Issued by: Committee to Elect Ada B. Jackson to City Council. Copy in author's possession.
41. The Communist Party did indeed endorse the ALP and saw it as a vehicle to promote its agenda.
42. Owen Middleton, "Political Outlook for Brooklyn in 1946," *People's Voice*, September 7, 1946, 11.
43. "We Honor," *People's Voice*, August 17, 1946, 21.
44. Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, 46–52. Also see Julie Gallagher, *Women of Action, In Action*.
45. Jackson, "Ada B. Jackson: This Woman's Place is in the City Council!"
46. Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, 52.
47. "ALP Battler Bright-Eyed, Breezy, Bouncy," *New York Post Home News Magazine*, May 11, 1949, sec. 2, 1.
48. In 1976, Negro History Week was expanded to a full month.
49. "Partial Report Submitted by ALP Negro History Week Sub-Committee," February 1, 1952, Box 27, folder Negro History Month, ALP Papers.
50. Elaine Ross, "Negro Representation Now," Box 51, folder Negro Representation, ALP Papers.
51. William J. Robinson to ALP, September 26, 1955, Box 51, folder Negro Representation, ALP Papers.
52. Ralph Peterson to ALP, February 10, 1956, Box 51, folder Negro Representation, ALP Papers.
53. Frank to Morris Goldin, October 26, 1955, Box 51, folder Negro Representation, ALP Papers.
54. "Action Letter, Special Bulletin, 1950 Election," Box 11, folder King's County (1950), ALP Papers.
55. American Labor Party—Kings County "Action Letter," March 25, 1949 and "Action Letter" April 25, 1949, Box 55, folder Kings County (1948–1950), ALP Papers.

56. On Robeson's appearance before McCarthy's committee, see Castledine, *Gendering the Cold* War, 141–143.
57. See "ALP Action Letter," Box 2, folder: Kings County (1949), ALP Papers. ALP Action Letter.
58. "1949 Membership Drive" memo, December 1, Box 2, folder Kings County (1949), ALP Papers.
59. See, for example, Staff Meeting minutes from January 1955, Box 51, folder Minutes—Staff, etc., January 25, ALP Papers.
60. C. B. Baldwin, "Politics for Progress 1954," Jessie Lloyd O'Connor Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.
61. "Report to State Executive Committee on the Role of the ALP, the Struggle for Peace and the Problems of Creating a Mass Third Party Movement—by Peter K. Hawley—unanimously adopted April 28," Box 51, folder Executive Committee, 1955, ALP Papers.
62. "Report to State Executive Committee on the Role of the ALP."
63. Clipping, "Bronx Motorcade Marks ALP Fight on McCarthyism," Box 39, folder Civil Liberties: McCarthyism, 1954, ALP Papers.
64. "Report to Executive Committee on the Role of the ALP."
65. Morris Goldin to Iggy, April 4, 1955, Box 51, folder Electoral Policy, ALP Papers. In 1956 Khrushchev proposed a policy of "peaceful coexistence" that would allow the United States and U.S.S.R. to compete for political and economic dominance without resulting in warfare.
66. "Peace Action Campaign," April 12, 1955, Box 49, folder Date File, ALP Papers.
67. "Partial Report Submitted by ALP Negro History Week Sub-Committee," February 1, 1952, Box 27, folder Negro History Month, ALP Papers.
68. Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, May 24, 1955, Box 50, folder Executive Committee 1955, ALP Papers.
69. Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 5.
70. "Interview with Annette Rubenstein," October 7, 1990, tape side 13, Annette T. Rubinstein Papers, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University, New York, NY.
71. Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, May 24, 1955.
72. Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, 95.
73. Cited in *Spotlight on Africa: Review of the Asian-African Conference*, May 1955, Box 49, folder Asia/Africa, ALP papers.
74. Minutes, Executive Committee Meeting, May 24, 1955.
75. For a discussion of anticommunist battles waged within PTAs in Queens, New York, see Sylvie Murray, *The Progressive Housewife: Community Activism in Suburban Queens, 1945–1965* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
76. Murray Illson, "Teacher is Ousted as Liar at Meeting Guarded by Police," *New York Times*, March 17, 1950 1.
77. Gallagher, *Women of Action in Action*, 50–52.
78. Clayton Knowles, "Kennedy Assigns Bailey To Study State Party Rift," *New York Times*, January 26, 1961, 1.

79. Walter Waggoner, "Elinor S. Gimbel, 86, Is Dead; Long Active in Hops Business," *New York Times*, March 3, 1983, 18.
80. For a discussion of the role of personal relationships in postwar women's political activism see Lynn, *Progressive Women in Conservative Times*, 3–4.
81. Eslanda Goode Robeson, "Trying to be an American."
82. In the 1930s Nkrumah studied in the United States and met W. E. B. Du Bois.
83. "Women of Ghana" Speech, July 13, 1960, Box 17, folder 9, Graham Du Bois Collection.
84. Helen MacMartin to Curtis MacDougall, September 9, 1956, Helen MacMartin Papers, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT (hereafter HMP). In 1958 the courts ruled that the rector emeritus was entitled to reside at the rectory for life. His son, who was living at the rectory as a guest of his father, was evicted.
85. MacDougall to MacMartin, July 10, 1957, HMP.
86. MacMartin to Mrs. Winters, December 6, 1961, HMP.
87. See "Women to March in Plea for Peace," *New York Times*, October 30, 1961, 18.
88. For a discussion of communists active in WSP, see Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 162–173.
89. Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace*: *Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 62, 191–93.
90. Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace*, 90.
91. Ibid.
92. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 107.
93. In 1962 HUAC subpoenaed WSP, believing that its New York organization was overwhelmingly Communist and that it had wrestled control of the national movement from its Washington founders. See Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace*, 104.
94. Former Progressives who joined Women Strike for Peace also include PP Vermont State Director Helen MacMartin, and WSP cofounder and Wallace supporter Folly Fodor. Coretta Scott King, who as a Young Progressive at Antioch College in 1948 attended the PP Convention, was the most prominent African American woman to join WSP.

3

The March of Young Southern Black Women: Esther Cooper Jackson, Black Left Feminism, and the Personal and Political Costs of Cold War Repression

Erik S. McDuffie

Esther Cooper Jackson was uneasy. Someone was knocking on the front door of her apartment in the predominately black Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Was it the FBI, she wondered? For seven months, agents had been trailing her and her two daughters wherever they went, in search of her missing husband, James E. Jackson, Jr., a black U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA) leader and a longtime advocate for racial justice and equality. Jackson had gone underground to avoid arrest soon after his June 1951 indictment—along with eleven other "second string" Communist leaders—for allegedly violating the 1940 Smith Act, a law that forbade the advocacy of violently overthrowing the U.S. government.[1] Neither he nor his comrades advocated such a program. However, it was the height of the McCarthy period, when cold warriors viewed demands for civil rights and peace and criticisms of U.S. cold war domestic and foreign policy as subversive. Jackson remained underground until December 1955. During his nearly five years in hiding, neither his wife nor their two young daughters had any contact with him.[2]

Meanwhile, despite her fears that a FBI agent was at her front door, Cooper Jackson nevertheless peered through it. Her concerns were abated

when she saw an African American man standing in front of her. He identified himself as James L. Hicks, a journalist from the preeminent Baltimore *Afro-American* newspaper. He explained his intention of conducting an interview with Cooper Jackson about her husband's plight as well as about government persecution of her and the couple's children. Recognizing Hicks from his photograph in the newspaper, she agreed and welcomed him into her home. Their conversation served as the basis for his lengthy, front-page article, "Fugitive Red's Family Plagued by FBI Agents," published in February 1952 in the *Afro-American*. In the coming years, her story circulated widely in black communities nationwide and in the Communist Left.[3]

For Cooper Jackson, the McCarthy years were especially difficult politically and personally. An able activist, world traveler, CPUSA member, and the former head of the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC), a World War II-era social protest group headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, which had promoted the CPUSA's 1930s Popular Front agenda of antifascism, trade unionism, civil rights, internationalism, anticolonialism, women's rights, and the protection of civil liberties, she was now on the defensive.[4] Instead of leading broad-based progressive black movements that had understood the African American freedom struggle in global terms and that had paid special attention to issues confronting black women, as she had during the 1940s, the Red Scare forced her to concentrate her activism mainly toward freeing her husband and in protecting herself and her children from government persecution.[5]

Until recently, the politics and life of this major figure in the Communist Left and in black struggles for equality during the mid-twentieth-century have been elided from standard narratives of the early postwar civil rights movement, American communism, the Cold War, and black women's movements.[6] This chapter seeks to illuminate the poorly studied political and personal costs of McCarthyism on black women radicals such as Cooper Jackson. First, it focuses on her activism to highlight the ways in which African American women in the Communist Left during the 1940s and early 1950s formulated a "black left feminism," which according to literary scholar Mary Helen Washington is a politics that centers on working-class women by combining Communist Party positions on race, gender, class, and black nationalism with black women radicals' lived experiences. Prefiguring positions taken by second-wave black feminists of the 1970s, black left feminism was attentive to the intersectional nature of black women's oppression across the diaspora and understood their struggle for dignity and freedom in global terms.[7]

Second, this chapter reframes what historian Penny Von Eschen has termed the "diasporic moment," "a time when [World War II-era]

agitation and discussion about colonial independence reached fruition," by illustrating how African American women radicals in Popular Front movements of the 1940s constructed their own meanings of freedom that understood the struggles against Jim Crow, colonialism, and black women's oppression across the diaspora as inextricably connected.[8] Cooper Jackson's black internationalism transcended diasporic frames of reference and promoted "black globality," a term used by Brent Hayes Edwards, Tiffany Patterson, and Robin Kelley to describe a politics of black international solidarity that "does not always come out of Africa, nor is necessarily engaged with Pan Africanism or other kinds of blackism." Islam, communism, surrealism, feminism, and other political and cultural movements, they argue, often inspired black internationalism. That the Communist Left and anticolonial movements in the nonblack world informed Cooper Jackson's global vision not only underscores these assertions but also opens up new avenues for appreciating the transnational inspirations for U.S.-based black feminisms.[9]

Finally, this chapter engages the intensely debated topic of the Cold War's impact on the postwar black freedom movement. Historians such as Gerald Horne, Penny Von Eschen, and Glenda Gilmore view the Red Scare as having caused a rupture in the movement, while others such as Fanon Che Wilkins downplay the Cold War as a turning point in black radicalism or argue, as in the case of Mary Dudziak, that the U.S.-Soviet rivalry benefited the civil rights movement, overlooking the government's incessant persecution of black radicals.[10] Scholars such as Cynthia Young and James Smethurst have highlighted the ways in which 1960s-era black activists, many of whom had ties to the Old Left, developed cultural institutions and aesthetics that were mindful of the "inner connections between U.S. minorities and Third World majorities in a moment of global decolonization"[11]

My position highlights the ruptures and the continuities in the black freedom movement and black women's struggles before and after the McCarthy period through underscoring the impact of government repression on the activism and personal lives of black leftist feminists such as Cooper Jackson.[12] Black women radicals faced relentless government persecution during these years that isolated some of the most committed black activists for a brief but crucial period as the civil rights movement and as independence movements across the diaspora and beyond were gaining momentum. State repression also revealed postwar "anxiety concerning modern sexuality and female roles," prompting cold warriors to "call for the revitalization of domesticity" that constructed womanhood as universally white, heterosexual, and middle class.[13] In response to these developments, Cooper Jackson employed "familialism," described

by Deborah Gerson as "a strategy that made use of the valorization of the family," in order to portray McCarthyism, not communism "as the destroyer of family freedom, security, and happiness" and to protect herself and her family from government persecution. This move signaled the underappreciated ways in which the Red Scare compelled some black left feminists to appropriate the discourse of conservative postwar domesticity as a political strategy of resistance to McCarthyism, which stood in stark contrast to the transgressive gender politics that they often practiced prior to the early 1950s.[14] Despite these harrowing experiences, veteran black women radicals after the McCarthy period formed new organizations, particularly on the cultural front, which promoted a black left feminist agenda into the 1960s and beyond. This chapter, in sum, rethinks standard narratives of black women's activism, the American Left, the Cold War, and the origins of second-wave feminism by highlighting the political, personal, and transnational spaces in which black left feminism developed, the contradictions and gaps in black left feminist thought, and the impact and legacy of the Cold War on the black freedom movement as well as on black women radicals' politics and lives.

Early Years and Radicalization

Becoming a major figure in black struggles for equality and in the Communist Left was not something Esther Cooper or her family had envisioned. Her experiences during her childhood and early adult years, however, led her to eventually choose a life as a radical activist. Esther Victoria Cooper was born on August 21, 1917, in Arlington, Virginia, to U.S. army officer George I. Cooper and Esther I. Cooper, a well-respected community activist. Cooper became radicalized at Oberlin College during the late-1930s after she gravitated toward Popular Front movements on campus committed to supporting Republican Spain and the emergent Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). She joined the Communist Party in 1939 while earning her masters degree in sociology at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.[15]

As she moved toward the left, her personal life took a dramatic turn as well. While studying at Fisk, she met the young James E. Jackson, Jr. while he was in Nashville researching the conditions of blacks in the South, under the direction of Ralph Bunche, research that was incorporated in Gunnar Mydral's classic study on U.S. race relations, *An American Dilemma*. Born in 1914 and reared in a respectable Richmond, Virginia family, Jackson joined the Communist Party at the age of sixteen. He graduated in 1936 from Howard University's pharmacy school. Deciding to leave behind a

promising, secure career in pharmacy, Jackson opted instead to dedicate his life to fighting for radical social change and black liberation. In 1937, he cofounded the Southern Negro Youth Congress, a "quintessential" Popular Front organization initially based in Richmond, whose leadership consisted of Communists and non-Communists, including distinguished African American reformers such as educator Mary McCleod Bethune, South Carolina National Association for the Advancement of Colored People leader and Palmer Institute director Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Tuskegee Institute president F. D. Patterson, who sat on its advisory board.[16] Anticipating the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) two decades later, SNYC activists were the shock troops of struggles for black equality across the Jim Crow South. The organization led campaigns for voting rights, jobs, desegregation of public accommodations, labor rights, and the celebration of African American culture, and understood them as inseparable from global struggles against fascism, colonialism, and capitalism.[17]

In 1939, Jackson extended an invitation to Cooper to attend the group's forthcoming convention in Birmingham, the site of the group's new headquarters. She accepted the invitation and was impressed with the group's militant program. In the following year, she turned down an invitation to pursue a doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago and instead decided to work full-time as a SNYC organizer in Birmingham.[18] Her personal life took a major turn as well. On May 7, 1941, Cooper and Jackson were married, marking the beginning of a union that lasted for sixty-six years and that witnessed many of the most exciting and tumultuous moments in twentieth-century U.S. struggles for black equality and socialism.[19]

Southern Negro Youth Congress

When SNYC members elected Cooper Jackson as their executive secretary in the spring of 1942, she headed an organization that from its very inception counted a cadre of African American women leaders and that focused special attention on fighting for the dignity and rights of black women. For example, Howard University graduate student Thelma Dale, who would become a leading figure in the black Left in the coming years, was a founding member of the SNYC and was elected as vice president at its 1939 convention. Other black women leaders included Rose Mae Catchings (president), Dorothy Burnham (educational director), and Augusta Jackson Strong (editor of the Youth Conference newspaper, *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Youth*).[20]

Programmatically, the SNYC advocated on behalf of black women. The group's "Proclamation of Southern Negro Youth," for example, stated the organization's commitment to "the struggle to improve the status of Negro girls—the future Negro womanhood of the South."[21] In the fall of 1938, James Jackson along with labor organizer and SNYC founder Christopher Alston had successfully organized a sit-down strike of nearly five thousand tobacco workers, most of whom were African American women, at the British American Tobacco Company plant in Richmond, Virginia, which resulted in substantial wage increases. Recognizing the ways in which the rape of black women was critical to maintaining Jim Crow terror, the SNYC took part in a nationwide effort to publicize the case of Mrs. Recy Taylor, a black woman who was kidnapped and gang raped by six white men near rural Abbeville, Alabama, in 1944.[22]

During her tenure as Youth Congress executive secretary, Cooper Jackson cultivated indigenous black women SNYC leaders in Birmingham. For example, she along with Dorothy Burnham recruited Mildred McAdory, a talented activist and journalist from humble beginnings, into the organization. In 1942, white police viciously beat and arrested McAdory and three other SNYC activists for their attempts to move the "colored only" sign on a bus in Fairfield, Alabama, a black industrial suburb of Birmingham. The Youth Congress's publication of the pamphlet, *For Common Courtesy on Common Carriers*, generated national publicity about the incident. The group also formed an organization called the Citizens for Equal Accommodations on Common Carriers, which staged a short-lived boycott of Birmingham buses.[23] Additionally, Sallye Davis, whose daughter Angela Davis later emerged as perhaps the most famous black Communist and an icon to young people worldwide, joined the Youth Congress and became a vital link between it and local women's clubs, churches, and trade unions and Cooper Jackson's close personal friend as well. The SNYC leadership also cultivated a consensus-style of decision-making that encouraged women's participation in running the organization.[24]

The SNYC was not exceptional amongst black left organizations in promoting black women leaders. The National Negro Congress (NNC), arguably the most influential black Popular Front organization, appointed Thelma Dale as editor of its newspaper, *Congress View*. In 1943, she replaced Ed Strong as NNC national secretary after he entered the army. (James Jackson enlisted in the army in the same year and was eventually deployed to Burma.)[25] Dorothy Funn of New York City headed the NNC's Labor and Legislative Bureau in Washington, while Jessie Scott Campbell, a National Youth Administration official who had been actively involved in the Young Women's Christian Association and Young Communist

League during the Depression in Brooklyn and New York, served on the NNC's national staff.[26]

Black left organizations such as the SNYC and the NNC were unique at this historical moment in their promotion of black women as titular heads of secular, mixed-gender black protest organizations. Gender structured relations of power differently in more politically mainstream black civil rights groups such as the NAACP, which generally defined formal leadership as an exclusively male preserve and relegated black women to positions as bridge leaders, vital grassroots organizers who communicated everyday people's concerns to national (male) civil rights leadership.[27] While wartime dislocations did help to create opportunities for women to lead black left organizations, it was black women's determination to lead that best explains the large number of high-ranking African American women officials in these organizations. Moreover, SNYC leadership was in many respects more progressive on gender matters than the Communist Party's national leadership in New York City. While both organizations professed a commitment to women's participation in radical social movements, the former was more successful than the latter in promoting women as high-ranking, formal leaders and in nurturing a political culture that encouraged women's decision-making in the organization.[28]

Cooper Jackson's position allowed her to gain a national reputation as a leading figure in struggles for black equality and to extend her political networks with prominent black women reformers. During the war and immediately after it, she worked and corresponded with Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Ella Baker, South Carolina NAACP official Modjeska Simkins, and Mary McCleod Bethune, who was the keynote speaker of the SNYC's 1944 conference in Atlanta. Cooper Jackson also befriended up-and-coming Communist Party leader Claudia Jones, whose groundbreaking, postwar theoretical writings on the intersections of race, gender, and class popularized in the Communist Left the term "triple oppression" of African American women. She, too, would fall victim to the Red Scare. Indeed, hers is the best-known case of McCarthyite persecution of a black woman radical. Authorities incarcerated Jones for nine months in 1955 and deported her at the end of that year to Great Britain, where she continued to pursue a radical feminist, diasporic, Third World, anti-imperialist agenda until her death in London in 1964.[29]

The SNYC fostered a black left feminist stance that encouraged the group's black Communist couples—Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson, Ed Strong and Augusta (Jackson) Strong, and Dorothy and Louis Burnham—to think critically about the politicized nature of personal life in ways that anticipated the "personal is political" slogan of second-wave

feminism. The organization also promoted what today would be called "progressive black masculinity," a term used to describe "unique and innovative practices of the masculine self actively engaged in struggles to transform social structures of domination."[30] For example, according to Cooper Jackson, her black Birmingham Communist comrades took "very seriously" what the CPUSA called the "Woman Question," the struggle against gender oppression, and they believed that eliminating sexism both within the public and private spheres "was an integral part of the whole struggle to change society."[31] She added that black Communist SNYC men "thought [that] to be a good Communist you struggled on the woman question."[32] She and her comrades carefully read Frederick Engels' *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State* in their study circles and used it to inform their understandings of the history of gender oppression and its relation to the overall struggle for radical social change. In a move that was ahead of its time, some SNYC women leaders in an effort to maintain their sense of independence continued using their maiden names in public for years to come. In contrast to most black protest groups of the day, the Youth Congress developed a nonhierarchal, consensus-style decision-making process that encouraged black women's participation in the group's governance.[33]

Cooper Jackson and her peers consciously made decisions to eradicate sexism within their personal lives by challenging prevailing ideas that defined men's proper gender role in the family as emotionally detached providers and women as mothers and homemakers. James Jackson and Louis Burnham, for example, regularly shared cooking, cleaning, and child-care responsibilities, providing their wives with time to pursue their activist work. Black Communist men encouraged their wives to speak at rallies and to take on leadership responsibilities of the Youth Congress. The men did not "always live up to this [their anti-sexist politics]," as Cooper Jackson insisted.[34] Still, the fact that black Party women and men attempted to grapple with dominant gender roles shows not only that they believed the personal was political but also the ways in which the SNYC broke from prevailing masculinist articulations of black liberation espoused by Garveyites of the 1920s and by most black protest groups during World War II and the Civil Rights-Black Power era, which equated black freedom with black manhood redemption.[35] Moreover, the SNYC's formal commitment to progressive gender politics underscores the rupture between black Left organizations of the 1940s and civil rights groups of the 1960s, such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. As Barbara Ransby has shown, SNCC under longtime activist Ella Baker's guidance fostered an organizational culture that cultivated female leadership and an "alternative model of womanhood" that rejected black

middle-class respectability. However, early SNCC, unlike the SNYC, did not explicitly use feminist rhetoric to promote gender equity. Nor did SNCC ever have a female titular head, signaling just how far ahead of the times the Youth Congress was in comparison to its successors.[36]

The World Youth Conference

Cooper Jackson's attendance as the SNYC's sole representative to the World Youth Conference in London in late 1945 and her extensive travels through the Soviet Union in early 1946 represented a key watershed in her black left feminist politics and subjectivity.[37] Sponsored by the London-based, Soviet-affiliated World Youth Council, the conference sought to extend the Popular Front agenda into the postwar period. Nearly 450 delegates from 62 countries and colonies claiming to represent 40 million youth worldwide attended the gathering, which established the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) headquartered in Paris.[38]

Cooper Jackson's interactions with young progressive people from around the world, especially from across the diaspora and the emerging Third World, were transformative experiences, prompting her to appreciate the struggles against Jim Crow, colonialism, capitalism, and women's inequality in transnational terms like never before. In a letter to her SNYC colleagues, she noted: "I have spent most of my time with the colonial delegates, both at the Conference and in spare time."[39] She interacted with delegates from East and West Africa, including the young Kwame Nkrumah, as well as youth from South Africa, India, Puerto Rico, China, Jamaica, and Cuba. She befriended W. E. B. Du Bois, who sat in on conference proceedings after attending the recent Fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester, England. This meeting proved fortuitous for both of them. In the ensuing years, she along with her husband became close friends and close political allies with Du Bois, until he passed away in Ghana in 1963.[40] Outside of the conference, the Nigerian delegate (and future Nigerian official) Godfrey Amachree gave her a tour of African London neighborhoods and introduced her to African students.[41] These exchanges prompted her to see people of color from Alabama to India, and the Caribbean to West Africa, as a transnational community who shared a common past rooted in a history of violent racial and colonial subjugation as well as a common future based on their determination to be free.

Due to her encounters at the London conference, Cooper Jackson also began to see women's issues increasingly in transnational terms. She befriended Indian youth and labor leaders Kitty Boomla and Vedya

Kanuga, and they discussed mutual problems facing youth and women.[42] They urged Cooper Jackson to attend the upcoming International Congress of Women in Paris in November 1945 that established the Women's International Democratic Federation, initially a Popular Front women's rights group. She wanted to attend the conference, but for unexplained reasons she was unable to attain a visa from the U.S. State Department to travel to Paris. However, her SNYC colleague Thelma Dale did attend the gathering as the National Negro Congress representative.[43] Published in the NNC's *Congress View* newspaper, Dale's account of the conference lauded it as an important opportunity to bring the attention of "the up-hill struggle of Negro women in America" before an international forum. "I am confident," she added, "that exchange of experience and program with women from the colonial countries, the Soviet Union and many other lands, will help us on our return to make a substantial contribution to democratic developments in the United States."[44] Even sixty years later, she remembered the conference as an "exhilarating experience." In contrast to her daily encounters with segregation and racial humiliations that she knew all too well back home, Dale was able to move freely about Paris, and conference delegates treated her with the utmost respect. It is important to note that her favorable accounts as well as her remembrances of her stay in France overlooked the ways in which the French violently ruled over their colonial subjects of color in Africa and Asia, a tendency that was common amongst African Americans who visited or moved to the City of Light.[45] Despite this oversight, encounters like these nonetheless illustrate how the global Popular Front provided unique opportunities for U.S.-based black women radicals to exchange ideas with women from around the world.

The World Youth Conference led to an unforeseen opportunity for Cooper Jackson to visit the Soviet Union. Soviet officials courted conference delegates, especially those of color, and invited them to the U.S.S.R. She accepted their invitation and spent several weeks working as a bricklayers' assistant in rebuilding a frigid, war-torn Stalingrad. Through these firsthand experiences she gained an even greater appreciation for the Soviets' recent victory over Nazi Germany and for the former's apparent commitment to anticolonialism, antiracism, and peace.[46]

Energized by her experiences overseas, Cooper Jackson returned to Birmingham in February 1946 convinced that the SNYC could play a key role in leading new, militant postwar black freedom struggles and in promoting a black internationalist sensibility. Within weeks of her arrival home, the Youth Congress sent her and James Jackson, who had recently returned from army service in Burma, on a speaking tour across the South to promote "the SNYC program which emphasizes the close bond

of interest which exists between American Negro youth and democratic youth throughout the world, especially in the colonial areas." The Youth Congress solicited financial support for the Jacksons' tour from longtime SNYC allies and prominent black Southern reformers such as Modjeska Simkins, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and F. D. Patterson. The Jacksons spoke before large audiences at the prestigious Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham and at black colleges and black community institutions in Mobile and Montgomery, Alabama, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Columbia, South Carolina, about the links between struggles against Jim Crow and colonialism as well as about life in the U.S.S.R. and the prospects for peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union. Cooper Jackson also discussed her observations of Soviet women's status and her discussions with women delegates at the World Youth Conference. It is difficult to gauge the precise impact of these talks on their audiences. What is certain is that the Jacksons' tour was part of a broader trend within the postwar African American community in which "not only were critiques of imperialism widely shared, but the organization of new communication networks and a host of postwar planning forums created opportunities for African Americans to give substance to their internationalist and democratic visions."[47] The tour's success illustrated that the left-wing-led SNYC could work closely with politically mainstream black leaders and that liberals were still willing to support calls for peace and cooperation with the Soviet Union before the Red Scare deemed these positions as subversive.[48]

Presiding over the Youth Congress's Sixth All-Southern Negro Youth Conference in Columbia, South Carolina, in October 1946 was Cooper Jackson's crowning achievement during the 1940s, and it evidenced her global outlook.[49] She delivered the convention's opening report and introduced the conference's keynote speaker, W. E. B. Du Bois, whose famous "Behold the Land" speech linked the campaign against Jim Crow with global struggles against colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy.[50] His address instantly became a classic on the Left. Cooper Jackson later contended that it was one of Du Bois' "greatest speeches."[51] The address, moreover, highlighted his turn toward the radical Left, which came about due in no small part to his association with the Jacksons and their SNYC comrades, who idolized him. The respect was mutual. Du Bois lauded the Youth Congress as "the most promising organization of young people of which I know."[52]

The conference prominently featured black women on the program. Dorothy Burnham, Esther Cooper Jackson, Modjeska Simkins, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Rose Mae Catchings, and the Fairfield, Alabama, SNYC branch official Maenetta Steele sat on panel discussions and delivered

addresses to the convention. The organization also showed its concern for black working-class women's well-being. Miami SNYC official Florence Valentine, for example, delivered an address during the "Youth and Labor" panel in which she argued that black women had "been discriminated against and exploited…with double harshness." Calling attention to how black women had "played an important part in winning the war" and yet still worked disproportionately in domestic service, she demanded decent-paying jobs in unionized blue- and white-collar professions for black women in postwar America.[53]

The McCarthy Period and the Personal Costs of Activism

The onset of the Cold War marked a key turning point in Cooper Jackson's life and in her black left feminist activism. Convinced that postwar black militancy was a tool of the Soviet Union, the FBI stepped up its surveillance of the SNYC as the postwar years dawned. The Youth Congress's 1946 conference especially worried the FBI. An October 3, 1946 memo to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover warned that the Youth Legislature would be dominated by a "large number of Communists."[54] Hoover himself expressed alarm about the gathering. He sent a request to the State Department to "advise this Bureau of any information" about foreign conference delegates who were "under the influence of Communists."[55] After the conference, the FBI issued a detailed forty-four-page report about the Youth Legislature that included lists of names of delegates and their organizational affiliations as well as out-of-state license plates of cars parked near the gathering and copies of printed materials used during the conference. Mostly unaware of government surveillance, Cooper Jackson and her fellow SNYC colleagues went about their business. But the anticommunist hysteria that the conference generated was an ominous harbinger for what was to come for black Party women in a few short years.[56]

Cold war repression coupled with a resurgence of white supremacy in Birmingham led to the SNYC's demise in 1949. Local white authorities including the city's mayor, Cooper Green, and Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor, who gained international notoriety fifteen years later for his staunch opposition to desegregation, were at the forefront in leading efforts that forced the Youth Congress to shut down. The SNYC's 1948 conference marked the beginning of the end for the organization. Due to Bull Connor's intimidation and threats of unleashing the Ku Klux Klan on the gathering, several local black ministers and former allies, including the pastor of the prominent Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, refused to allow the Youth Congress to use their

churches. Eventually, the SNYC found a smaller church in which to hold its gathering; however, white Birmingham police forcibly prevented Gleu Taylor from entering the building. In this stifling political climate, the Youth Congress' politically mainstream black supporters "melted away," removing from the political scene a pioneering black militant organization that provided black women radicals such as Cooper Jackson with unique opportunities to lead a group with links to the global political stage and that nurtured a progressive gender politics.[57]

The virulent political repression of the McCarthy period, however, did not deter black women radicals from pursuing a black left feminist agenda. The formation in 1951 of the short-lived, New York City-based Sojourners for Truth and Justice, the first and only all-black women's group in the Communist Left, speaks to black radical women's resilience. The Sojourners attempted to mobilize black women against Jim Crow and U.S. cold war domestic and foreign policy and to expose violations of African Americans' human rights before the United Nations at the height of the Red Scare. Moreover, Sojourners' understood black women's oppression in diasporic, intersectional terms and attempted to forge ties of international solidarity not only with women of African descent but with Third World and white women radicals. Although not actively involved in its national leadership, Cooper Jackson attended Sojourner meetings in Brooklyn, where she and her husband had moved in 1950. Similar to the fate of the SNYC, anticommunist repression played a crucial role in shutting down the Sojourners, and until recently the group's legacy was shrouded from the historical record.[58]

Cooper Jackson paid a heavy personal cost for her left-wing affiliations and for her husband's decision to go underground to avoid arrest for allegedly violating the Smith Act. During the nearly five years in which James Jackson was in hiding, the FBI relentlessly harassed the Jackson family, like other Communist families, "with a doggedness born of ideological fervor" due to the government's belief that these families represented the embodiment of an international communist conspiracy that threatened national security.[59] Government agents, for example, conspicuously trailed Cooper Jackson and her daughters wherever they went, including during leisurely afternoon walks through Brooklyn's Prospect Park near their home, in an effort to ascertain Jackson's whereabouts. The FBI closely watched the Jacksons' home and those of the couple's family and friends. Most notably, the FBI coerced four-year-old Kathryn Jackson's nursery school to expel her, a move that generated significant attention both in the Communist and African American press. These experiences evidenced how Cooper Jackson and other "Smith Act wives" often bore the brunt of government repression and the burdens

of raising children and making a living while their husbands were in hiding or in jail.[60]

The long separation and their reunion placed serious strains on their children and marriage. For nearly five years, the Jackson daughters grew up without their father, and Cooper Jackson was alone. In contrast to the partnership that they had developed during the 1940s in sharing household responsibilities, his long absence compelled Cooper Jackson to become the primary care giver and wage earner.[61]

James Jackson's return created new strains within the family. As Cooper Jackson recalled: "It wasn't easy to get readjusted again as a family… Sometimes I was so accustomed to being in charge that I was doing everything. We had a lot of serious talking to do to decide whether [maintaining the marriage] was worth it or not." The couple also had to negotiate "[ho]w to deal with problems that our daughters had. What to discuss in front of them because it was like starting all over again." The family did persevere, although with lasting effects on their personal lives.[62]

Generous emotional and financial support, especially from her and her husband's families, as well as her own lived experiences of growing up as a black woman under Jim Crow terror, enabled Cooper Jackson to weather the cold war storm.[63] The small community of black Communist families in Brooklyn was especially important in helping her endure the McCarthy period. Her old SNYC comrades from Birmingham, Dorothy and Louis Burnham and Ed and Augusta Strong, had relocated to Brooklyn by the late 1940s. Cooper Jackson and her daughters eventually moved into the Strong's Bedford-Stuyvesant home. The Burnhams lived across the street. Many neighbors who were either in or allied with the Party were sympathetic to the Jackson's plight. Additionally, black Communists Louise Thompson Patterson and William L. Patterson briefly lived nearby in Brooklyn before they moved to Harlem. During the summers, the Davises from Birmingham drove up to Brooklyn. All of these couples had children close in age. They regularly socialized together. They could also relate to one another's ordeal. For example, Ed Strong and his sister-in-law Constance Jackson, who had lived with the family, had been underground. Phyllis Taylor-Strong remembers as a child routinely "seeing FBI cars parked on the corner." Witnessing her mother burning letters in the kitchen oven out of fear that government agents might raid their home and seize documents was especially traumatic for Taylor-Strong. These experiences had long-term effects on her ability to trust new acquaintances.[64] Similarly, Margaret Burnham remembers as a child being "just terrified" of the constant government surveillance, especially after the June 1953 execution of the Rosenbergs, an event that was especially traumatic for many Smith Act children.[65] Still, these black children

of Communist parents understood that "we weren't alone," as Burnham recalled, adding: "It was frightening. But you knew that somehow you were fighting against something." Although their parents rarely spoke about their Party affiliations with their children, the Jackson, Burnham, and Strong children regularly attended left-wing political meetings and rallies with their parents. Spending time in the Pattersons' and Du Bois' homes was important for these children. Margaret Burnham recalled: "you felt like you were in a museum of African American life" when you were in their homes, which provided the children with a sense of warmth and protection. Moreover, their parents did everything they could to ensure that their children enjoyed such typical childhood pleasures as playing hopscotch and attending birthday parties. Growing up under the traumatic circumstances caused by the Red Scare created lasting bonds of friendship for them. Many achieved personal and professional success as adults, underscoring "that to the degree that the families of the Smith Act victims had support and could achieve a sense of community and connections to others, the children of these families would experience less negative effects of trauma."[66] This community was also beneficial to the adults' well-being. They saw each other daily, and they regularly discussed politics and socialized more informally. These families' mutual collective support illustrates that Cooper Jackson and her close friends understood that the creation of a new world entailed not only dismantling oppressive social and political systems but also the cultivation of compassionate, nurturing relationships between people at risk and in need.[67]

Government harassment redirected Cooper Jackson's activism away from her internationalist-informed antiracist work that she had pursued during and immediately after the war and narrowly toward freeing her husband from government persecution. In an effort to free him, she worked closely with the Brooklyn-based National Committee to Defend Negro Leadership, an organization that publicized the McCarthyite political persecution of African American Communists such as Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., Pettis Perry, Claudia Jones, and William L. Patterson as well as non-Communist black spokespersons such as W. E. B. Du Bois, labor leader (and future Detroit mayor) Coleman Young, Detroit attorney George W. Crockett, Jr., Mary McCleod Bethune, clubwoman Mary Church Terrell, and South Carolina NAACP official Modjeska Simkins.[68] Cooper Jackson also spoke at rallies about her husband's case and other Smith Act defendants under the auspices of the James E. Jackson Defense Committee, the Civil Rights Congress, and other black left organizations before and after he surrendered to authorities at the federal building at Foley Square in New York City. Immediately after he turned himself in, she spearheaded efforts in raising $20,000 for his bail. His yearlong trial for violating the

Smith Act began in May 1956. He was found guilty and sentenced to two years in prison. The case, however, was thrown out on appeal and helped set the precedent for the important Supreme Court 1957 *Yates v. United States* ruling that in essence declared the Smith Act unconstitutional. Although Jackson secured his freedom, government persecution prevented the couple from actively taking part in new struggles for black equality in the South that the SNYC had helped to initiate. For example, his efforts along with those of SNYC activist Mildred McAdory in organizing the 1942 boycott of Birmingham buses deeply impressed the young E. D. Nixon, the future leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. But Jackson's left-wing past and his legal troubles prevented him from participating in this movement.[69] Moreover, while the State Department never confiscated Cooper Jackson's passport as it did those of W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, William L. Patterson, and Charlotta Bass, James Jackson's case prevented her from traveling overseas and attending left-wing forums as she had before the McCarthy period. Anticommunist repression at this moment, in short, accomplished one of its primary goals: isolating some of the most committed, experienced antiracist fighters from the emergent civil rights movement and from the world stage.

