

CONTENTS
Vol. 15, No. 1 (2002)

ARTICLES

- Erwin Marquit*, The Demobilization Movement of
January 1946 5
- Thandeka K. Chapman*, Garveyism and Multicultural
Education: Notions of Hybridity and Nonsynchrony in
the 1920s Movement 41
- Rachel Peterson*, Richard Wright's "Red Ladder":
Marxism, Race, and Anticolonialism 71
- Pradip Baksi*, A Short Note on *MEGA* IV/32:
Catalog of the Partially Reconstructed Personal
Libraries of Marx and Engels 105
- BOOKS AND IDEAS* by Herbert Aptheker 111

BOOK REVIEWS

- George Fishman, *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: An
Artist's Journey, 1898–1939*, by Paul Robeson Jr. 115
- Victor N. Paananen, *Progressive Heritage: The Evolution
of a Politically Radical Literary Tradition in Canada*,
by James Doyle 120
- ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES (In English and French) 126

in memoriam

Herbert Aptheker
1915–2003

NST editorial board 1987–2003

*“a brilliant intellectual who
devoted his life’s work to
the cause of antiracism and
human liberation”*

—Manning Marable

The Demobilization Movement of January 1946

Erwin Marquit

During the first two weeks of January 1946, four months after the surrender of Japan ended World War II, enlisted personnel and officers in the U.S. Army and other military services took part in massive demonstrations and protests at bases throughout the world demanding to be sent home. The specific focus of the protests was for an end to the abrupt slowdown in ongoing demobilization. The largest demonstrations took place in the Philippines, Hawaii, France, Germany, and Guam, with others, large and small, taking place in Japan, Korea, India, Burma, Austria, and Great Britain, and on the U.S. mainland.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 had brought the United States into World War II in an alliance led by the Big Three—United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union (France had already fallen under German occupation). Germany surrendered unconditionally in April 1945, and at the announcement in August of the imminent Japanese surrender, the U.S. armed forces numbered some twelve million GIs.¹ This second largest massing of military force in world history was surpassed only by the Soviet Army, which had successfully turned back the German assault by June 1944, when the Normandy “second front” was opened by the United States, Britain, and other allies. The vast majority of U.S. military service personnel were draftees, and they were eager to return to civilian life at the end of the fighting, as

were most other women and men who had enlisted voluntarily.

The right-wing Hearst press (then the largest newspaper chain in the country) and the House Committee on Un-American Activities charged that the Communist Party was behind the allegedly “mutinous” demobilization demonstrations. The official military history (Sparrow 1951) and academic analyses (Sharp 1976; Lee 1966) suggest that the demonstrations were actually the result of spontaneous GI dissatisfaction with the demobilization slowdown, although the Communist Party did exploit the dissatisfaction and support the demonstrations, as well as the “Bring the Boys Home” movement that preceded them.

In his paper entitled “The Army ‘Mutiny’ of 1946,” R. Alton Lee, a historian sympathetic to U.S. Cold War goals, writes that if the Articles of War “had been interpreted strictly, thousands of American soldiers would have been guilty of ‘mutiny’ in January 1946 when they rioted and demonstrated in a desperate attempt to accelerate demobilization.” Lee explains that these events occurred “at a crucial point in the development of the Cold War” because “the administration, forced to consider the new role of the United States as a world leader, failed to develop a coherent demobilization policy adequate to meet military obligations” (1966, 555).

From October through December 1945, a campaign called by its initiators “Bring the Boys Home by Christmas” developed within the continental United States as well on an increasing scale among GIs abroad. With this background, the spontaneous GI outburst in January 1946 was triggered primarily by the sudden disclosure of the Truman administration’s previously unannounced decision to reverse its public commitment to release by 20 March 1946 all troops with two years of service. Despite the largely spontaneous character of the demonstrations, it is important to complete the historical record by showing how the Communists and those allied with them helped guide this GI outburst into a powerful, well-organized movement that was successful in accelerating the demobilization process.

This movement revealed potential resistance to the overtly imperialist ambitions latent in the new U.S. role in the postwar

world. Although the GI movement focused on very concrete demands for speedy demobilization, it should be remembered that one of its demands was far broader: that the U.S. government should “institute a clear foreign policy that will not make a large army necessary.” It is not too much to say that had this demand met with the same success as the more immediate ones, it would have changed the history of the next half century.