Familialism and Black Left Feminism during the McCarthy Period

The Red Scare necessitated that Cooper Jackson's public persona conform to the discourse of conservative postwar domesticity that was integral to cold war politics by framing her claims for social justice in familialist terms.[70] In an effort to free her husband and other imprisoned Communists, she emerged as a leading national spokesperson for the Families of Smith Act Victims (Families Committee), an organization comprised largely of wives of CPUSA officials indicted under the Smith Act. Appropriating the cold war era "cultural icon of family security," the group employed familialism to discredit McCarthyism by portraying government persecution of the families of imprisoned Communist male leaders as an unjust attack against innocent, defenseless children and mothers. Since "motherhood and family devotion were [understood as] the bulwark of patriotic, postwar America," the Families Committee subverted cold war logic by positing that "the state violat[ed] its own values by attacking families."[71]

While this strategy enabled the Families Committee to generate some support for Smith Act families outside of the Communist Left, the organization's appropriation of the discourse of postwar domesticity also

signaled the contradictions and ironies of the Communist Left's articulation of "the Woman Question" during the early 1950s. In light of the ways in which the "politicization of homosexuality was crucial to the consolidation of the Cold War consensus," familialism countered a prevailing demonization of communists as advocates of "free love" and sexual deviance that threatened national security. Anxieties linking communism with interracial sex between black men and white men also informed cold warriors' homophobia.[72] Yet the Communist Left's deployment of familialism came at a cost. In part a defensive response to McCarthyism as well as an expression of long-standing heterosexism deeply embedded within the Communist Left, familialism encouraged the CPUSA's own internal purge of homosexuals during the Red Scare, which undercut its progressive views on gender oppression by silencing discussions within the Party about sexuality, reproductive rights, and domestic violence.[73]

This was evident in Cooper Jackson's use of familialism in her work to free her husband, underscoring both the limited options that black women radicals during the McCarthy period had in asserting their claims to citizenship and justice and to the creative ways they challenged the discourse of postwar domesticity that was "deeply imbued with racist assumptions" and that represented womanhood and motherhood in popular U.S. culture as universally white and middle class.[74] One example of this was her decision to adopt "Jackson" as her last name. Prior to the McCarthy period, she regularly had used "Cooper" and occasionally "Cooper Jackson." Strategically, adopting her husband's name made it easier for her to be readily identified publicly as James Jackson's wife when she spoke and organized on his behalf. But it also signaled the ways in which cold war repression required her to conform to social norms that wives share their husband's last name, shedding the transgressive practice of black SNYC women's use of their maiden names during the 1940s, a practice that cold warriors in the early 1950s read as subversive.[75]

Cooper Jackson's thirty-six page 1953 agitprop pamphlet *This Is My Husband: Fighter for His People, Political Refugee* best illustrated the ironic, contradictory implications of employing familial ideology for making claims for social justice and citizenship through her valorization of black motherhood. The pamphlet was as much about her and her children's ordeal with McCarthyism as it was about telling her husband's plight. Portraying the government's efforts to capture Jackson as a vicious attack against a respectable, unprotected black family, a faithful, supportive wife, and the entire African American community, the pamphlet opened by lamenting how her "husband has been a hunted and harried 'fugitive' in his own land." She added: "Our children especially have been the target of [government] vindictiveness." She discussed how FBI pressure led

to the expulsion of "little Kathy" from her nursery school and noted that government agents followed her children wherever they went. Evoking memories of slavery, she compared the infamous 1850 Fugitive Slave Act to the "fascist-like" Smith Act and referred to J. Edgar Hoover as "the present master of the FBI bloodhounds" who were "sniffing around the peaceful homes of thousands of law abiding citizens" in search of Jackson. In addition to calling for the freedom of her husband and all Smith Act victims, she called for, in essence, a Popular Front program: black-white racial unity, labor rights, world peace, international cooperation, and racial democracy. She expressed, above all, her longing for her endeared husband, "Jack," her affectionate nickname for him, and support for what he believed: "I want so much to have now his warm comradeship; to hear again from his lips those winged words of exciting promise as he would give voice to his confident dreams of a free and bountiful new life for the world's humble people."[76]

In light of the long memory of the violent breakup of black families and the sexual violation and exploitation of black women by white men during and after slavery, along with recent memories of Nazism, she must have known that her family's ordeal would resonate with her readers, especially with an African American audience. Indeed it did. For example, black journalist James L. Hicks's extensive front-page exposé in the *Afro-American* newspaper detailed the FBI's relentless harassment of Cooper Jackson and her daughters. He assailed the FBI for its halfhearted efforts in investigating the December 1951 violent murder of Florida NAACP official Harry T. Moore and his wife Harriet, while it used "Gestapo-like" tactics in "hounding" this "young mother and her two small daughters" and "trailing innocent four-year-old children down the streets of Brooklyn." Framing the family in respectable, heteronormative, middle-class terms, he called attention to how the Jackson's Brooklyn home was a "neatly kept, modestly furnished apartment." He observed that their living room contained: "a comfortable leather chair—a chair obviously the seat of a man—a man who is not there." Hicks closed the article by noting that FBI agents in an unmarked car followed him as he drove away from the Jackson home, suggesting that any African American could become a potential target of government persecution.[77]

This Is My Husband revealed the irony of familialism. On one hand, Cooper Jackson conceded ground to the cold war order by using the discourse of postwar domesticity to demand her husband's freedom. In doing so, the pamphlet precluded the formulation of an alternative discourse that might have directly challenged the hegemonic masculinist logic undergirding postwar domesticity that buttressed U.S. cold war domestic and foreign policy, and white supremacy.[78] Her use of familial

ideology highlights the heteronormative assumptions embedded in her articulation of black left feminism. While their understandings of the relations between race, gender, and class were in many respects ahead of its time, most black left feminists during the 1950s had little to say publicly about sex and sexuality and its relation to politics.[79] This speaks in part to the resonance of the "politics of respectability" and the "culture of dissemblance" in silencing public discussions about sexuality amongst black radical women, suggesting that some shared much in common with their more politically mainstream sisters in women's clubs and reform organizations.[80] In this light, *This Is My Husband* was part of a wider tendency within the Communist Left and black protest organizations that elided sexuality from political discussion.[81] It is important to note that black left feminism was not categorically heterosexist or silent on matters of sexuality. The prescient, pro-gay rights arguments in anonymous letters by progressive journalist, political activist, and lesbian Lorraine Hansberry published in late 1950s issues of the *The Ladder*, the newsletter of the first U.S. national lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, is the best example of this claim.[82] However, these conversations did not become an explicit part of the black feminist agenda until the 1970s, when organizations such as the Third World Women's Alliance and the Combahee River Collective made fighting heterosexism a critical component of their program. The CPUSA did not begin to address sexuality as a political issue until the late 1970s, albeit with considerable resistance from some Party men and women.[83]

The pamphlet's objective for Cooper Jackson was to invoke public sympathy for her family's persecution and to build broad-based support to free her husband during one of the most politically repressive moments in U.S. history, not to theorize on women's oppression. As a black woman radical living through the McCarthy period, she had limited political options. As Andrea Friedman has recently observed, "[f]ew African American women could claim any sort of national prominence, and the citizenship of women of all races was widely understood as filtered through their family roles."[84] So in this light, Cooper Jackson's appropriation of traditional gender conventions made strategic sense, and it did generate publicity for her plight and her husband's case. Moreover, her deployment of familialism can be read as a political performance. Black Queer Studies theorist E. Patrick Johnson's observations about the ways in which "authentic" blackness is performed and appropriated by black and nonblack people sheds light on this claim: "the performance paradigm illuminates the mirroring that occurs in culture, the tension between stabilizing cultural forces (tradition), and the shifting, ever-evolving aspects of culture that provide sites for social reflection, transformation, and

critique."[85] That her gender politics did not undergo a radical realignment and that she remained committed to a left-wing stance after the Cold War unlike some black progressive women such as writers Alice Childress and Ann Petry, who in later years downplayed their left-wing pasts, suggests that Cooper Jackson's use of familialism was a calculated, expeditious political move.[86] So by employing familial ideology, she, on one hand, subverted postwar domesticity and McCarthyism, adeptly using one of the few socially accepted avenues available to black women to criticize the government and to demand social justice and democracy. On the other, familialism removed critical discussions of sexuality from the table that might have been able to help destabilize cold war ideology.

Conclusion

Despite the persecution she endured and the destruction of Communist Left organizations during the McCarthy period, Cooper Jackson continued pursuing a black left feminist agenda after the 1950s, albeit in a political landscape that had been irrevocably transformed by the Red Scare.[87] Her vision of freedom rejected the NAACP's and other mainstream black protest groups' advocacy of "Cold War civil rights," a term historian Mary Dudziak describes as "a narrowing of acceptable civil rights discourse" that "kept discussions of broad-based social change, or a linking of race and class off the agenda."[88] Nothing better epitomized the resilience of Cooper Jackson's black left feminism than her role in cofounding *Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Negro Freedom Movement* in 1961, which she served as managing editor until 1985.

The journal marked Cooper Jackson's most significant achievement as an activist and stood as "probably the most notable and enduring institution established in the 1960s by African Americans who had been active in the Popular Front."[89] Even more, *Freedomways* stands as an important but often overlooked "parent" of modern black feminism.[90] The magazine, for example, published articles by veteran black women radicals such as Shirley Graham Du Bois, Eslanda Robeson, and others focused on diasporic freedom movements and women's contributions to them. It also published some of the earliest work by Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, and June Jordan, all of whom would make their names as major figures in black literary feminism, highlighting the debt modern black feminism owed to black women, such as Cooper Jackson, in the Communist Left.[91]

Cooper Jackson's black left feminism has important implications for critically understanding the contours of black internationalism, the

impact of the Cold War on diasporic radicalism, and the roots of second-wave black feminism. Her work demonstrates the importance of the Communist Left as a site for nurturing a distinct black feminism during the 1940s and early 1950s. The transnational circuitry of the global Popular Front led to unforeseen opportunities for her to travel overseas and to exchange ideas with radicals from around the world, encounters that fundamentally transformed Cooper Jackson's politics and subjectivity. Moreover, groups such as the SNYC created opportunities for black women to lead dynamic social movements with links to the international arena that they could find nowhere else. Cooper Jackson's left-wing affiliations, however, came at a tremendous personal cost. Her persecution during the McCarthy period shows that black women radicals suffered for their beliefs, highlighting the gendered and racialized contours of anticommunist repression.

Future scholarship needs to address not only how black women radicals constructed their own meanings of freedom, which at least occasionally challenged the racism and sexism within the Communist Left, but also how the Red Scare influenced the trajectory of black left feminism. While it is impossible to predict how black women's activism might have progressed had the Red Scare not been so severe—or not occurred at all—we can point to how anticommunism destroyed left-wing organizations that were attentive to the global intersections of race, gender, and class. A critical understanding of Esther Cooper Jackson's activism, then, provides insight into a small but vocal community of black women radicals who were at the forefront in imagining and building a more democratic world and yet were still burdened with the contradictions of their historical moment.

Notes

1. Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCathyism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 145–147; Ellen Schrecker, *Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Esther Cooper Jackson, *This Is My Husband: Fighter for His People, Political Refugee* (Brooklyn: National Committee for the Defense of Negro Leadership, 1953); James R. Barrett, *William Z. Foster and the Tragedy of American Communism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 238–242.
2. Esther Cooper Jackson and James E. Jackson, Jr., interview by author, April 2, 1998, Brooklyn, NY (hereafter Jackson interview April 2, 1998); Esther Cooper Jackson and James E. Jackson, Jr., interview by author, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, NY (hereafter Jackson interview August 13, 1998) ; For how cold warriors interpreted peace as subversive, see Robbie Lieberman, *The*

Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism and the U.S. Peace Movement 1945–1963 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), and Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 151–199.

3. *Afro-American*, February 9, 1952, 1, 2.
4. For a useful discussion of the Popular Front, see Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997).
5. Peter F. Lau, *Democracy Rising: South Carolina and the Fight for Black Equality Since 1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 158; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 200–202; Johnetta Richards, "The Southern Negro Youth Congress: A History" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1987), 27–48; Erik S. McDuffie, "Long Journeys: Four Black Women and the Communist Party, USA, 1930–1956," (Phd.D. diss., New York University, 2003), 228–229, 365–395, 463–468; Augusta Strong, "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage," *Freedomways* 4 (Winter 1964): 35–50.
6. For example, black women radicals receive only superficial treatment in canonical texts on African American women's protest, such as historian Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), and Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Quill, 1984). Although they are not the main subject of study, black Communist Party women receive fuller treatment in Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 97–113, Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Depression* (New York: Grove Press, 1983), Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), and Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*.

   This essay joins a growing body of scholarship focused on black women's involvement in the Communist Left during the 1940s and 1950s. See, McDuffie, "Long Journeys"; Erik S. McDuffie, "A 'new freedom movement of Negro women': Sojourning for Truth, Justice, and Human Rights during the Early Cold War," *Radical History Review* 101 (Spring 2008): 81–106; Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Jacqueline Ann Castledine, "Gendering the Cold War: Race, Class and Women's Peace Politics, 1945–1975" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2006); Dayo Falayon Gore, "To Hold a Candle in the Wind: Black Women Radicals and Post World War II U.S. Politics" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2003); Mary Helen Washington, "Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, and Claudia Jones: Black Women Write the Popular Front," in *Left of the Color Line: Race, Radicalism, and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States*, ed. Bill V. Mullen and James Smethurst (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 185,

193–194; Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

7. Washington, "Black Women Write the Popular Front," 185, 193–194; McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 479–480; Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*, 10–20, 37–40.
8. Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 69.
9. Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43 (April 2000): 11–45; Brent Hayes Edwards, "'Unfinished Migrations': Commentary and Response," *African Studies Review* 43 (April 2000): 47–68; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Brett Hayes Edwards, "Black Globality: The International Shape of Black Intellectual Culture" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1998); Earl Lewis, "'To Turn as on a Pivot': Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *American Historical Review* 100 (June 1995): 765–787.
10. With some variations in their arguments and often mindful that some veteran black radicals politically survived the 1950s, these texts view the Cold War as a key turning point in the black freedom movement, see Horne, *Black and Red*; Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (London: Associated University Press, 1988); Gerald Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008); Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*; Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: the Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 58–59; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 220–231; Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*; Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism*; James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). For discussions that view the Cold War as beneficial to the civil rights movement, see Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race*

Relations in the Global Arena (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Historian Fanon Che Wilkins, for instance, in a useful article about the internationalist dimensions of Lorraine Hansberry's political journalism and literary work, admonishes scholars to avoid overdetermining the Cold War as a "temporal break that sets all the terms and neatly periodizes black internationalist activity without fully engaging the rich tributaries that facilitated the intergenerational exchange of ideas and practices animating African American political discourse in the post-World War II period." Instead, he argues that Hansberry's life and work provide scholars with a lens for appreciating the continuities in black internationalist initiatives and intergenerational exchange before and after the mid-1950s. "Beyond Bandung: The Critical Nationalism of Lorraine Hansberry, 1950–1965," *Radical History Review* 95 (Spring 2006): 192.

11. Cynthia Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 3; James Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); See also Alan M. Wald, *Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 54–56, 62–66, 134–137.
12. The term "personal cost" of activism is taken from Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
13. Elaine Tyler May, "Explosive Issues: Sex, Women, and the Bomb," in *Recasting America, Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) quoted in Deborah A. Gerson, "'Is Family Devotion Now Subversive?' Familialism against McCarthyism," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America*, *1945–1960*, ed., Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 166; See also Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).
14. Gerson, "Is Family Devotion Now Subversive?" [152]; Families of the Smith Act Victims, "The People Take Care of Their Own: Fact Sheet on the Families of the Smith Act," pamphlet, Smith Act Box, Defense Activities, 1951–1963 Folder, James E. Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archive, New York University, New York (hereafter Jackson Papers). Note that this author first accessed the Jackson Papers before they were reorganized in early 2007. All materials accessed after this date will be noted as Jackson Papers 2007. *Daily Worker*, June 1, 1953, 8.
15. McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 285–302; Robert Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929–1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), *134–187*, 139–154, 207–208; Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine*

Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 33–68; Della Scott, "An Interview with Esther Jackson," *Abafazi: The Simmons College Journal of Women of African Descent* 9 (Fall/Winter 1999): 4; Esther Cooper Jackson, telephone interview by author, November 17, 2002; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 204–205.

Cooper's 1940 masters thesis, "The Negro Woman in Relation to Trade Unionism," marked the first major articulation of her black left feminism. Still the most thorough study of black women domestics and unionization during the Depression, it argued that "the problems faced by Negro women domestic workers are responsive to amelioration through trade union organizations," while challenging mainstream labor's position that domestic workers were "unorganizable." In doing so, she challenged white Communist women writers who often portrayed women as universally white and the labor movement's neglect of African American women wage-earners. Esther V. Cooper, "The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism" (M.A. thesis, Fisk University, 1940), 27; James and Esther Jackson, interview by Louis Massiah, W. E. B. Du Bois Film Project, June 2, 1992, 16–17, 23, 25–26, McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 284, 290–292, 295–302; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 204.

16. Lau, *Democracy Rising,* 158; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 200–202; Richards, "The Southern Negro Youth Congress," 27–48.
17. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 195–219; Richards, "The Southern Negro Youth Congress," 27–177.
18. Impressed with her thesis, renowned University of Chicago sociologist Robert Park offered Cooper a fellowship to pursue her doctorate. She intended to complete her graduate studies one day. But she got "busy organizing in the South." The chance to materialize her commitment to racial justice and democracy was just too good an opportunity for her to pass up. Scott, "An Interview with Esther Jackson," 4; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 205; McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 303–316.
19. Jacksons, by author, August 13, 1998, 6; Jacksons, by author, April 2, 1998, 3–7; Cooper Jackson, telephone interview by author, November 17, 2002; Esther Cooper Jackson, telephone conversation by author, January 23, 2003; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 204; David L. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), 518–519, 523–524; "Honoring the Life of James Edward Jackson Jr.," memorial service program, Tishman Auditorium, Vanderbilt Hall, School of Law, New York University November 17, 2007, in author's possession.
20. McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 368–369; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 202.
21. "Proclamation of Southern Negro Youth," James E. Jackson, Jr. and Esther Cooper Jackson personal papers, in author's possession (hereafter Jackson personal papers).
22. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 200–201; Augusta Jackson (Strong), "A New Deal for Tobacco Workers," *Crisis* 45 (October 1938): 322–324, 330; Danielle

McGuire, "'It Was like All of US Had Been Raped': Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle," *Journal of American History* 91 (December 2004): 911–912.

23. McAdory initially worked as a clerical worker in the SNYC office, where she gained her first experience as a writer. She eventually moved to New York in the late 1940s and joined the writing staff of the CPUSA's *Daily Worker* newspaper. Communist Party of the USA Records: Biographical Files on Communist Activists and Leaders, Box 5, Folder 47, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York; "Youth Leader Jailed and Beaten by Alabama Police," December 12, 1942, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC: Documents, Publications, and Clippings, 1942; Dorothy Burnham, interview by author, August 10, 1999; Brooklyn; "Mildred McAdory Edelman," memorial service program, Dorothy Burnham personal papers, in author's possession; E. D. Nixon to Esther Cooper, September 8, 1944, Jackson personal papers; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 74; Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home, Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 90–91; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 203.
24. Dorothy Burnham, interview by author, April 10, 1999, Brooklyn, NY; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 203–204.
25. U.S. War Department, "Personnel Placement Questionnaire," January 11, 1944, Jackson Papers 2007, Box 1, Folder 3.
26. *Congress View* 3 (December 1945): 1, Edward E. Strong Papers, Box 6, Folder 24, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC (hereafter Strong Papers); "Souvenir Journal," Southern Youth Legislature, October 18–20, 1946, Strong Papers, Box 29, Folder 5; John Baxter, Jr., "National Negro Congress, 1936–1947" (Ph.D., diss., University of Cincinnati, 1981), 308, 309.
27. Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 15–35.
28. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 66; "Women Urged to Attend Tuskegee," n.d. in Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, Documents, Publications Folder; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 203; Gerson, "Is Family Devotion Now Subversive?" 168.
29. Esther V. Cooper to Charlotte Hawkins Brown, April 25, 1946, Southern Negro Youth Congress Papers, Box 2, Third Leadership Training School Folder, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC (hereafter SNYC Papers); Louis E. Burnham to Annie Belle Weston, March 13, 1946; Modjeska Simkins, form letter "Dear Pastor," n.d.; Modjeksa Simkins to Louis E. Burnham, March 17, 1946; all in SNYC Papers, Box 2, Jackson's Lecture Tour Folder; "Souvenir Bulletin, Sixth All-Southern Youth Conference," November 30–December 3, 1944, Atlanta, GA; "Keynote Session, Sixth All-Southern Negro Youth Legislature" flyer, all in Jackson Personal papers; "Proceedings: Sixth All-Southern Negro Youth Conference," program, Strong Papers, Box 3, Folder 4; McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 427–432; Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*; Weigand, *Red*

Feminism, 97–113. Jones is buried to the left of Karl Marx's grave in London's Highgate Cemetery.

Cooper Jackson also corresponded with leading black male civil rights leaders such as National Urban League director Lester B. Granger, NAACP Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, and NAACP head Walter White. Esther V. Cooper to Thurgood Marshall, April 8, 1944; Thurgood Marshall to Esther V. Cooper, September 21, 1945; Esther V. Cooper to Lester B. Granger, October 16, 1946; both in Jackson personal papers; Walter White to Esther V. Cooper, telegram, April 14, 1945, Jackson Papers 2007, Box 9, Folder 14.

30. Athena D. Mutua, *Progressive Black Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xi. See also Mark Antony Neal, *New Black Man* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
31. Jacksons, interview by author, August 13, 1998; James E. Jackson, Jr. and Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by author, April 10, 1999, Brooklyn, NY.
32. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 207.
33. Jacksons, interview August 13, 1998; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 206; Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 105–147, 256–259, 291–298.
34. Jacksons, interview by author August 13, 1998; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 206.
35. For discussions of more traditionally defined gender roles in black protest movements and masculinist articulations of black freedom during the twentieth century, see Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 288–301; Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Barbara Bair, "True Women, Real Men: Gender, Ideology, and Social Roles in the Garvey Movement," in *Gender Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History*, ed., Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Rhonda M. Williams, "Living at the Crossroads: Explorations in Race, Nationality, Sexuality, and Gender," in *The House That Race Built*, ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 136–156; Wahneema Lubiano, "Black Nationalism and Black Common Sense: Policing Ourselves and Others," in *The House That Race Built*, ed. Lubiano, 232–252; E. Frances White, "Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter-Discourse and African American Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History* 2 (Spring 1990): 73–97.
36. Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 256–259, 309–313.
37. Cooper Jackson's attendance at the three-day International Youth Planning Conference in Mexico City in October 1941 bolstered her global sensibility. Her first trip outside of the United States, she interacted with nearly two dozen delegates from Argentina, Canada, the United States, Costa Rica, Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela committed to Popular Front antifascism and internationalism. (She was one of two African American women delegates.) Emphasizing that "freedom in the United States can only

be won by joining hands with them [antifascist youth of the Americas] to destroy the menace of Hitler," the conference strengthened her belief that the African American freedom struggle was inseparable from global struggles against fascism. Esther V. Cooper, "Hitler's Foes—From Canada to the Cape," *Cavalcade* (November 1941): 5, 7, Strong Papers, Box 3, Folder 19.

38. More than 6,000 people packed London's Albert Hall for the conference's colorful opening ceremonies. In keeping with the spirit of the Popular Front, the American delegation consisted of an eclectic, interracial group of twenty young people (five African Americans), representing the National Jewish Welfare Board, NAACP, American Youth for Democracy, United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers, CIO, YWCA, and Cooper's SNYC, amongst others. The conference's final resolutions called for the elimination of racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, fascism, and colonialism; demanded the formation of an international agency to oversee atomic weapons; and called for U.S.-Soviet cooperation in the postwar period. Delegates selected Cooper along with five other Americans to the U.S. national committee of the WFDY. "Report of the American Delegation to the World Youth Conference"; "List of Delegates," both in Jackson Papers 2007, Box 19, Folder 44; Esther Cooper Jackson, "Historic London Conference Unites Youth for World," Strong Papers, Box 7, Folder 4, 1–2; *Youth Conference-1945*, 2–5; Esther Cooper to Louis Burnham, October 30, 1945, letter from London, reprinted in SNYC *Monthly Review* (December 1945), SNYC Papers, Box 9, WYF, 1947 folder; William Z. Foster, *The History of the Communist Party of the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1952), 447–448; Frances Damon to Esther Cooper, letter, September 14, 1945, SNYC Papers, Box 9 World Youth Festival, 1947 folder; Jacksons, interview by author, April 2, 1998.
39. Esther Cooper to Louis Burnham, October 30, 1945.
40. Getting to know W. E. B. Du Bois was one of the highlights of the World Youth Conference for Cooper Jackson. Although they had occasionally corresponded during the war, the two hit it off in London. There she arranged a dinner with Du Bois and a number of delegates from the colonial world. W. E. B. Du Bois to Esther Cooper, July 24, 1946, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC Correspondence Folder; W. E. B. Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, October 28, 1946, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC Correspondence Folder; Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality*, 518–519, 523–524; Scott, "An Interview with Esther Jackson," 6–8.
41. She also spoke about the SNYC on BBC radio programs as well as before curious English audiences in Cambridge, Stratford-on-Avon, and Gloucester, and at a Red Cross club for African American soldiers. Cooper Jackson, "Historic London Conference," 1, 2; Esther Cooper Jackson to "Mrs. Coop," November 5, 1945, Jackson's personal papers, in author's possession; Jacksons, interview by author April 2, 1998, 12; W. E. B. Du Bois to Esther Cooper, July 24, 1946, and October 28, 1946, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC Correspondence Folder; Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality*, 518–519, 523–524; Scott, "An Interview with Esther Jackson," 6–8.

42. "Report of the United States Delegation, World Youth Conference," 2, SNYC Papers, Box 9, World Youth Federation, 1947 folder; *The Leader*, January 26, 1946, n.p. in Jackson Papers 2006, SNYC Box, Clippings, Pictorials Folder; K. Boomla, "Women and Women Workers in India" (circa October 1945), Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers, Box 4, Folder 19, Reel 4208, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Archives.
43. Cooper to Burnham, October 30, 1945; "Report of the United States Delegation, World Youth Conference," SNYC Papers, Box 9, World Youth Federation, 1947 folder; Officers Report, Congress of American Women, May 6–8, 1949, 1, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA, Series III, Women's International Democratic Federation, Box 2, Folder 20a; Women's International Democratic Federation, "Standing Orders," adopted by the Constitutive Congress, November 25–30, 1945, Gurley Flynn Papers, Box 4, Folder 11, Reel 4208; Weigand, *Red Feminism*, 48.
44. Dale, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Vivian Carter Mason were the three African American women to attend the conference. *Congress View* 3 (December 1945): 1, Ed Strong Papers, Box 7, Folder 1; Intervention de Mme Thelma Dale, au non de la Délégation de Etats-Unis, Fédération Démocratique Internationale de Femmes, *Congrès des Femmes* (Paris: Fédération Démocratique Internationale de Femmes, n.d.), 151, Communism Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 20, Sophia Smith Collection.
45. Thelma Dale Perkins, telephone interview by author, July 18, 2006; Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 6.
46. While attending a party for conference delegates at the Soviet Embassy in London, she and other delegates received an unexpected invitation from Russian officials to visit the U.S.S.R. Jacksons, interview by author, April 2, 1998, 12; Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 518. Jacksons, interview by author, April 2, 1998, 12; Esther Cooper Jackson to author, letter, February 5, 2003. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 518.
47. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 42–43.
48. Flyer for the Jackson's appearance at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, March 17, 1946, Esther I. Cooper Papers, Box 4, Esther V. Cooper folder, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University; Louis E. Burnham to Rev. H. C. Carter, March 4, 1946; Louis E. Burnham to Mrs. Annie Belle Weston, March 13, 1946; Louis E. Burnham to Dr. F. D. Patterson, March 4, 1946, Louis E. Burnham to Ms. Winifred Norman, March 4, 1946; Modjeska M. Simpkins to Louis E. Burnham, March 17, 1946; SNYC Papers, Box 2, Jackson Lecture Tour folder; Barbara Woods, "Modjeska Simkins and the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP, 1939–1957," in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941–1965*, ed. Vicki Crawford, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 99–120; Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream*, 32–134; Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare*, 167–191; Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 69–121.
49. Strong, "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage," 47; Jacksons interview by Massiah, 23, 25–26; Esther V. Cooper to Walter White, September 30, 1946; Walter White to Mrs. Hurley, memo, October 2, 1946; Mrs. Hurley to Walter

White, memo, October 3, 1946; "Final Call to Conference!" NAACP Papers, Group II, A527, SNYC folder; "Southern Youth Legislature Souvenir Journal," SNYC Papers, Box 29, Folder 5; W. E. B. Du Bois, "Behold the Land," reprint in *Freedomways* 4 (Winter 1964): 8; Scott, "Interview with Esther Jackson," 6–7; Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 163–171.

50. Du Bois' speech eloquently argued that the South "was the firing line not simply for the emancipation of the American Negro but for the emancipation of the African Negro and the Negroes of the West Indies; for the emancipation of the colored races; and for the emancipation of the white slaves of modern capitalistic monopoly." W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 332; The entire text of "Behold the Land" is reprinted in Esther Cooper Jackson's edited volume, *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in Their Own Country* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 6–11; Jacksons interview by Massiah, 23, 27–28; W. E. B. Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, October 28, 1946, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC Correspondence Folder.
51. Jacksons, interview by Massiah, 23, 27–28.
52. W. E. B. Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, October 28, 1946, Jackson Papers, SNYC Box, SNYC Correspondence Folder.
53. Florence J. Valentine, "Remarks on Jobs and Training for Negro Women delivered at the panel on Youth and Labor, Youth Legislature," SNYC Papers, Box 6, SNYC Folder; "Southern Youth Legislature Souvenir Journal" program, Southern Youth Legislature, Columbia, South Carolina, October 18–20, 1946, SNYC Papers, Box 6, SNYC Folder; Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 167–168.
54. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "SNYC," Memphis, TN Bureau File 100-6548-243, 3, October 3, 1946, in Harvey Klehr Papers, Box 44, Folder 6, Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta (hereafter HK Papers).
55. J. Edgar Hoover to Jack D. Neal, FBI, "SNYC," Washington Bureau File 100-6548-238, 10 October 1946, HK Papers, Box 44, Folder 6; FBI, "SNYC" Savannah, GA, Bureau File 100-6548-230, October 9, 1946, HK Papers, Box 44, Folder 6.
56. FBI, "SNYC," Atlanta, GA Bureau file 100–452, November 20, 1946, HK Papers, Box 44, Folder 6; Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 171.
57. Jacksons, interview by author, April 10, 1999; McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 50–51, 62–64, 95, 98; Dorothy Burnham, interview by author, April 10, 1999, Brooklyn, NY; Dorothy Burnham, interview by author, October 26, 2001, Brooklyn, NY; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 220–231; Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism, 1948–1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 12–48; George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004).

A large throng of Birmingham police officers positioned outside of the church forcibly apprehended Senator Taylor after he attempted walking

through a "Colored Only" doorway. White detectives drove Taylor around the city for more than one hour, threatening and haranguing about for his progressive racial politics. Unharmed, Taylor immediately left the city. Perhaps had this event occurred only a few years earlier, the Youth Congress might have been able to weather the storm. But in this politically stifling atmosphere, the SNYC collapsed. Southern Youth Legislature, April 30–May 2, 1948 program, Jackson Personal papers; Richards, "The Southern Negro Youth Congress," 186–190.

58. *Daily Worker*, June 27, 1952, 8, in FBI, "Sojourners for Truth and Justice," New York Bureau File 100-384225-A, June 10, 1952; McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 463. For a discussion of the Sojourners see, McDuffie, "A 'new freedom movement of Negro women' "; McDuffie, "Long Journeys," 399, 424, 438–450; Castledine, "Gendering the Cold War," 165–175.
59. Gerson, "Is Family Devotion Now Subversive?" 152.
60. Ibid., 158, Jackson, interview by author August 13, 1998; Esther Cooper Jackson, conversation with author, June 10, 2007; Peggy Dennis, *The Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life, 1925–1975* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1977), 194–204.
61. It should be noted that the McCarthy period did not mark the first time the couple endured a long separation. During the war, the Jacksons were separated for nearly three and a half years while Jackson served in the army and was stationed overseas. However, their first separation occurred at a historical moment that was significantly different than their second. During the war, the United States and Soviet Union were allies and the Communist Party enjoyed its greatest influence in the American political mainstream. Despite their separation, the couple remained in constant communication. They exchanged more than 1,000 letters during the war. Their correspondence was filled with news about the war, local and global political developments, struggles against Jim Crow, anticolonial movements, and of course their family, friends, and daughter Harriet, who was born in 1943. Often poetic and romantic, the letters also expressed their mutual love and respect for one another. Moreover, unlike the McCarthy period, Cooper Jackson could move about as freely as any black person could in the Jim Crow South and continue to maintain her normal, daily routines.
62. I should note that this author did request interviews of Harriet Jackson Scarupa and Kathryn Jackson; however, they respectfully declined my invitation. Several studies such as Judy Kaplan and Linn Shapiro's edited anthology, *Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), Bettina F. Aptheker's memoir, *Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up Red, Fought for Free Speech, and Became a Feminist Rebel* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2006), and Kathryn Alice Jackson's (the Jackson's youngest daughter) dissertation "Trauma Survivors: Adult Children of McCarthyism and the Smith Act" (Temple University, 1991), provide insightful discussions of the trauma that many Smith Act children experienced while growing up as well as their psychological and emotional resilience as adults.
63. Jacksons, interview by author August 13, 1998.

64. Phyllis Taylor-Strong, telephone interview by author, April 4, 2008.
65. Margaret Burnham, telephone interview by author, April 30, 2008; Jackson, "Adult Children of McCarthyism," Judith Kaplan and Linn Shapiro, *Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).
66. Margaret Burnham, interview by author; Jackson, "Adult Children of McCarthyism," 8.
67. Jacksons, interview by author, August 13, 1998.
68. "An Appeal…In Defense of Negro Leadership," in Cooper Jackson personal papers, in author's possession; "In Defense of Negro Leadership," Strong Papers, Box 6, Folder 12; "A Special Occasion…" Reel 69, Frame 1042; Esther Jackson to W. E. B. Du Bois, March 20, 1963, Reel 69, Frame 1044, all in W. E. B Du Bois Papers, microfilm, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, History and Philosophy Library.
69. Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 74; McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*, 90–91.
70. Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*; Joanne Meyerowitz, "Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960," in *Not June Cleaver*, ed. Meyerowitz, 1–15.
71. Gerson, 165, 156–166.
72. Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 3; David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 145–147; Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 79.
73. For a discussion of the Communist Left's silence on matters of sexuality and antipathy toward homosexuality during the 1950s, see Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, 103; Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1982), 149, 197; Robert Shaffer, "Women and the Communist Party, USA, 1930–1940," *Socialist Review* 45 (May–June 1979): 106–107; Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes*, 19–20, 148–149; Barrett, *William Z. Foster and the Tragedy of American Communism*, 242–243.
74. Meyerowitz, "Women and Gender in Postwar America," 9.
75. Jacksons, interview by author, April 10, 1999; Gerson, "'Is Family Devotion Now Subversive?'" 166; Lieberman, *Strangest Dream*, 133.
76. Cooper Jackson, *This Is My Husband*, 4, 11, 34, 35.
77. The Brooklyn chapter of the left-wing Civil Rights Congress sent a women's delegation to the federal building at Foley Square to demand the end of the Jackson family's persecution, the repeal of the Smith Act, and prosecution of the assailants of the Moores, who were killed by a stick of dynamite thrown into their home on Christmas 1951. The flyer, "Why Hasn't the FBI Found the Florida Bomb Murderers" (circa 1953), featured the photograph of Cooper Jackson and her two daughters on the cover of *This Is My Husband* and an excerpt from Hicks' 1952 expose in the *Afro-American*, Jackson personal papers. *Afro-American*, February 9, 1952, 1, 2; See also, *Daily Worker*, January 18, 1952, 8; *Daily Worker*, February 18, 1952, 3; *Daily Worker*, April 2, 1953, 7.

78. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 184–188.
79. One exception to this assertion was author and playwright Lorraine Hansberry, whose lesbian identity and pro-gay stance in her writings, especially in the *Ladder*, the magazine of the Daughters of Bilitis, have recently gained some attention from scholars. See LNH, untitled letter *The Ladder* (May 1957): 26–28 Lorraine Hansberry, "Simone de Beauvoir and *The Second Sex*, An Unfinished Essay-in-Progress," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed., Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: The New Press, 1995), 128–142; Michael Anderson, conversation with author, November 16, 2007; Washington, "Black Women Write the Popular Front," 194.
80. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 185–229; Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West," *Signs* 14 (Summer 1989): 912–920.
81. Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, 103; Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes*, 19–20, 148–149.
82. LNH, untitled letter, *The Ladder* (May 1957): 26–30; Lorraine Hansberry, "Simone de Beauvoir and *The Second Sex*"; Michael Anderson, conversation with author, November 16, 2007; Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, 107, 400–405; Washington, "Black Women Write the Popular Front," 194.
83. Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968–1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 130–138; Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 121; Aptheker, *Intimate Politics*, 103–104, 298–299.
84. Andrea Friedman, "The Strange Career of Annie Lee Moss: Rethinking Race, Gender, and McCarthyism," *Journal of American History* 94 (September 2007): 456.
85. E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 6.
86. Washington, "Black Women Write the Popular Front," 186–187; Wald, *Trinity of Passion*, 136, 137.
87. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 167–189.
88. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13; Horne, *Black and Red*, 105–111, 201–253; Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, 164–190.
89. Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement*, 45. The initial idea for a progressive black political and literary quarterly originated with Cooper Jackson's old SNYC comrades—Louis Burnham and Ed Strong, both of whom died tragically before *Freedomways* started. She followed through with the idea. Advised by W. E. B. Du Bois, she organized a collective to launch the journal's first issue in the spring of 1961. Esther Cooper Jackson, ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in Their Own Country* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), xix–xxx. *Freedomways* featured articles by W. E. B. Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, and other veteran black radicals about global black freedom movements. The

magazine's coverage of revolutionary struggles in Vietnam, Nicaragua, and in other nonblack nations illustrated how it articulated a black internationalism that extended beyond the Diaspora and toward broader issues of black globality.

90. I am borrowing the term "parent" from Benita Roth who uses it to describe the organizational forebearers of second-wave black feminism, *Separate Roads to Feminism*, 16.
91. "The Negro Woman in American Literature," *Freedomways* 1 (1966); Jean Carey Bond, interview by author, November 9, 2001, New York, NY; Audre Lorde, "Rites Passage," *Freedomways* 3 (1970); Nikki Giovanni, "The Lion in Daniel's Den," *Freedomways* 1 (1971); June Jordan, "For Beautiful Mary Brown: Chicago Rent Strike Leaders," *Freedomways* 2 (1971); Alice Walker, "Rock Eagle," *Freedomways* 4 (1971); Alice Walker, "Facing the Way," *Freedomways* 4 (1975); Alice Walker, "The Abduction of Saints," *Freedomways* 4 (1975). Cooper Jackson, ed., *Freedomways Reader*, xix–xxx.

4

Correspondence: Journalism, Anticommunism, and Marxism in 1950s Detroit*

Rachel Peterson

Historians and cultural critics have generally viewed postwar anticommunism as an attack on progressives affiliated with the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), from the Hollywood Ten and artists such as Paul Robeson to prominent party figures such as Howard Fast and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, individuals who were alternately blacklisted, restricted in travel, or imprisoned under the Smith Act. While CPUSA-connected people suffered the most visible and widespread repression and thus merit such attention, it often has come at the exclusion of examinations of McCarthyist assaults on other Marxist organizations of the period. Such omissions potentially obscure the government's broader aim of suppressing anticapitalist, antiracist work in this period, in which even small sects that shared the government's hostility toward the CPUSA were susceptible to harassment.

This chapter explores the Detroit-based Marxist newspaper *Correspondence*, produced by a diverse group of antiracist Marxists from 1953 to 1962. Collective members of this group, some who were defectors from

*In this chapter, an important distinction is made between anti-Communism as opposition to Stalinism, the Soviet Union, and the CPUSA and anticommunism as the broad attack on progressive individuals and organizations working for economic and racial equality. *Correspondence* was thus opposed to such broad anticommunist attacks (i.e., anti-McCarthyism) at the same time as being Marxist and anti-Communist.

the Socialist Worker's Party, were themselves anti-Communist—that is, strongly opposed to the CPUSA and the Soviet Union—yet they too suffered infiltration, harassment, detention, and exile. Nikhil Singh contends that "in post-World War II cultural and state apparatuses, the silencing of giants like Du Bois and Robeson, along with the voluntary and involuntary exile of anti-Stalinist leftists like Richard Wright, Chester Himes, C. L. R. James, E. Franklin Frazier, and others completed a purge of the black activist intelligentsia that had come of age a little more than a decade prior."[1] *Correspondence* suffered the impact of this purge while attempting to posit alternative activist voices in the proclamations from often-anonymous black workers and intellectuals.

If the Cold War necessitated occasional concessions to the civil rights movement, it also inflicted arguably permanent injury on leftist political organizations. In *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950*, Glenda Gilmore suggests that upon Truman's endorsement of anti-communist measures, leftists recognized that they could not "return to Popular Front cooperation, and the Left began a sorting-out process, sometimes at its own behest, sometimes under agonizing pressure from loyalty boards, the House Un-American Activities Committee, or the press. The overall result was to splinter and weaken the left into factions distinguished by degrees of anti-Communism."[2] As this chapter shows, *Correspondence*'s fervent anti-Communism arose organically and attained particular currency in the McCarthy era, yet this failed to protect it from government attack for its civil rights militancy and implicit Marxism-Leninism, itself a carryover from the experience of many members in Old Left institutions.

Recently, scholars of the Left have substantiated further Alan Wald's 1994 assertion that the 1950s brought "a continuity of personnel and themes, along with additions, developments and transformations" in black radicalism.[3] James Smethurst locates moments of continuity in Popular Front activists and Harlem Guild Writers who influenced the Black Arts Movement, and cautions that too great an emphasis on "ruptures should not blind us to the continuities (and communities) of radical politics and poetics that would provide a matrix for the emergence of Black Arts institutions."[4] Bill Mullen also notes that many leftists developed new theoretical approaches that reflected their persecution as radicals and African Americans and their complicated identifications with a variety of 1950s social movements.[5] Such work has significantly contributed to a growing appreciation of the complexity of Marxist, antiracist politics among artists and activists whose careers and commitments extended into the 1950s, and in doing so has produced pivotal links between the 1930s and 1960s. Altogether, such recent scholarship illustrates the explicit connections drawn between racism and the repressions of the free speech and civil liberties that is amply evidenced in cold war serial presses.

The corrosive impact of McCarthyism needs to be keenly considered in continuity and adaptation narratives and in regard to activists across the Left in the 1950s, some of whom composed what Ellen Schrecker calls the "human wreckage" anticommunism wrought. An alchemy of the above views apply aptly to *Correspondence*, as it exemplifies the destruction McCarthyism inflicted on 1950s leftists who sought to reenvision older models of activism, while also showing the ways that the newspaper transcended Old Left models to significantly influence the New Left, therein suggesting continuity. *Correspondence*, then, encapsulates the contradictory interpretive tendencies that reflect the period's volatility and affected its achievement as a newspaper reflecting diverse perspectives.

Additionally, amidst debates over whether the Cold War hindered or aided the struggle for racial equality in the United States, *Correspondence* offers a generally overlooked perspective, one amalgamating strains of anti-Communism, Leninism, and antiracism. While scholars such as Mullen, Smethurst, Paul Buhle, and Kent Worcester have given some attention to *Correspondence*, its Special Negro News (SNN) page has thus far gone unstudied, despite its acute insights into racial attitudes in the 1950s as they affected the shop floor and those accused of communist sympathies.[6] The newspaper's complicated expressions of anti-Communism and Marxist humanism that framed its black radicalism also illustrated how some activists negotiated arenas for expression that challenged McCarthyist categorization yet were still gravely compromised in their efforts. This essay analyzes the ways that anticommunism actually represented an extensive movement against antiracist, anticapitalist activism, how *Correspondence*'s divisive anti-Communism failed to insulate it from repression, the limitations engendered by its choice to eschew activism for printed conversation, and the resultant conflicts that ultimately undermined the collective.

Like their contemporaries at *Freedom* and the *Daily Worker*, *Correspondence* members turned to a serial publication as a means of expressing dissent in response to the cold war surveillance, harassment, and infiltration by government agencies that compromised the organizing capacity of antiracist, anticapitalist and peace movements. Established in Detroit in 1953 under the leadership of C. L. R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, Grace Lee Boggs, and James Boggs, and with editorial collectives and distribution centers in California, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, the paper contains numerous accounts of the local struggles of workers in these areas. The organization that produced this archive saw itself as a collective that would edit the paper through the assembly of the letters, interviews, and recorded comments of readers. While the collective itself never consisted of more than 300 members, *Correspondence* transmitted and preserved the opinions of thousands of

regular readers and contributors whose voices were often suppressed in the context of McCarthyism. In the face of tense race relations in already compromised unions, numerous violations of civil liberties targeting leftists and African Americans, the effects of automation on blue-collar workers, and direct action by civil rights groups, *Correspondence* asserted that "the form of a Marxist Organization today is a newspaper," a seemingly convenient nonactivist adaptation to McCarthyist repression.[7] *Correspondence* thus joined other individual writers and serial publications in substituting words for action, but it provided theoretical underpinnings for this abnegation of activism in its conception of spontaneity, anti-vanguardism, and the newspaper as a surrogate social movement.

Correspondence was rare among leftist presses that struggled to adapt their progressive politics to the restrictions of McCarthyism in that its anti-Communism emerged organically from the Trotskyist roots of the groups' founders, C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya.[8] *Correspondence* is also singular in that it was composed primarily of readers' comments from across the country. The majority of its pages expressed the opinions of usually anonymous auto workers, housewives, and domestic servants, with the editors themselves strategically framing these comments with their own regular columns. Eager to correct the errors of previous Marxist organizations that subordinated race to class and replicated racist relations within the group, *Correspondence*'s Special Negro News page promoted what the group called "Negro aggressiveness," or a militancy that prefigured the rhetoric and demands of what would later be called the black power movement. Finally, *Correspondence* foregrounded the intersections of race and gender with particular acuity and focused considerable attention on the mistreatment of African American women.[9]

Correspondence's commitment to promoting these intersections in its pages offered a unique venue that encouraged free speech, making it inherently vulnerable to the McCarthyist tactics that would eventually prohibit its distribution. When government harassment silenced the paper through the 1955 suspension of its mailing rights, it also ended dialogues among marginalized groups that had obtained open and frequent expression in *Correspondence*.

Correspondence's Roots, Formation, and Theoretical Foundations

From its inception, the *Correspondence* collective sought to break with previous leftist organizations and to put forward a new conception of revolutionary change in response to the specific conditions of the 1950s. The

organization shunned traditional forms of social movements such as public protest and community work, instead focusing its energies on producing *Correspondence* wherein, as its masthead declared, "Workers, Negroes, women, youth, will tell in this paper in their own way the story of their own lives, in the plant, at home, in school, in their neighborhoods."[10] Hence a collective of activists, intellectuals, and workers seeking a new approach to Marxism, race, and collective work joined to produce a newspaper "by, for and about" the particular sectors of society that the *Correspondence* staff had identified as embodying radical consciousness.[11]

Correspondence was initiated by members of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, which took its name from the pseudonyms of two of its high-profile founders, Raya Dunayevskaya (Freddie Forest) and C. L. R. James (J. R. Johnson). Forged during the 1940s out of a theoretical rupture with the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Johnson-Forest Tendency committed itself to the "understanding that Marxism was not a party line or a program but a methodology."[12] Since *Correspondence's* internal documents use a variety of pseudonyms to identify members, it is difficult to describe all of the initial members.[13] *Correspondence* instituted this precaution against FBI surveillance after the group's leader, James, was deported for his subversive writings and speeches in 1953 and, more generally, because of the anticommunist atmosphere surrounding the newspaper's launch.[14] Indeed, by 1955, Lyman Paine began to wonder whether the group's classification on the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations might "signify an agent in the midst."[15] As it turned out, these concerns were well justified, as at least twelve informants made regular reports to the FBI about the organization's Detroit activities, a remarkable number considering there were only approximately seventy-five members in Detroit.[16]

Those members who are identifiable tend to be those who remained with the group for the longest time or whose influence extended beyond *Correspondence*. Besides Lee Boggs, Dunayevskaya, and James, there were others whose participation has not been wholly erased, such as Charles Denby, Martin Glaberman, Nettie Kravitz, Freddy and Lyman Paine, Constance Webb, and Frankie Zupan.[17] Brief biographies of especially key members facilitate a greater understanding of the group's formation and the interpersonal and political issues that erupted over issues of race and anti-Communism.

The most high-profile member, C. L. R. James was the son of middle-class parents in Trinidad. In 1932 he left for London, where he became involved in British socialist and anticolonial movements, working with Amy Jacques Garvey and editing *International African Opinion*. In addition to journalism, he wrote three books defining his principal concerns,

the study of Bolshevism, self-activity, and black liberation, including the pro-Trotsky *World Revolution 1917–1936: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International* (1937), *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), and *A History of Negro Revolt* (1938). This work and James's reputation for oratory brought him to the attention of Trotsky, exiled in Mexico, who asked that James come to the United States to rectify the SWP's negligence toward African American issues in 1938. James quickly developed a following on the socialist left, yet he soon became disillusioned with the SWP and its offshoot, the Worker's Party (WP), and began, with Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee, the Johnson-Forest Tendency (JFT). This group eventually broke with the Trotskyist movement for a number of reasons, most importantly in terms of *Correspondence*'s development because of the SWP's alleged failure to grasp the significance of the changes World War II had brought to African Americans especially.[18]

In 1948, James and about thirty JFT sympathizers, most of whom had also come from the SWP, laid the groundwork for what would be *Correspondence*, developing a theory of revolution that recognized the postwar militancy among African Americans, women, youth, and workers. After his 1953 deportation, James continued to produce a number of works and to participate in a variety of movements, including the British shop floor movement and, in Trinidad, Eric Williams's People's National Movement, where he eventually became editor of the latter's weekly publication, *The Nation* (1958–1959), while still communicating regularly with *Correspondence* members.[19]

Equally important to the organization was Grace Lee Boggs, the daughter of Chinese immigrant restaurateurs in New York whose success ensured her an economically stable youth. After graduating with a Ph.D. in philosophy from Bryn Mawr, the proposed March on Washington in 1941 helped Grace Lee choose to spend her life as a "movement activist in the black community." She joined the WP where she met C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya, a Russian immigrant with a long history in Marxist movements and a former secretary to Trotsky in Mexico. Lee's expertise in philosophy and German made her indispensable to the JFT.[20] Though Lee remained a low-profile force in *Correspondence*, the letters of James and other members praise her ability to both reflect on current events and internal dynamics.[21]

In 1954 Grace Lee married James Boggs, originally from Alabama, who moved to Detroit as a young man and worked for thirty-eight years at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant where he was an active union member and petitioner of the Fair Employment Practices Committee. He became involved with the JFT in 1951 when he heard that it was an interracial organization

"more radical" than the CPUSA, which had previously impressed Boggs by welcoming people of color. He soon became a powerful member of Detroit's *Correspondence* collective, and because he was what Paul Buhle called a "brilliant autodidact" and black autoworker with considerable political and labor experience, "the whites in Detroit were ecstatic . . . they recognized him as a leader."[22] Under the pseudonym Al Whitney, Boggs wrote a regular column in the Special Negro News section. He would go on, like Grace Lee Boggs and Martin Glaberman, to be an important influence in Detroit radical politics, authoring such works as *The American Revolution: Pages from a Worker's Notebook* (1963) and, like C. L. R. James, influencing the League of Revolutionary Black Worker's executive committee.[23]

The JFT's animosity toward the U.S.S.R. and the CPUSA formed the basis of the group's distinctive antiorganizational stance and produced an anti-Communism only surpassed by the most ardent McCarthyists of the period.[24] *Correspondence's* enmity toward Soviet-style communism, which it saw as a betrayal of Lenin and Trotsky's vision, manifested itself in the paper's disowning of two central features of traditional Marxist groups; first, *Correspondence* members decried organizational structures that they felt easily could transform into hierarchical and dogmatic bureaucracies, and thus rejected the development of a definitive platform or policy. Second, the group explicitly rejected the premise that workers needed to belong to an organization to become educated and united. The collective believed that workers learned experientially and could act without the potentially patronizing guidance of an organization.[25] Thus *Correspondence*'s rejection of formal organization repudiated the Leninist concept of the vanguard, or a class of experienced organizers and intellectuals who would lead the proletariat to revolution.[26]

Instead, the collective offered a newspaper that would express the views of the four groups that it had identified as particularly radicalized—workers, African Americans, women and, young people. As Grace Lee Boggs has explained in her autobiography, James believed that "the main role of socialist revolutionaries is to recognize and record the rebellions of ordinary working people," who, upon seeing the correspondences between each other's conditions, would engage in a spontaneous revolution.[27] Thus the four groups would "self-organize," in other words, they would unite on the basis of their common interests and experience. In promoting "spontaneity," the idea that the shared daily experiences of workers were unifying, *Correspondence* attempted to bridge the quotidian with world events. The group's core faith in spontaneity as a politically transformative device, wherein subalterns would simultaneously rise up

and overthrow their oppressors, seemed to be substantiated by the wave of postwar wildcat strikes, the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, and the Hungarian revolution in 1956.[28]

Eschewing direct action and leadership was well-suited to the political climate of McCarthyism, a time when groups such as the CPUSA that had actively and publicly organized saw its members harassed and its leaders at times forced to go underground or become incarcerated.[29] *Correspondence*'s anti-vanguardism allowed it to maintain that the paper was not an organizing tool, and unlike the *Daily Worker*, or *Masses & Mainstream*, *Correspondence* could not be tied to a specific party that could be accused of spying for or supporting the goals of the Soviet Union. Over time, however, readers and members became frustrated with the limited goals of the paper and its apparently convenient abnegation of praxis. Its attempts to construct a dialog among workers, women, youths, and African Americans inevitably led to umbrage, and its unwillingness to declare a clear program of action alienated some readers. Within the organization, those committed to taking a greater organizational role in Detroit politics, notably Raya Dunayevskaya and Charles Denby, clashed with those who insisted that they remain passive conduits of readers' opinions. In 1955, this issue, dissension over whether to go underground (like the CPUSA) and resentment of James's overseas attempts at control, contributed to the departure of nearly half the members, who then formed the still extant *News & Letters*, a major competitor to *Correspondence*.[30]

If *Correspondence*'s refusal to play a leadership role in Detroit politics especially constituted a convenient adaptation to McCarthyism, it also reflected the organization's belief in the potential for spontaneous revolution emanating from potentially radical forces in society, combined with its renunciation of vanguardism. These beliefs led it to embrace Lenin's theory and practice of "third layerism." In order to beget a genuine "dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin declared that young Soviet society should consist of three hierarchical layers, and that the leaders of the first layer (original Bolsheviks) and the second layer (trade unionists) should subordinate themselves to the third layer of rank-and-file workers.

Within *Correspondence*, this meant that the more experienced activists and intellectuals of the first layer and the trade union members of the second layer were to adhere to the positions and goals of the third layer of workers, black people, women and youths.[31] Intended to be a learning device for the collective, the concept was studied at a New York City Organic Third Layer School sponsored by *Correspondence* during 1952, whilst James was being detained at nearby Ellis Island.[32] *Facing Reality*, the 1958 book coauthored by James, Lee Boggs, and Cornelius Castoriadis,

explained the group's theoretical foundations and praxis; the idea behind a paper like *Correspondence* was that "workers and other ordinary people will tell each other and people like themselves what they are thinking, what they are doing, and what they want to do. In the course of so doing, the intellectuals and advanced workers, both inside and outside the organization, will have their opportunity to learn. There is no other way."[33] Within the pages of *Correspondence*, an "Old Member" asserted this conviction in her insistence that "we are not just asking workers their opinions. We are telling them that their opinions are decisive."[34]

The "Newspaper As Organization" Strategy

In order to ensure that frequently marginalized people made "their opinions . . . decisive," *Correspondence* revised Lenin's conception so that the first two layers, the leaders/intellectuals and union members, with "a full fountain pen," recorded the words of third layer speakers from more marginalized sectors. Full fountain pen theory precedents, beyond Lenin's third-layerism, can be traced to C. L. R. James's 1939–1941 work in Missouri among sharecroppers, where he utilized amanuensis, the practice of recording verbatim the words of another, as in taking dictation, to produce a pamphlet for the workers.[35] Amanuensis would generate one of the collective's most successful publications, Charles Denby's *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (1952), the tale of a Detroit worker from Tennessee recorded, edited, and organized by Constance Webb.[36] Amanuensis became so prevalent within the organization that "The Worker's Journal," a column also produced under the pseudonym Charles Denby, perhaps the paper's most popular item, was actually the transcription of Si Owens's narrative to members of the first two layers who then, in protocol that extended to all contributors, allowed Denby to edit the transcription.[37] "Reader's Views," a large section of the newspaper that printed the responses of readers, thus was filled largely with comments recorded through amanuensis.[38]

The need to use pseudonyms, a common practice in the pages of *Correspondence*, was explained by Charles Denby in a 1978 edition of *Indignant Heart*. Here Denby/Owens states that key details were changed "to protect individuals from the vicious McCarthyist witch hunt then sweeping the country [in 1952], which resulted in the persecution and literal destruction of many people. Few who did not go through that experience of national repression of ideas can fully understand the truly totalitarian nature of McCarthyism and the terror it produced."[39]

Correspondence described its formation and activities in a February 1954 Editorial Statement. It states that the newspaper was produced via individuals

> scattered all over the country who meet and prepare articles and get subscriptions and interviews… The original Friends of *Correspondence* were composed… of people who had tried all sorts of political groupings, workers and intellectuals, whites and Negroes, men and women, adults and youth [who] came to the conclusion that the only thing to do was to publish a paper like *Correspondence*.[40]

That year, the collective claimed that the paper could be purchased at one of fourteen newsstands in the country, mostly in Detroit and also New York City, Los Angeles, and Laurinburg, North Carolina[41] The group grew through the use of socials (fund-raising dances), sub-getters (members selling subscriptions), and word-of-mouth, and by March 1954, Lyman Paine could excitedly report to James that in Los Angeles, "for the first time friends are coming around… who participate in both editing and circulation."[42] Membership demographics changed over time and geography, though according to an internal evaluation of Detroit membership the group was ethnically diverse, containing African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos, although whites still significantly outnumbered people of color.[43]

The group's apparent complicity with McCarthyism, however much rooted in its opposition to the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, would lead to internal conflicts, as was the case with other more established leftist organizations.[44] *Correspondence* struggled to avoid the defections and divisions over cold war engendered issues, yet proved vulnerable, like other radical serial publications, to shortened and occasionally suspended publication, economic crises, internal splits, government infiltration, and external pressure.

C. L. R. James's *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* as a Blueprint for *Correspondence*'s Anti-Communism

Correspondence's anti-Communism needs to be read in conversation not only with fellow radical serial publications but with its other major publishing effort of 1953, James' *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: Herman Melville and the World in Which We Live*, primarily composed over James's six-month detention on Ellis Island.[45] James's deportation meant that he was never able to participate in the newspaper's publication in person, though his frequent letters of guidance from London ensured

that he was a very active member. Accordingly, James's analyses of totalitarianism in *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* would also infuse the pages of *Correspondence*. As Melville inscribed the individual and collective dynamics of oppression and resistance on the racially diverse Pequot, *Correspondence* would probe and publish the survival methods multiracial workers from New York to Los Angeles deployed in an effort to "avoi[d] misery" and "struggle for happiness" in what the newspaper argued was an increasingly totalitarian society.[46]

James's reading of the crew of the Pequot, and Melville in general, has been criticized by many scholars. For instance, Buhle censures James for "nearly approach[ing] an apologia for social life under capitalism…" in his final chapter.[47] However, reading *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* in conjunction with *Correspondence* and the internal letters circulating among members reveals James's deep faith in what he saw as a distinctively generative "American civilization," a set of ideals *Correspondence* practiced regularly in its pages.[48]

As James wrote *Mariners*, members of *Correspondence* prepared to publish its first issue, though James would be forced to return to England three months before the newspaper's debut.[49] While James's contribution to the production of *Correspondence* was limited to overseas micromanagement, his feral anti-Communism and insistence on prioritizing race delineated some of the newspaper's most controversial currents. Though most *Correspondence* members did not share James's strident anti-Communism, they acquiesced both in publishing and distributing the book to members of Congress and literary critics, and, as we shall see, in critiquing Communism in the pages of *Correspondence*.

Unlike liberal anticommunists and anti-Stalinists on the Left who tolerated and even praised the House Committee on Un-American Activities, serving at times as informers, *Correspondence* opposed both McCarthyism and Communism in the United States, Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe.[50] As Pease and Buhle have observed, James's controversial final chapter in *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, in which he recounts his experiences on Ellis Island, can be read as a form of informing on the tactics of Communists held there, thus collaborating with anticommunism in a desperate and doomed attempt to remain in the United States with his fellow organizers and young son. However, James also applied his attacks on totalitarianism, represented in struggles between Ahab and his crew, to the government that imprisoned him during its writing.[51]

Arguably, James's efforts to prove his Americanism via anti-Communism in *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* are undermined by his indictment of the Department of Justice and the Immigration and

Naturalization Service. He tells his intended audience of congressmen, literary scholars, and the officials deciding his case that he had witnessed such repressive measures before, "step by step to a whole nation between 1934 and 1939."[52] After suggesting that the potential to replicate the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany endangered American democracy, James points out that throughout his political career, he was "never for a single moment anything but an enemy to the Communist Party and Stalinist regime."[53] Indeed, in numerous articles, speeches, and pamphlets, many for the SWP's *The Militant*, James opposed what he called the "zigzags" in the Communist Party positions regarding African Americans between the Third Period, Popular Front, and Hitler/Stalin Pact.[54]

During James's detention as a foreign subversive retroactively under the McCarran Act, he was placed in a cell with five Communists, including "M," a representative for the group's rights, among them. James needed medical care,[55] and he intimates that M's kindness, as well as that of the other Communists (whose concern for James's health led them to threaten a hunger strike if he was not given the proper food) were part of a plot to win him over. After pages of praise for M's compassionate care, protests of conditions, and the improvements they brought to both the staff and prisoners, James deduces that

> On Ellis Island it was M who stood for what vast millions of Americans still cherish as principles of what America has stood for since its foundation. You needed a long and well-based experience with Communism . . . to know that M is really an Ahab . . . In fact his purpose would demand that if he were in charge of Ellis Island, he would subject [staff and prisoners] to a tyranny worse than any they could conceive of.[56]

James thus assures his imagined audience of state officials and Melville experts that despite his weakened physical state, he remained impervious to the Communists' seductions. Such testimony and the book's literary analysis are both at odds with his experiences, yet both allow him to analyze different manifestations of totalitarianism.[57]

Fellow Trinidadian Marxist and pan-Africanist George Padmore was one of many close friends who objected to James's anti-Communist attacks in *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*, and James defended his position in an alternately caustic and pleading twelve-page letter to Padmore in 1953. He explains the context of the book's release: "Except for a few isolated sects, anything like organized radical thought is silent. The Communists alone peddle their doctrines, and under cover of the attack on Communism, whoever raises his voice against the official forces is a marked man . . . It is into this morass that I brought my little book."

James implores Padmore to see that his detention and exile was "a *political* case… The fundamental issues in law was whether a radical who was an avowed enemy of the Communists could be included in legislation aimed against a Communist movement from Moscow." James explicitly addresses his particular persecution, declaring that "I am at a total loss to understand why [*Mariners*], written in the face of McCarthyism and the reign of terror against free thought that is rampant in the United States should creat [*sic*] a bad impression."[58]

Anti-Communism and Anti-McCarthyism In Action

Within *Correspondence*, representations of a "reign of terror" in the United States directed against leftists also led to equations between the Soviet Union's tactics with those under McCarthyism. For example, the editors declare, "In the United States, dominated by the Almighty Dollar, there is McCarthyism, McCarranism, and Taft-Hartleyism—attempts to establish here the political forms and social environment of Russia and the satellite countries." While the group believed that McCarthyism constituted an "outstanding feature in any society in decay," it also insisted that the United States had not yet reached the level of being run, like Russia, by "murderous gangsters."[59] In the premiere issue of *Correspondence*, the editorial collective explicitly expressed its position vis-à-vis Communism in the United States, Stalinism, and McCarthyism, promising the reader that the newspaper would maintain "a total hostility to all forms of bureaucratic domination, anti-Communist as well as Communist."[60]

Juxtaposed on the same page, *Correspondence* further defined totalitarianism in a political cartoon entitled "The Newcomer," depicting ghosts, labeled Stalin and Hitler, telling McCarthy, who is on his knees with his palms upturned before them, that "your hands are still bloodless, Joe."[61] Such expressions illustrate the James-based organic (rather than situational) anti-Stalinism that characterized *Correspondence*'s political analysis. In this cartoon, the collective characteristically warned that the United States was on the path to such carnage, but thus far had not reached the level of violent repression found in Germany and the Soviet Union. Thus, despite the audacity of this cartoon's likening of Stalin, Hitler, and McCarthy, it implicitly supported the United States' claims to superior morality and dedication to freedom. Suggestions that the United States remained exceptional understandably elicited confusion regarding *Correspondence*'s simultaneous indictment and diminution of McCarthyist excesses, and especially in the vividly documented face of racial oppression.

This cartoon elicited heated responses from some readers who thought it drew an unfair comparison between fascists, Stalinists, and McCarthyists. Most reactions, however, were supportive and record insightful linkages. For example, one reader, self-described as a "Young Woman Worker, New York," defends the cartoon based on her experience witnessing a white woman racially berate a Puerto Rican youth. She concludes, "I figured she was probably a very strong supporter of McCarthy. I was thinking of Hitler."[62] This woman's astute entwining of racism, fascism, and McCarthyism also provides a rare linking of the struggles of Latinos and opponents of McCarthyism in the 1950s.[63] Another reader declared that "I don't know anything about Communism, but they never did anything to me…all I know is what they're doing to me here."[64] *Correspondence*'s editors conceded that the United States' own actions at home and abroad in the Cold War produced a society in which "every person in the United States is governed, twisted, distorted by the proclaimed struggle against Communism."[65] A Detroit Auto Worker argued that McCarthyism allowed one "to see the system better," a system for which the ruthless McCarthy was "a natural."[66]

While criticizing McCarthyism, the collective also saw the newspaper as a weapon against Soviet communism. For instance, in an article (probably penned by James) discussing Europe's seeming sympathy with Communism, the editors suggest, "you want the European people [to regain their] will in the fight against Communism.… Then multiply the issues of CORRESPONDENCE by 10,000."[67] This grandiose vision of the newspaper's relevance reflects James's high ambitions and fellow member Martin Glaberman's belief that its work was "revolutionary."[68] Such pronouncements underscored the collective's conviction that the forum their newspaper created for correspondences from different individuals across geographical space and class positions constituted activism. Though *Correspondence*'s editors believed that "the newspaper is the organization," charges of vanguardism were leveled between members, and occasionally the contradictions of rejecting direct mobilization in its pages created difficulties. The *Correspondence* collective's refusal to "lead" was again both a practical course amidst McCarthyism and a product of its belief in third-layerism and spontaneity.[69]

Readers sometimes conveyed frustration with *Correspondence*'s chafing combination of anti-Communism and anti-McCarthyism, leading at least one reader to accuse the editors of having "made a mistake in deciding to tread lightly on the issue of McCarthyism." This Cambridge, Massachusetts, correspondent goes on to say that the newspaper's declared focus on union issues and choice to "leave McCarthy to the tender mercies of the labor and liberal papers" betrayed *Correspondence*'s obligation

to "establish the opposition to McCarthy on a popular basis." The editors responded to the letter in an "Editor's Note," which said the reader "is right," cited a relevant article in that issue, and promised a more aggressive stance against McCarthy.[70] Other articles published in 1954, such as "Reader Meets A McCarthyite" and "McCarthyism Aims to Isolate Workers," further established *Correspondence*'s opposition to broad anticommunism, leading some readers to continue to think this equated to pro-Communist sympathies.[71] Ultimately, this more aggressive stance against McCarthyism was less dangerous for the collective than its insistence on discussing racism and giving a forum to black readers.

As the discussion above demonstrates, *Correspondence* editors committed themselves to a strategically self-protective course combining anti-Communism with their encoded Marxist and antiracist work. Thus, they awkwardly straddled the line between criticism of Communism and criticism of anticommunism, and occasionally their hostility towards the CPUSA and Soviet-style Communism seemed to lapse into antagonism toward the Marx and Engels vision of a Communist society. Even within letters, denunciations of small "c" communism can be found, and the absence of any attempt to distinguish between the ideology and its American and Russian practitioners in the newspaper's pages led to ambiguity. Though the newspaper rarely mentioned Marxism, according to FBI informants Marxism was frequently invoked in JFT meetings, as in May of 1953, when Dunayevskaya claimed that the "group is Marxist to the bone."[72] The paper's contents amply evidenced such political convictions, however, leading many to assume that the collective was affiliated with the CPUSA. *Correspondence* responded to such charges in a December 14, 1955 editorial entitled "Are We Communist?" While ostensibly the group would share aspirations to create a communist society, they instead declare that they "are unconditionally opposed . . . to the aims and methods of the American Communist Party" as well as the U.S.S.R. They cite far-reaching discontent to show that "Russian Communism and Capitalism [. . .] are only leading to more chaos and complete barbarism," and these conditions, combined with "McCarthy, a breeder of Communism," impelled their journalism.[73]

The Praxis of Correspondence

On October 3, 1953, the first regular issue of the Detroit-based *Correspondence* expressed its anti-vanguardism: "we are not out to lead. We are unalterably opposed to all planners, whether they are capitalist or Communist, Reutherite or Trotskyist."[74] The newspaper's inaugural

issue also stressed that such a forum was especially important because of cold war conditions: "In official circles of all kinds, people are afraid to say what they think and believe. This atmosphere of McCarthyism is a disgrace to the American people." The editors established their commitment to producing a paper composed of its readers' views, where readers can "exchange ideas freely, without hiding their doubts and disagreements."[75] In this issue, they denounced the work of leftist predecessors on "the Negro question," who, the editors charge, believed that African Americans could not "'go it alone' because it is inconceivable [to these organizations] that ordinary people can achieve anything without their leadership."[76] The paper in general honored its pledge to promote self-activity and printed, in the SNN page especially, debates relating civil rights activism to McCarthyism that became as divisive as the collective's internal clashes about their journalistic policies.

While some of their peer publications such as the *Daily Worker* and *The Militant* bemoaned their diminished capacities during McCarthyism, *Correspondence* brought forth its journal with Jamesian optimism.[77] Behind the scenes, members were impelled by a sense that "the stakes are too high, the forces too powerful, the developments too exhilarating" for them to cease their work, despite government harassment.[78] Thus they believed that, as they say in their December 28, 1953 issue, their paper was "the first blow in the battle for independence of the ideas and feelings of ordinary people."[79] Given the small number of core group members and the fact that distribution never surpassed 5,000 copies, the *Correspondence* collective perhaps overstated its impact, or as Grace Lee Boggs recalled of the group's confident pronouncements of its own importance, "like many statements made by radicals, there was a lot of hype."[80] Nonetheless, in the context of McCarthyism, their claims that *Correspondence*'s foregrounding of readers' accounts and opinions marked a victory for free speech, or civil liberties, appear justified.[81]

The difficulties of creating a newspaper "by, for and about the people" were evident less than a year after its first issue, and the high level of internal strife vis-à-vis revolutionary theory and practice is apparent in a plea that reveals the group's disappointment in the paper's inability to draw in regular correspondents. The editors complain that they have "three or four thousand people reading the paper regularly. Not more than 100 of these readers are seriously writing for the paper." While some would be satisfied with such exposure only a year into the newspaper's history, *Correspondence* foreboded that it "will never realize its full potentialities and become a living force until its readers take seriously the avowed purpose . . . a paper written and edited by its readers."[82]

James's attempts at oversight from abroad abraded several members on the ground in the United States. Grace Lee Boggs recalled an almost fanatical reading of the letters, with members poring over every detail and debating implementation, leading to arguments that produced two serious ruptures, one in 1955 and another in 1962.[83] Thus James's forced expulsion by the government in its broad anticommunist sweep created strain within the group, further weakening its ability to provide a unique format for readers to express their views. James Smethurst argues that James's "inability to fully share leadership" with Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee and James Boggs precipitated the splits of 1955 and 1962, and clearly, James's desperate attempts to remain relevant in the United States via *Correspondence* led to internal struggles within the collective.[84]

James harshly rebuked the group a year after its founding in a memo subtitled "the paper as a weapon." James contends that if the newspaper started to

> mak[e] any move toward analysis of imperialism, capitalism, the cause of war, and revolutionary phrases and rehashes of Leninism in 1914 or Trotskyism in 1934, or if it starts babbling crap about guaranteed annual wage, or worse still, starts exhorting workers to do this, do that, do the other… ["militants"] will turn from it in disgust.[85]

Accordingly, *Correspondence* chose not to overtly express its leftist convictions. In response to reader's requests that they clarify their position, the editorial collective wrote that "Communists have so fouled everything up that an American worker cannot say a word about speed-ups without being called a Communist," thereby dissociating themselves from Communism without addressing Marxism itself.[86] As we shall see, many readers automatically assumed that the paper was Communist because of its attention to labor and race, and the editorial board struggled to remain no more than a conduit for the expression of workers' attitudes.[87] In turn, readers repeatedly expressed frustration with the paper's reluctance to make its foundation transparent and promote specific courses of action.

The "Special Negro News" Section: A New Vanguard

Internal and published conflicts in *Correspondence* coalesced most acutely around the collective's ideas about race relations in the United States. The organization's conceptions about this issue, much like its other philosophies, emerged from James's conviction that black people constituted "that section of society most receptive to revolutionary ideas and the radical solution to social problems," and therefore, the

"[m]ost dynamic element of the working class."[88] James's famous speech "Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Question," delivered in Detroit in 1948, five years before the collective established *Correspondence* there, framed the groups' approach to revolution at large and to race in particular.[89] In this oft-quoted speech, James declares that "the independent Negro struggle has vitality and validity of its own [...] it has deep historic roots in the past of America and in present struggles; it has an organic political perspective."[90] Unique here was the assumption that black people would compel radicalism among whites, who in his view had historically proven less willing to take the necessary risks required for truly fundamental change. A correspondent from Pennsylvania reinforced what could be called a black vanguardism central to *Correspondence*, arguing that "dark peoples" were "not the only ones that have been under bondage, but they have been the most oppressed on earth, and have also played the most heroic part in every revolution from the slave days to the present time."[91]

The group's ideas about a historically constituted and evidenced radicalism among African Americans fit in well with its theorizations about spontaneity, self-activity, and the significance of quotidian resistance. James's *Black Jacobins* argues that uprisings in Haiti often occurred organically and swiftly, and his other writings point to the many examples under slavery, sharecropping, and in the factory where African Americans fought back against oppressive conditions in creative, quotidian, often individualized forms; the group saw these moments as substantiating its view that people could and did rebel under circumstances where an industrialized proletariat was not leading them.[92] In short, the idea that spontaneous, self-organized, and regular resistance among African Americans especially could measure radicalism and commitment to change became a cornerstone of *Correspondence*'s outlook.

In a reflection of these views, the newspaper dedicated one full page, titled "Special Negro News," (SNN) to issues pertaining to African Americans.[93] As James argued in a letter to Grace Lee Boggs, the collective needed to "place our Negro position in the paper with the utmost clarity" in several front-page pieces as well as the SNN.[94] Thus the SNN was not the only place where issues of race were represented; Charles Denby's "Worker's Journal," which appeared on the front page of every issue until Denby left with Raya Dunayevskaya and others in the 1955 split, frequently discussed racism. Denby's column was one of the paper's most popular sections; judging by the responses of readers and the general consensus within organizational letters, this column was done well.[95]

In addition to exploring racism in the workplace, in housing, and in social interactions, with an emphasis on the ways black people resisted

inequalities and abuses, the SNN also carried debates about the different forms that racism assumed in the Northern and Southern United States, a major concern since many readers were recent migrants to Detroit from the South, as were Charles Denby and James Boggs. While the SNN discussed the *Brown v. Board* decision and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, these issues seemed less urgent than the daily interactions the contributors recount. From abroad, James encouraged members to focus on recent events regarding civil rights and abuses, and Constance Webb in particular responded with detailed accounts in letters and pamphlets, for instance on the Emmett Till Case and the Monroe, North Carolina case of Robert F. Williams.[96] The paper made much of the fact that it was the only interracial press that devoted such attention to black people and pointed to this as an example of its overall dedication to racial struggle.[97]

That *Correspondence* readers expressed more interest in local events than those in Alabama or Arkansas reflects in part the process of amanuensis, in that those whose comments were transcribed and printed were often in conversation with coworkers like James Boggs in Detroit or Constance Webb in Los Angeles. It could also indicate the enormity of racial conflict in postwar urban centers like Detroit that found individual expression in *Correspondence*'s pages, reinforcing the collective's notion that spontaneity organically emerged from the worker's environment to catalyze active resistance, however much individualism limited these confrontations with power structures (i.e., the foreman, a fellow worker, and a landlord). Within the context of McCarthyism, celebrating such acts of resistance played a special role in broadening the range of possibilities for progress in a repressed environment, marked by frustration with the détente of 1950s unions.

Initially, the SNN section was mirrored by a column of the same size entitled "White Talk," which consisted of letters documenting the vociferous racism in Detroit, especially through the recording of overheard comments, descriptions of incidents, and letters from whites expressing their ambivalence. One progressive plant worker writing in to "White Talk" describes a conversation with another woman regarding the increasing numbers of African American women in the plant. Rather than condemn this change, the woman says "maybe we'll have a decent union like they have at Briggs."[98] Though troubling in its reductionism, this worker's belief that the new employee, by virtue of race and gender, would help radicalize coworkers indicates the typification of African American female agency *Correspondence* promoted.