Drawing on my own experiences as a Communist GI participating in the demonstrations in Hawaii in January 1946, I am able to recount some aspects of these demonstrations as they unfolded. From other sources, I am able to reconstruct further aspects of the events. Among the other sources are interviews in June 2000 with two veterans who played leading roles in the demonstrations. (One, still gainfully occupied at the time of the interview despite his 90 years, asked not to be identified by name, so I shall refer to him as John Davids.) A member of the Communist Party when he entered the army, John Davids was stationed in Manila when the demonstrations erupted there. The other veteran, Herbert Freeman, was at the time of the demonstrations a corporal stationed at Hickam Air Force Base (Hickam Field), bordering on Pearl Harbor. Freeman had been at that time ideologically close to the Communist Party, and became a member after his return to the United States.

The Honolulu Labor Canteen was established in mid-1945 on the initiative of the local labor movement. Since several of the GI leaders of the protest movement during the ten days of the protests had been active in the formation and activities of the Labor Canteen, the Communists and those allied with them met there to plan their roles.

How this came about is the starting point of this history and personal memoir.

The Honolulu Labor Canteen

The city of Honolulu and the main military bases in Hawaii, including the naval base at Pearl Harbor, are on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. In 1945, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), a Left-led CIO union based on the West Coast

of the United States, was engaged in a major organizing drive in the Hawaiian Islands. Its principal focus was the sugar plantation workers, most of whom were of Asian origin, primarily Japanese. The ILWU was also organizing a wide range of other branches of the Hawaiian economy. It was the most dynamic trade-union force in the islands and in 1946 led a successful strike of the plantation workers for union recognition. Another Left-led CIO union, the National Maritime Union (NMU), was also active in Hawaii.

Jack W. Hall, regional director of the ILWU in Hawaii and a Communist—indicted in the 1950s under the anti-Communist Smith Act—worked closely with Norval Welch, the NMU port agent, also a Communist. Left activists would meet every Sunday in Welch’s office to discuss political developments (Freeman 2000). During one of these sessions early in 1945, the idea arose to establish a nonracist service canteen, because the USO and the Red Cross would not allow Asians or African Americans into their canteens.

Hall and Welch followed up on this idea. The *Honolulu Advertiser* (HA) reported on 27 February 1945:

To remedy Honolulu’s present lack of a community-sponsored canteen, AFL, CIO and independent unions yesterday announced their plans for Labor’s Canteen to open next month in the Capitol Market Building. With the combined backing of industry and organized labor, the canteen will be open to servicemen, war workers, merchant seaman and local citizens.

The report stated that space for the canteen was donated by the owner of the building and owners of adjoining property. According to the newspaper, the labor group further reported the endorsement of the project by Admiral William Furlong, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard commandant, and that with “big business” pledged to cooperate, the canteen would emphasize the theme of labor-management harmony. The emphasis on labor-management harmony reflected the fact that the war was still in progress in Europe as well as Asia. The projected opening date proved to be overly optimistic. Labor-management harmony, never really fully achieved, vanished as the war came to an end that year.

A Labor Canteen committee was formed and a public appeal for funds was launched for the renovation of the site in the Capitol Market Building. Elizabeth Bristow, secretary of the ILWU regional office, and Jack Hall served as temporary cochairs of the canteen organizing committee. The *Honolulu Advertiser* reported that “local businesses contributed \$2,000 worth of lumber, upholstery, fabrics, bookcases, chairs, couches and other furnishings” (5 May 1945). The Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu organized a subscription campaign to raise \$10,000 for the Canteen (*HA*, 12 May 1945). Contributions came in from labor unions and the public. Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr., Commanding General U.S. Army Forces, Central Pacific, presented a \$200 contribution to the Labor Canteen from a fund generated in 1944 from service personnel (*HA*, 1 April 1945).

Eugenia Paprin, who had resigned as a hostess at the Red Cross canteen in 1945 to protest its refusal to serve nonwhite service personnel, was named Canteen director. She was assisted by Corporal Herbert Freeman, then assigned to the army’s Information and Education Service at Hickam Field (Freeman 2000).

The local press reported general enthusiasm for the concept among both service people and civilians. A report in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 4 April 1945, stated, “a number of Seabees, many months removed from their civilian occupations, have stated they look forward to making friends among the working people here and insist the Canteen will prove its value to them by providing contacts with local people working at the same kind of jobs they used to hold.” In fact, one of the ideas behind the Canteen was that it would attract service people with labor background, who could be involved in labor education programs that would be offered by the Canteen for people in and out of the service.