Some writers expressed outrage at the voice given to African Americans, such as the "Southern Woman Worker" who charges that "the

paper is more against Southern whites than Northern. I'll bet the article on the South was written by a Northerner." The writer then concedes, "One thing, this is a very honest paper, and I like to read when people say what they think."[99] Thus, at least in the beginning, *Correspondence* seems to have succeeded in creating a vigorous forum, and frequent accounts by "sub-getters" and internal records of highly successful fund raising socials and house parties show that readers shared it with others, which led to conversations about labor, race, anticommunism, and women.

Among the separate sections of the paper, that the SNN page became the flashpoint for tensions among readers says much about the limits of postwar racial progress, the incendiary nature of antiracist policies amidst McCarthyism, and the profound tensions that would erupt in the 1960s. More frequent and revealing than those white readers who felt slighted by the attention to African American issues were the more than a dozen black readers who objected to what seemed to be the isolation of African American issues. Some readers felt that the paper's relegation of the "Negro News" to its own page replicated other forms of segregation. As one reader wrote, "the whole Negro page is discrimination."[100] Others also felt that the page instituted a separation that did not reflect the dynamic relations between different races, even under a system of segregation. Since the paper targeted particular readers through "The Woman's Page," "Youth Talk," and "On the Job," these sections, like the SNN, printed letters and comments from readers. This was seen by at least one reader in Philadelphia as artificially imposing categories; in short, all letters should go together, because when they are "broken down into separate sections… [it is] too easy for the Negro to read only letter sections regarding Negro life, workers reading only 'Their Section' etc. This is a form of segregation within your publication and not akin to life. After all, in everyday living we all meet all kinds of people…"[101] One reader attested that "all I read are the Women and Negro Pages," and surely this worked both ways, wherein white readers who wanted to ignore issues of race could choose not to read the page.[102] A reader who locates himself in Detroit and signs as a "Negro subgetter" asked "why aren't more whites subscribing to this paper? I approach as many of them as I do Negroes, and I always get the feeling that they think only soreheads and radicals and Negroes need a paper like this."[103]

Others supported the existence of the SNN, saying that it was a rare opportunity to depict "the types of relationships Negro people have on their jobs and in their daily lives." Several readers concurred, maintaining that the SNN was "a place where Negroes can say what they don't ordinarily say to whites, and where they can talk to each other, straight."[104] In *Facing Reality*, James argues that in a worker's paper the opinions and

experiences of black readers had "more right to representation than any other point of view on the race question [...] Marxist organizations must show firmness, not in defense of its own principles, but in its determination that the Negro Worker shall say what he wants to say and how he wants to say it. This alone will make a paper in the United States unique."[105]

The *Correspondence* collective eventually responded to readers' concerns in an editorial statement that links racism to McCarthyism. In the October 2, 1954 article, "Why a Negro Page," *Correspondence* wrote:

> ...we live in a society in which workers are so suppressed that even we, who want to hear what workers say, tend to suppress them ourselves. As a result, we have to take careful pains to see that the worker appears.
>
> It's for this reason we have a Negro page. We want them heard. We're not completely free from prejudice. If we didn't have that page, we wouldn't be sure that the Negroes would be heard.... It's the world we live in.[106]

Correspondence believed that the CPUSA's program of "Black and White, Unite and Fight" potentially made interracial politics merely an instrument to achieving socialism, and thereby negated racial issues that could not be cleanly subsumed in an anticapitalist analysis. As the collective's founder stated of the slogan, it was "unimpeachable in principle and undoubtedly [it] has an excellent sound. But it is often misleading and even offensive in the face of the infinitely varied, tumultuous, passionate, and often murderous reality of race relations in the United States."[107] Awareness of previous shortcomings and the need for white workers to evolve into an antiracist position led the paper to focus attention on the myriad forms that racism assumed. Thus, part of the SNN page's purpose was to educate white readers about their various expressions of racism and to encourage interracial friendships through the examples of successful interracial relationships.[108] Accordingly, in 1955 the editors argued that the "struggle of Negroes for their own rights have [*sic*] already shown that its results go far beyond the question of race. It frees the working people as a whole."[109] As a "Negro coal miner" from Purglove, West Virginia, declared, "Negroes don't have to be told about the race question. White people are the ones who have to read this paper."[110]

As Lyman Paine observed, these published debates reflected internal fissures in the organization as early as 1954, when the group began "witnessing a sort of division among us according to the differences we encounter in the people we see outside."[111] As discussed above, these debates compelled *Correspondence* to justify the presence of the page in ways that reflected the anguish marking issues of race, leftism, and

self-expression during the 1950s. Because *Correspondence* established both white and black workers as primary, if different, agents of revolution, the organization needed to emphasize unity among these forces if their theories were to come to fruition. Resistance among whites long accustomed to dominance complicated the supposed commonality among all workers, black and white, that James assumed in his 1954 article: "A worker knows what workers want, what workers think, how they feel."[112]

These views were codified in the 1958 *Correspondence* publication of the book *Facing Reality*, which maintains that "American Negroes did not wait for the Vanguard Party to organize a corps of trained revolutionaries. . . . They have gone their own way, and in intellectual matters (for example the study of Negro History) as well as in practical, they have in the past twenty-five years created a body of political achievement . . . influencing American civilization as a whole."[113] In terms of producing an inclination for black participation in a Marxist paper, *Facing Reality* argues that editors should note "Many Negroes make race relations a test of all other relations" while white workers "show strong prejudice against association with Negroes outside the plant."[114] Balancing the antagonism in *Correspondence*'s internal memos and letters were other articles and letters that explored instances where black and white people worked together, politically or socially. Yet whites' inability to overcome their racism enough to accept contact between black men and white women was a recurrent theme.[115]

Denby recounted a situation where black and white workers got along on a social level at work until an interracial romance occurred. In a Detroit auto plant, "twenty or thirty workers of different nationalities and races, men and women, southerners and northerners . . . all work together. Our relations are very close. We talk about anything and everything," until two coworkers, Joyce, a white woman, and Charlie, an African American man, date. Soon both are subjected to threats, insults, and ostracization, to the degree that they consider quitting. However, in this instance, both Joyce and Charlie refuse to be intimidated or hide their relationship and eventually their white coworkers accept their relationship.[116] Interracial romance was the social interaction that elicited the most entrenched white racism, and the issue recurred regularly in the SNN, at times appearing in every issue (as in late 1955), and in general appearing in approximately a quarter of the pages.[117] In addition to articles comparing Northern and Southern racism (often arguing that there was little difference) and experiences of segregation in public places, housing, and in the workplace, the SNN often published accounts of whites who, though willing to organize politically and work with African Americans, were racist in social settings. In

keeping with the paper's didactic goals, these accounts sometimes ended with the white person overcoming racism in this sphere as well.

Detroit members, at the operation's hub, tended to focus on the conditions of black workers in the aftermath of World War II, their resistance to the racism of coworkers and management, and their sense that the unions at times collaborated in the exploitation of workers.[118] The voices recorded in *Correspondence* together construct stories of disenfranchisement in the early post-World War II era, attacks on union workers, the links between spontaneity and wildcat strikes, racism and civil rights violations, and the silencing of multiply marginalized workers who, even in the least authoritarian of times, rarely found opportunities for expression. In this way, *Correspondence*'s substitution of the written word for direct action produced an alternative politics necessitated by the repressions of their times and proved that such an outlet was much needed among those most invisible in narratives of postwar prosperity and consensus. *Correspondence*'s pages identified expressions of spontaneity on shop floors in Detroit and in the South.[119] Accordingly, there was a sense that both the paper's success and weaknesses lay in its SNN page. As Lyman Paine informs Raya Dunayevskaya in a 1954 letter, compared to the SNN page, the rest of the paper seemed "limited, hesitant, unimpassioned." He goes on to encourage following the SNN's example of including as geographically diverse a collection of correspondents as possible.[120]

In contrast to Communist Party serial publications, *Correspondence*'s SNN page rarely connected McCarthyism to civil rights issues like *Brown v. Board* or to issues of freedom of expression, though their discussions of labor relations in Detroit primarily related union conditions to McCarthyism. Many letters promote direct action, reasoning that "the only time Negroes will do all right is when they just start fighting."[121] Clearly, the direct action tactics that would define the civil rights and black power movements were inchoate among readers voicing their concerns in *Correspondence*, however much *Correspondence* officially evaded endorsing particular actions in the midst of McCarthyism.

McCarthyism and Race

Correspondence readers frequently reported the comments of those they shared the paper with or sought subscriptions from, and many of these comments reflect understandable fears of radicalism and an assumption that Communism and an interest in race relations were synonymous. A self-identified "steel workers wife" from Pittsburgh wrote in to say that those relatives to whom she showed the paper "say I'd better watch out, they

think it's a Communist paper . . . they say it must be Communist because any whites who would be interested in Negroes must be Communists." A " 'miner's wife" from Osage, West Virginia, similarly recounted that "people around here were saying your paper was Communist," but like the Pennsylvania reader, she continued to read and participate in the newspaper despite her peers' accusations.[122]

Arguably, *Correspondence*'s ambivalent stances regarding McCarthyism, anti-Communism, and unions broadened its appeal, as is evident in a Detroit auto worker's comment that "If the Un-American Activities Committee calls me in, I'm going to tell them to call Reuther. He was playing around with the Communists and thought it was wonderful in Russia." Immediately below this letter, a highly ambiguous and rare likening of racism and anticommunism occurs when another reader comments that "The way the government sees it, a Communist is a white person who has Negro friends. [signed] Anti-Communist, Los Angeles."[123] Again, Grace Lee Boggs's comment that some of her *Correspondence* peers viewed Communists positively in Detroit suggests that they were less concerned with the issues of totalitarianism that preoccupied James. Given the diversity of views presented in *Correspondence*, the "Anti-Communist" from Los Angeles could easily be expressing disgust with the government's equation of civil rights and Communism, or, alternatively, his or her own combination of racism and anticommunism. As part of *Correspondence*'s organizing principles, it endeavored to give voice to even reactionary workers, and those expressing hostility toward the CPUSA or the U.S.S.R. particularly suited the newspaper's anti-Communism. *Correspondence*'s occasional willingness to publish potentially offensive material became a divisive issue in the newspaper's pages and in the internal letters, memos, and minutes of the collective, which debated the utility of allowing whites to articulate their racism out of an abstract commitment to presenting a spectrum of views.

Correspondence's frequent indulgence in red-baiting indicates the influence of James and Dunayevskaya, since other key figures such as James Boggs was, in his widow's recollection, "very measured in his attitude toward the Soviet Union and the Communist Party, always careful to avoid any association with the anticommunism of the power structure."[124] Grace Lee recalls that upon arriving in Detroit from New York City, she "was amazed at how clear the average black worker was about the positive contributions that the Communists had made to the struggle for justice for working and black people and how out of place the anti-Stalinism of Trotskyism would have been in a gathering of community people."[125] It is clear that particularly in the early years of *Correspondence*, James's anti-Communism (again, as in a very specific anti-Stalinism/CPUSA)

held sway, but letters and editorials problematizing this stance were also published.

Some supporters of the paper expressed direct apprehension at being associated with the CPUSA or any Marxist politics, or the apparent corollary of Communism and antiracism. A Los Angeles "Old Member" (probably Constance Webb) described the response of a potential African American newspaper vendor, who reportedly "liked some of the articles and sent in [a subscription]. At first, he thought it was a new kind of Negro paper. When he saw me, a white, he thought it was Communist. He said 'The Communists do have Negroes and whites mixing.' " This reaffirms the comments of many white readers who felt the newspaper's coverage of racial issues was potentially dangerous. The "Old Member" then affirms the value of anti-Communist rhetoric in the paper, particularly in terms of its appeal as a pro-civil rights newspaper, assuring her audience that when the vendor "saw what we had to say about the Communists," he agreed to sell the paper at his newsstand.[126] Many correspondents and "sub-getters" report prospective readers needing assurance that the newspaper was not of Communist origins, and the collective's dual strategy of denouncing Communism and McCarthyism appears to have appeased several dubious readers. A "cement worker" from Los Angeles wrote in that he "passed it on to a white [co-worker who] said he will read it, but if it has anything about Communism, into the wastebasket it goes." Apparently, this new reader said the newspaper was "o.k.," meaning it was sufficiently anticommunist.[127]

Another reader, a "Negro Housewife" from Detroit, affirms her sympathy with *Correspondence*'s anti-Communism, but objects to a *Correspondence* piece labeling African American activists such as William Patterson "criminals. That's dangerous. Especially to do that to a Negro Communist. They're going to make a martyr of him. They ought to put an end to the things the Communists are always pointing out about this country, instead."[128] This correspondent's sense that it was incumbent upon the government to correct the wrongs Communists protested assumed the validity of Communists' charges against racism, war, and labor exploitation. It also reflects the complex attitudes toward Communism and race among those readers straddling wariness toward Communists with their hostility toward blanket persecutions, and also implicitly legitimated the CPUSA's record of integrated, antiracist work that created martyrs.

In the same November 1954 issue, a Detroit "Day Worker" chastises the newspaper for using an African American Communist as an example in a previous issue, saying that "Any Negro who takes up about races is called a Communist…they probably call me one for I tell these people off everywhere."[129] The reader's equation of vocal antiracist activism with

Communism underscores the sorts of links the government made, while attesting to the history of Communist opposition to racism. Whereas this reader appears willing to risk protests against racism being interpreted as Communist-inspired, another advocates silence as a response to anti-communism, claiming "[t]he best thing to do is keep your mouth shut."[130] Such comments demonstrate the stultifying effects of McCarthyism even when juxtaposed with courageous individualized accounts of quotidian power struggles.

As *Correspondence* increasingly critiqued McCarthyism and racism, FBI attention led to further repercussions. An April 4, 1954 article by James (under a pseudonym) entitled "Is McCarthy a Communist?" appeared on the front page of *Correspondence*, and over that summer discussions about racism escalated in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board*. Not surprisingly, in December 1954, JFT was included on the Subversive Activities Control Board list of seditious organizations; this followed *Correspondence* losing its mailing rights due to the July 24, 1954 issue, which the postmaster decided was "tending to incite murder and assassination."[131] As managing editor Martin Glaberman explained to their lawyer, the Post Office Solicitor's objections were seemingly based only upon newspaper pieces recording the "reaction of Negroes to the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation. All that is indicated is an attitude, not in any sense proposals or encouragement."[132] Glaberman's position is, of course, in keeping with *Correspondence*'s abnegation of leadership. Glaberman suggests they should argue that the controversial racial rhetoric in the July 24, 1954 issue was commonplace in media discussions when addressing "a race riot or juvenile delinquency or the apprehending of a murderer," and thus the views expressed by editors and correspondents were not especially offensive.[133] In his defense, Glaberman stresses *Correspondence*'s role as a conduit for the voices of workers otherwise silenced, and denies that the paper's editors were conspiring to incite violent revolution. In a transcribed interview between *Correspondence*'s lawyer, Rowland Watts, and the Detroit Post Office's Assistant Solicitor, William O'Brien, the latter reportedly says that "some of [*Correspondence*] sounds Communist," which Watts denies, insisting that there was "no political group" behind the newspaper.[134]

This final point was central to the *Correspondence* collective's fight against being included on the Attorney General's list of "subversive organizations" as the Johnson-Forest Group. As Dunayevskaya stated in an internal letter discussing the case after legal consultations, "J-F T was a political point of view…It was therefore careful to call itself a Tendency, not an organization." She further points out that the Tendency dissolved in 1951, and therefore had no connection to *Correspondence*.[135] In late

December 1954, managing editor Martin Glaberman informed "Friends and Supporters" of the newspaper that the U.S. Attorney General "had placed the Johnson-Forest group . . . on the subversive list," and he assured readers that the Johnson-Forest publication "*Correspondence* is and has been what it says it is . . . written and edited and circulated by its readers. No one knows or would what are the political views or previous political affiliations of its supporters. The very nature of the paper as a forum for the free expression of its readers would make such questions impossible."[136] This reasserts the value of *Correspondence*'s abnegation of any responsibility for advocating a program; however, FBI records and accounts from members reveal that this principle mattered as little as the group's anti-Communism in terms of providing the collective any immunity from persecution.

The FBI's records for Martin Glaberman indicate that twelve informants made reports between 1954 and 1958, including seven who regularly, and with surprising accuracy for FBI informants, reported on discussions at meetings.[137] The FBI was concerned with what its agents called JFG (Johnson-Forest Group), meaning *Correspondence*, because of its revolutionary stances, and additionally, because Glaberman's employment with a key-making outfit for the Navy put him in proximity to classified material. However, surveillance and infiltration extended well beyond Glaberman's activities and employment, and included a thorough record of the splits and disagreements within the group over leadership, especially its funding sources, its preoccupation with the civil rights movement, James's influence, and its likening of spontaneous revolutions in Hungary to those potentially brewing in the United States. Comments such as Grace Lee's statement in a 1953 meeting that "European workers would not make the final move until the American workers began the revolution" worried the FBI, which hardly seemed mollified by Dunayevskaya's claim in a meeting that *Correspondence* collective members were unafraid of "the State Department, and the Justice Department, and the FBI" because "we are not subversives and do not support the Communist Party."[138] The FBI also read Glaberman's incoming and outgoing mail, and tailed him in 1957, recording his visits to *Correspondence*-related meetings and socials, which also included surveillance of those who accompanied him.[139]

In letters over the course of 1955, several members report being visited by FBI agents who insisted that *Correspondence* was "Communist," despite the denials of interviewees and the newspaper's vehement anti-Communism. These visits in California, Michigan, and West Virginia occurred in members' homes as well as at their jobs, in an effort to, as

one agent informed a Los Angeles member, "make it hard" for them. One member reported five visits from agents. The level of infiltration in the organization is revealed by the case of a woman who denied giving money to *Correspondence* only to be forced to admit to having given six dollars some time before, due to the FBI's evidence.[140] An interchange reported by the paper's cartoonist, Frank M., regarding an FBI visit to his wife, Peg, further reveals the concerns of the government and the ambivalence of some members who could more realistically assess the paper's goals and composition. When "official-subversives of the A.G." asked Peg "what estimate she made of [*Correspondence*]…She said that she didn't think we would amount to anything. She wondered why they spent so much time on an insignificant group like ours. They said we might become the nucleus of a new movement."[141]

Indeed, many in the group believed it was ushering in a new type of activism, yet one that refused to call itself a movement, while others feared that the small anti-vanguardist group was ineffective. The limited scholarship on *Correspondence* suggests that perhaps Peg's assessment regarding insignificance had merit. However, despite its size and limitations, *Correspondence* recorded voices that might otherwise have gone unheard, creating a dialogue in the midst of a repressive atmosphere that discouraged the free expression of dissatisfaction. *Correspondence*'s uniqueness lay in its archive of letters and transcribed comments of readers, over more than a decade of occasionally interrupted publication. Interchanges among Los Angeles housewives, Detroit auto workers, West Virginian coal miners, and New York academics capture nuanced and vigorous engagement with the labor and civil rights movements, anticolonialism, popular culture, and local politics.[142]

Conclusion

In November of 1962, about fifteen *Correspondence* members from locals in Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York City attended a hastily convened conference in New York City to discuss how to proceed after Grace Lee and James Boggs, and Freddy and Lyman Paine had left the group that spring. These departures incapacitated the group's ability to produce its long-standing newspaper, *Correspondence*, as the Boggses and Paines maintained legal rights to the newspaper and continued to publish it under the same name.[143] The collective's remaining members fought over how to best realize their injunction that "the form of the Marxist organization is a paper," without the necessary funds, activists, or direction. Members agreed to work toward a new serial publication, the newsletter *Facing*

Reality (1963–1967), while arguments revealed their imbrication between the Old and New Left at a time very different from the McCarthyist era of seeming complacency and limited organizational capacity in which they began their work.[144] For example, original member Nettie Kravitz reported that the group's once strong "contact amongst workers, Negroes, and women, is almost nil," while disregarding its significant following among Detroit youths and students, particularly in the Detroit contingent of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.[145]

In the early 1960s, burgeoning direct action in opposition to racism and war challenged the group's fundamental belief that it should not advocate any courses of action. Key members would find ways to influence the 1960s radical movements in Detroit. Thus Smethurst includes *Correspondence* and its successor *Facing Reality*, James and Grace Lee Boggs and C. L. R. James as among those "individuals and organizations to emerge from the [Trotskyist] Left tradition with the greatest impact on the Black Arts and Black Power Movements."[146] Bill Mullen notes that James Boggs would go on to "serve as a sort of father figure" among Detroit radical organizations such as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, and the Revolutionary Action Movement(RAM) and to publish a regular column, "Birth of a Nation," in *Inner City Voice*. Grace Lee Boggs remained active in numerous Detroit social justice movements, and in the 1960s, she participated in UHURU and RAM, and with her husband promoted "Boggsism," a combination of Maoism, black nationalism, and dialectical humanism.[147] Martin Glaberman held discussion groups with *Inner City Voice's* editor, James Watson, which focused on Lenin and the utility of the newspaper.[148] Glaberman also participated in several small movements and publications, importantly teaching a class to the League of Revolutionary Black Workers on Marx's *Capital*, and his publication *Speak Out* gained popularity in the late 1960s.[149] C. L. R. James enjoyed popular receptions when he was allowed to return to the United States to teach in 1968 and 1970–1971; he lectured at the Federal City College in Washington, DC, Northwestern, and Howard University, and in 1971 received an honorary degree from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, not far from *Correspondence*'s origins. James's measured defense of black nationalist groups like the Black Panthers grew out of his own political sense of black agency, and his earlier work with Trotsky and the SWP would later appeal to Malcolm X and others advocating black power.[150]

Collectively, the activities noted above indicate continuity between different activist modes and generations, suggesting that McCarthyism did not entirely discourage their commitments. *Correspondence* demonstrates that the tactic of substituting journalism for mass action to

avoid government repression failed to protect leftists, and vigorous antiracism, even when just in print, was enough to warrant government harassment that has often been seen as targeting CPUSA affiliates alone. *Correspondence*'s vulnerability lay in its Marxism and antiracism, and its frequent disavowals of the CPUSA showed that collaboration with anti-Communism generally offered no cover for leftists. Though the newspaper repeatedly stated its refusal to take an organizational, leadership role, its unique contribution as a format for the articulation of grievances among citizens across the nation and its insistence that black people contained the ability to create permanent change in the United States was especially alarming to authorities eager to quell all expressions of antiracist activism in the 1950s.

The FBI's willingness to direct resources toward monitoring and interfering with leftist organizations without ties to the Soviet Union underscores that government fears were likely as much about the alternative Marxist antiracism offered to postwar liberal capitalism as they were about Communists serving as spies for the Soviet Union. Accordingly, *Correspondence* also shows that government repression, targeting the collective's focus on disgruntled black and white readers, proved a decisive factor in the collective's failure to achieve its goals. Recognizing that anticommunism was directed at small publishing groups like *Correspondence*, as well as those associated with the CPUSA, expands our understanding of McCarthyism's numerous motivations, methods, and consequences.

Notes

1. Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is A Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 169.
2. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), 412.
3. Alan M. Wald, *Writing From the Left: New Essays on Radical Culture and Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), 120–121.
4. Smethurst states that "we can see the rise of the Black Arts movement as not simply a break with earlier ideologies, earlier poetics and previous institutions. Of course, breaks did occur, and the dramatic staging of gestures of rupture and disaffiliation with earlier modes of radical politics was an important feature of the early Black Arts and Black Power movements." *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 56.
5. In *Left of the Color Line* (2003), for example, Smethurst and Mullen note that *Freedom*'s popularity shows "that a vibrant, public and significant African American left subculture… would be driven underground, but not destroyed, at the height of the McCarthy era." Bill V. Mullen and James Smethurst, eds.

Left of the Color Line: Race, Radicalism and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 3–5. See also Bill Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

6. Of all sources discussing *Correspondence*, Kent Worcester's *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) provides the most thorough account of the newspaper. Worcester is particularly acquainted with the features that made the paper unique, as is evident in his point that "Unlike other leftist papers produced in the heyday of Fordism, *Correspondence* openly discussed issues like human sexuality, male chauvinism, blue-collar discontent, and high school alienation" yet he does not mention the Special Negro News section's significance (see pages 124–129, 139–140). Smethurst's *Black Arts Movement* is another fine resource on *Correspondence*, especially capturing its contribution to cultural analysis, though not the SNN (see pages 187–192, 225–226). Though he does not discuss SNN as such, Bill Mullen points out that in its section on the "Negro Question, Johnson-Forest gave the clearest indication of its emerging internal contradictions and impending demise." As he points out, this section advocated "providing room in an organization newspaper for discussion and debate on racial questions." Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, 131–132. See also Paul Buhle, *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (New York: Verso, 1988), 119–122, which briefly discusses the newspaper without reference to the SNN.

   Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) offers an indispensable personal account of her experiences in *Correspondence*, but does not discuss the SNN.

7. Constance Webb is paraphrasing a central idea of the group's 1958 book, *Facing Reality*. "Minutes, New York Conference," 7, Box 11, folder 3. Glaberman Collection, Wayne State University, Walter Reuther Archives.

   The Walter Reuther Archives is currently reprocessing the Glaberman Collection, and thus some box and file allocations have been changed from their citation here.

8. *Partisan Review* is one example of another anti-Stalinist publication in this period.

9. See Cornelius Castoriadis, "James and the Fate of Marxism," in *C.L.R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 285. Castoriadis was also a contributor to a seminal publication of *Correspondence*, the 1958 book *Facing Reality*, cowritten with C. L. R. and Selma James and Grace Lee Boggs.

10. "Editorial Statement," *Correspondence*, October 3, 1953, 1.

11. *Correspondence*'s perceived readership and ideation of the prime victims of McCarthyism differed markedly from that of the CPUSA. In a 1953 *Masses and Mainstream* article, "Resistance is Our Bond," V. J. Jerome argues that "scientists, educators, editors, writers and artists . . . are transmitters of ideas to the people." *Correspondence* members scorned the notion that "the people" required such transmissions, insisting instead that those on the cultural

front needed to listen to "the people," defined as anonymous, typified workers, youths, women, and African Americans. *Masses & Mainstream* 6. 7 (July 1953): 46.

12. Glaberman, "The Marxism of C. L. R. James," in *C.L.R. James: His Intellectual Legacies,* 305.
13. Grace Lee Bogs recalls that these pseudonyms, often consisting of initials, were so often changed that members frequently were confused about who was who. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, March 2003.
14. James was interred at Ellis Island between the fall of 1952 and summer of 1953, and was deported in October 1953, leaving behind a four-year-old son.
15. In an April 23, 1955 letter from Lyman Paine, from Los Angeles, to Glaberman, in Detroit, Paine discusses their classification in terms of the recent break with Dunayevskaya, and the effort of *Correspondence to* break with Johnson-Forest, since both James and Dunayevskaya were no longer leaders. Paine tells Glaberman that "the list recently put out by the AG dealing with those groups tentatively put on the list around Christmas has added, in a couple of cases, another name identifying a group previously listed under another name, a sort of alias, as it were.... Among such is the listing of JT immediately following the original listing of JF. Does this signify perhaps a deliberate contribution to the knowledge of the AG by someone among our former colleagues in order to create, perhaps, a loop-hole thru which they might escape, or does it signify an agent in the midst?" Paine Collection, Reuther Archives, Box 1, folder 3, 6.
16. In our March 2003 interview, Grace Lee Boggs expressed surprise at the number of infiltrators in her particular group. The figure of seventy-five members is based on the "Editor's report," February 22, 1955, 6. Glaberman Collection, Box 38, folder 23.
17. Martin Glaberman, a prominent Detroit activist, was an original member of the Johnson-Forest Tendency. He became *Correspondence*'s managing editor until its 1962 split, and went on to publish several works both with *Correspondence*'s and *Facing Reality's* publishing company, including *Wartime Strikes* (1980) and *Punching Out* (1952). He continued to participate in several small movements and publications, importantly teaching a class to the League of Revolutionary Black Workers on Marx's *Capital*.

    Freddy and Lyman Paine had also been with *Correspondence* since its Johnson-Forest Tendency period. The couple provided important financial support to C. L. R. James and the organization. Lyman Paine was a Harvard-educated architect who married Freddy, a "self-educated and street-smart labor organizer" involved in Socialist/Communist movements since her teens. Freddy represents an interesting profile, as the wife of a wealthy man, she did not need the money, but continued to work in plants and as a secretary to continue her political work and help subsidize the collective. In New York City during the 1940s, their apartment was a locus for those who eventually became members of *Correspondence* and a host of other intellectuals and activists. Both worked on *Correspondence* in Detroit and later Los Angeles and played prominent roles in the organization without directly

writing for the paper. They maintained close ties to the Boggses after both left the original collective to relaunch *Correspondence* in 1962.

Constance Webb was the model-actress whose long correspondence and short marriage to James has received increased attention since the publication of *Special Delivery: The Letters of C.L.R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948* (1997). After they separated, she raised their son in Los Angles where she was an active organizer for *Correspondence*. In addition to being instrumental to the production of Charles Denby's *Indignant Heart*, she also wrote *Richard Wright: a Biography* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1968), the first major biographical and analytical work, particularly valuable because of Webb's close association with Richard Wright during her time as James's wife. James invested great faith in Webb's ability to address racial issues, and their letters throughout the 1950s indicate his belief that she could positively impact the Detroit collective. She produced key pamphlets, and remained true to Johnsonism, particularly as expressed in her work on race.

18. See the 1986 reprint of *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (Chicago: Charles Kerr Company),with an introduction by Paul Buhle. C. L. R. James wrote the 1950 original in collaboration with Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee.
19. Kent Worcester, *C.L.R. James: A Political Biography*, 148–153. Despite this activism, Grace Lee Boggs and others have argued that his years in the United States were the height of James's political activism, and clearly his oversight from abroad of *Correspondence* constituted a unique contribution to radical politics in the 1950s, even with his physical absence. George Padmore's wife Dorothy sums up James's post-deportation state in a 1955 letter to Ellen Wright (Richard Wright's wife). She claims that James' "appeal [...] seems very faded to me." October 6, 1955, 2. Box 3, Folder 1521. In a November 1953 letter to Ellen and Richard Wright, written after seeing James for the first time since his deportation, Dorothy Padmore states that she becomes "very sad every time I see Nello, as each encounter emphasises more and more his wasted talents." Box 3, Folder 1521. Wright Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University. In an interview with Grace Lee Boggs and in her pubic comments (i.e., the University of Michigan American Culture's MLK Symposium, January 2005), and finally in her autobiography *Living for Change*, Boggs argued that James was debilitated and without direction after his deportation. Author interview with Boggs, December 2002.
20. In a letter to Glaberman after the group's breakup, James praised Grace Lee Boggs highly, though he concludes that her alignment with Boggs weakened her analytical abilities. Glaberman Collection, January 6, 1963, Box 12, Folder 22, Glaberman Collection.
21. After the Boggses and Paines left in 1962, James assessed the value of Grace Lee Boggs and Dunayevskaya in a letter to Marty Glaberman: "All that Rae gave to us in political experience and knowledge of Bolshevism Grace gave in philosophy and a general high level of education. I cannot forget not only what the movement but I personally owed to both" women, who eventually

broke with James. Letter from James to Glaberman, dated December 3, 1962. Glaberman Collection, Box 12, folder 22.

22. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, March 2003. Buhle, *C. L. R. James*, 122.
23. Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), 16, describe the influence of *Correspondence* founders on Detroit's 1960s activist publication *Inner City Voice*, which was connected to both the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and Dodge Revolutionary Union Movements (DRUM), and contained members from SNCC in Detroit, 16. See also the documentary, *Finally Got the News*. Stewart Bird, René Lichtman and Peter Gessner, produced in association with the League of Revolutionary Black workers, 1970, released 2003. New York City: Cinema Guild.
24. Unlike those in the SWP and WP who equivocated on the Soviet Union's political forms, the JFT-*Correspondence* members believed that the Soviet Union represented "state capitalism," an extreme form of bureaucratic rule where the oppressions inherent in the maximization of profit persisted under government control, and that workers would inevitably renounce this tyranny. See State *Capitalism & World Revolution*. C. L. R. James, written in Collaboration with Raya Dunayevskaya & Grace Lee (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Co., 1986 (originally 1950)).
25. The Johnson-Forest Tendency, based on its members' long experience in Trotskyist sects and observations of other movements, felt that such departmentalization led to bureaucratic and antidemocratic organizations (like the CPUSA) because they required top-down organization dependent on leaders. This conflict between the democratic, idealistic goals of a movement and the difficulties of applying it can be found in other groups, for example the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.
26. As James stated in *Facing Reality* (1958), a book that articulated the group's core beliefs: "It is not enough to say that the working class alone has the necessary force to realize its emancipation, as if the working class were the steam of an engine with intellectuals as mechanics and engine drivers.... It is the working class alone which is able to produce the organization, the forms, and ideas which this emancipation demands." *Facing Reality*, 91. Such faith in the worker's ability to understand his or her conditions and commonalities was based in Marx's declaration that the worker is "disciplined, united, and organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself." Hence within the collective, the group attempted to function effectively without these structures and without ideological positions or policies, and it met with the sorts of difficulties as later movements that similarly renounced former models of organization encountered when trying to enact change.
27. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 69–70.
28. In its pages, *Correspondence* reasserted the analysis for which James was perhaps most well-known, that African Americans had particular agency. Because of their "[e]xclusion from full citizenship in America by prejudice

and segregation, they have been unfettered by the limitations of nationality while able to spearhead and participate in the specific national tendency to spontaneous action and free association." *Correspondence*, "Whites and Negroes," April 13, 1956, 4.

29. However much *Correspondence* opposed the CPUSA, it implicitly shared features of the CPUSA's periodical *Political Affairs*, where, in 1959, prominent Communist Philip Bonosky declares that "in periods of retreat, when physical forces are dispersed, one turns in another direction to continue the struggle—an ideological direction." For *Correspondence*, however, internal anguish over ideology translated in the paper into the free exchange of ideas among readers across a geographical and political spectrum. See Bonosky, "Marxism and 1930s Culture," *Political Affairs* (May 1959): 38. Another Communist press, *Masses and Mainstream*, in 1951 reprinted the text of "The Negro People vs. The Smith Act: An Appeal to the Supreme Court," in which lawyers argued that "Negro citizens have a special and vital interest in the right of free expression. The most precious right which a minority can enjoy under any form of government is the right to protest, the right to voice its complaints and to request, urge and demand and advocate government redress."
30. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 100, largely attributes the 1955 split to Dunayevskaya's desire to go underground. The group also looked to apparently spontaneous acts of anticolonial resistances in Ghana, Kenya, and India, and the history of slave rebellions to further support its theory that workers were capable of self-organizing and acting effectively and with some simultaneity. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, November 2002. See also Boggs' *Living For Change*, 50, 91–103; Worcester, *C.L. R. James*, 126–128.
31. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, November 2002. The belief in third-layerism also reflected the paper's deep ambivalence toward intellectuals, who the group felt were inherently corrupt and debilitating forces within a radical movement. Because many of the group's members were intellectuals, this hostility led to curious patterns of self-loathing and hypocrisy. See Paul Buhle, *C.L.R. James* and Kent Worcester, *C.L.R. James.*
32. Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, 127.
33. *Facing Reality* (Detroit: Correspondence Press, 1958), 126.
34. "Readers' Views," *Correspondence*, July 24, 1954, 7.
35. The product of this experiment with amanuensis can be found in articles in the Socialist Worker's Party's *The Militant* and James' 1941 pamphlet, "With the Sharecroppers," in which James transcribed the words of sharecroppers and their families integral to the dramatic strike staged on the Saint Louis Highway. Worcester, *C.L.R. James: A Political Biography*, 57. *C.L.R. James on the "Negro Question,"* ed. Scott McLemee (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1996), 63–90, xxiii, pamphlet "With the Sharecroppers" (1941), republished on pages 22–34; other articles from James's time with Missouri sharecroppers appear in *Labor Action* and *The Militant.*
36. Grace Lee Boggs alludes to the process by which *Indignant Heart* (first published in 1952) was written in *Living for Change*, 110, and in "Organizing in

the United States, 1938–1953," in *C.L.R. James, His Intellectual Legacies,* ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 164. Also, in our November 2002 interview, Grace Lee Boggs relayed that *Indignant Heart* was produced through amanuensis, with Webb as the conduit.

37. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, November 2002.
38. The use of amanuensis makes it difficult to determine how many readers actually wrote to comment on the newspaper's contents. Dozens of letters appear in every issue that would indicate that many of the newspaper's 5,000 readers engaged in maintaining it. However, if many of these comments were actually responses to questions posed by Jimmy Boggs and others, as Grace Lee Boggs said in our March 2003 interview, it is hard to reconstruct the degree of reader commitment.
39. Denby (Matthew Ward), *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (Boston: South End Press, 1978 (originally 1952)), Foreword, page unnumbered.
40. "Editorials," *Correspondence,* February 6, 1954, 6.
41. "Newsstands Where You Can Buy *Correspondence*," [*Correspondence*], February 6, 1954, 6. Curiously, West Virginia is not on this list.
42. Paine to James, March 28, 1954. Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 12, page 2 of 3. Wayne State University Archives.
43. In 1956, Grace Lee Boggs describes the New York contingent (twenty-seven members attended the meeting) as "predominantly white, employees, women in their late 20s, 30s and upwards, alert, eager to know and learn about workers and Detroit… [there was a] relative absence of Negroes." Letter dated November 30, 1956, 1. Paine Collection, box 2, folder 7. The small Los Angeles contingent was diverse as well, and the paper's frequent treatment of issues relevant to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Japanese broadened its appeal.
44. In 1954, the SWP experienced another internal split based on Bert Cochran's followers' conviction that the party needed to dramatically adjust its policies in response to McCarthyism, and take what some saw as a conciliatory, defeatist stance in the face of repression of leftists. See Paul Le Blanc, *Trotskyism in America, the First Fifty Years* (New York: Fourth International Tendency, 1987). Schisms like those in the SWP over Bert Cochran's seeming defeatism in the face of McCarthyism particularly affected the group in Detroit, where *Correspondence* experienced a similar division when the issue of developing cadres or going underground in response to McCarthyism led Dunayevskaya and numerous other influential members of *Correspondence* to leave, further debilitating the organization.
45. James' *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* delves into themes that would preoccupy the pages of *Correspondence*, for example, his conviction expressed in a letter to friend George Padmore that the Pequot's crew represented "all races, the poorest of the poor," people capable of producing a new identity founded in "humanity, human values, the things by which we survive are to be found." James to George Padmore, June 22, 1953, Richard Wright Collection, Box 113, folder 1521, Beinecke Library.

46. James's incarceration on Ellis Island underscored such analogies. James, *Mariners*, 21.
47. William E. Cain claims that James, by equating the totalitarianism of Hitler to that of Stalin, a common JFT and *Correspondence* trope, "constructs a transhistorical form of evil—an allegorical rendering of the historic that lacks the rigor and depth that James [usually] exhibits." "Readings of Moby Dick and Othello," in *C.L.R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 262.
48. Donald Pease's introduction to the republication of *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* in its entirety provides a detailed overview of James's complicated legal status during this period, and offers a powerful rebuttal to Buhle's criticisms on the grounds that James was perturbed by his segregation with Communists, which "constituted an act of political categorization with disastrous implications for James's deportation hearings." Pease also illustrates that by "linking his experience with the I.N.S. authorities on Ellis Island to his reading of an exemplary national classic, James fashioned a writing practice that was in one of its aspects an interpretive exercise and in another a juridical appeal." Introduction to C. L. R. James, *Mariners, Renegades & Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (Hanover: University Press of New England 2001), xxi.
49. Throughout that period, those who would become the nucleus of *Correspondence* advocated for James's release and raised money to publish 2,000 copies of *Mariners*, and distributed free copies to members of Congress, literary critics, and friends. Meanwhile, activist intellectuals such as George Padmore attempted to intervene on James' behalf. Saul Blackman to George Padmore, August 20, 1952, Wright Collection, JWJ MSS 3, box 113, folder 1521. See also Aldon Nielsen, *C.L.R. James: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 159.
50. The exemption of other Communist governments in North Korea and China might reflect a Eurocentrism on behalf of *Correspondence* theoreticians, particularly James. Judy Kutulas, *The Long War: The Intellectual People's Front and Anti-Stalinism 1930–1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 222–223. Kutulas argues that in the mid-1950s, "most liberal anticommunists justified their encounters with investigatory bodies as unpleasant duties intellectuals had to perform for the greater good."
51. Not surprisingly, given his high profile as a Marxist antiracist and his encoding of radical critiques within the seemingly supplicatory *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways,* James's deployment of anti-Communism in the book's coda failed to win his case. To the contrary, the I.N.S. ended up using the manuscript to demonstrate James's radicalism.
52. James, *Mariners*, 144. In letters from Ellis Island printed in the *Daily Worker*, CPUSA activist-theoretician and fellow Trinidadian Claudia Jones similarly warned that the conditions of her multinational fellow prisoners, and the I.N.S.'s refusal to take proper care of her heart condition, replicated fascism. Like James, Claudia Jones required medical care during her illness-ridden

detentions at Ellis Island, where she was held sporadically between 1948 and 1954 before her final deportation to London in 1955. In "A Letter from Ellis Island," published in *The Worker*, Jones argues that she and other McCarran Act victims were "incarcerated in concentration camps." However, James's long-standing antipathy toward the CPUSA prevented him from appreciating his shared fate with other such victims of McCarthyism and led him to disavow the evidence of his own experience as beneficiary of the Communists' efforts on Ellis Island. Jones, "Letter from Ellis Island," *The Worker*, Section 2, 7; Marika Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Life in Exile* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 22–27. Also like James, Claudia Jones was forced to rely on the help of friends in the United States for sustenance during her poverty and infirmity after her return to London. Interestingly, the two do not seem to have connected in London, perhaps due to James's anti-Communism.

53. James, *Mariners*, 154.
54. As James stated regarding the party's move from the Third Period to the Popular Front, "the line changed from one that at least attempted to be revolutionary to one which is today openly tied to American imperialism and the Roosevelt war machine," resulting in the loss, which James exaggerates, of 80 percent of its African American membership in New York. James is careful not to praise the party's Third period, arguing that it was riven with the "demagogy and corruption, the bureaucratic manipulation of Negro leaders, the chauvinism open and inverted" that he believed characterized all of the CPUSA's work. James, "The Communist Party's Zigzags on Negro Policy" (1939), *C. L. R. James on the "Negro Question,"* in McLemee, 117. James's deep loathing for the CPUSA was also informed by his close friendship with Richard Wright.
55. James, *Mariners*, 126. Placing James with Communists assured that his internment would be treated as a political matter more so than its original, unsupportable premise of visa violations, and unlike his fellow detainees, James lacked citizenship status that would have afforded him a chance to testify before a court.
56. Ibid., 132.
57. The most James can muster is a protest against his fellow prisoner's visitor, that "slanderer, Communist hack" William Patterson, who had apparently disparaged James earlier during acrimonious debates over race and Marxism. Even here, James' protest is largely personal, and he admits that no great offense occurred because of Patterson's visit. Indeed, his heroic renditions of his fellow Communist detainees are unabated but for this comment, and James undoubtedly was speaking both from a desperate desire to flaunt before the government the humanity of supposed enemies in contrast to the mistreatment he suffered under the government's apparatus, and yet to distance himself from the impulse to solidarity that this recognition would seem to generate. On a personal level, beyond the obvious tactical imperatives of his disavowal, James must have been unsettled by the chasm between his nefarious typification of Communists and his lived experience on Ellis Island. To whatever degree these impulses determined his choice of words

in this passage, his conclusions about the perfidy of seemingly benevolent Communists is utterly in keeping with all of his previous and future pronouncements about Communists.

58. James to Padmore, June 22, 1953, 1, 4, 8. Wright Collection, Box 113, folder 1520.
59. "Charges Against Truman," anonymous, *Correspondence*, December 12, 1953, 1.
60. *Correspondence*, October 3, 1953, 1. In a 1953 article the editors likened Washington's "barbarism" with that found "from Peiping to Moscow, from Paris to Buenos Aires." October 3, 1953, "Statement of the Editor," 1.
61. "The Newcomer," *Correspondence*, December 12, 1953, 1.
62. "Readers Comments," *Correspondence*, February 6, 1954, 6.
63. The fact that the paper ran special features of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Japanese underscores its uniqueness, particularly as in this reader's ability to draw analogies that have often evaded scholars preoccupied with black/white binaries.
64. This letter is signed I.F., Detroit Auto Worker. February 6, 1954, 6. It is a sort of rehearsal for protest placards among African Americans against the Vietnam War, declaring, "No Viet Cong Ever Called me…."
65. The authors go on to say that "the United States is, after the Russian Army, the greatest producer of Communists…in every quarter of the world." "Two Worlds: Notes From a Diary," February 20, 1954, 2.
66. "Still Investigating McCarthy," *Correspondence*, January 23, 1954, 6.
67. "Two Worlds: Notes from a Diary," *Correspondence*, May 1, 1954, 2.
68. Glaberman to James, April 11, 1954, box 38, folder 14. Glaberman Collection, box 38, folder 23.
69. From Johnny Zupan's Editor's reports, February 22, 1955. The editor describes a ten-point approach to an article about McCarthyism, arguing that the working class intimidates McCarthy, and the only ones "who are afraid of McC [are] helpless because of social ties." Glaberman Collection, Box 38, folder 23, 4.
70. "McCarthy—A Real Danger," *Correspondence*, February 6, 1954, 6. In a letter to Freddy Paine, James writes that he "has worked out a fundamental article on McCarthy…all who read it will sit up and take notice." Though such an article did appear, it did not have the impact James foresaw. Letter dated February 7, 1954, Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 18.
71. "A Reader Meets a McCarthyite," *Correspondence*, August 21, 1954, 2 and "McCarthyism Aims to Isolate Workers," *Correspondence*, February 6, 1954, 2.
72. Dunayevskaya quoted by informant at a Detroit meeting. Glaberman Collection, Box 38, folder 15, FBI file, DE 100-10203, 6–7.
73. "Are We Communist?" *Correspondence*, December 11, 1954, 4.
74. "Editorial Statement on the Negro Question," *Correspondence*, December 12, 1953, 1.
75. October 3, 1953, "Statement of the Editor," *Correspondence*, 1. The newspaper's front page conveyed its eclecticism with articles discussing racism

within relief agencies, Lucille Ball's radicalism, expurgations within the government of the Soviet Union, and work shortages in Flint, Michigan. It also featured a cartoon showing a black and a white woman who cannot identify their husbands because both are miners covered in coal, joking with each other about their confusion.

76. Editorial Statement, "On the Negro Question," *Correspondence*, October 3, 1953, 1.
77. Several authors and associates have commented on James's optimism that at times replicated visions of American exceptionalism, including Grace Lee Boggs, Paul Buhle, Martin Glaberman, Aldon Nielsen, Donald Pease, and Kent Worcester.
78. Lyman Paine to James, March 28, 1954, 3. Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 12.
79. "Editorial," *Correspondence*, December 28, 1953, 1.
80. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, November, 2002.
81. Their optimism was bounded by their recognition of the tremendous responsibility involved in providing the newspaper as a catalyst or discursive organizer for mass action, and by an inner feeling that they should become politically active and channel the energy that emanated from *Correspondence*, a position held by Dunayevskaya, Johnny Zupan, and Charles Denby. Accordingly, the group constantly analyzed its actions, motives, and theories, and each issue of the paper seemed to generate another volume of recriminations, accusations, and resolutions, as the capacious collections of letters and memos that have survived the organization attest. See the Paine and Glaberman collections at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, WSU, and *Correspondence* collection at the C. L. R. James Institute, New York City.
82. "Sameness in the Paper," August, 1954, 6. Accordingly, longtime collective member Lyman Paine worried over *Correspondence*'s abilities to present "our activities and perspectives as a stage in social development as opposed to the ideas of a tiny bunch of fanatics in some esoteric corner." These early concerns about relevancy and the applicability of their theories would follow the group throughout its history. If some at times doubted that a paper could leave a lasting imprint on society, James was characteristically sure of the group's place in history. In a 1954 letter to Grace Lee Boggs, discussing problems in a particular issue and within the organization, James states, "let the historians write about all that in the future." C. L. R. James to Grace Lee Boggs, January 4, 1954, 7. Paine Collection, box 1, folder 18.
83. These included writing at times daily letters of as many as twenty pages critiquing everything from the best role of African Americans in the paper to the proper metric dimensions of columns per page, See Glaberman Collection, Wayne State University, for the best record of James's letters regarding the organization, though it is important to note the files of others, such as Constance Webb in the C. L. R. James Institute in New York, and Wayne State University's Paine collection.
84. Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement*, 189.
85. James argued that "the greatest and most glaring failure of the paper, its inability to mobilize the membership" could only be resolved if "the class

struggle, the concrete efforts of the American workers in their battles, successes defeats" became "embedded" in the paper's fabric. Paradoxically, in the same document, James declares "Now I am warning everyone" that promoting "self-activity" without assuming a leadership role is difficult but necessary. Memo "The Paper" dated February 25, 1955. Glaberman Collection, box 38, folder 23, 1, 2, 3.

86. "Editorial Statement," January 9, 1954, 1. They go on to say "*Correspondence* was started and is run by a small group of people, mostly workers; A good many of them have had experience with various radical parties, the Socialist parties, the Trotskyist parties and, some of the older ones. Even with the Communist parties. We have all found that those are no good. All of them are convinced that they have the wisdom and heaven has commissioned them to lead the workers. Some of these are merely ridiculous. Others, like the Communists, are the most deadly menace to the workers that has appeared."
87. James's insistence that the paper not "exhort" restricted *Correspondence*'s collective members and contributed to the departure of Dunayevskaya, Denby and others in 1955. James's imperious attitude toward Dunayevskaya in the lead-up to the split says much about his attitude. He declares that "I have told [Dunayevskaya, a.k.a. Weaver] what to do." He also complains, "As usual on issues that I raised with her… I got no reply." James, "The Paper," Feb. 25, 1955, 4–5. Glaberman Collection, box 38, folder 23.
88. James, "The Historical Development of the Negro in American Society" (1943), in *C.L.R. James on the Negro Question*, in McLemee, 71.
89. Though the SWP recruited James eagerly as a way to compete with the inroads its nemesis, the CPUSA, had made among black people, it was slow to make any actual changes within its ranks. James's presence surely attracted some members of color, but the SWP's reluctance to move beyond rhetoric limited its appeal and contributed to the departure of the JFT and other black members.
90. Though this approach imparts far more agency and autonomy to African Americans than other Marxist organizations of its time, it still considers the overall achievement of socialism as a product of a movement led by the proletariat, however "force[ful]" the intervention of the black independent struggle might be. C.L.R. James, in *C.L.R. James on the "Negro Question,"* in McLemee, 22–34. Quote from page 71. James further elaborated his notion of black agency in his "With the Sharecroppers" (1941) and "Historical Development of the Negro People" (1943), both of which examine specific struggles in the United States, from abolitionists and populists to the sharecroppers union of the late 1930s. These books conclude that black people radicalized the demands and commitment of each movement, and therein were directly responsible for the movements' achievements.
91. "Special Negro News," *Correspondence*, March 1, 1954, 7.
92. The SNN would inevitably become the paper's focal point, given that the collective, under the influence of James, foregrounded the black worker as projecting particular agency. *Correspondence's* masthead optimism regarding

the agency of African Americans for workers, women, and youths can be found in James' *American Civilization*, written in 1950, three years before *Correspondence* first appeared, and finally published in full more than three decades later. In hindsight, James' optimistic reading of the revolutionary potential in the United States was disproved by the persistence of racism, the entrenchment of elites, and divisions between the rich and poor. Yet on another level, James, in 1950, predicted the groups who would create meaningful change in the 1960s: youths, African Americans, and women. James, *American Civilization* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993 (written in 1950)), 200.

93. The paper also dedicated one page to gender issues, titled "A Woman's Place," and to youths, titled "Guys and Gals." It is notable that while there were debates about particular articles in these sections, objections never were so great that the editorial staff had to collectively respond to criticism or reconsider the appearance of the page.
94. James to Grace Lee Boggs, January 4, 1954, page 2 of 7. Glaberman Collection, Box 1, folder 18.
95. Again, like *Indignant Heart*, it was the product of amanuensis. Author interview with Grace Lee Boggs, March 2003.
96. James to Webb, December 1, 1955. In another letter to James, Webb discusses Georgia Tech student riots, the burning of an effigy in Macon, bus boycotts, a recent murder in Mississippi, and other events. Webb to James, December 9, 1955. C. L. R. James Institute, New York.
97. To my knowledge, the only other non-African American based paper to have such a section was the CPUSA's *Daily Worker* during the 1930s, which featured a page about Harlem. However, this section did not contain any articles that departed from the party's antagonism toward black nationalism and independent black organizations or that critiqued the party itself.
98. "White Talk," *Correspondence*, October 17, 1953, 9.
99. Ibid.
100. "Against Separate Sections," *Correspondence*, November 14, 1953, 10. A reader from Chicago similarly stated, "I don't think you should have a special Negro page. Negroes are trying to break down segregation." "Special Page," *Correspondence*, November 13, 1954, 6.
101. "Our Page Again," *Correspondence*, May 1, 1955, 8.
102. "What is Wrong With Special Negro News," *Correspondence*, March 20, 1954, 8.
103. "Whose Paper," *Correspondence*, March 20, 1954, 7.
104. "Why Separate Sections," *Correspondence*, January 23, 1954, 8.
105. White readers' complaints and the difficulties sub-getters encountered among those who thought that the paper appealed exclusively to African Americans call into question the page's "educational" purposes. As outlined in *Facing Reality* and editorials that stressed the primacy of African American voices over traditionally dominant white workers, and emphasized in James' letters from abroad, the group was perhaps overly optimistic regarding the

ability of some white readers to use the SNN page self-critically. James, et al, *Facing Reality*, 152.

106. "Why A Negro Page," *Correspondence*, October 2, 1954.
107. James, et. al., *Facing Reality,* 152.
108. The group's belief that it needed to educate white workers led to conflicts, as is evident in Martin Glaberman's concern that the tone of the page's editor and columnist, Al Whitney (the pseudonym of James Boggs), might alienate white readers. Glaberman notes that the SNN page experienced "considerable success in showing the concrete struggles against specific forms of discrimination. [Whitney's column] tends to abstractness and vagueness on the specific forms of Negro struggles. We read that Negroes will struggle, have struggled and are struggling. Also that white workers are not only backward on the Negro question but also on the class question…to just state this in issue after issue only antagonizes the white worker, teaches him nothing, and drives him deeper into his own prejudice." "Editor's Report," February 22, 1955, 6. Box 38, folder 26, Glaberman Collection.
109. "The Negro Question Today," *Correspondence*, February 5, 1955, 1.
110. "Readers Views," *Correspondence*, February 6, 1954, 8; December 12, 1953, 8. Similarly another reader wrote in to state succinctly, "whites need to read this."
111. "Editorial Report, February 22, 1955," Paine Collection, Box 2, folder 4. Paine to James, March 28, 1954, Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 12.
112. "Workers and Intellectuals," *Correspondence*, April 3, 1954, 6.
113. James, et. al., *Facing Reality*, 150.
114. Ibid., 151. Notably, their sense of agency would be substantiated in the 1960s, from civil rights direct action to the movement for Black Studies programs.
115. For example, Charles Denby's second "Worker's Journal" piece describes at length a union effort where black and white members overcame division, yet, when a masquerade party was suggested, white men objected on the grounds that their wives may mistakenly dance with black men.
116. "View of a Northern Negro," *Correspondence*, October 31, 1953, 1, 3.
117. Much of the discussion was spurred by African Americans who felt white women were divisive.
118. One man wrote, "The CIO didn't do anything for us. It just put everybody on the spot." *Correspondence*, November 14, 1955, 10. The bitterness toward the CIO suggested that its earlier, seemingly progressive stance on race, at least in the eyes of this reader, only further endangered the lives of black men, especially once the union, in response to McCarthyist pressure, abandoned and betrayed those who had fought for integration in the union and their personal lives.
119. Because so many of the auto workers who contributed to the newspaper had recently migrated to Detroit, readers often compared Northern and Southern racism, discussed the civil rights movement, Till, Williams, and the implementation of Brown v. Board. Further, prior to *Correspondence*'s

1955 split, its front page columnist, Charles Denby, frequently reflected on his origins in Georgia.

120. Paine to Dunayevskaya, June 2, 1954, Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 12.
121. "Not Taking It," *Correspondence,* July 14, 1954, 8.
122. *Correspondence*, November 18, 1954, 4.
123. Via the terms Communist and Anti-Communist with capital "c"s that typically denotes specific opposition to Stalinism, this contributor, like many others, seems to be using the terms to generally address members of the CPUSA, known more in the community for its interracial politics than its connections to the U.S.S.R. *Correspondence*, February 6, 1954, 6.
124. Boggs, *Living For Change*, 95.
125. Ibid., 95–96.
126. "Special Negro News," *Correspondence,* November 13, 1954, 4.
127. "New Friends of *Correspondence*," August 7, 1954, 7.
128. "Communism—Since McCarthy," *Correspondence*, August 7, 1954, p, 6. The latter reader, a Detroit "Ford-Rouge Worker," prefaces his remarks by saying that if he were to go "to the park and started to say what I thought about his country? They'd lock me up. Say I was a Communist."
129. "Special Page," *Correspondence*, November 13, 1954, 6.
130. "Communism—Since McCarthy," *Correspondence*, August 7, 1954, 6.
131. To Correspondence Publishing Company, from United States Post Office, Classification section, July 29, 1955, Glaberman Collection, Box 4, folder 1. This follow-up letter requested other specific issues, which were viewed as similarly subversive.
132. Glaberman to Rowland Watts, July 8, 1955. Glaberman Collection Box 4, folder 1.
133. Glaberman points out that "If the views of substantial sections of the population on pressing issues are unmailable because they indicate a certain attitude toward violence, there isn't a daily paper that isn't unmailable." Letter to Rowland Watts, July 8, 1955. Glaberman Collection, Box 4, folder 1. Glaberman alludes to the often cacophonous opinions in *Correspondence* in his assertion that in "the same issue there appeared a contrary view, which was also important because it reflected the thinking of another segment of society, the liberal white."
134. Meeting notes, January 13, 1955, Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 14. During this meeting, Watts points out that the *Dally Worker* was still circulating, to which the Assistant Solicitor replied that was soon to change, which it did.
135. Dunayevskaya to Lyman Paine, January 6, 1955. Paine Collection, Box 2, folder 11.
136. Letter from Glaberman on Correspondence Publishing Company letterhead, to friends and supporters, December 30, 1954, 1–2. Paine Collection, Box 2, folder 11.
137. "Office Memorandum." United States Government, September 21, 1955, to director of FBI from SAC, Detroit. In Glaberman Collection, Box 38, folder 15, 3–9.

138. Office Memorandum United States Government, To Director, FBI. Report dated September 21, 1955, 6 and 8. Glaberman files, Box 41, folder 4.
139. Office Memorandum, United States Government, August 8, 1957, 5–6. Glaberman Collection, Box 41, folder 5.
140. Letter from "F," to "Dear Friends," December 14, 1955. Glaberman Collection, Box 4, folder 7. According to this letter, one member was apparently visited on three separate occasions, while another "almost lost his job."
141. Frank M, to Lyman Paine, July 6, 1955, Paine Collection, Box 1, folder 14.
142. Other leftist newspapers and journals also felt that their publishing of dissident views constituted a form of political action, an argument that was particularly persuasive in light of the scrutiny the FBI. directed at the papers, and the recriminations experienced by, for instance, V. J. Jerome who was imprisoned under the Smith Act largely based on his arguments in the CPUSA-produced pamphlet "Grasp the Weapon of Culture." For information about Jerome, see Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 302.
143. The new *Correspondence* maintained the same format as the old but moved distinctly away from the working-class basis that had distinguished the original newspaper, and instead covered the civil rights movement in great detail. According to Kent Worcester, *C. L. R. James*, 142–143, the new paper emphasized "the importance of speaking in the American vernacular and…integrating socialist themes with indigenous traditions," and replaced "a quasi-New Age conception of the development of the whole person for the worker centrism that [*Correspondence*] had once embraced." See also Buhle, *C.L.R. James*, 122–123.
144. "Minutes, New York Conference, November 23–24, 1962," 5, 7. Glaberman Collection, Box 11, folder 3.
145. "Minutes, New York Conference, November 23–24, 1962," 1, 3, 4. Glaberman Collection, Box 11, folder 3.
146. Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 19.
147. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism*, 138, 142.
148. Ibid., 98–99.
149. Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), describes the influence of *Correspondence* founders on Detroit's 1960s activist publication *Inner City Voice*, which was connected to both the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and Dodge Revolutionary Union Movements (DRUM), and contained members from SNCC active in Detroit. 16. See also the documentary, *Finally Got the News*. Stewart Bird, René Lichtman and Peter Gessner, produced in association with the League of Revolutionary Black workers, 1970, released 2003. New York City: Cinema Guild.
150. "Memory of the World Register: C. L. R. James Collection," The University of the West Indies, portal.unesco.org/ci/en/file_download.php. Worcester, 62.

5

Freedom Train Derailed: The National Negro Labor Council and the Nadir of Black Radicalism

Clarence Lang

The years of the Great Depression and World War II were a formative moment in the modern black freedom movement. African American activists campaigned for their share of the New Deal public relief and works programs, mobilized pressure to gain wartime civilian defense jobs, and assailed segregated accommodations. Immediately after the war, black activists continued their efforts to dismantle the structures of U.S. racial apartheid; as they had for decades, they marshaled both legal and protest strategies toward this end. But postwar developments had dramatically transformed the landscape of global politics, precipitating economic, diplomatic, and ideological rivalries between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a consequence of this simmering Cold War, anticommunism pervaded U.S. civic culture in the late 1940s. The phenomenon was driven by perceived Communist threats to internal security, as well as the State Department's desire to exercise hegemony among the peoples of Asia and Africa in their revolt against European colonialism. It also served the interests of policymakers who sought to roll back the modest achievements of the New Deal and block the further expansion of the liberal welfare state. In the new domestic U.S. environment, far-reaching demands for economic and political reforms could invite unwanted attention from anticommunists in federal, state and, local government. Militant activists were coerced into muting their demands for racial and economic justice.[1]

Many black movement organizers and spokespersons limited their agendas to integrating eating establishments, swimming pools and other public accommodations, and schools. These were by no means trifling grievances, nor were they easier battles to fight. But in the schema of postwar American liberalism and consumption, they were relatively safer issues that fit comfortably within a liberal interracialist framework, one preoccupied with changing white attitudes rather than challenging economic inequalities. Granted, President Harry S. Truman had formed the President's Committee on Civil Rights, issued a decree against racial discrimination in government employment, and in 1951 created the Committee on Government Contracts. Yet, Truman had been partly responsible for stripping Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive ordered Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) of even its limited authority. Critics on the Left denounced the new government contracts committee as a barely functional substitute for "a real FEP," its only purpose being to "take the political heat off the Democrats for their failure to carry out their promises on civil rights."[2] His administration had also subjected federal workers to wide-ranging loyalty tests that left black employees painfully vulnerable to charges of "disloyalty" for their involvement in protest activity.[3]

Despite such reaction, a cohort of militant activists maintained the potent political linkages between black civil and economic rights during the early cold war years. The key emergent vehicle in this political project was the National Negro Labor Council (NNLC), a united front of progressive trade unionists, veteran left-wing organizers, ex-soldiers, and members and "fellow travelers" of the Communist Party of the United States of America. Active between 1950 and 1956, the NNLC waged several fair employment campaigns, including a national boycott of Sears, Roebuck and Company, and agitated for greater black participation, and leadership, in the U.S. labor movement. From organizers' perspectives, elevating the conditions of black Southern workers and ending Jim Crow were central to the overall welfare of American workers. As a result, members adopted wide-ranging initiatives to accomplish both. Significantly, and atypical of the time, the NNLC lent unqualified support to the particular race, gender, and class interests of black working-class women.

Numbering 5,000 members at its height, the NNLC built more than thirty chapters across the nation. With few exceptions, however, the council never attracted substantial numbers of active participants and supporters, which mirrored a general lull in black mass political engagement during the early cold war era. Indicative of the noxious climate of postwar anticommunism, the NNLC was a short-lived political project; dogged by charges of subversion from liberals and conservatives alike,

the organization was forced to disband less than six years after its birth. By 1960, A. Philip Randolph—president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), former leader of the militant March on Washington Movement of the 1940s, a revered black labor spokesman, and an implacable foe of the NNLC—had created a "legitimate" alternative to the council, in the form of the Negro American Labor Council (NALC). Although its leadership was as equally committed to improving black workers' economic and social conditions, the NALC agenda was articulated along more conservative lines that helped reinforce the dominance of cold war liberal politics among black activists.[4]

This chapter sketches the NNLC's formation and development, beginning with its long-term origins in a strain of black radicalism present since the 1920s.[5] It then discusses the seeds of the council's decline, and its eventual dissolution amid government-sponsored harassment. In bringing to light the NNLC's short-lived but significant history, this chapter responds to three approaches to interpreting the Cold War's impact on the African American freedom movement. The first, typified by the work of Mary L. Dudziak and Thomas Bortstelmann, posits the Cold War as a boon to the movement, one that facilitated U.S. domestic racial reform as a national security measure in the court of world opinion against the Soviets.[6] However, this view, as historian Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore notes, "inflates the Cold War's contributions and discounts its costs," particularly in its impact on progressives, liberals, and radicals who suffered harm to careers, social standing, and public and private lives.[7] "Although the Cold War helped motivate civil rights reform," Dudziak writes, she concedes "it limited the field of vision to formal equality, to opening the doors of opportunity, and away from a broader critique of the American economic and political system."[8] Indeed, argues historian Carol Anderson, anticommunism "systematically eliminated human rights as a viable option for the mainstream African American leadership," forcing black activists and organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to narrow the philosophical framework in which they articulated their demands.[9]

The second trend, recently exemplified by historian Manfred Berg, acknowledges the accommodation of organizations, specifically the NAACP, to anticommunist hegemony, yet casts such opportunism as a matter of self-preservation. "In retrospective, [the NAACP's] choices were good politics in the basic sense that they helped prevent the cause of civil rights from being discredited along with Communism," he maintains. "This is not to deny that the anticommunist hysteria retarded the struggle for racial justice and narrowed the political options of the civil rights movement. It is highly doubtful, however, whether any viable alternative

existed."[10] This position uncritically accepts the premise that socialist politics were a "foreign" element against which mainline activists had to defend themselves, rather than a set of ideas and practices with both international and homegrown origins. Berg also downplays the role black liberal cold warriors played in actively purging suspected "subversives" from their organizations, silencing radicals in black political discourse, and isolating them from the movement overall. To be sure, NAACP leadership was both victim and purveyor of anticommunist repression, colluding with the White House and the State Department to protect the nation's image abroad.[11]

The third approach refutes the first two trends, and challenges the idea of a cold war federal government leading an inexorable march toward justice and equality. As scholars such as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard have contended, this "monumental" version of civil rights reform reinforces a grand narrative of American exceptionalism that obscures the existence, and unmet demands, of ongoing popular struggles. Similarly, influenced by the thesis of a "long" civil rights movement transcending the standard 1954–1965 periodization, others such as Robert O. Self, Robin D. G. Kelley, Nikhil Pal Singh, and Peniel E. Joseph have theorized an unbroken black radicalism flowing from the interwar period through the early cold war years. Yet, this perspective unwittingly tends to minimize the ruptures and dislocations caused by anticommunist repression, which stalled and deformed the African American freedom movement during the late 1940s and early 1950s and sidelined black radicals in particular. This chapter argues that while black radical activists across time have been deeply engaged in struggles for social transformation in the United States, the early cold war era represented a nadir of black radicalism in the mid-twentieth century. The NNLC, then, serves as an illustration of both the historical continuities and discontinuities in this black radical tradition.[12]

African Americans and the Communist Left since the 1920s

The NNLC's historical roots lay generally within the tumultuous relationship between African Americans and the U.S. Communist Left. During the 1920s, Caribbean-born black Socialists, independent radicals, and left-wing Garveyists had been drawn to the Communist Left by the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks' opposition to all forms of national oppression and colonialism. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (Comintern), convened in 1928, members had formally supported African Americans' right to full equality throughout

the United States, and their right to self-determination in the South, including the right to secession. The thesis held that as a result of the unfinished revolution of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the rise of American monopoly capitalism, black people in the South, particularly, were a landless, oppressed "Black Belt" nation. Racism, therefore, was not simply a bad idea that could be eradicated through "education and humanitarian uplift," but rather a set of concrete relationships rooted in black national oppression. Support for the "right to self-determination" was attributable not only to the Comintern's radical Third Period shift, but also to the activism of Cyril Briggs, Richard Moore, Otto Huiswood, and other leaders of the African Blood Brotherhood who brought a black revolutionary thrust to the American party, melding black nationalism with a critique of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism. Many such black Communists had complained about the party's lack of mass work among African Americans, and asserted that black resistance had a revolutionary thrust independent of "pure" class struggle. Paying ideological debts to the Socialist Party, the Bolsheviks, and the Hamitic League of the World, they laid the groundwork for a modern black radical tradition.[13]

The American Negro Labor Council (ANLC), formed in 1925 under the auspices of the Communist Party and Trade Union Educational League, had floundered in its efforts to build a black-labor front. Following the Sixth Comintern Congress, however, the Party had established a Negro commission to recommit activists to this task as well as coordinate the new policy on black self-determination. Some 1,000 new African American members, many of them former Garveyists, soon had joined the Communists. In 1930, the ANLC, on the eve of dissolution, had sponsored an antilynching conference in St. Louis, Missouri, that launched its successor—the League of Struggle for Negro Rights (LSNR). Like its antecedent, the LSNR also failed to develop the broad characteristics its founders had envisioned, and it disbanded in 1936. In some black Communists' estimation, moreover, the LSNR had deteriorated into a convenient clearinghouse for all racial matters, allowing white comrades to avoid dealing with rank-and-file racism within the party more substantively. Yet, the famed Yokinen show trial on "white chauvinism," the Scottsboro and Angelo Herndon cases, the formation of Communist branches in the South, protests against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and the creation of the militant Sharecroppers Union were all successful demonstrations of the CP's work around the black "national question" during the 1930s. As a result of their Unemployed Councils, Communists had also gained moral credibility and respect among broad black constituencies through their willingness to physically resist evictions, demand federal social insurance, and combat white police violence.[14]

The National Negro Congress (NNC), and later the Civil Rights Congress (CRC)—both successors to the LSNR— achieved a much broader liberal-progressive-left base. But the larger Popular Front politics that enabled this success also precipitated the party's turn toward moderate, even conservative, policies on the "Negro Question." As their national leadership sought to maintain goodwill within the New Deal administration and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), American Communist functionaries jettisoned the policy on black self-determination, dissolved the Sharecroppers Union, and otherwise abandoned or resisted independent mass work around the specific racial-class demands of black workers. Comintern policies during World War II, including the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact in 1939, also cost the American party support among committed black antifascists. When Germany later invaded Russia, Communist activists in the United States not only urged "no-strike pledges" with industrial employers but also opposed black militant protests as disruptive to the war effort. By the early 1950s, prominent Communist leaders admonished their cadre to throw their support behind the NAACP rather than cultivate an autonomous black radical presence. African Americans, so they posited, had chosen the path of full equality through racial-cultural "amalgamation," which they would achieve through a peaceful transition to socialism. This prediction paralleled other directives encouraging Communists to follow the mainline labor movement and Democratic Party—even though the NAACP, CIO, American Federation of Labor (AFL), and Democrats were among the same forces viciously attacking the party from without.[15]

"Proud Black Sons and Daughters of Labor"

In the meantime, a black caucus movement surfaced on the outskirts of the Communist Left, spurred by continuing racial discrimination in the House of Labor. In June 1950, about 1,000 people convened in Chicago for the National Trade Union Conference for Negro Rights. The delegates represented militant and left-wing labor activists, former Progressive Party campaigners, and veterans from the National Negro Congress and the defunct Negro Labor Victory Committee. Many also hailed from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers (FTA), and several other Communist-led unions that recently had been expelled from the CIO for subversion. Paul Robeson, the acclaimed concert performer and actor who had become the target of federal harassment, delivered the conference's main plenary speech, condemning belligerent American foreign

policy and urging détente with the Soviet Union. But his attention, and that of the other conveners, was focused on the conditions of African American workers both inside and outside organized labor. Since the end of World War II, black workers had lost many of the gains they had made in industry, often in violation of union contracts. Black women, who had been the "last hired and first fired" during the war, and who had remained largely unprotected in defense production even when Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 banning racial discrimination in the defense industries, saw little change in their working lives. Black men had not fared significantly better. In 1940, black men had held about 16 percent of all the male factory operative jobs; but by 1950, this had fallen to 9 percent. Others were denied upgrades to skilled and semiskilled work, with industrial trade unions frequently doing little to defend them. In the building and machine trades and other skilled fields, barriers to black apprenticeship training remained as solid as ever. Even black professional workers were not immune to attacks on their livelihood: Between 1940 and 1944, the percentage of black men in professional and semiprofessional jobs had risen from 2.8 to 3.3 percent, but by 1950 the share had dwindled to 2.6 percent. Postwar recession, inflation, and racial wage and price differentials all compounded this situation.[16]

Not only did the AFL still discriminate against African Americans, but the CIO, too, appeared to be in full retreat from black workers' issues. Detroit representatives, led by labor organizers Ernest Thompson, William R. Hood, and Coleman A. Young, raised the call for a new permanent organization to fight for jobs, upgrading, "an end to lily-white shops," the abolition of Jim Crow auxiliaries, and fair employment practice legislation. The conference established a continuations committee to coordinate the building of Negro Labor Councils around the nation. On the heels of the meeting, council members in New York City held a "Job Action Conference," which resulted in, among other provisions, a hiring agreement with the Safeway supermarket chain. Several budding Negro Labor Councils also mounted campaigns for state and local FEPC laws. Campaigners in Detroit, for instance, secured some 40,000 signatures toward a referendum vote.[17]

In October 1951, about 1,100 workers, the majority of them black, gathered in Cincinnati, Ohio, to consolidate this National Negro Labor Council. The conveners named as their president Hood, recording secretary of Detroit's UAW Local 600, then the largest in the world with 20,000 mainly black foundry workers. Young, an official of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers-CIO, and former director of the Michigan Progressive Party, was elected executive secretary and national organizer. Octavia Hawkins, influential in Chicago's UAW Local 453, became the new

organization's secretary-treasurer. Connecting their efforts to the past, organizers underscored the historical gravity of convening in a city that had been a way-station along the Underground Railroad.[18] In his keynote address, Hood asserted, "We, the Negro working sons and daughters, have come here to Cincinnati to keep faith with our forefathers and mothers who landed right here from the banks of the Ohio River in their dash for freedom from chattel slavery through the underground railroad."[19] He, and other NNLC leaders, envisioned the organization as a new "Freedom Train" for black economic, political, and social citizenship.

The "Bill of Particulars," the NNLC's working program of action, was a broadside against industrial employers, white organized labor, and government, who, from organizers' perspective, formed a "three-party conspiracy" of discrimination. The platform called for full employment opportunity in areas of work currently barred to black people, apprenticeship training, and greater formal leadership in the House of Labor. "They [unions] were willing to use us as organizers to get blacks to join the union," Local 600 activist and NNLC organizer David Moore later recounted in the documentary film *The Freedom Train*. "They were willing to take our dues dollars as members, but they were not willing to accept us in the leadership positions." Conveners were determined to change this state of affairs. Members also vowed to agitate for "model FEPC clauses" in all union contracts, and at Hood's recommendation adopted a national campaign to collect one million signatures for a substantive federal FEP law. The NNLC's platform also addressed the particular rights of black working-class women, who historically had occupied the bottom rung of the economic ladder. Rank-and-file participants, a third of whom were women, advocated the labor organization of domestic workers and adopted a convention resolution supporting African American women's expanded job opportunities in industry, offices, department stores, and public utilities. Such demands recalled planks in the 1936 platform of the NNC, whose conveners had advocated black women's intertwined racial, class, and gender interests with equal vigor.[20]

Taking a strong stand against the American war in Korea, Hood tied the conflict to Western colonialism in Asia and Africa, and to racism at home. White troops on the Korean peninsula, he noted, had been known to display, as their battle flag, the Confederate "stars and bars"—symbolism freighted with legacies of slavery. Evoking the mass movements of the epic depression years, NNLC founders also elaborated the goals of building interracial working-class unity, rekindling solidarity between black workers and trade unionism, and completing the unfinished task of organizing the South. Yet, Hood served notice that African American workers would not be subordinates in any such movement.