As the end of the war in Asia became evident, the Canteen organizers announced that the Canteen would become a peacetime community project (*HA*, 12 August 1945). On 14 August, the Japanese announced that they would surrender. A few days before the Canteen’s opening on 19 August, a Canteen constitution was adopted and officers were elected: Jack Hall, chairman; Marshall L. McEuen of the Typographical Union, vice-chair, Shirley

Hayoshi, treasurer; and Elizabeth Bristow, secretary. General Richardson accepted the honorary chairmanship.

On 18 August the *Honolulu Advertiser* greeted the Canteen in an editorial:

When the ILWU-CIO and first the stevedoring industry, then the sugar industry got together a short time ago and voluntarily signed agreements benefitting thousands of workers, labor relations history was made in Hawaii. Now, with the armed forces and the community as new partners, organized [labor] and local businesses have gone a step further. The result is Labor's Canteen.

The editorial drew attention to the goal of the Canteen by citing the preamble to the Canteen's constitution:

Recognizing the need to promote harmonious relations and better understanding among all racial, religious, economic and political groups and wishing to supplement the facilities now provided by existing organizations, we, members of Labor, Business, the Armed Forces and the Community in Hawaii, acting upon the initiative of Labor and friends of Labor, have formed the Labor Canteen.

The opening of the Canteen on Sunday, 19 August 1945, was a gala affair—page one news in Monday's newspapers. The event was attended by General Richardson as honorary chair; Rear Admiral Edward W. Hanson, the new commandant of Pearl Harbor; representatives of what was still the territorial government of Hawaii; and token representation by business groups. Also present were progressives from community organizations and a large turnout of labor and service people. The president of the ILWU, Harry Bridges, cabled greetings: "Action of CIO and AFL unions in Honolulu in opening Labor Canteen carries our hopes for great success. You are on beam when you build solidarity between our brothers in armed services and on home front. We are confident you will do labor movement proud. Best wishes" (*HA*, 20 August 1945). Freeman told me that the 475th Infantry Chorus, an all-Black sixty-voice choir led by famed Leonard

De Paur, sang songs from the USSR, Britain, the United States, and French partisans, with an emphasis on antifascist themes. Other entertainment was provided by Hawaiian music and dance groups, and solos by leading concert artists. The program also included recordings of “The Internationale” and of Paul Robeson singing “The Four Rivers” (Freeman 2000).

Within the next few months, the Labor Canteen became a center of labor education as service people with ties to the labor movement were increasingly drawn to what was becoming the principal congregating place for leftists in and out of the service. It set up a Labor School that was open to the public, but primarily directed to the newly organized members of the ILWU, among whom were the plantation workers, as well as GIs. Many of the classes were taught by GIs with labor backgrounds, including Sergeant (T/4) David Livingston, who was vice president before the war, and president after the war, of District 65 of the Wholesale and Warehouse Workers of America CIO, and Warrant Officer (jg) Ewart Guinier, who later was secretary-treasurer of the United Public Workers Union, which was expelled from the CIO in 1947 for allegedly being Communist-led. While in Hawaii, Guinier married Canteen director Eugenia Paprin.²

On 4 January 1946, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reported that “Dave Livingston, president of the Labor School, congratulated the 150 students on their successful completion of the labor courses.” The report stated that the next semester, which was to begin on 14 January, would offer evening courses in “labor economics, current events, how a trade union works, history of the Soviet Union, trade union publicity, economic history of Hawaii, current labor problems, public speaking, and history of the Negro people.”

The demobilization slowdown

In August 1945, after Japan had announced its intention to surrender, the House of Representatives held hearings on demobilization. At these hearings, the U.S. Army said that it had 8,050,000 service personnel and it would reduce that number to 2,500,000 by 1 July 1946 (U.S. House 1945, 21). The U.S. Navy

announced that its membership totaled over 3,300,000, which it would reduce to 550,000 by 1 September 1946 (U.S. House 1945, 60–62). The Marine Corps and Coast Guard had a strength of about 600,000 and they would reduce this to about 145,000 (U.S. House 1945, 89–91; Marshall et al. 1947, 712). Immediate concern over these figures arose because they meant that the army would be almost fifteen times larger than in 1939, the navy more than four times in size, the Marine Corps about five times, and the Coast Guard about three times in size.

By September, conflicting estimates were being issued by various levels of the military and the president, not only about the number of troops that would be demobilized, but also about the demobilization schedule. The various services announced demobilization schedules that were based on point systems, various numbers of points being assigned for length of service, time overseas, time in combat, combat decorations, and number of dependents. A major source of army GI complaint was the fact that the accumulation of points toward discharge ceased on 2 September, the day of formal capitulation by Japan.

A partial demobilization had already begun with the end of the war in Europe. Letters and messages of protests from civilians at home and troops overseas immediately began to descend on members of the Congress, the executive, and newspapers in the following months as the point allocations and demobilization schedules were issued, revised, and not followed through. With the end of the war against Japan, these protests grew rapidly and the letters took on an increasingly bitter tone. One group of GIs in Okinawa wired the president that they would like a presidential pardon (Sharp 1976, 209).

Without any public announcement, however, a factor far more important than bureaucratic fumbling had come into play. Relations among the Allies were becoming strained. In smashing the German Army, the Soviet Army had occupied Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, which had allied themselves with Germany and Italy. With capitalist and landlord classes so deeply associated with the fascist enemy, the Soviets could justify their turning to the prosocialist forces in these countries for the establishment of civil

administrations, as they did also in those parts of Germany and Austria that had been occupied by Soviet troops. In Albania, the Communist-led guerrilla movement had already forced a German withdrawal in November 1944. In Yugoslavia, the Communist-led guerrilla movements had liberated most of the country even before the Soviet troops had arrived. In Czechoslovakia and Greece, the Communists led the only significant underground resistance movements during the Nazi occupation. In France and later in Italy, the Communist-led partisans were the most active in the struggle against the wartime fascist regimes. In Poland, the Soviets turned to the Polish Committee of National Liberation, which had been formed by an alliance of Communists and social democrats who had taken refuge in the Soviet Union during the Nazi occupation, to reestablish civilian government over the protests of the anti-Semitic, anti-Communist, semifascist government-in-exile based in Great Britain.

The divisions that would define postwar Europe for the next fifty years were emerging. With Britain and France weakened militarily by the war, the United States took on the task of providing the principal military support for the West as the capitalist versus socialist camps began to form. In Italy, the U.S. Army was maneuvering to disarm the antifascist guerrillas who had deposed Mussolini.

The Cold War, although not openly declared until Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in March 1946, was already in the making in Asia as well as Europe. Immediately upon the surrender of Japan, the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in the Dutch colony of Indonesia, the French colony of Indochina, and the British colony of Malaya launched their movements for full independence. In China, the Chinese Red Army was resuming its revolutionary struggle against the Kuomintang forces of the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

No significant numbers of U.S. troops were involved in combat roles against these national-liberation movements. The United States did, however, provide military supplies and logistical support to the old European colonial powers in their Asian colonial wars. To keep open the option of intervention by U.S. troops, it was

necessary to maintain forces intact. Moreover, the Communist-led guerrillas in the Philippines (the People's Anti-Japanese Army [*Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* or *Hukbalahap*]), known simply as the *Huks* (pronounced "hooks"), had already liberated several provinces in the main Philippine island of Luzon prior to the landing of the U.S. troops.

The Huk guerrilla army emerged in March 1942 in a lengthy process that began in 1939 with the merger of the Communist and Socialist parties of the Philippines, the merged party retaining the name Communist Party. This unity was forged on the background of recognition of the need for unity in face of the fascist aggressions against other nations by Japan, Germany, and Italy. In October 1941, the Communist Party urged its units to prepare for armed resistance against the impending Japanese invasion by forming a Barrio United Defense Corps. On 22 November 1941, two weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, *Kalyaan*, the organ of the Communist Party, predicted that the U.S.-Japanese discussions then underway in Washington would not stave off the coming hostilities and urged a United Front against a Japanese invasion and the fascist fifth column in the Philippines. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in December 1941, a proposal by the Communist Party to General MacArthur and the U.S. high commissioner of the Philippines for the formation of a united antifascist front and the arming of the people was arrogantly rejected. By January 1942, the nucleus of the Hukbalahap had been formed, and it was formally launched in March 1942 (Allen 1993, 93–94). In January 1946, the Huks were still in effective control over many areas of Luzon that they had liberated from Japanese occupation and were viewed by the Truman administration as a danger to U.S. plans for the establishment of a neocolonial regime instead of a fully independent government. The Truman administration was determined to keep U.S. troops available for suppressing the Huks.