Unity was possible only through equality and black workers' autonomy in defining their own interests. "[T]he day has ended when white trade union leaders or white leaders in any organization may presume to tell Negroes on what basis they shall come together to fight for their rights," he bellowed from the convention podium. "Three hundred years has been enough of that. We ask for your [white] cooperation—but we do not ask your permission!"[21] If anything, it was the duty of trade unionists everywhere, "as a matter of vital self-interest," to support black people in their independent struggle. At a practical level, Hood, Young, and the council's other leading organizers regarded the labor movement as a political and financial base for advancing black struggle. This not only reflected the background of convention participants, many of whom belonged to one of fifteen international unions in attendance, but it also seemed a testament to the bureaucratic strength of organized labor in the early 1950s.[22]

The labor movement also stood to gain from solidarity with the black freedom movement, and with black workers more generally. "In the Civil War," Hood reminded the convention, "thousands upon thousands of Negro workers who took arms in the Union cause won, not only their own freedom—the freedom of the Negro people—but by abolishing the institution of slave labor, provided the basis for the development of free trade unions in the United States."[23] Yet, the Hayes-Tilden Compromise, which had ended Reconstruction in 1877, remained effectively intact, allowing Northern capital to dominate the South in exchange for condoning naked white supremacy in the region. This "unsolved Negro problem," as the black Communist ideologue Harry Haywood had argued in his 1948 book, *Negro Liberation*, was rooted in the continuing peonage of black workers in the South's plantation economy, and it hindered working-class unity—a state of affairs that Wall Street actively preserved.[24] "Let no one be fooled," asserted NNLC delegate Viola Brown, echoing this position. "The fact that the thirteen Southern states are under the political and economic control of the huge Wall Street monopolies allied with the Southern landlord reaction is a serious threat to the entire labor movement."[25] Brown further admonished her fellow conveners:

> There will be no security for anyone, nor any civil rights, nor any real right and ability to organize anywhere in the country as long as millions of Southern workers remain unorganized and especially while nine million Southern Negroes suffer under special Jim Crow oppression.[26]

Hence, the condition of black Southern labor remained a bellwether for workers' rights across race, as the lower wages and weak trade unionism that corporations favored were possible only because of segregation.

Among other developments, an unorganized South, with its depressed wage structure and living standards, had created the opening for a new menace to working-class life—the "runaway shop" phenomenon in which corporations moved production from the Midwest and Northeast to the cheaper labor markets of Dixie.[27]

Embedded in the NNLC's platform for jobs and full union membership was a broader agenda to dismantle Jim Crow beyond the workplace—ending the poll tax, organizing for the passage of a federal antilynching law, and eradicating segregation in housing and public accommodations. Thus, as the "proud black sons and daughters of labor," as Hood referred to his co-conveners, NNLC members were committed to mobilizing as African Americans and as trade unionists and workers, on simultaneous axes of race and class. This multifaceted identity had three broad premises, according to historian Mindy Thompson. First, black people shared not only the color of their skin, but also a common history and culture forged through the experiences of slavery, Reconstruction, and migration. Second, because most black people were workers, their subjugation had its moorings in relations of economic exploitation as well as racial domination—though, of course, African Americans across class suffered racial-national oppression. Third, in fighting this oppression, black working people, and their white allies, were compelled to contest for leadership against the black middle class and its collaborators.[28]

NNLC organizers' sense of their own independent political identity extended even to their dealings with the Communist Party, which detractors accused of directing the council's activities. "Many of us didn't know communism from rheumatism," San Francisco NLC member Joe Johnson later joked in *The Freedom Train*. "We knew a lot about unionism. And that was the objective." Moreover, as the party's position on mass work among African Americans had zigzagged between the interwar and postwar period, a number of black activists within its orbit had retained visions of change that clashed with the official line and went beyond even the far-reaching reforms endorsed by the NNLC convention. In 1951, CRC national executive secretary William L. Patterson presented a petition to the United Nations General Assembly charging the United States government with the crime of genocide against the 15 million African American people within its borders, in violation of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights and its Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. DuBois, Robeson, and Claudia Jones were among the ninety-four black freedom activists who signed the painstakingly detailed document. Holding fast to the "Black Belt Nation" thesis, others such as Haywood advocated "democratic land-redivision" in the South, which would create necessary conditions for socialism. Although

no friend to the Communists, the Trinidadian-born Trotskyist theorist C. L. R. James had similarly identified the "the independent Negro struggle" as the crucial pivot for revolutionary change in the United States. Notwithstanding its moorings in the Communist Left, the NNLC was representative of a general postwar black radical project, one constitutive of multiple political and ideological tendencies.[29]

Propelling the "Freedom Train"

In the aftermath of the NNLC founding convention, seventeen new councils were formed, including branches in Louisville, Flint, and Pittsburgh. By the end of its first year, the national body oversaw some thirty-five local chapters, all with disparate activities. In Chicago, the Negro Labor Council led a community picket line against the Drexel National Bank, eventually forcing the institution to depart from its discriminatory hiring practices and employ a black assistant service manager. Other local activists boycotted several stores along Chicago's Madison Avenue, where black people shopped in large numbers yet were absent as shop employees. In line with the organization's emphasis on gender as well as class, a committee of women led by Hawkins was also in the process of planning a national conference on job rights for black women. In Detroit, where the NNLC was headquartered, activists negotiated with the Big Bear supermarket chain to hire black cashiers, clerks, office workers, and supervisors. The firm's vice president even agreed to accept applications sent to the store by the NNLC. NLC organizers in San Francisco fought for the hiring of black streetcar conductors and motormen. Meanwhile, members of the Louisville Negro Labor Council, anticipating the opening of a major new appliance factory, brokered an agreement with the Board of Education to offer night courses to black youth in armature winding, motor wiring, and allied skills. In a surprising gesture of magnanimity, the school board also agreed to offer any other courses not available at the city's black high schools.[30]

Local successes, and the NNLC's national visibility, attracted a larger attendance to Cleveland for the organization's second national convention in November 1952. Activists called for the repeal of the anticommunist, antilabor Smith, McCarran, and Taft-Hartley acts, likening the recent Smith Act convictions of eleven Communist Party officials to the continuing denial of black civil rights. Consistent with NNLC leaders' left internationalist politics, participants also issued statements against South Africa's white supremacist regime. Addressing domestic racial apartheid, the convention resolved to break the employment color line

in the hotel, railroad, and emerging commercial airline industries. (Some 1,500 delegates staged a mass jobs demonstration at Cleveland's downtown airline ticket center.) "If our [black] pilots can fly over Korea, fly those planes, why can't they fly commercial planes?" recalled New York NLC leader Vicki Garvin, explaining the logic of the protesters. "And all your stewardesses are doing is serving food; we've been cooking and serving white people all our lives. So we raised the consciousness of this kind of thing."[31]

The NNLC's first major national campaign began in March 1953, when the organization tested its mettle against Sears, Roebuck and Company to win clerical positions, mainly for black women. The nation's largest retailer, Sears, was strongly antiunion, and maintained a strict policy of barring black workers from sales and clerical positions. In each of its 674 stores, the only African American employees were in janitorial services. Labor militants wagered that if they could break the practice here, the victory might set an industry-wide standard. NNLC branches in Cleveland, Detroit, San Francisco, St. Louis, Newark, and Indianapolis launched dogged boycotts.[32]

On one hand, NNLC organizers were able to attract diverse communities of interest to their demonstrations, including black clergy, industrial and service workers, civic networks among women, and high school and university students. The Cleveland NLC, which led a remarkably successful six-week picketing campaign, was one example. On the other hand, far fewer people participated in the council's picketing and lobbying than had responded to the March on Washington Movement ten years earlier. This had to do, in part, with the unique political circumstances of individual cities where the NNLC was active. But anticommunist policies also had a clear-cut effect. Between 1952 and 1953, officials declared NNLC Communist-dominated, and named it to the Attorney General's list of "subversive organizations." This was a virtual death sentence that drove away many potential supporters, particularly government employees subject to investigation and dismissal for associating with such groups. Fearful of becoming targets of anticommunist hysteria, liberal civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) eschewed any association with the NNLC. The National Urban League was equally hostile. At the CIO's 1951 national meeting, NUL leader Lester Granger had attacked the NNLC from the convention rostrum, declaring it a "masquerade party" for the Communists. In cities such as St. Louis, the Urban League and the NAACP took credit for black employment victories that local NLC branches won yet could not publicly claim.[33]

Leading representatives of organized labor, driven by similar fears, opportunism, or genuine conviction, had also closed ranks behind the

White House and the State Department to fight the Communist threat abroad and "internal subversives." The AFL, the UAW's international executive board, and James Carey, president of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE), had all publicly boycotted the NNLC founding convention in Cincinnati. UAW president Walter Reuther, for one, denounced the council as a "Communist-dominated, dual unionist organization." This was a revealing denunciation, for it suggested that aside from their objections on political and ideological grounds, liberal trade unionists also saw the NNLC as a potential threat to their own bases of power. At the urging of labor leaders like William Oliver, many affiliates sought to preempt the NNLC by establishing their own "citizens committees for the FEPC" and endorsing the integration of all public accommodations. In March 1952, Carey, A. Philip Randolph of the BSCP, and other well-known trade unionists also had formed the National Negro Labor *Committee* in a blatant attempt to take the initiative from the NNLC. Both New York governor Thomas Dewey and President Truman sent official greetings to the meeting, whose plan of action included combating communism and the NNLC. The recent elections of George Meany and Reuther as presidents of the AFL and CIO, respectively, and talk of a merger, exemplified the consolidation of a conservative labor leadership, leaving meager hope of cooperation with the NNLC. Thus, black radicals confronted an established liberal interracial leadership, black political moderates, and a labor movement largely co-opted by the federal cold war agenda.[34]

End of the Line

Deprived of broad cooperation and support, the organization was vulnerable to government harassment and repression. Federal agents had been surreptitiously present at the NNLC founding convention in Cincinnati, while the FBI and police continued the surveillance of local members. In St. Louis, an unmarked police van became a fixture at the NLC's picket line at a local Sears headquarters. When the detail was discovered, police photographers, lacking a motive to remain hidden, brazenly placed their cameras and tripods on the open sidewalk across the street, where they continued to shoot pictures of the boycotters. The demonstrators also endured outright police violence, with authorities accosting and beating youths walking the picket line, and arresting known NLC leaders. Still, the council in St. Louis and other cities managed to succeed in its boycott against Sears; by the end of 1953, virtually all of the company's retail stores outside the South had come to terms with NNLC organizers,

though its national headquarters in Chicago held stubbornly to its racist hiring policies until the summer of 1954.[35]

The fight to "run jim crow off the rails" also had been a key issue at the NNLC's 1953 convention in Chicago. A growing commercial airline industry may have altered modes of postwar travel, but railroad profits had increased steadily, largely through federal contracts. (In 1951 alone, the nation's rail carriers boasted net capital of over $15 billion.) No other industry, NNLC executive secretary Coleman Young insisted, held "greater drama in the struggle of the Negro people, past and present," than the railroads. American popular culture had long associated African Americans with rail labor, as embodied in the working-class legend of John Henry. For generations, black workers in the South had dominated the occupations of railroad firemen and brakemen. But as diesel-powered engines and automatic stokers replaced locomotive engines, white railway workers had mounted a murderous campaign to oust African Americans. In February 1941, several southeastern railroads, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, and officials from the National Mediation Board had signed the Southeastern Carriers' Conference ("Washington") Agreement, which ensured a future white monopoly of skilled railway work and relegated African Americans to menial positions as porters, waiters, matrons, and coach attendants. Through pressure from self-organized black workers, the FEPC had investigated the rail carriers and unions. A subsequent federal directive had ordered the industry to desegregate, and a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in late 1944 had declared as illegal racial discrimination in railroad-union contracts. But the carriers, "with the lily-white unions tagging along like a caboose," had defied these precedents for a decade.[36]

With continuing racism in the industry, and increased mechanism, "the grandsons and granddaughters" of the working-class legend John Henry continued to have a hard time securing, and keeping, employment on the rails. In the early 1950s, nine out of ten black railroad workers were in common labor and service—waiters, porters, car cleaners, and red caps. They were institutionally barred from being dispatchers, ticket agents and telegraphers, or serving in other office classifications. None were conductors or engineers. African American women were almost totally nonexistent in any form of railroad labor whatsoever. In August 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had reorganized Truman's Government Contracts Committee, which subsequently became the President's Committee on Contract Compliance. Established to monitor the employment practices of firms engaged in federal contracts, the new committee functioned just as unevenly as the old, going so far as to claim "no jurisdiction" in many complaints against the railroad carriers. Ideally, NNLC organizers

favored passage of a strong national FEP law. In its absence, however, they resolved to make the agency, and the Eisenhower administration, responsive to mass pressure. Many viewed the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* as an encouraging sign of what could be accomplished, and these sentiments were echoed in NNLC literature. Concluded one pamphlet: "We *can* make the 'Freedom Train' roll—faster and faster—to bring democracy to the rails."[37]

One of the NNLC's most ambitious grassroots campaigns occurred neither in the North nor the South, but rather in the border state city of Louisville, Kentucky, which was becoming a new industrial center as Northern businesses pulled up stakes and moved their operations to low-wage areas at the Southern periphery. In the spring of 1953, the General Electric Corporation announced it was shifting its appliance manufacturing to a central plant in Louisville. The relocation would create between 16,000 and 30,000 new jobs. From the outset, leaders of the local NLC contended that the plant should hire no fewer black employees than their proportion of the total Louisville population (17 percent). Concerned that African Americans would be excluded from work opportunities, labor radicals negotiated with the Board of Education to offer courses in skilled electrical trades at black high schools. Several hundred pupils graduated from training, but when the GE plant opened, hiring the first 5,000 workers, only 156 were black. One hundred forty-six of them were men, and of these, 83 were janitors. All 10 of the plant's black female workers were "matrons" who scrubbed floors and cleaned toilets.[38]

When the Westinghouse Corporation unveiled its own plans for a new electrical appliance center in Louisville, NNLC leadership worried that the GE plant would set an example for the "permanent enslavement of the South" by other firms. Activists transformed the city into a battleground between the runaway shop movement of Northern industrialists and the struggle of black Southern workers and the labor movement. They focused their ire on the virtual absence of black women at the GE factory, where 50 percent of the workforce was female. A women's committee, backed by several church and civic groups, began an agitation campaign, while the NLC promoted black female applicants for production jobs. NLC pamphlets and circulars highlighted the dissonance between the popular cult of domesticity erected for an idealized white middle-class womanhood and the realities of economic inequality for black women as workers and consumers:

> In advertisements across the land, industry glorifies the American woman—in her gleaming GE kitchen, at her GE Laundromat, before

> her GE television set. Nothing is too good for her—we guess this means Negro women too—unless she wants a job at GE in the South.[39]

As part of a larger Louisville campaign, the local NLC also besieged a local Ford plant, where no black production workers had ever been hired, and the local railroad, where black workers were excluded even from most service occupations. Like the Sears boycotts and the railroads campaign, the offensive against GE continued a black agenda combining civil and economic rights. Black women's racial-class concerns, moreover, were both explicit and implicit in the NNLC's programmatic thrust. Not only did organizers address them directly as a specific constituency, but also many NLC campaigns—for white-collar, clerical work at Sears, or jobs in appliance manufacturing and the railroad industry—were geared toward expanding employment opportunities for African American women. This meant smashing racial barriers to classifications of "women's work," as well as gender barriers to "Negro jobs."

Given the assault on the NNLC, it is remarkable that local councils in Louisville and other cities could generate communal support among religious congregants and other "respectable" black civic leaders. But the ripples these struggles created were faint, and their cumulative impact, at least immediately, were ephemeral. Of the trade unions associated with the NNLC, only the UE, the International Fur and Leather Workers, the International Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards, and the United Packinghouse Workers ever adopted its "model FEPC clauses." In the absence of a strong national fair employment practice law, moreover, state and municipal FEP commissions were largely ineffectual, relying primarily on persuasion, conciliation, education, and voluntary compliance. Further, while local NLC's were able to expand the range of work available to African American workers, their efforts created jobs in only a few areas. In Louisville, GE hired an embarrassing two black female production workers, and this only after the NNLC filed charges with the President's Committee on Government Contract Compliance. Red-baiting, as well as accusations of "dual unionism," severed many NLC activities from genuine mass support and led to widespread harassment by police, FBI, and agencies such as the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB) and the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Members were expelled from union positions, fired from their jobs, or summoned to hearings on subversion. Hood, a UAW official, was pressured by the International to resign his union office in 1953. Two other militant NNLC activists, David Moore and Nelson Davis, were removed from their offices in Detroit's UAW Local 600, as

well. Ernest Thompson, a national organizer for the council, was representative of NLC members who suffered unemployment as a consequence of their involvement. St. Louis NLC chairman Hershel Walker was one of several African Americans subpoenaed as witnesses by HUAC in a probe of Communist Party activities among the local black citizenry. Each invoked the Fifth Amendment when questioned about his ties to the party. While the Detroit NLC also valiantly battled HUAC during a series of hearings in 1952, the costs of such intense harassment became greater than any single organization could bear.[40]

At the beginning of President Eisenhower's administration, too, broader changes in the U.S. political economy were beginning to undermine the prospects for black economic equality envisioned by labor radicals and militants. Between 1947 and 1952, African American median income had risen nationally from $3,563 to $4,344. After 1952, however, black income began to decline in relation to whites for the first time since the Great Depression, compounded by a nationwide recession in 1953–1954. Automation, an emerging industrial phenomenon, was symptomatic of a new period of declining job opportunities. The push toward automation stemmed from political objectives, chiefly the desire to discipline a labor movement that had gained strength during the 1930s and 1940s. Even during the presumably halcyon days of the early CIO, black workers' relationship with organized labor had been stormy, not to mention the fact that African American workers historically had been overly represented in itinerant and casual labor, where they endured periodic unemployment. But with the introduction of new labor-saving and union-busting technology, black workers began experiencing an unemployment that was, in historian William H. Harris' words, "both more frequent and longer-lasting."[41] As the black Detroit working-class radical James Boggs commented at the beginning of the next decade, "Negroes have been and are today the most oppressed and submerged sections of the workers, on whom has fallen most sharply the burden of unemployment due to automation."[42] Indeed, the sociologist Sidney M. Willhelm would later argue that technological change had made it unnecessary for white employers to discriminate against African Americans at the point of production, when they could simply eliminate black workers altogether. Organized labor, concerned with a narrowing membership base, was indifferent to this economic displacement, while many leaders of "respectable" black and white liberal organizations avoided questioning too stridently the distribution of postwar largesse.[43]

Black working people who paid attention could hardly have been encouraged when the AFL and CIO consummated their merger in late 1955, bringing together some 15 million members. The presidency of the

new organization, and 75 percent of the positions on the executive council, went to the AFL, long known for its focus on skilled workers and its racism. Some decisions, however, seemed to augur better relations between organized labor and black workers. Two African Americans—BSCP president A. Philip Randolph and Willard S. Townsend of the United Transport Service Employees-CIO—were elected to the twenty-nine-member executive council.[44] The new federation's constitution promised to "encourage all workers without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin to share in the full benefits of union organization," and provided for the creation of a Committee on Civil Rights.[45] In a strategy designed, in part, to preempt the influence of radical trade unionists, the AFL-CIO also endorsed passage of an enforceable fair employment practices act, encouraged affiliates to seek nondiscrimination clauses in collective bargaining agreements, and urged Congress to abolish the poll tax and pass antilynching legislation.

But this was poor compensation for the fact that the AFL-CIO admitted as affiliates the Locomotive Firemen and Railroad Trainmen, two unions with constitutional restrictions against black members. While unions were liable for expulsion for communism and racketeering, they could practice racial discrimination with virtual impunity. In "An Open Letter to the AFL and CIO," Negro Labor Council activists argued that the confederation had not gone far enough in guaranteeing the end of racist practices. What the AFL-CIO Constitution needed were not statements that simply disregarded race in union organization, but, to the contrary, provisions that explicitly asserted the full membership of workers of color. Given the present constitution, the NNLC statement insisted, craft unions could maintain segregated black auxiliaries under the pretext they shared "equal"—albeit *separate*—benefits. As they had done so many times before, NNLC leaders argued that the welfare of all organized labor pivoted on the "Negro Question," and hence black workers. Particularly with many runaway industries departing to the South, strengthening trade unionism in this region would require full African American participation.[46]

Yet, the NNLC, which had seemed best situated to carry out this task, was on the decline by 1956. That year, the Subversive Activities Control Board called a hearing on the NNLC, and rather than dissipate resources fighting charges of Communist domination, members voted to dissolve. Similar fates befell the Council on African Affairs and the Civil Rights Congress, both of which also succumbed to debilitating federal lawsuits filed by the U.S. Attorney General's Office, opposition from white organized labor, and the cold war liberalism of an interracial elite. When Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev denounced the crimes of the Stalin

era at the Russian Communist Party's 1956 congress, this further isolated the U.S. Left. Ironically, Communist Party policies also contributed to the overall erosion of support for the NNLC. Consistent with their retreat from building mass radical politics among African Americans, by 1954 CP leaders in fact attacked the NNLC for being too "left" and too "narrow," ordered black cadre to withdraw from participation, and favored greater support to the NAACP. Indeed, by the end of the 1950s, the Party had both explicitly refuted the "Black Belt" thesis and expelled its most militant black members, such as Nelson Peery and Haywood, for the crime of "nationalism."[47] At the same time, attaching the NNLC too closely to the Communists would presume that the council was a front organization, reinforcing the presumption that the black Left was subservient to, or duped by, the Communists. To the contrary, as historian Philip S. Foner has argued, the council "was composed overwhelmingly of black workers who, while opposed to witch-hunting and appreciative of the Communist Party's fight for Negro equality, made their own decisions on the basis of the needs of their people as they knew them from their own experience."[48]

The NALC Postscript

Perhaps the cruelest paradox in the NNLC story is that its foes in the labor and black freedom movements not only helped destroy the organization but also freely grazed on its carcass. Mainstream trade unionists responded to challenges from the Left by endorsing moderate racial reforms modeled on NNLC proposals. Civil rights leaders of a cold warrior bent similarly co-opted much of its agenda. Consequently, while he had actively worked to marginalize the black radical union caucus movement, Randolph—a committed anticommunist since the 1920s—loudly lamented the disconnect between black activism and trade unionism. In 1959, following a clash with AFL-CIO president George Meany at the federation's annual convention, the aging BSCP president led the creation of the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), subsequently becoming its president. Like their left-wing predecessors, NALC organizers promoted an independent, dual strategy of attacking white-dominated unions for their racist practices and underscoring the "economic revolution" at the core of the nascent postwar Civil Rights Struggle.[49] "Despite the harsh words and heated debate between George Meany and Randolph at labor conventions," Harris noted, "both Randolph and the NALC represented a segment of the black labor movement that white spokesmen like Meany found acceptable."[50] Indeed, Reuther's attendance at the NALC founding

convention, where he delivered an address to the delegates, spoke volumes about the fledgling organization's relationship both to the mainstream labor movement and black radical activism. The NALC's shining moment came in 1963, when, joining the NAACP, CORE, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the UAW, and several other organizations, it spearheaded the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.[51]

But while the NALC's emergence was consistent with a rich tradition of black worker self-organization—including the BSCP and the militant March on Washington Movement of the early 1940s—its development, and even its triumphs, must also be viewed in light of an equally consistent anticommunist agenda among cold war liberals and conservatives to repress trends of black radicalism that the NNLC embodied during its short lifespan. This had harmful effects on individual black radicals and their organizations; in the NALC's case, its leadership sought to reorient the black union caucus toward a more conservative politics overall. Thus, for instance, in contrast to the NNLC organizers who had given primacy to black working-class women's issues, Randolph had a long career of treating women as subordinates within the organizations he led. When he pushed through an all-male slate of vice presidents at the NALC's 1960 founding convention in Detroit, fifty black women delegates embarked on an intense, hour-long floor fight. Forced to reverse his decision, the NALC president added two women to the sixteen-member slate. During the 1963 March on Washington, Randolph's gender politics (and those of the main event organizer, Bayard Rustin) were again starkly revealed: Although several women, including Rosa Parks, were seated prominently on the speakers' platform, none were allowed to deliver a speech or play an official role in the proceedings. Further, none were part of the delegation of black leaders that met with President John F. Kennedy that day.[52]

Randolph similarly clashed with his rank-and-file over his strategic vision for the organization. But while he was content to maintain the NALC as a moderate pressure group functioning within the AFL-CIO, younger members considered its goals too narrow, and they clamored for a clean break with the federation and greater agitation from outside the mainline labor movement. Amid such criticisms of his staid leadership, Randolph began to withdraw from the NALC in 1964, and in 1966 he resigned altogether, claiming that the organization had fallen under the sway of "separatists and Communists." By then, he and his chief aide, the brilliant movement organizer Bayard Rustin, had founded the A. Philip Randolph Institute. Although ostensibly committed to social-democratic reform, the institute was a bulwark of opposition to the race-specific, black nationalist efforts among the period's young activists, many of

whom were dramatically rediscovering the black radicalism of the 1920s and 1930s.[53]

Conclusion

Randolph's role in destroying the NNLC, and the trajectory of his leadership in the NALC and beyond, exemplify how black America paid a heavy price for the isolation of its left flank. As the NALC case illustrates, the creation of anticommunist replacements at times accompanied the scuttling of black radical groups during the early cold war years. More fundamentally, McCarthyism aborted many initiatives on behalf of racial and economic justice in the late 1940s and early 1950s, even those led by moderates and liberals diametrically opposed to the Left. Campaigns for a permanent national FEPC encountered stiff opposition from the same politicians demanding patriotic loyalty to the American security state. Several states and municipalities did pass FEP laws, but these had few enforcement mechanisms and generally did not govern private businesses. Further, as the NAACP's national leadership soon discovered, rapprochement with cold war forces did not shield organizations from accusations of Communist domination. Following the *Brown* ruling, lawmakers in several Southern states used charges of "subversion" to intimidate members and prevent local chapters from functioning, while the state of Alabama outlawed the NAACP altogether. It was not until 1958 and 1959 that the Association was able to legally overturn such laws.[54]

In society, as in nature, some catalysts metamorphose in the process of change, while others are expended altogether. The National Negro Labor Council was clearly an example of the latter. "Even critics of the NNLC," Foner maintained, "conceded that in a number of communities the efforts of the national body and the local councils had placed black truck drivers, streetcar motormen and conductors, hotel workers, bank officials, clerks and salespeople, and industrial workers, including black women, in jobs that were formerly lily white."[55] Thus, while black radicals during the early cold war era may not have been able to mount the kinds of programs that had been possible during the 1930s and early 1940s, their efforts, in the final analysis, were not in vain. By itself, the narrative of the NNLC does not end with the group's dissolution. One may consider, for instance, the career of national council leader Coleman Young who, despite being red-baited and harassed, reinvented himself politically. In 1964, he was elected to the Michigan State Senate; a decade later, he became Detroit's first African American mayor.[56]

In the meantime, an alliance of black and Puerto Rican ex-Communists had joined efforts to build a new, antirevisionist party aligned with the Chinese Revolution and the anticolonialist nationalist movements in the global South. One tendency led by Peery, a former NNLC organizer, had given birth to the Communist Labor Party (CLP). Another instructive example of post-NNLC continuity might be Cleveland Robinson, who had been an organizer for the United Office and Professional Workers of America. An active presence at the 1950 Chicago conference that gave birth to the NNLC, he later became vice president of the NALC and, following Randolph's resignation, succeeded him as president. This occurred at a moment, moreover, during which a resurgent radical black nationalism influenced the formation of black worker caucuses, such as Detroit's Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, which subsequently developed into the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (a faction of which later merged with what subsequently became the CLP). In 1972, Robinson was prominent among the 1,200 black union officials and rank-and-file members who formed the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists in Chicago. While this continuity is certainly striking, it is worth considering what might have been achieved had the schisms created by cold war anticommunism not constantly forced black labor activists to recreate the wheel. Rendering the NNLC's brief history, nonetheless, aids the recovery, and documentation, of the much longer black radical, political, and intellectual tradition to which it belonged. As anticommunist harassment during the early cold war period attests, African American freedom movement activists have encountered moments of political rupture that disabled radical tendencies while promoting, or at least sparing, others. What is striking about the black radical tradition is not its impermeability to repression, but rather its ability to reemerge at different historical junctures, despite attempts to suppress it.[57]

Notes

1. See Gerald Horne, *Black & Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945–2006*, third edition (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 12–37.
2. National Negro Labor Council, "Let Freedom Ride the Rails" (Detroit: National Negro Labor Council, 1954), 20. See also Andrew Edmund Kersten, *Race, Jobs,*

and the War: The FEPC in the Midwest, 1941–46 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 134.

3. Ellen W. Schrecker, "McCarthyism and the Labor Movement: The Role of the State," in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 145.
4. *The Freedom Train*, directed by John Owens (Kingberry Productions in association with WDIV-TV), n.d.
5. I define radicalism as an ideological trend that pursues the qualitative transformation of a given society, either through massive reforms that dramatically redistribute wealth and power, or through revolutionary upheaval. Since the twentieth century, two forms of black radicalism have predominated: radical egalitarianism, or social democracy, and more far-reaching variants of the socialist tradition. Black radicals theorize that black people are caught in the crosshairs of not only racial oppression but also the economic exploitation endemic to capitalist political economies. In some strains of radicalism, racism is epiphenomenal, merely incidental to capitalism. In others, racial oppression possesses a life and momentum independent of its connections to class hierarchies and production relations. Most varieties of black radicalism appeal to interracial "proletarian" unity while simultaneously opposing racial oppression, though in some variants race is entirely sublimated to class. Another radical tendency asserts that black struggles for self-emancipation materially advance the American working-class movement and create conditions for socialist revolution. Black radicals of all stripes have shared common ground in advocating the freeing of human society from the violence of capitalism. See Robert C. Smith, "Ideology as the Enduring Dilemma of Black Politics," in *Dilemmas of Black Politics: Issues of Leadership and Strategy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), ed. Georgia A. Persons; and Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 14–19.
6. Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Thomas Bortstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations and the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
7. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), 7.
8. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 252.
9. Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5. See also Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
10. Manfred Berg, "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War," *Journal of American History* 94 (June 2007): 96.
11. Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 167, 192–193. For a compelling perspective about the indigenous roots of U.S. radicalism, see James R. Barrett, *William*

Z. Foster and the Tragedy of American Radicalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

12. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233–1263; Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Robert O. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement*, ed. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 15–55; Robin D. G. Kelley, "Stormy Weather: Reconstructing Black (Inter)Nationalism in the Cold War Era," in *Is It Nation Time?: Contemporary Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism*, ed. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 67–90; Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Peniel E. Joseph, "Black Liberation without Apology: Reconceptualizing the Black Power Movement," *The Black Scholar* 31 (Fall–Winter 2001): 2–19; and Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006). See also Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African American History* 92 (Spring 2007): 265–288.
13. Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978), 231, 253–265, 325; Ernest Allen, Jr., "The New Negro: Explorations in Identity and Social Consciousness, 1910–1922," in *1915, the Cultural Moment: The New Politics, the New Woman, the New Psychology, the New Art and the New Theatre in America*, ed. Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 55–58; Susan Campbell, "'Black Bolsheviks' and Recognition of African-America's Right to Self-Determination by the Communist Party USA," *Science & Society* 58 (Winter 1994–1995): 440–469; Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (*New York: Basic Books, 1984*)*, 324–325; Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 102–116; and Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 51–65. See also Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Depression* (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 3–15; and Minkah Makalani, *For the Liberation of Black People Everywhere: The African Blood Brotherhood, Black Radicalism, and Pan-African Liberation in the New Negro Movement* (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2004).
14. Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, 143–145, 317–326, 343, 357–363; Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism,* 331–332; Naison, *Communists in Harlem*, 42, 173; and Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 118–132. See also Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

15. John P. Davis, "Let Us Build a National Negro Congress" (Washington, DC: National Negro Congress, 1935), and *The Official Proceedings of the National Negro Congress* (Washington, DC: National Negro Congress, 1936), NNC vertical file, African American Societies and Organizations, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University (hereafter ALUA); Gerald Horne, *Communist Front?: The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–56* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987); Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Depression*, 177–182, 287–293; and Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem*, 128–130.
16. "Initiating Sponsors, 'National Trade Union Conference for Negro Rights,'" UAW President's Office, Walter P. Ruther Papers, Collection 261, Box 348, Folder, 10; "For These Things We Fight," full text of address by William R. Hood, delivered at the Founding Convention of the National Negro Labor Council, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 27, 1951, National Negro Labor Council vertical file, African American Societies and Organizations; and Mindy Thompson, "The National Negro Labor Council: A History," Occasional Paper No. 27 (New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1978), 5–6, ALUA. See also Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981* (New York: International Publishers, 1981), 294–295.
17. "For These Things We Fight," NNLC vertical file; "Draft Program of Action," adopted at National Trade Union Conference for Negro Rights, Chicago, Illinois, June 10–11, 1950, Reuther Papers, Box 348, Folder 10, ALUA; and "A History of the National Negro Labor Council," NNLC Reunion booklet, June 4–5, 1993, Chris and Marti Alston Papers, Collection 1779, Box 6, Folder 6, ALUA.
18. "Negro Unionists Hold Conference in Cincinnati," *Ford Facts*, November 10, 1951, ALUA; Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1981*, 296–299; and William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 139.
19. "For These Things We Fight," NNLC vertical file, ALUA.
20. "For These Things We Fight," and "Work Wanted: 100,000 Jobs for Negro Workers," NNLC vertical file, ALUA. See also Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 263–268; and *The Freedom Train*.
21. "For These Things We Fight," NNLC vertical file, ALUA.
22. Ibid.; and Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981*, 300.
23. "For These Things We Fight," NNLC vertical file, ALUA.
24. Harry Haywood, *Negro Liberation* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 7, 49–50, 57, 66, 107.
25. Quoted in Thompson, "The National Negro Labor Council," 24–25, ALUA.
26. Ibid.
27. National Negro Labor Council, "Let Freedom Crash the Gateway to the South Campaign," circa 1954–1955, Nat Ganley Papers, Series 1, Collection 320, Box 6, File 41, ALUA.
28. "For These Things We Fight," NNLC vertical file; and Thompson, "The National Negro Labor Council," 11–13, 27, ALUA.

29. Haywood, *Negro Liberation*, 8, 83, 125, 127; William L. Patterson, ed., *We Charge Genocide* (1951; reprint New York: International Publishers, 1970); C. L. R. James, "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the United States," in *C.L.R James on the "Negro Question,"* ed. Scott McLemee (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996), 139; and Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem*, 65, 155.
30. "New Councils Organized," "Chicago N.L.C. Smashes Bank Jimcrow," "Chicago Plans Parley on Negro Women's Problems," "Market Chain Agrees to Council Demands," and "Louisville Council Wins Apprenticeship Training Program," *Struggle*, Official Organ of the National Labor Council, n.d., NNLC vertical file, ALUA; and Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981*, 301–302.
31. "Brownell Adds to Our Country's Shame," statement by the National Negro Labor Council, circa 1956, NNLC vertical file, ALUA; *The Freedom Train*; and Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981*, 302.
32. Ibid.
33. Thompson, "The National Negro Labor Council," 14, 30, 34–35, ALUA; *The Freedom Train*; and Nelson Peery, *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary* (New York: New Press, 2007), 131–137.
34. UAW-CIO press release, October 22, 1951, NNLC vertical file; William H. Oliver, codirector, Fair Practices and Antidiscrimination Department, UAW-CIO, letter to Jack Conway, October 30, 1952; and Oliver, letter to all UAW international union officers, executive board members, department heads, and advisory council members on antidiscrimination, January 23, 1952, Donald Montgomery Papers, Collection 36, Box 25, Folder 10, ALUA. See also Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619–1981*, 301; Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 140.
35. W. E. "Red" Davis, quoted in Rose Feurer, ed., "The St. Louis Labor History Tour," 37, Missouri Historical Society Library and Research Center (MHS); and interview with Hershel Walker, "'A Strong Seed Planted': The Civil Rights Movement in St. Louis, 1954–1968," Oral History Collection, written transcripts, Box 2, MHS.
36. NNLC, "Let Freedom Ride the Rails," 2, 4, 12, 19; and Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 86, 118. See also Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
37. NNLC, "Let Freedom Ride the Rails," 1–4, 10, 21–24; and John E. Means, "Fair Employment Practices Legislation and Enforcement in the United States," in *Negroes and Jobs*, ed. Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh, and J. A. Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), 464.
38. Thompson, "The National Negro Labor Council," 68–70, ALUA; and Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker,* 302–303.
39. NNLC, "Let Freedom Crash the Gateway to the South Campaign," Ganley Papers, Box 6, File 41, ALUA.
40. "A History of the National Negro Labor Council," Alston Papers, Box 6, File 6; and "Brownell Adds to Our Country's Shame," NNLC vertical file, ALUA.

See also Means, "Fair Employment Practices Legislation and Enforcement in the United States," 469, 473, 494, and Herbert Hill, "Twenty Years of State Fair Employment Practices Commissions: A Critical Analysis with Recommendations," in Ferman, et. al., eds., *Negroes and Jobs*, 497, 500; Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 301, 304–309; "Red Inquiry to Reach into Local Community," *St. Louis Argus*, June 1, 1956; "Labor Council Once Rejected by NAACP Here," *Argus*, June 8, 1956; and Peery, *Black Radical*, 172.

41. Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 133.
42. James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), 85.
43. Sidney M. Willhelm, *Who Needs the Negro?* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1970), 162, 258.
44. Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 140–141; Jervis Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 297; and Paula F. Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 207–208.
45. AFL-CIO, "1955 Convention Resolution on Civil Rights," publication no. 8, Ganley Papers, Box 6, File 39, ALUA.
46. NNLC, "An Open Letter to the AFL and CIO: The Only Road to Labor Unity is Equality and Democracy for All!" Ganley Papers, Box 6, File 41, ALUA; and Harris, *The Harder We Run*, 140–141.
47. Pettis Perry, "The Third Annual Convention of the National Negro Labor Council," *Political Affairs* 3 (February 1954): 1–8, NNLC vertical file, ALUA; Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism*, 343. See also Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*; Horne, *Black and Red*; and Horne, *Communist Front?*; Haywood, *Black Bolshevik,* 624; Peery, *Black Radical*, 147, 150–154.
48. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 309; Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 261–267, 208, 274; and Gilmore, *Defying Dixie*, 6.
49. Jack Crellin, "At 70, He Still Fights Bias," *Detroit Times*, May 27, 1960; Tom Nicholson, "Negro Leader Kicks Off Labor Integration Drive," *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1960; and Asher Lauren, "Negro Labor Body Aims at 1.5 Million Members," *Detroit News*, May 28, 1960, Reuther Papers, Box 348, File 7, ALUA. See also Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 333–334; Pfeffer, *A. Philip Randolph*, 17–18; Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph*, 298–299.
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6

Challenges to Solidarity: The Mexican American Fight for Social and Economic Justice, 1946–1963

Zaragosa Vargas

When the Mexican American World War II veterans returned home, they confronted rampant discrimination. Like their African American counterparts, many wanted change, such as better educational opportunities, job training, and resources for purchasing homes and life insurance. This demand by Mexican Americans for a just share of the benefits of full equality helped define a new era of civil rights activism. It led Mexican Americans, America's second largest minority group, to welcome democratic organizations into their communities and to form new all-Mexican advocacy groups.[1]

The genesis of this movement was in the late 1930s and 1940s when Mexican Americans along with African Americans and women pushed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to make unions and industry inclusive and worked with various progressive organizations in fighting for civil rights more broadly.[2] The unions gave Mexican Americans a political voice and they forged a working-class-based movement led by leftist trade unionists that focused on economic rights rather than legalistic civil rights. The emergent Cold War stripped opposition to, then placed constraints on, working-class power, and as a result Mexican Americans would fall victim to the CIO's purges of its left-led unions. Those racially progressive unions that survived continued to fight for equality. In 1950, Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and

Smelters Workers (Mine Mill) turned southeastern New Mexico into the most militant battleground of the Mexican American people.

Many Mexican Americans looked toward alliance with the Communist Party of the United States as a means for achieving racial and economic justice and global peace. As Communists, fellow travelers, or sympathizers, they used their collective power as workers, citizens, and voters to fight for full equality. The Mexican American Left's various campaigns moved beyond the narrow definition of civil rights. They advanced their views through progressive organizations such as the National Association of Mexican Americans (ANMA), which set the example of Mexican American united struggle.[3] ANMA explicitly attributed the evils of racism to the capitalist system and was also attentive to international issues.

Communists were an established presence in Los Angeles, California, which was also home to many left-led trade unions and the largest population of Mexicans in the United States. Leftists in the Los Angeles CIO Council were soon challenged by cold war liberals who were determined to take control of the labor movement in the city and win the allegiance of its Mexican American community. They did this with the support of like-minded Mexican American labor activists who were engaged in struggles against the Left in their own unions and in suppressing left-wing dissent in their communities. The anticommunists won, with help as well from the Catholic Church and the newly founded Community Service Organization (CSO).[4] Though it served as a foundation for anticommunist campaigning, the CSO disavowed any ideological outlook. Rather, its goal was to empower Mexican Americans as loyal American citizens. The CSO therefore pressed for voting, open housing, and an end to school segregation, police brutality, and neighborhood displacement through urban development.

The Mexican American civil rights movement that was rooted in a coalition with the labor Left and trained in the front lines of class struggle more and more fell to the ravages of the Cold War abroad and the second Red Scare at home. The most militant Mexican Americans became vulnerable for their political views, while moderate Mexican Americans were cowed into obedience.[5] The suppression of the early Mexican American struggle for social and economic justice by anticommunism is critical to understanding the modern Mexican American civil rights movement.

Periodic mass expulsions of Mexican residents have been the rule in modern United States history. In 1954, Mexican Americans once more were confronted with the troublesome issue of asserting their U.S. citizenship in the face of intimidation and terror. Government officials used the anticommunist hysteria fomented by them to launch a large-scale deportation raid, named Operation Wetback. Because the threat was

labeled "foreign," the raids generated racism by the deliberate targeting of all those considered "Mexican," regardless of their citizenship. Bolstered by ideas of protecting "national security" from "internal threats," the ensuing raids, deportations, and increased harassment were employed to terrorize all Mexicans into docile subservience and to demoralize Spanish-speaking radicals. Operation Wetback resulted in gross violations of civil and human rights—government agents conducted searches without warrants and denied detainees legal representation or hearings. Endorsed by the federal government as the name for a nationwide deportation drive, the demeaning power of the term wetback became a perennial weapon of discrimination. Mainstream Anglo society now lumped Mexican Americans, whose local families went back generations, with undocumented Mexicans as "wetbacks."[6]

As McCarthyism brought militant Mexican American activism and its causes to an end, moderate elements stepped in to fill the vacuum and reconfigured the Mexican American rights movement. They distanced themselves from fellow activists with communist ties and abandoned the Left's economic agenda for the gradualist one of Anglo racial liberals. The idea of assimilation animated their new movement, which pursued legal equality and protection. Some of these group leaders in their rush for cold war respectability embraced a claim to whiteness as integral to their movement.[7] Moreover, another sign of reaction was that they distanced themselves from African Americans to avoid being classified as nonwhite. This took place despite the fact that the Mexican and African American people, each with their own demands and leadership, had common ground and worked together democratically.

There are many instances where racism united African Americans and Mexican Americans and they cooperated and collaborated in a common interracialist struggle. I examine some of the links between the struggles of African Americans and Mexican Americans for racial and economic justice in the early postwar years as well as assess the larger context for these two groups' affinities.

The heightening of the civil rights movement in the 1960s awakened a new generation of Mexican American advocates of inclusion. They once more launched grassroots and direct action campaigns in their work places and communities. Some activists began urging a more militant approach, for they realized that civil rights legislation did not end the structural realities of race and class in America. Others promoted nationalism, increased their interest in Marxism, and made alliances with the Black Power struggle. The eventual transformation of the Mexican American civil rights movement to Chicano Power redirected and reshaped the movement's political agenda. More important, it revitalized Mexican

American working-class activism in the cause of advancing both racial and economic justice.

The following discussion compares and contrasts the views and activities, as well as the losses and continuities, of Mexican Americans and their organizations on the issue of civil rights in the early postwar years. It shows that despite the abrupt stop to the momentum by the Cold War, there were direct links between this earlier civil rights movement and the modern rights movement. It also seeks to unite a narrative of Mexican American civil rights with the broader narrative of the civil rights movement. Despite organizational and ideological differences that ranged from radical to moderate to radical again, there would be ongoing political triumphs as well as setbacks in the Mexican American struggle for equality during these early years. One thing was certain. Mexican Americans of that era engaged with the great issues of their day to obtain jobs and justice.[8]

Left Out and Forgotten: The Plight of Mexican Americans in Postwar America

The prosperous postwar years simply passed nonwhite families by; their economic position in America did not improve from 1947 to 1962. More than a third of America's Mexican population lived in poverty, the degree of impoverishment varying by state and metropolitan area.[9]

Continuing their exodus that began during World War II, Mexican Americans were leaving impoverished rural areas and heading for the cities in search of work. By 1950, 80 percent of the nation's Mexican population was urban. However, there was no demand for the unskilled labor these immigrants brought to the urban job market, and employers resisted hiring them. The newcomers in addition faced residential segregation that was rapidly becoming the principle barrier to racial progress in America.[10]

Housing segregation in America became even more widespread after 1948, when the Supreme Court struck down enforcement of racial covenants in the *Shelly v. Kramer* decision. Though restrictive covenants had been rendered illegal, recalcitrant realtors and lending agencies devised other ways to keep minorities out of white neighborhoods. Anglo homeowners also responded protectively, expressing concern about the impact brown- or black-skinned neighbors would have on their property values and schools.[11]

Many of the overcrowded and deteriorating inner city neighborhoods, where one-third of Mexican Americans were confined, were being

destroyed through federal urban renewal and freeway construction projects. Postwar housing and urban redevelopment schemes sponsored by the federal government further increased residential segregation and reduced interracial mixing in America's rapidly urbanizing cities. The result of this squeeze on living space was that Mexican Americans were forced to cram together in whatever housing they could find in congested areas or public housing that typified America's racially Balkanized landscape.[12]

Concentrated in the less desirable residential communities, Mexican Americans also faced segregation and antagonism in the schools. Separating school-age Mexican Americans essentially into academic ghettoes was furthermore imposed by Anglo teachers and counselors. They had no respect for these students because they shared the prevailing views on their inherent intellectual inferiority. As racist as Anglo students and their parents, these teachers and counselors characterized Mexican Americans as having a low mentality and being slightly retarded. Tracked into vocational training classes, those few Mexican Americans who did gain an education did not obtain jobs because the employment market blocked people with dark skins and limited language skills. The employability of Mexican Americans with little education grew worse, so that by 1960 three-fourths of Mexican Americans in the Southwest were relegated to manual labor.[13]

Racial violence toward minorities by law enforcement officials was rampant in the postwar years as Anglo police engaged in widespread intimidation, brutality, and murder against them. In Texas, police were so out of control when dealing with minorities that some community leaders called for intervention by the Department of Justice. For example, the sheriff of Bee County gunned down eight Mexican Americans in cold blood over an eight-year period. After killing three of his victims, the Anglo peace officer viciously assaulted their female relatives, and he flogged his last victim with a chain before he shot him twice. In Taylor, Texas, a white policeman shot and killed two Mexican American brothers, both war veterans, after attempting to arrest them on a misdemeanor charge. Adding to the insult, the District Attorney refused to accept a complaint about this cold-blooded murder.[14] In Denver, Colorado, there were numerous instances of Anglo cops shooting unarmed Mexican Americans and of beating handcuffed Mexican Americans with batons and then setting police dogs on them.[15]

Los Angeles was a city increasingly hostile to the presence of minorities. The racist Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriffs had a long record of brutality against Mexican Americans and African Americans. Members of these two minority groups were arbitrarily stopped and searched without probable cause, punched, clubbed,

kicked, called racist names, and pinned down at gunpoint and arrested. Others were simply shot. One of the most troubling incidents of racist law enforcement practices was the savage beating of seven jailed Mexican American youths in 1951. It occurred on Christmas Eve at the hands of twenty-two city police officers during an all-night wild drinking party at the Lincoln Heights police substation. The horrible mistreatment of the victims amounted to torture.[16]

Supporters of Mexican American civil rights pushed the fight against police brutality and other large-scale and deep rooted injustices such as job and housing discrimination into the forefront. They first did this through their involvement in campaigns launched by racially progressive unions, most of which became the targets of unfolding postwar anticommunist purges.

Strong in the Struggle: Mexican Americans, Unions, and Organizing

The demand for full and fair employment was one of the leading arenas of postwar civil rights protest. Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico helped pioneer the legislative battle for labor and civil rights. In 1945 the Mexican American Democratic Senator introduced Bill S 101 to establish a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). The Senate bill, which guaranteed "equality of economic opportunity," set off a national controversy over how much control the federal government should have in employment practices. It attracted the ire of antilabor Southern Dixiecrats James O. Eastland (Mississippi), Walter F. George (Georgia), John Holmes Overton (Louisiana), and Theodore G. Bilbo (Mississippi), who upheld "states rights" and opposed any kind of federal intervention. These white supremacists viewed the bill as a step toward social equality of the races and thus sought to sabotage the fight for the FEPC. Leading this opposition was arch racist Senator Bilbo, who vowed he would beat the "damnable, un-American and unconstitutional" FEPC to death.[17]

The drive for the establishment of a permanent FEPC came under assault with the start of the Cold War, as charges that communists controlled organized labor grew louder. Nelson Lichtenstein and other historians note that left-wing labor leaders and their unions remained protected from red-baiting as long as fellow unionists viewed an attack on the Left as an attack on organized labor itself.[18] This changed as the labor movement became more conservative and progressive unions and left-wing trade unionists experienced increasing isolation. Only a few unions

remained to support labor and civil rights legislation and other antidiscrimination measures. In addition, the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 restricted and undermined trade unionism as a civil rights vehicle for minorities and women, while the non-Communist affidavit became a trap for countless thousands of trade union leaders with militant records. Because of the era's unrelenting anticommunist campaign, little would remain of the radical culture and democratic spirit of the CIO by 1955.

With unions thus weakened, wages and working conditions became a disgrace. Confined disproportionately to low-paid work, and with little promise for job advancement, Mexican American workers nonetheless continued their activism for social and economic change.[19] Those who were members of Mine Mill continued to pursue a leftist strategy even as the labor movement moved to the political right. In 1950 in southeastern New Mexico, left-wing Mexican American leaders and members of Mine Mill Local 890 wedded minority issues with class concerns as they launched the cold war era's most famous strike. Their struggle against an array of powerful interests resulted in a protracted labor battle that became known as the Salt of the Earth strike.

Mexican Americans constituted nearly half the work force in the metal industries of the Southwest and Rocky Mountain States. Most belonged to the left-leaning Mine Mill union, with many Communists serving as leaders of their locals. Mine Mill's civil rights activities in the Southwest were a motivating force for Mexican American union members. Firmly committed to racial equality, Mine Mill encouraged democratic participation, developed leadership, and brought the fight for equality out of the mines and smelters and into the local communities. As a champion of civil rights, Mine Mill helped Mexican Americans break the two-tiered wage system in the mining and smelter industry, the so-called "Mexican wage scale." However, there was considerable criticism of Mine Mill and its members. CIO leaders denounced Mine Mill and it was expelled from the national federation. For their part, the mine operators responded to this working-class challenge in predictable ways. Anticommunist activity became devastating during the Korean conflict. The mine operators and their supporters, some of the latter being paid infiltrators or informers of the FBI and related law enforcement agencies, alleged that Mine Mill was planning to call a strike in order to hamper the Korean War. The miners correctly saw such attacks as a cover for the mining corporations to destroy their union and roll back what gains they had won in the 1940s. The ensuing strike against the Empire Zinc Company therefore arose from both labor issues and political causes.[20]

The miners of Mine Mill Local 890 went on strike at the Empire Zinc Company in September 1950 in the small town of Hanover, New Mexico.

Organizational work began in earnest in the face of increased harassment, arrests, and dismissals of workers by the mine management aided by the police. In June 1951, Empire Zinc obtained a court injunction against the striking miners. Though they faced going to jail, the brave miners did not give up their strike and it dragged on for fifteen months. The New Mexican women, like the men, felt great anger and bitterness at the attacks they and their families were subjected to and the misery that pervaded the mining camp. These militant women, many of them Communists like their men folk, became central to the unfolding strike. They went on the picket line in place of the striking miners and added housing, hot water, and indoor plumbing to the list of demands. The spirited women were humiliated, assaulted, and arrested by law enforcement officers and mine security forces, but the women did not falter in maintaining their solidarity that buoyed the striking miners' spirit.[21]

The overtly political film *Salt of the Earth* chronicled the protracted strike of these courageous Mexican American mine workers against the Empire Zinc Company. A monument of American film, *Salt of the Earth* was completed despite considerable harassment of the filmmakers and the real-life actors by the FBI and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Promoters of *Salt of the Earth* had difficulties in showing the film, primarily resulting from concerted efforts by anticommunist individuals and groups such as the American Legion. The most visible militant in the war against subversion, the American Legion believed the film was Communist propaganda. Despite threats to distributors and exhibitors with loss of business if they showed the film, *Salt of the Earth* attracted audiences nonetheless. One of the first showings took place in a movie house in Harlem, New York. The success of the legendary film about the strike, however, focused attention on the blacklisted individuals who made the film and not on the militant struggle of the Mexican American mine workers striving for a higher standard of life.[22] Like the workers in Mine Mill who challenged Empire Zinc, Mexican American unionist Francisco Medrano was also concerned with obtaining civil rights in and out of the workplace. Medrano's organizing for the United Automobile Workers (UAW) is part of the history of Mexican American/African American unity in the trade union movement. While racism united the Anglo workers in a reactionary manner, it united Mexican Americans and African American workers in a progressive manner. At the North American Aviation plant in Dallas, Texas, Medrano believed collective struggle could achieve equality and thus he appealed to the common interests of the plant's Mexican American and African American workers. Drawn by the UAW's pledge not to discriminate against anybody because of race, color, or national origin, Medrano worked to eliminate unfair

practices in his own union local and to obtain equality for his Mexican American and African American coworkers.[23]

The union local at the Dallas North American Aviation plant used its power to preserve segregated job classifications and lines of promotion for its Anglo members. White workers consequently dominated all the better jobs while workers of Mexican descent held the least desirable positions and endured terrible working conditions.[24] It was even worse for African Americans. Nearly all of them were assigned to cleaning restrooms or to the sand blasting or the paint stripping departments, the most undesirable and dangerous jobs. There was little support or sympathy for the workers. "I don't think there was ever a black at any machine at North American Aviation," Medrano remembered. "Everything, even the punch clocks, was segregated. All black employees had to use tin cups by the water fountains rather than use the water fountain itself as Anglos did. The company did nothing to discourage violence against blacks."[25] Francisco Medrano worked to end such blatant segregation, fight the racist oppression of Anglo factory supervisors, and took on the formidable task of job upgrading Mexican American and African American workers.

During the 1946 nationwide strike, the CIO organized plant after plant across Texas. However, the situation for union activists such as Francisco Medrano changed dramatically in the wake of the anti-worker campaign ushered in by the Taft-Hartley law. A paranoid brand of anticommunism was another weapon of union foes. The antilabor propaganda often sounded as though the unions were directly run from Moscow. The frequency of its allusions to "outside agitators" bore a striking resemblance to the race-hate literature produced by the White Citizens Councils because it inveighed against communism, atheism, African Americans, "wetbacks," Jews, and labor unions. Texas Governor Allen Shivers called a special session of the state legislature in the spring of 1954 to pass a bill making membership in the Communist Party a felony punishable by a fine of $20,000 and twenty years in prison. An admirer of Joseph McCarthy and a major player in the defense of white privilege in Texas, Governor Shivers was sorely disappointed he was unable to persuade state lawmakers that Communists should receive the death penalty.[26]

Elsewhere, other Mexican American progressive unionists were making efforts to eliminate de facto discrimination and the resulting social and economic inequality. In the Rocky Mountain States and California, the National Association of Mexican Americans was the leading advocate for labor rights and civil rights for Mexican Americans. Although vulnerable to the general prejudice at the time

against left-wing organizations, ANMA developed a campaign to educate and mobilize Mexican Americans against inequality.

The Home Grown Radicalism of ANMA

ANMA was a national organization of Mexican Americans founded in 1949 that demanded the same civil rights for their people that other Americans enjoyed. Mexican Americans from the Communist Party actually had been engaged in forming such an organization prior to 1949. Taking on this task was Ralph Cuarón of the United Furniture Workers of America (UFWA) Local 196 of Los Angeles. One year earlier, Cuarón was invited by Party District chairman Arthur Bary to make a presentation on Mexicans and the national question at the Party's Rocky Mountain District convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. The majority of the convention delegates concurred with Cuarón's assessment that a new position on the national question was needed and that it should be presented at the Party's national convention that year.[27]

Cuarón attended the Party's convention in New York City where he delivered the *Resolution on Party Work Among the Mexican People* and the *Resolution on the Conditions of the Mexican People*. The latter "provide[d] a general condemnation of the economic, political, and social suppression of the community and the Party's pledge to struggle alongside the Mexican American against these attacks." Cuarón's resolutions were voted on in the convention and he got the Party's endorsement to continue work in the Mexican community throughout the Southwest. These efforts led to the formation of ANMA, which represented a new start for radicals to organize Mexican Americans on a mass scale.[28]

ANMA was a staunch exponent of the strategy of protest in protecting the civil, economic, and political rights of Mexican Americans, and it made no secret of its additional mandate to defend the cultural and language rights of the Mexican American people. Clearly, ANMA "placed blame for the condition of the Mexican people on the powers that be."[29]

At its peak, ANMA amassed a significant following of nearly 4,000 members, with its strength concentrated in the Rocky Mountain States and California. In Los Angeles, members of the Communist Party's Mexican American Commission along with Communist sympathizers were instrumental in forming and cultivating the growth of ANMA in California.[30]

Two years earlier in 1948 the leftist Mexican Americans who formed ANMA had lent considerable support to the third party campaign of Henry A. Wallace of the Progressive Party, because Wallace was the

standard bearer who opposed the Cold War and favored social reform at home. The Progressive Party presidential candidate spoke out against racism, called for integrated housing and education, the repeal of Taft-Hartley, and abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). Wallace also endorsed the Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America, backed the world peace movement, and opposed the Marshall Plan. Progressive Mexican American trade unionists took leave from their unions to organize full time for the Wallace campaign and those state and local candidates running on the Progressive Party ticket. Many of these unionists had attended the Progressive Party convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1948. The major efforts during Wallace's Progressive Party campaign involved voter registration and the dissemination of information. The Mexican American Left answered the call by mobilizing over 10,000 Spanish-speaking voters for the Progressive Party. These efforts proved to be only partially successful as Wallace lost the presidential election by a huge margin due to strong anti-Left opposition from both the Democratic and Republican parties. His campaign nonetheless politicized many Mexican Americans.[31]

ANMA was comprised mainly of militant male and female trade unionists from the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelters Workers, the United Furniture Workers of America, and other progressive unions that had provided funding and volunteers to organize ANMA. Dedicated to advancing the cause of economic and civil rights, including African American equality, ANMA built tactical alliances with the Civil Rights Congress, the Progressive Citizens of America, the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, and other left-led organizations.[32]

Maintaining a class position at the heart of its politics, ANMA defied organized labor's devotion to the Cold War. It joined the Civil Rights Congress in the drive for passage of pro-labor legislation; despite red-baiting, ANMA provided funds and clothing to Mine Mill strikers in New Mexico; and it supported a minimum wage for agricultural workers and their right to form unions. ANMA joined the NAACP, the National Negro Congress, and the Civil Rights Congress in bringing the racial situation in the United States before the United Nations and the rest of the world. Although critical of the Bracero Program, ANMA in 1951 appealed to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to investigate the contract laborers' miserable plight. ANMA protested the mass deportations under the McCarran-Walter Act of Mexican immigrants and Mexicans who were permanent residents or American citizens, particularly working-class leaders who were being targeted because of their activism.[33]

ANMA viewed the specific struggles of the Mexican community as related to the international struggles against the Korean War, or any foreign confrontation that would lead to a third world war, and colonial oppression and racism worldwide. It particularly condemned U.S. intervention in Guatemala and America's support of dictatorships in Latin America and the Middle East. ANMA declared solidarity with the Cuban revolutionary movement and also with Puerto Rican nationalists in their cause for independence. ANMA also was part of the peace movement; it strongly opposed worldwide nuclear proliferation through the Stockholm Peace appeal.[34]

ANMA leaders and followers were united in their appreciation and support of the struggles of African Americans because they recognized that African Americans were victimized by racism just as Mexican Americans were. ANMA had declared its commitment to interracialism in its founding document: "We have pledged ourselves to eradicating the force and violence so repeatedly used against Mexican, Negro, and minority peoples by local police and lynch-minded racists." Embracing Mexican/African American unity, ANMA championed the fight for civil rights by African Americans. ANMA protested the printing of racist news articles by the *L.A. Examiner* that, in associating crime with African Americans and Mexican Americans, blamed "rat-packs" and "pachucos" for a crime wave in that city. ANMA chronicled among its early activities "the first Mexican observance of Negro History Week" in the Maravilla Mexican community of Los Angeles.[35]

However, as the United States was tilting to the right, becoming more concerned about the subversive threats of radicalism, ANMA came under increasing scrutiny owing to its stance on the issues of labor, racism, deportations, and the peace movement. HUAC investigated ANMA for its alleged disloyal activities, which included criticizing American foreign policy overseas. Pressed into service, the FBI infiltrated ANMA and local and state authorities harassed the organization. Paid informants provided the FBI with membership lists and background information on its officers and members. Red-baited by the U.S. Attorney General's Office as a subversive organization and for its pro-Soviet position, and with several leaders already threatened with deportation, ANMA's role diminished in the mid-1950s and it eventually disintegrated.[36]

As anticommunism eliminated left-wing organizations and figures through purges of the Mexican American civil rights struggle, the CSO emerged as a major player in the struggle for equality for this minority group. It had strong ties to several liberal anticommunist union locals with large Spanish-speaking memberships. By concentrating its efforts on community organizing, the CSO helped nurture a well-organized

grassroots political movement among Mexican Americans in Los Angeles and in other parts of California.

Participatory Democracy In Action: The Community Service Organization

The CSO emerged in 1948 in Los Angeles. Dependent upon labor for its political survival, the CSO was the product of the struggles between liberal and socialist leaders, on one hand, and the Communists and their allies, on the other, for the political direction of the labor movement and for the power base within the Mexican American community.[37]

Registration and voting among Mexican Americans lagged in California. In Los Angeles, conservative Anglos resorted to anticommunism to squash any change to the status quo, including ANMA's efforts at enfranchisement of the Mexican American people. In 1948, working through the CSO and with strong labor union support, Mexican Americans recruited Edward B. Roybal as a candidate for change. The CSO undertook a mass voter registration campaign on behalf of Roybal for a seat on the all Anglo Los Angeles City Council. Roybal pioneered multiethnic politics, advocating for African American and Mexican American civil rights. When African Americans from the city's South Central district pressed Roybal on why they should support his campaign, Roybal replied: "Our skin is brown—our battle is the same. Our victory cannot be but a victory for you, too." The Roybal campaign provided a crucial test of the impact of the larger Mexican American and African American vote that would bode well for the future.[38]

Roybal lost his first run for a Los Angeles City Council seat by only 300 votes. This close vote did not demoralize Roybal's precinct workers. In 1949, after launching a voter registration campaign that gained 15,000 new voters, the CSO secured Roybal's second bid for a seat on the City Council. Again, Roybal made significant gains in the African American neighborhoods, rallying support and winning endorsements from community leaders and from state assemblyman Gus Hawkins.[39]

Unquestionably crucial to Roybal's success were the hundreds of Mexican American women who spearheaded the door-to-door organizing campaign strategy in the city of Los Angeles to register voters. Like African American women in the Deep South, Mexican American women canvassed more than the men, showed up more often at meetings and demonstrations, and served as major leaders, organizers, and strategists. Many of the women were unionists. ILGWU members María Durán and Hope Schecter Mendoza were leading figures in the Roybal campaign.[40]

Once in office, Roybal spoke out very strongly for civil rights and racial justice. He was the only Los Angeles City Council member to do so. Moreover, the progressive Mexican American cast the only vote against a controversial Communist registration ordinance. Councilman Roybal had this to say about the ordinance: "The doctrine implicit in this ordinance . . . places every citizen and organization, whose word or act resembles at any time those of the Communists, at the mercy of any biased crack-pot who may decide to report the matter to the Police Department as subversive. . . ." The Mexican American city councilman also condemned the McCarran-Walter Act. In Roybal, minorities and progressives had an example to admire. Over the next decade Roybal would play a key role in the politics of Los Angeles and California.[41] His election helped the CSO reinforce its influence in the Mexican American community. By 1950 the organization had more than 5,000 members with chapters in thirty-five cities active in voter registration and electoral campaigns. Two years later, the Left's presence in the Los Angeles labor movement had been rolled back and the labor movement was now firmly in the hands of the anticommunist union forces. The CSO was the dominant civil rights advocacy group in the city.[42] Owing to the ravages of McCarthyism, activists of any kind provoked suspicion. Mexican American labor and civil rights advocates were forced to censure themselves for fear of being suspect of Communist activity. Banned and banished, they became victims of domestic anticommunism. For example, Ralph Cuarón's activist and outspoken reputation caught up with him. Cuarón was unable to find work anywhere in Los Angeles. He still retained contact with the Party.[43]

Mexican American Victims of the Red Scare

The crackdown on outspoken dissenters was a broad assault against civil liberties. Given the hostile anticommunist climate, all persons who made an effort to ameliorate social problems and advocate for or defend civil rights were put in a bad light. Political watchdogs did not fail to notice the leftward leanings of Mexican American activists. Their rights as well as the rights of those who were aliens and naturalized citizens were sacrificed because of cold war government practices. If the activists were aliens who became Communist Party members, they could be deported under the 1950 Internal Security Act. If others were recently naturalized, they could be denaturalized if they were caught in the web of the McCarran-Walter Act and the attendant deportation frenzy the Act created to deal with an unraveling Mexican guest worker program. The Mexican American civil rights movement was essentially stripped of its most

capable activists through deportation procedures, which were far more menacing than criminal charges. The threat of deportation as an undesirable alien "…served as a very effective weapon to keep the Mexican people as a whole in bondage.…As soon as a leader arises…deportation proceedings are immediately used to remove [them] from leadership."[44]

The INS detained longtime Los Angeles trade unionist Armando Davila for deportation because of his left-wing politics. Fortunately, Davila's union, the United Furniture Workers of America, came to his defense; it contacted the Civil Rights Congress to defend him. The government quelled the activities of veteran labor activist Refugio Martínez of Chicago, Illinois, and deported him to Mexico. A resident of the United States for twenty-seven years, Martínez was an organizer for the United Packinghouse Workers of America. His political predicament was that he was a former member of the Party and had links to Communist and fellow traveler groups such as ANMA. His case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but Martínez lost. The Mexican activist was deported under the McCarran Act because he had joined the Communist Party in 1932.[45]

Another alien deportation case involved prominent labor and civil rights advocate Robert Galván of San Diego, California. Galván had been a resident of the United States for thirty-six years, and had an American-born wife, four American-born children, and a stepson who served in the Army overseas during World War II. In addition to his union work in southern California, Galván battled the Ku Klux Klan, whose prime target for their racial hatred and bigotry in that region were Mexicans. The Klan captured Mexicans and hung and disemboweled them, buried others alive, cut the throats of those who "insulted" white women, and used gas torches on their victims to "see them dance." Though threatened and physically attacked by the Klan, the labor and civil rights activists refused to back down in fighting against the Klan's depraved acts.[46] Galván was being deported because of his past membership in the Communist Party and the Communist affiliation of the organizations to which he had been linked. Galván disavowed any political agenda. Fortunately, fate smiled on him. Attorneys for the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People (ACSSP) finally won Galván's case when the federal judge ruled that he was "law-abiding…a steady worker and family man and loyal to the United States."[47] American-born Anna Correa-Bary of Denver, Colorado, was not as lucky.

A member of the United Packinghouse Workers of America and an active Communist, Anna Correa-Bary intensified her activities on behalf of the Party. She and her husband Arthur Bary, and four other Party members, all of them residents of Denver, became prime targets of the

anticommunist campaigns. They were indicted in 1954 and tried for violation of the Smith Act. The Smith Act placed severe restrictions on any person alleged to have taught, published, or advocated or organized others in an attempt to overthrow the government of the United States.[48]

The Civil Rights Congress contacted over one hundred lawyers to defend Anna Correa-Bary, but none wanted to take the case. In its indictments, the federal government relied on the testimony of four paid witnesses hired by the FBI to spy, make reports, and furnish other information to convict the defendants. After twenty years of legal battles, including a final one before the U.S. Supreme Court, the indictment was withdrawn. Nevertheless, Anna Correa-Bary became a casualty of the abuses of civil liberties during the McCarthy era.[49]

The accusations of being a Communist were damaging, and Mexican Americans, many of them World War II and Korean War veterans, were not left unscathed by these charges. Closely associated in the public mind with Communists, Mexican American progressives could not get work and acquired an un-American aura that destroyed their political effectiveness as well as their personal reputations. The singling out of Mexican Americans allied with the Left for punitive treatment was despairingly summed up by Anita Alvárez, a member of the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born:

> In a land founded on freedom and justice, a mother of a war veteran is aroused in the morning and torn from her home. A father of a dead war hero is waylaid on his way home from work and snatched away from his family.... What is their crime? Where is the evidence? The accusation is "You believed—you thought—you spoke."[50]

Despite red-baiting, police surveillance, and efforts to disrupt the organizing of Mexican Americans, activists such as Anita Alvárez fought for the rights of Mexican Americans against the government-sponsored deportations through the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, the Civil Rights Congress, and the American Civil Liberties Union. These progressive organizations tirelessly defended more than two hundred foreign-born and U.S.-born individuals charged under the McCarran-Walter law.

The American Communist Party was put on the road to disintegration because of the heightening of the Cold War, the federal government's relentless pursuit and expulsion of Communists from society, in addition to the Party's own internal shifts, weaknesses, and bitter factional disputes. The Red Scare drove away most of its Mexican American members. Others were deported or went underground. Many left the Party

following Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin or became disillusioned with the Party's practice of addressing the issue of race only when it applied to Party strategy.[51]

In 1954, as Senator Joseph McCarthy's political fortunes were peaking, built largely on an assault on civil liberties, the United States government launched a massive deportation campaign targeting Mexicans. The paranoia over illegal Mexicans mirrored the witch-hunts that were being conducted at the same time for suspected Communists. What began as a controlled, closely monitored deportation program to detain undocumented workers grew to encompass naturalized and American-born citizens. In such a repressive climate, fear of harassment and deportation had a significant deterrent effect on Mexican American activism.

Caught in the Dragnet: Mexican Americans, Operation Wetback, and Operation Terror

The year 1954 was a time of economic recession in the United States, in which unemployment doubled, imposing even greater hardship for minorities. The 1950s was the "decade of the wetback," as the number of undocumented workers coming from Mexico increased by 6,000 percent. Mexican Americans greatly feared that the influx of workers would endanger their marginal foothold in America. In the view of labor activists, cheap labor displaced native workers, increased labor law violations and discrimination, and encouraged racist public discourse about illegal aliens and the rise in crime, disease, and other social ills. Some Mexican American organizations worked to stop the Bracero Program and to pass stricter regulations on future immigration from Mexico in order to protect legal residents from competition that enabled employers to cut back on workers' pay, benefits, and working conditions.[52]

As the recession unfolded, the mood in the Southwest toward Mexicans grew hostile and resentful. On June 9, 1954, the federal government launched a nationwide deportation drive code named Operation Wetback. The McCarran-Walter Act served as the legal arm of this deportation campaign. What became the largest mass deportation in U.S. history was an effort to locate, seize, and deport undocumented Mexican aliens in the United States. Much like today, the campaign was meant to send a political message and not just to respond to immediate immigration concerns. Federal agents used a broad criterion for determining who were potential aliens; consequently, they did not distinguish between American citizens of Mexican descent and undocumented aliens. Operation Wetback became strictly focused on Mexicans in general—the federal roundup

became a 1950s version of racial profiling of Mexicans on the street. This practice incited and angered many U.S. citizens of Mexican descent because federal agents swarmed Spanish-speaking neighborhoods and did not ask to see individuals' documents or question them about their legal status. These indiscriminate apprehensions caused families to be separated and children left behind. Many of the victims of the mass deportation were shipped across the border without recourse to due process amidst claims by the U.S. Attorney General that the operation was to prevent the entrance into the country of Communist subversives.[53]

Organized by the INS and with the full cooperation of county and state authorities, the deportations numbered more than one million undocumented Mexican workers. This was only the beginning of a vast process of removal that sent Mexicans back to Mexico. During the subsequent Operation Terror, the Mexican community of Los Angeles was subjected to another wave of blatant human rights violations as tens of thousands of the city's Spanish-speaking residents were swept up in the raids.[54]

Operation Terror was launched in Los Angeles on June 17, 1954, shortly after midnight. Without civil search or arrest warrants, nearly a thousand immigration agents hunted down Mexicans, ferreting them out in business districts and places of entertainment. Government agents also invaded residential areas and used excessive force to burst into homes to search out Mexicans, in essence tracking them down in order to capture them wherever they might congregate or live.[55]

Operation Terror meted out collective punishment to the entire Mexican people of Los Angeles. Thousands of Mexican immigrants and their American citizen families were processed for deportation without any hearings and legal counsel. Young American-born children were suddenly without their parents. Many of the parents wound up in Mexico penniless, having to beg for food and shelter. The federal government's actions drew public outcries and charges of civil and human rights violations. Outraged by the deportations, the Community Service Organization, the Civil Rights Congress, the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, and progressive labor unions protested loudly. The Civil Rights Congress distributed an English-Spanish pamphlet, "Stop the Deportation Drive…Know your Rights." Trade unionists set up a picket line at a detention camp at Elysian Park near the Los Angeles Police Academy prepared by INS agents to herd Mexicans for processing and shipment out of the city. Civil libertarians concluded that the government apprehension of Mexicans evoked Nazi-era practices.[56]

Operation Wetback and Operation Terror ensured the silencing of the nation's second largest minority group. Moreover, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service made the word "wetback"

official by naming the mission to remove the undocumented from the United States "Operation Wetback." The derogatory term became very popular among Americans, and through common usage it became a moniker to refer to all Mexicans in general.

Failing to see the long-range impacts, the American GI Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), America's two principal and conservative Mexican American organizations, endorsed the apprehensions by which all of the Mexicans of the United States encountered the same antipathies. While the GI Forum eventually protested the unfolding government repression, LULAC remained silent about the persecution of Mexican American citizens caught in the dragnet and the misery suffered as a result. American employers profited from the deportation campaign. They continued to import new crops of undocumented workers from Mexico and under permanent threat of deportation superexploited this labor.[57]

Meanwhile, the task of acquiring legal equality and protection for Mexican Americans was taken up. Litigation would be through the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People, which adopted an "other white" legal strategy. This was the brainchild concocted by Mexican American elites. Part of a much larger campaign for civil rights, litigation ultimately failed to improve the position of Mexican Americans in U.S. society.

Civil Rights and Civil Wrongs: Mexican American Litigation

As the controversy over civil rights intensified in the postwar period, the spotlight shifted to the courts. Mexican Americans were profoundly affected by the legal battles for civil rights being waged by African Americans, and they opened up legal offenses of their own. The two established Mexican American groups, the American GI Forum and LULAC, would take the lead in this endeavor.[58]

Founded in 1948 in Corpus Christi, Texas, the American GI Forum was constituted of locally run units and sought to involve Mexican American citizens in public life. Within five years after its founding, the GI Forum's followers numbered over 20,000 organized into 600 chapters that were engaged at various levels around the issues of community need and welfare. Highly patriotic and weaned on a steady diet of anticommunism, the American GI Forum was opposed to domestic leftism of any form. It instinctively warned against the dangers of aligning with "un-American ideologies." Unlike the grassroots oriented American GI Forum, LULAC represented the upper crust of Mexican American political culture. It

drew its leadership from the ranks of businessmen, attorneys, and the educated. Compliant and timid, it mirrored the self-interests of its leadership who valued conformity in the pursuit of the American way of life.[59] Both the GI Forum and LULAC refused to embrace confrontational activism, preferring instead to embark upon legal action and, in the case of the GI Forum, voter registration drives to improve the status of the Mexican American people. Expressing a hard anticommunist line, these two groups had remained silent on the civil rights violations committed against Mexican Americans suspected of being Communists. As noted, they were also stalwart supporters of the federal government's anti-immigrant campaigns. Nonetheless, the American GI Forum's lofty rhetoric about patriotic devotion to the United States failed to assist it in escaping the domestic Red Scare investigations of the cold war era. During the 1963 Subversive Activities Control Board hearings in Washington, DC, paid FBI informant William J. Lowery testified that he had been spying for four years on the activities of the American GI Forum, the NAACP, and other integrationist organizations in Texas.[60]

Equal educational opportunities for Mexican Americans were the key to improving their social condition. So long as Mexican Americans remained powerless, racism would take the form of unequal distribution of school dollars, gerrymandered school boundaries or clearly delineated "Mexican schools" that segregated Mexican American children, and punitive teachers and counselors who discouraged their aspirations. Eliminating segregation in the schools of the Southwest through the courts thus became a central activity of the central established Mexican American organizations. It would be done by pursuing a legal strategy of whiteness, but without embracing white racism or giving up common cause with African Americans.[61]

Assimilation and identification as white was trumpeted by the conservative Mexican American leadership as a solution to the disparagement of Mexican Americans. They also distanced themselves from association with blacks. With their attitude shaped this way, Mexicans at this time, argue legal scholars, "did not want to be white, neither did they want to be black." The hard legal fact was, unlike African Americans, most segregation of Mexican Americans in the 1940s and 1950s was de facto, set in place by custom rather than state statute and therefore not remedied by law. Because Mexican Americans occupied an ambiguous position in the nation's legal and social orders—they were considered legally "white" but treated as nonwhite—litigators used the conundrum term "other white" as a legal tool in their civil rights cases to desegregate schools. Attorneys argued before the courts that Mexicans should not be subject to Jim Crow because state law only sanctioned the segregation of "negroes" or

"colored" people. However, this "other white" line of reasoning did little to dismantle segregation in the Southwest. Instead it helped reluctant school districts in the region undermine post-*Brown* desegregation rulings by integrating African American students into so-called "Mexican schools." Officials, emboldened by their racist cohorts, claimed the latter were "white" schools, thus leaving the real white schools essentially unaffected under desegregation orders.[62]

Mexican American attorneys coordinated litigation to eliminate discrimination through the American Civil Liberties Union's Robert Marshall Civil Liberties Trust. It provided substantial assistance to the newly established American Council of Spanish-Speaking People organization. Emulating the NAACP and the "ultra-progressive Negro-Americans," the ACSSP aided attorneys in gaining remedy through the courts for the civil rights violations of Mexican Americans and also assisted organizations attempting to create civil rights programs. The legal tactic evolved through several test trials, one of which was closely watched by the NAACP.[63]

The pioneering *Westminster v. Mendez* case against Mexican American segregation in California was litigated in 1947. The court ruled that because California's Jim Crow statutes did not expressly mention Mexican Americans, separation denied them due process and hence equal protection under the law. In Texas, most school districts prevented Mexican Americans from sharing public classrooms with Anglo students. Placing Mexican American students in separate classes based on language and academic ability undermined the ideal of equal educational opportunity. In 1948, Mexican American lawyers in *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* succeeded in convincing a federal court to declare unconstitutional the segregation of Mexican Americans based on linguistically deficient students because it was arbitrary and discriminatory. However, this federal ruling was not enforced and resulted in continued legal challenges. In South Texas, approximately 90 percent of the public schools were segregated according to the "Anglo" or "Mexican" enrollment. Residential segregation also undercut educational opportunity in many Texas districts. In 1957, the ACSSP, in partnership with American GI Forum and LULAC attorneys, won a suit against the Driscoll, Texas Independent School District. In this case, the federal court judge ruled that grouping Mexican American students as a separate class from Anglo students was arbitrary and unreasonable. Once again, subsequent legal challenges were made due to the slow process of school desegregation in light of weak civil rights legislation.[64]

Bound by a common cause, Mexican Americans and African Americans achieved a measure of victory in the drive for equal education in southern California. In 1950, the Alianza Hispano Americana and the Spanish

American Alliance opted not to use the "other white" legal tool and filed a school segregation suit with the NAACP in El Centro, California, the *Romero v. Weakley* case. The parents of forty-four Mexican American children (including one white child falsely segregated) and twenty African American children alleged in the suit that the El Centro School District and the Imperial County Board of Supervisors illegally segregated their children into two separate and unequal schools while Anglos were bused to the "white" school. The plaintiffs were able to settle the case by forcing the defendants to agree by stipulation that the segregation would end.[65]

In addition to school segregation, there was a long-standing, systematic, and arbitrary exclusion of qualified Mexican Americans from jury service, based solely on their race, in violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. For much of the twentieth century, courts pronounced Mexican Americans "white" in the courtroom, most often as a way of denying that they were victims of racial discrimination in jury selection.

In 1954, as Operation Wetback was initiated, beginning the process of sending Mexicans "back to Mexico," Mexican American attorneys won the Supreme Court case *Hernández v the State of Texas*. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote that Hernández was denied his rights to the equal protection and due process clauses of the 14th Amendment because the Texas county in which he lived did not allow Mexican Americans to serve on juries. The court accepted the argument of the plaintiff's attorneys that Anglos treated Mexicans as nonwhite, despite the fact that they were actually white. Mexican Americans hailed *Hernández v. the State of Texas* as a landmark decision and it served as a rallying point for civil rights activists. To Anglo Texans who cherished states' rights, however, the Supreme Court had rendered Mexican Americans "too white for their own good." Their hostile reaction predictably came in the form of mocking attacks such as: "Why do you want Mexicans on juries? [Mexicans] claim to be white. Aren't we all white?" Two weeks later, challenges to state-mandated segregation culminated in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* when the Supreme Court unanimously ruled segregation in schools unconstitutional. Whites immediately set out to sabotage the court's decision.[66]

To Anglos, *Brown v. Board of Education* represented federal intervention in Southern race relations. Many Anglo communities evaded integration through redefining school-district boundaries, appealing court desegregation orders or, as was the case in the Southwest, integrating African American students into the existing Mexican schools. The White Citizen's Councils, devoted to upholding white supremacy, began to appear first in Mississippi and then in Texas, where elected officials called integration a communist plot to destroy the white race. Soon

thereafter, more than 200 ultra-racist congressional senators signed the "Southern Manifesto" endorsing segregation. Segregationists furthermore attempted to discredit civil rights organizations and activists by calling them subversive.[67]

Despite the succession of legal victories, the Mexican American community did not solve the problem of school segregation or win the constitutional struggle for civil rights. The Marshall Trust fund withdrew support for its Mexican American legal strategy, revealing the financial vulnerability of this tenuous eight-year cause. It assessed its venture to assist the Spanish-speaking people of the Southwest as a failure because no organization existed to coordinate Mexican American civil rights on a national level. The Marshall Trust liquidated its assets, the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People disappeared, and the founding of a national legal organization for Mexican Americans would have to wait nearly ten years until the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund was established. Nevertheless, the suits and arguments brought about by Mexican American civic organizations played a great part in broadening the legal rights of Mexican Americans.[68]

Don't Bow to the Powers that Be: Shifts in the Mexican American Rights Movement

Texas had the highest density of Mexican Americans. One and a half million of the nation's Mexican population resided in the state, where pervasive racism and legally mandated Jim Crow prevailed. They worked and lived under wretched conditions in both rural and urban areas extending from El Paso to San Antonio and southward to the Gulf of Mexico. Most remained concentrated in the agricultural counties of South Texas, one of America's poorest regions. Mired in poverty, Mexican Americans had the shortest life expectancy, the highest infant death rate, the poorest housing, and the greatest rate of chronic unemployment and underemployment; they were segregated in schools and public places, and were denied the right to vote, serve on juries, or own real estate in certain areas.[69]

Together, Mexican Americans and African Americans comprised one-third of the population of Texas. Mexican Americans and blacks in Texas together endured such indignities as attending movie houses built exclusively for "Negroes and Mexicans" and riding in non-air-conditioned segregated passenger buses. While both minority groups suffered from discrimination, the mandated segregation of Mexican Americans was more a function of demography than law.[70] Segregationist legislation in the Texas House of Representatives in 1957 ultimately galvanized some

Mexican American political leaders to more formally tie their civil rights efforts directly to African Americans by their effective opposition to proposed state segregation. These Mexican Americans rejected the skin color politics of the GI Forum. A sense of common purpose and experience with African Americans to undo racial injustice and remake American society again explains one aspect of the Mexican American civil rights movement of the early postwar years.[71]

In May 1957, at the height of the Southern resistance to school desegregation, the Texas House of Representatives passed several bills designed to maintain the color line in the state's public schools. The bills had strong support in the Texas Senate too, that is, before Mexican American state senator Henry B. González of San Antonio took the floor in opposition to a measure that allowed parents who objected to integration to withdraw their children from school.[72] The Mexican American was distinctly progressive by the standards of contemporary Texas politics. His support for civil rights was a striking departure from the views of the great majority of his Anglo colleagues fiercely determined to protect the state's established social order.

Unlike other Mexican American leaders in Texas, Henry B. González built coalitions with the African American community. With interracial support, González had been elected to the San Antonio City Council in 1953 and served as mayor pro-tempore for part of his first term. González was neither a radical nor a conservative; rather, he was a multifaceted, flexible leader who followed an effective middle-course approach in an attempt to advance social justice. González spoke against legal segregation of San Antonio's public facilities and he backed the City Council's passage of desegregation ordinances. In 1956, González became the first Mexican American elected to the Texas State Senate in one hundred years. The following year González reacted bitterly to the legislature's resistance to integration, attracting national attention for holding the longest filibuster in the history of the Texas legislature. It lasted thirty-six hours against the dangers posed by racists in the state legislature and their Southern Manifesto, the official white supremacist defiance of the civil rights movement. González, with State Senator Abraham Kazen of El Paso, stood his ground and succeeded in killing eight out of ten racial segregation bills aimed at circumventing the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.[73] The Mexican American legislator basically told white Texans to abandon their racism.

Anglo Texan segregationists steadfastly refused to surrender their racial privilege and control as they mobilized resistance against integration. With racial tensions already high, the task of desegregating public schools in Texas remained undone. By 1957 only seventy-five school

districts in the state had been desegregated. Nor had segregation in privately owned places of public accommodation and in public facilities been eliminated.[74]

The gap between the status of Mexican Americans and that of the dominant group continued to widen. Despite many legal victories and much hard work, the Mexican American people still suffered economic, educational, and social deprivation. Although Mexican American voters strengthened the Democratic Party, it failed to capitalize on this infusion of activism. Just as it did with African Americans, the Democratic Party defaulted on its promises to Mexican Americans for social reform because it remained beholden to white Southern Dixiecrats. The more than four million Mexican American people were without political representation at all levels of government—they had but two representatives in Congress, Henry B. González of San Antonio and Edward B. Roybal of Los Angeles.[75]

The following summer of 1961 witnessed a full-scale mobilization of the civil rights struggle as the message spread that the time had come for "Freedom Now." Mexican Americans were caught up in the winds of change of that year. Francisco Medrano turned toward championing the civil rights movement. He joined the drive by African Americans to integrate lunch counters in politically conservative Dallas where business elites maintained control of the city's segregated and repressed minorities. In addition to Medrano's civil rights work in Dallas, the Mexican American activist joined the campaigns to challenge segregation of the races in Mississippi and Arkansas. "When UAW leader Walter Reuther said we should help repeal the poll tax, I went into the Deep South," recalled Madrano. "I could understand the struggle of black people because my people [Mexican Americans] were experiencing the same sort of thing." Medrano later participated in the historic 1965 march on Selma, Alabama.[76]

By 1963, as white opposition surged to a fever pitch, the civil rights movement reached a crescendo of activity as demonstrations erupted in more than 800 cities and towns across America. One of these demonstrations took place in Phoenix, Arizona, in July when 5,000 African American and Mexican American marchers angrily protested discrimination against minorities by the city's largest employers. At a civil rights meeting in Torrance, California, Mexican American and African American activists, bound by the common cause of demanding racial and economic justice, confronted angry and abusive racist hecklers from the right-wing John Birch Society and the fringe American Nazi Party that denounced the civil rights movement as a communist plot to undermine America. In this year in Crystal City, Texas, despite intimidation by the Texas Rangers, Mexican Americans mobilized by labor and civil rights activists from San Antonio

elected five of their members to the city council and gained control of city hall for the first time in half a century.[77] The Crystal City revolt was of symbolic importance; it was the starting point of what became known as the Chicano movement. Meanwhile, other Mexican American advocates of social justice were emerging from the crucible of poverty and discrimination and came to the fore in the movement.

Frustrated at the slow pace of change, the more vocal Mexican American activists began to question whether integration was possible within the existing society. Some rediscovered Marxism and veered leftward, while assertive separatism resonated with those who had grown disillusioned with racism's dominance. Still others believed that cooperation and collaboration with African Americans was essential to progress in the struggle for equality. The rebellion in northern New Mexico that would be led by fundamentalist preacher Reies Lopez Tijerina from Laredo, Texas, provided a preview of the impending insurgency.

On February 2, 1963, in northern New Mexico, Lopez Tijerina founded the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants). The Alianza was intent on securing the restoration of individual and communal land grants in New Mexico and the Southwest guaranteed by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Anglos had fraudulently acquired these grants. The other goals of the Alianza were to gain respect and recognition for the Spanish language and culture. A spellbinding orator, Tijerina's voice evoked a sense of mission among thousands of Mexican Americans who seized hope and strength from his call to revolt. Tijerina tried to broaden his appeal beyond the circle where it first won favor by including African Americans and American Indians. In 1958, the interracialist Tijerina had gone to Chicago and met with Elijah Muhammad, the head of the Black Muslim movement. During his ten-day visit, Elijah Muhammad pointed out to the future proponent of Chicano nationalism that the Black Muslims identified racism as part of the basic nature of the white man, who was doomed to extinction, and emphasized Black Power and nationalism as opposed to integration. More important, the Messenger of Allah counseled Tijerina of the need for unity between the two minority groups. While in Chicago, Tijerina befriended Dr. Alton A. Davis, the executive director of the American Emancipation Centennial. At Tijerina's invitation, Dr. Davis served as the guest of honor of the Alianza's founding convention in Albuquerque and was one of its keynote speakers.[78] Tijerina would contribute to the Chicano Power Movement that called on the Mexican American people to lead the struggle for their own liberation.

On August 28, 1963, the American public's attention centered on Dr. King's epochal March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, in which

200,000 people participated, making it the largest demonstration to date in the nation's capital. The demonstrators called for fair hiring practices, a minimum wage increase, and the creation of new jobs through a federal public works program. Mexican Americans in Texas, California, and elsewhere with a vision of an American society free from racial and economic injustice and who were unable to attend the big march in Washington joined locally held "Freedom Marches." In Los Angeles, there were Mexican Americans who supported a Mexican American/African American alliance, for they realized its full potential as a vehicle to attain equality. Those from the Mexican American Political Association, which had earlier sent members to work in the civil rights movement in the Deep South, carried the day for interracialist unity. To the 5,000 demonstrators gathered in front of the Los Angeles City Hall, they proudly proclaimed in a spirit of mutuality and common cause: "On behalf of the Mexican-American community, we extend the hand of friendship and solidarity."[79] The Mexican American people had symbolically allied themselves with African Americans in the struggle for not only racial justice but economic justice as well.

Conclusion

Wartime service and sacrifices, the experience with racism at home and overseas, and rising expectations for equality set the stage for a new era in Mexican American assertiveness in the postwar years. Because of the deterioration of the racial climate, the nation's second largest minority group experienced the stigma of social and economic oppression and political powerlessness and was systematically defined by Anglos as outside of American citizenship. Mexican Americans resisted the various limitations placed upon them.

Mexican American grassroots organizations were made up of working-class people, many who came out of the trade union movement with experience in previous civil rights efforts that included voter registration. However, corporate America declared war on the nation's unions. The decline in working-class power was reflected in the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act that reversed many of the hard-won gains of Mexican Americans and African Americans.[80] These minority workers nonetheless remained politically engaged. Those Mexican Americans who were members of Mine Mill Local 890 made it a bastion of blue-collar militancy. The fifteen-month-long Salt of the Earth strike exposed the nation to the steadfast determination of Mexican Americans to advance their economic interests and the principle of civil rights.

Supporters of full equality for Mexican Americans belonged to the Communist Party or were fellow travelers or sympathizers. Ralph Cuarón interpreted the Mexican Problem in terms of the conflict between capital and labor in accordance with the orthodox position of the Communist Party. He also fought the white chauvinism of the Party. The efforts of Communists gave birth to ANMA, the most militant of all Mexican American organizations of the early postwar years.

ANMA showed the potential for building a struggle against racial and economic injustice based on workers' power, and it also invoked and gave meaning to the traditional fighting spirit of Mexican Americans. ANMA was outspoken about civil rights and human rights, supported peace, and opposed America's wars against popular movements in underdeveloped countries. For this, ANMA earned the ire of the fear-driven Red Scare spreading across the United States.

The federal government mounted a nationwide attack on Communists as well as perceived fellow travelers, especially in the labor movement. The Smith Act, the McCarran Act, and the McCarran-Walter Act were used to intimidate, deport, and denaturalize Mexican American trade unionists. The federal government discredited these radicals, even though they fought back through the courts, almost always unsuccessfully. Lingering fear and uncertainty affected hundreds of other individuals who under great pressure abandoned leftist causes.

The Red Scare crackdown on dissenters led to a deportation frenzy, while efforts to disrupt the organizing of Mexican Americans continued. Functioning under Operation Wetback and Operation Terror, U.S. immigration, border, and customs agencies conducted search and seizure campaigns and committed innumerable human rights and civil rights violations.

In such a repressive climate, the Mexican American civil rights movement that emerged had a very different leadership with different methods. The anticommunist Community Service Organization encouraged Mexican Americans to vote and to seize community power, in addition to developing multiple issues for grassroots action out of local concerns. In the context of anticommunism's redefinition of the notions of Americanism, American loyalty, and American citizenship, they advanced civil rights by replacing direct action through mass mobilization with litigation and cooperation.[81] Some Mexican Americans who sought equality wrestled with problems of racial classification or expressed an urge to whiteness. For these individuals, the "Caucasian calculation"—the decision to fight for white rights for some, rather than equal rights for all—reflected a pragmatic, albeit problematic, political strategy. In any case, their claim to whiteness did not protect them from the vicissitudes of racism.

As Mexican Americans turned to the courts for redress, civil rights decisions in Texas, California, and Arizona against segregated schools foreshadowed the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The rights of Mexican Americans to jury selection and to vote were no less hard-won. The *Hernandez* case demonstrates the nature of racism in Texas justice. This decision attracted the attention of many civil rights groups, including the NAACP. Legal rights did not automatically produce equality for Mexican Americans because serious social and economic problems remained unsolved.

The larger civil rights movement with its dual goal of attaining racial and economic uplift unquestionably provided the energy, inspiration, and model for the Mexican American struggle for equality, as it did for every other effort at social reform that emerged in the United States. Many Mexican Americans were strongly supportive of African American rights, not as a moral issue as some historians contend but because identification with the civil rights movement meant taking direct action against racial and economic inequality.[82]

As the civil rights movement gained momentum, Mexican Americans such as Francisco Medrano advanced the cause of equality in areas broader than the workplace. They worked in the South for the civil rights of African Americans before joining the Chicano movement. The extent to which Mexican Americans supported the African American cause continued to increase in the 1960s and beyond.[83] This solidarity challenges the commonly held assumptions about American society in the early postwar years, for it shows that along with their own advances toward greater equality Mexican Americans and African Americans at times pushed for civil rights together. For both minority groups the pressing issues remained primarily economic because postwar deindustrialization continued to move minorities without job skills to the margins of the urban economy.

Mexican Americans of the 1960s were inspired by the example of their predecessors of the late 1940s and 1950s as protagonists of social change. Indeed, the far-reaching rights revolution launched by Mexican Americans was built upon the foundation established by the class-conscious activists of the early postwar years and their brave stand for meaningful social and economic change.

Notes

1. Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 163; Enrique R.

Buelna, "The Mexican Question: Mexican Americans in the Communist Party, 1940–1957," Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society, University of California, Irvine, 1999, http://repositories.cdlib.org/crlgs/WP14, 11. The author would like to thank Nelson Lichtenstein, Eileen Boris, and Douglas H. Daniels for their valuable input on an earlier version of this essay.

2. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 163–164.
3. Ibid. The Los Angeles CRC provided free legal assistance, had a Bail Fund Committee, and an outreach program in its defense against police brutality, job discrimination, and deportation. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 21–22. In 1947 Party member Ralph Cuarón opened an office of the CRC near downtown Los Angeles where he referred cases to the CRC's main office.
4. Kenneth C. Burt, "Latinos and Labor in Los Angeles: Postwar Dreams and Cold War Fears, 1948–1952," *Labor's Heritage* 8. 1 (Summer 1996): 6–8.
5. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 164; Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 9.
6. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 159.
7. Ibid., 162–164.
8. MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough*, 29–32; Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1–4; Ruth Needleman, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel: The Struggle for Democratic Unionism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 142.
9. Zaragosa Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment: The Early Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights, 1945–1963," *New Mexico Historical Review* 76 (October 2001): 385; Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States Since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 152. Annual incomes by 1960 for Mexican Americans averaged less than $3,000. The postwar surge of industrialization in the Southwest took place in construction and service industries and in the creation of high technical industries of aviation, electronics, and the atomic and space-related sectors. Mexican Americans were locked out of the new factory jobs because they lacked education and skills and because employers and unions blocked their entrance into training programs. Paul Bullock, "Employment Problems of the Mexican American," *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society* 3. 3 (May 1964): 38.
10. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 167; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 386; Paul Bullock and Robert Singleton, "What to Do With a Drop Out," *The New Republic* 147 (October 1962): 17–18.
11. Zaragosa Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*: *Mexican American Workers in 20th Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 285–286.
12. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 167; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 286–287; Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the*

Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920–1965 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 192, 210–211. Up to 1950, the National Association of Real Estate Boards Code of Ethics required realtors to keep minorities out of new neighborhoods. Funding to private developers solidified racial lines by destroying poor or working-class communities in highly desired areas.

13. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 159–160, 167.
14. American Council of Spanish-Speaking People, "Pistol Happy Texas Sheriff Gets Eighth Notch," *Civil Liberties Newsletter of the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People*, 4 (March 17, 1952), 3, Julian Zamora Papers, Special Collections, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; American Council of Spanish-Speaking People, "Taylor Cop Kills Latin Vets," *Civil Liberties Newsletter of the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People*, 6 (July 14, 1952), 1, Julian Zamora Papers, Special Collections, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.
15. Carl Abbott, "Plural Society in Colorado: Ethnic Relations in the Twentieth Century," *Phylon* 39. 3 (1978): 251; Rudolph "Corky" Gonzales, Los Voluntarios, et al., Denver, Colorado, to Governor John Love, Denver, Colorado, April 15, 1964, Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 27.6, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas.
16. For example, Julius Burns was beaten unconscious and collapsed over his dead brother's body. Seventeen-year-old Augustine Salcido was shot through the head by a Los Angeles police officer while thirteen-year-old Eugene Montenegro, an honor student, was fatally shot in the back by a Los Angeles County deputy sheriff. Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 260–261; Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 139. In April, 1962, Los Angeles police raided the local Nation of Islam mosque, killing Ronald Stokes and wounding six other unarmed Black Muslims. Tension had been growing between the Los Angeles police and the sect since the founding of the Los Angeles mosque in 1957. See Frederick Knight, "Justifiable Homicide, Police Brutality, or Governmental Repression?: The 1962 Los Angeles Police Shooting of Seven Members of the Nation of Islam," *Journal of Negro History* 79. 2 (1994): 182–196.
17. Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, Chicago, Illinois, Senator Dennis Chavez Papers, Washington, DC, January 8, 1946, Papers, MSS 374 BC, Box 79, Folder 1, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research Collection, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Kevin M. Schultz, "The FEPC and the Legacy of the Labor-Based Civil Rights Movement of the 1940s," *Labor History* 49. 1 (February 2008), 79.
18. Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 114–118; Philip Jenkins, *The Cold War at Home: The Red Scare in Pennsylvania, 1945–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 99.
19. The labor legislation in Texas was among the most restrictive in the nation. Organized labor began to develop a campaign of political education and

mobilize to create a more favorable environment for labor. Michael K. Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 276. See also Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 258–260; R. L. Chambers, "The New Mexico Pattern," *Common Ground* 9. 4 (Summer 1949): 21; *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1946; *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 30, 1946.

20. Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelters Workers, "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth…" 2, Dennis Chaves Papers, MSS 703BC, Box 30, Folder 35, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research Collection, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Barber, *On Strike and On Film: Mexican American Families and Blacklisted Filmmakers in Cold War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 80–81. See also Horace Huntley, "The Red Scare and Black Workers in Alabama: The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelters Workers, 1945–1953," in *Labor Divided: Race and Ethnicity in U.S. Labor Struggles, 1835–1960*, ed. Robert Asher and Charles Stephenson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 129–145.
21. Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 84–86; Larry R. Salomon, "It's Our Union, Too: Mexican American Women Rescue the 'Salt of the Earth' Strike," in *Roots of Justice: Stories of Organizing in Communities of Color*, ed. Larry R. Salomon (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 31–40.
22. Author's personal conversation with longtime labor activist Bert Corona in Santa Barbara, California, October 1995. For a history of the making of the film *Salt of the Earth*, see James J. Lorence, *The Suppression of Salt of the Earth: How Hollywood, Big Labor, and Politicians Blacklisted a Movie in Cold War America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999).
23. Oral History Interview with Francisco Medrano, 1996, by José Angel Gutierrez, CMAS 37, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, 14. Texas ranked sixth in order of industrialization but thirty-eighth in order of unionization. Just 12 percent of the Texas workforce was organized. Along with right-to-work laws, Texas possessed some of the most restrictive labor legislation in the nation. Like New Mexico and Arizona, Texas was a major growth area for the ultra–right wing John Birch Society, an antilabor and anti–civil rights organization. Ibid., 77.
24. Ibid., 22, 27.
25. Ibid., 61–63; Oral History Interview with John Castillo, 1998, by José Angel Gutierrez, CMAS 50, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, 17; Oral History Interview with Francisco Medrano, 1996, by José Angel Gutierrez, CMAS 37, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, 61–63.
26. George N. Green, "Anti-Labor Politics in Texas, 1941–1957," in *American Labor in the Southwest: The First One Hundred Years*, ed. James C. Foster

(Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), 221; Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 418. In Texas, the General Investigative Committee would help to fuel the Red Scare and emboldened segregationists. This agency frequently exchanged information about civil rights activists with the FBI. See Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948–1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2004).

27. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 21–22.
28. Ibid., 22.
29. Ibid., 24.
30. Mexican American Communists had participated in ANMA's first convention held in the city in October 1950. Ralph Cuarón was appointed Youth Director of ANMA's National Executive Board. Ibid., 24.
31. Ibid., 22; Burt, "Latino Empowerment in Los Angeles," 16; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 275–276; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 399.
32. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 22–23; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 276–277.
33. Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 276–277; Baker, *On Strike and On Film*, 103.
34. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 24; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 276–277; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 400.
35. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 24; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 276–277; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 400.
36. Organizations Designated Under Executive Order No. 10450. Compiled from Memoranda of the Attorney General. Consolidated List—November 1, 1955. Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 105.8, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas; Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 277; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 400–401; Baker, *On Strike and On Film*, 106; Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 24.
37. Mario T. Garcia, *Memories of Chicano History: The Life and Narrative of Bert Corona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 166.
38. Burt, "Latino Empowerment in Los Angeles," 8; Louis F. Weschler and John F. Gallagher, "Viva Kennedy," in *Cases in American National Government and Politics*, ed. Rocco J. Tresolini and Richard T. Frost (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 53; Katherine Underwood, "Pioneering Minority Representation: Edward Roybal and the Los Angeles City Council, 1949–1962," *Pacific Historical Review* 66. 3 (August 1997): 409; Raphael J. Soneishien, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 26, 30; Sanford D. Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky: His Life and Legacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 227–228.
39. Underwood, "Pioneering Minority Representation: Edward Roybal and the Los Angeles City Council, 1949–1962," 410.

40. Burt, "Latino Empowerment in Los Angeles," 13–15; Margaret Rose, "Gender and Civic Activism in Mexican American Barrios in California: The Community Service Organization, 1947–1962," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 186; Charles Payne, "Men Led, but Women Organized: Movement Participation of Women in the Mississippi Delta," in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941–1965*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Company, 1990), 1–2; Underwood, "Pioneering Minority Representation," 407.
41. Underwood, "Pioneering Minority Representation," 402, 410, 413; Edward Ross Roybal, "Justification for Vote Against the Communist Registration Ordinance," 3, Box 8, Edward Ross Roybal Papers, Department of Special Collections/UCLA Library.
42. Carlos K. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of Southern History* 72 (August 2006): 590. By the early 1960s there were thirty-four CSO chapters in California with 10,000 dues-paying members. Underwood, "Pioneering Minority Representation," 406.
43. Buelna, "The Mexican Question," 26.
44. Patricia Morgan, *Shame of a Nation* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, 1954), 39–48; Louise Pettibone Smith, *Torch of Liberty: Twenty-five Years in the Life of the Foreign Born in the U.S.A.* (New York: Dwight-King Publishers, 1959), 418–419; David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 215, 229.
45. Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*, 271; Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 392.
46. Carlos Larralde, "Roberto Galván: A Latino Leader of the 1940s," *The Journal of San Diego History* 50. 1–2 (2004): 154.
47. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 588; *Galvan v. Press*, Officer in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 10 Cir., 201 F.2d 302 (1954). Robert Galván joined the Party in 1944 but he ended his alliance with the Communists in 1947 after deciding that he no longer wanted to belong to the Party.
48. Although the Supreme Court upheld the Smith Act in 1951 in *Dennis v. United States*, the court later limited the operation of the act in *Yates v. United States* (1957). As a result, government prosecutors began abandoning its use in favor of administrative actions through the Subversive Activities Control Board, thereby avoiding the evidentiary and civil liberties problems posed by *Yates v. United States*. Yet such administrative actions did not last, as the government dropped the last case in 1964.
49. Gerald Horne, *Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 320; Susan J.

Siggelakis, "Advocacy on Trial," *The American Journal of Legal History* 36. 4 (October 1992): 502, 506; *Bary v. United States*, 10 Cir., 248 F.2d 201; *Bary v. United States*, 10 Cir., 292 F.2d 53 (1961).

50. Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 393; Ira Gollobin, *Winds of Change: An Immigrant Lawyer's Perspective of Fifty Years* (New York: Center for Immigration Rights, Inc., 1987), 9.
51. Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Right*s, 146–147.
52. Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 388–390.
53. Ibid., 390–391.
54. Edward F. Hayes, "Operation Wetback—Impact on the Border States," *Employment Security Review* (March 1955): 16–18; Morgan, *Shame of a Nation*, 35; Smith, *Torch of Liberty*, 423.
55. Ralph Guzmán, *Roots Without Rights: A Study of the Loss of United States Citizenship by Native Born Americans of Mexican Ancestry* (Los Angeles: American Civil Liberties Union, Los Angeles Chapter, 1957), 47–66. See also "A Collection of Statements Regarding Harassment and Targeting of Individuals of Mexican Descent by Immigration Department Agents," Box 17, Edward Ross Roybal Papers, Department of Special Collections/ UCLA Library.
56. Vargas, "In the Years of Darkness and Torment," 391.
57. Smith, *Torch of Liberty,* 421–422; Horne, *Communist Front?,* 329; Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 181; Ralph Guzmán, "Politics of the Mexican-American Community," in *California Politics and Policies*, ed. Eugene P. Dvorin and Arthur J. Misner (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1966), 365; Henry A. J. Ramos, *The American GI Forum: In Pursuit of the Dream, 1948–1983* (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1998), 72. A symbol of the new attitude toward Mexican immigration at this time was the construction of a barbed wire fence along the border.
58. Claire Sheridan, "'Another White Race': Mexican Americans and the Paradox of Whiteness in Jury Selection," *Law and History Review* 21. 1 (Spring 2003): 9. See also Thomas A. Guglielmo, "Fighting for Caucasian Rights: Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and the Transnational Struggle for Civil Rights in World War II Texas," *The Journal of American History* 92. 4 (March 2006).
59. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 164–166; "The American G.I. Forum . . . wishes to congratulate your department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the fine work you have done in protecting our country against subversive elements. We also want to congratulate you for stopping the spread of communism." Dr. Hector R. García, Corpus Christi, Texas, to Herbert Brownell, U.S. Attorney General, Washington, DC, August 29, 1957, Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 105.8, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas. See also the letter from the American G.I. Forum, San Marcos, Texas, to Robert F. Kennedy, U.S. Attorney General, Washington, DC, October 4, 1963, Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 224.8, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi.

60. George P. Ruiz, Secretary, Southwest Chapter American G.I. Forum to Dr. Hector R. Garcia, Corpus Christi, Texas, September 24, 1963, Dr. Hector R. Garcia Collection, 224.8, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi; "Communist Activities in San Antonio are Revealed," *San Antonio Express*, December 23, 1963, 1, 12-A; Felton West, "FBI Spy Set-up Among Reds in Texas Revealed," *The Houston Post*, September 24, 1963, 1, 9.
61. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 592; Robert G. Newey and David B. Tyack, "Victims Without 'Crimes': Some Historical Perspectives on Black Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 40. 3 (Summer 1971): 199.
62. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 156–157; Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 212; James A. Ferg-Cadima, *Black, White and Brown: Latino School Desegregation Efforts in the Pre- and Post-Brown v. Board of Education* (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, May 2004), 12–13.
63. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 587–588; Sheridan, "Another White Race," 9; Ferg-Cadima, *Black, White and Brown*, 35. In the 1950 *Gonzalez v. Sheely* case, Mexican Americans sued the board of trustees of the Tolleson Elementary School District of Maricopa County in federal court. The federal judge found that the segregation of Mexican American school children violated the plaintiff's due process and equal protection rights under the 14th Amendment. See *Gonzalez v. Sheely*, 96 F. Supp. 1004 (D. Ariz. 1951).
64. *Westminster School Dist. of Orange County et al. v. Mendez et al.* 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947); *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* (No. 388 Civil, unreported: W. D. Texas 1948); Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 589–590.
65. Though the Alianza and the NAACP intentionally filed separate suits on the same day, the court consolidated both. The outcome of these cases was positive for both the NAACP and Alianza. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 601; *Romero, et al. v. Weakley, et al.* (CA 9) (131 F. Supp. 818).
66. *Galvan v. Press*, Officer in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 10 Cir., 201 F.2d 302 (1954); Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 590; Sheridan, "Another White Race," 27–28; Ariela J. Gross, "Mexican Americans and the Politics of Whiteness," *Law and History Review* 21. 1 (Spring 2003): 15; Jake Rodriguez, Texas, to Senator Dennis Chavez, Washington, DC, July 26, 1957, Jacob Rodriguez File, General Correspondence, 1953–1959, Box 1, Folder 1, LULAC Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

67. Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 301.
68. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 161; The Trust's executive director Roger Baldwin concluded, "It became apparent that the major efforts in this field were localized…" Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 591.
69. MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*, 160; Permanent Committee on Latin American Affairs, Texas AFL-CIO, March 1964, *An Affair of Conscience: A Report and Some Recommendations to the Texas AFL-CIO of the Annual Convention*, Brownsville, Texas, August 17–20, 1964.
70. "Midland, Texas Theatre Discrimination," 1, Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 183.22, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas; "Greyhound Bus Discrimination," 1–3; Dr. Hector R. García Collection, 181.52, Special Collections Library, University of Texas at Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas.
71. Robert A. Goldberg, "Racial Change on the Southern Periphery: The Case of San Antonio, Texas, 1960–1965," *The Journal of Southern History* 49. 3 (August 1983): 362; Neil Foley, "Partly Colored or Other: Mexican Americans and Their Problems with the Color Line," in *Beyond Black and White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the U.S. South and Southwest*, ed. Stephanie Cole, Alison M. Parker, and Laura F. Edwards (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 137.
72. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 600.
73. Ronnie Dugger, "The Segregation Filibuster of 1957," *The Texas Observer*, December 27, 1974; *Time Magazine*, May 13, 1957. In 1958, González unsuccessfully ran for governor of Texas; although an unlikely candidate, he wanted to offer an alternative to the race between Texas Governor Daniel and former Governor W. Lee O'Daniel. González was reelected to the Texas State legislature and served until 1961. In 1963, as a U.S. Representative, González once again received substantial publicity when he voted against additional appropriations for the House Committee on Un-American Activities.
74. Ricardo Romo, "George I. Sánchez and the Civil Rights Movement: 1940–1960," *La Raza Law Journal* 1 (Fall 1986): 342–344; Ramos, *The American GI Forum*, 8, 60–61, 74, 82–83; Don E. Carleton, *Red Scare! Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism and Their Legacy in Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985), 276, 284; Michael J. Klarman, "How [*Brown*] Changed Race Relations: The Backlash Thesis," *The Journal of American History* 81. 1 (June 1994): 84, 90, 97, 102, 117.
75. As a newly elected U.S. congressman from Texas, González worked for the passage of a number of legislative proposals benefiting both African Americans and Mexican Americans that included the 1964 Equal Opportunities Act, the Housing Act, and the Civil Rights Act.

76. Oral History Interview with Francisco Medrano, CMAS 37, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, 63–67. In 1966, Medrano would participate in the march of Mexican American farm workers from the Río Grande Valley to Austin, the so-called "Minimum Wage March" that contributed to the passage of the states first minimum wage law.
77. Jack Languth, "March in Phoenix is Met by Mayor," *The New York Times*, July 26, 1963, A1; "Rights Parley Breakup Blamed on Hate Groups," *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1963, 20.
78. University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research Collection, Reies Lopez Tijerina Papers, MSS 654BC, FBI Files, "RE: Nation of Islam," Box 2, Folder 13, 7–8; University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research Collection, Reies Lopez Tijerina Papers, MSS 654BC, Reies Lopez Tijerina to Dr. Alton A. Davis, September 7, 1963, Box 41, Folder 40; University of New Mexico, Center for Southwest Research Collection, Reies Lopez Tijerina Papers, MSS 654BC, FBI District Office, San Diego, California, to Director, FBI, Washington, DC, January 27, 1964, Box 41, Folder 40; Frances Swadesh, "The Alianza Movement of New Mexico: The Interplay of Social Change and Public Commentary," in *Minorities and Politics*, ed. Henry Jack Tobias and Charles E. Woodhouse (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 53–84; Abbott, "Plural Society in Colorado," 259. The interracialist Tijerina would later meet with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who chose him to coordinate the New Mexico section of the Poor Peoples' March and to lead the March's Southwest contingent.
79. On June 14, 1964, the MAPA at its state convention in Fresno passed resolutions condemning the anti-Rumford Housing Act initiative and pledging "cooperation with Negroes in areas of common concern." Ruben Salazar, "Latin-Negro Unity Move Launched July 5, 1964," in *Ruben Salazar: Border Correspondent: Selected Writings, 1955–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 144–146. While there was growing sentiment on the part of progressive Mexican Americans to join the drive by African Americans for civil rights, a few conservative leaders expressed concern over the relation of Mexican Americans to the African American cause. One reason was economic, since employers were firing Mexican American workers from their jobs to make room for African Americans, out of their fear of retaliation from African Americans if they did not hire them. Ruben Salazar, "Negro Drive Worries Mexican-Americans," *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 1963, G10; *Los Angeles Times,* August 17, 1963*;* Gladwin Hill, "Mexican-Americans Now Back Negro Campaign in Los Angeles," *The New York Times*, August 30, 1963, 11.
80. Paul Grosser, "Patterns of Opposition to Organized Labor in the Southwest," in *Urbanization in the Southwest, A Symposium*, ed. Clyde J. Wingfield (The University of Texas at El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968), 77–78.
81. Jenkins, *Cold War at Home*, 209.
82. MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough*, 169.

83. Blanton, "George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement," 603. For example, Mexican American organizational affiliates of the Black Workers Congress of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers participated in its founding convention that was seeking to expand the movement into the larger American cities. The ranks of left-wing Mexican Americans expanded, as they were also part of the movement to create a new multiracial Communist Party of the United States. Indeed, components within the Chicano movement were moving toward an explicitly Marxist ideological framework.

Notes on Contributors

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Zaragosa Vargas is Professor of History at the University of California-Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917–1933* (1993, 1999); *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth Century America* (2005); and the forthcoming *History of Mexican Americans in the United States*. He is currently writing a history of the early Mexican American civil rights movement.

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