This politics of neocolonialism was never openly avowed, of course, since it would be unlikely to be approved by U.S. public opinion. The long war was over, military service for the "duration plus six months" had long been taken for granted, and

Americans wanted their sons and daughters home. The principal excuse given for the slowdown in demobilization was the alleged lack of ships to carry the troops home. On 17 September 1945, the Undersecretary of the Navy, Artemus Gates, said that shipping was the most important factor in the entire demobilization program (U.S. Senate 1946, 88).

As a result of increasing national concern about the delays in demobilization, the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, spoke to over three hundred members of the Senate and House of Representatives on 20 September 1945. He claimed that “the rate of demobilization had been determined by transportation facilities and by the availability of trained personnel to carry its administrative requirements out. It has had no relationship whatsoever to the size of the Army in the future” (cited in Sparrow 1951, 201–2). He also stated that he hoped that by late winter the army could discharge men on the basis of two years’ service, implying that this process would be completed by spring 1946. Marshall’s remarks were taken to mean that all service people with two years’ service would be released by March 1946 and that the schedule was dictated primarily by the availability of ships to transport the troops. On 2 October 1945, the House majority whip, Representative John J. Sparkman, stated on the radio program “American Forum of the Air” that “within three or four months every person in the army with as much as two years’ service will be discharged” (cited in Sparrow 1951, 204). According to the GI-run newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, General Marshall subsequently gave 20 March 1946 as a definite date by which those with two years’ service would be demobilized (reported in *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 4 January, 1946). In mid-October, the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion stated that the program of demobilization would be governed by the available shipping (Kingsley 1945).

The connection between the demobilization slowdown and the determination of imperialist powers to hold on to their colonies and neocolonies slowly unfolded. On 20 September 1945, the *Daily Worker* reported that fifty seaman belonging to the National Maritime Union picketed the Dutch consulate at Rockefeller Center in New York to protest the shipment of Dutch marines to suppress the Indonesian independence movement. The same

issue of the paper carried an article by Max Gordon entitled, "Vets Suggest How to Improve Demobilization." Gordon wrote that veterans in the labor movement "maintain that by December all two-year men should be out and that soon afterward all others who were in the service on V-J [Victory over Japan] day can be demobilized. They say there is no need for an army of 2,000,000."

An article by James S. Allen in the *Daily Worker* on 30 September carried the headline, "Independence Revolt Rocks Southeast Asia." Allen wrote, "The peoples of this vast colonial area—the heart of the British, Dutch, and French empires—are demanding their independence in no uncertain terms." Another article reported that the British had sent troops to Java to aid the Dutch colonists.

On 7 October, the *Daily Worker* commented that the snarl in demobilization was the result of the lack of a clear policy on two fundamental questions: foreign policy and the size of the U.S. standing army. The criticism of lack of a clear policy was forthcoming from a good part of the corporate-controlled press as well—liberal and even conservative. The *Daily Worker* commentary, however, highlighted the class aspect of the question: "Imperialist intentions toward the peoples of Europe and Asia will call for a large armed force, while a democratic attitude will require a small force."

On October 19, the Communist Party of the United States called for a campaign on the question of demobilization. In an article headlined "Bring the Boys Back Now," the *Daily Worker* wrote:

The announcement by the Army that 1,100,000 troops will be discharged this month is good news.

Good news—but not good enough.

On Sept. 1 there were 5,600,000 men in the Army with more than two years of service. Most of these men are still in the Army. . . . Letters to your Congressmen or to Secretary of War Patterson will help get action on demobilizing the boys in the service.

Two days later, a first-page headline in the *Daily Worker* read, "GIs Expose Ship Shortage Alibi on Discharge. Declare

Army Fails to Use Available Vessels.” The accompanying article by Adam Lapan reported that thirty-six members of the staff of the Paris edition of the GI newspaper *Stars and Stripes* took the unusual step of writing, as individuals, a letter to the Soldier Opinion column of their own newspaper, since they could not run an editorial criticizing the War Department.

“We have refrained from doing this up to now,” a staff spokesman said, “but we think answers to our questions must be forthcoming to avoid a real blowing over here.” Similar charges were being made at the same time by GIs 10,000 miles away in Manila. In the letters column of the Army newspaper, the *Daily Pacifican*, enlisted men charged army officials with stalling and inefficiency, dozens of Army vessels sailing empty to the United States. (21 October 1945)

Lapan also reported that Local 1227 of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers urged speeding up of demobilization. “We consider the use of the armed forces in the Philippine Islands and in Italy a form of oppression against the expression of the will of the people.” By the end of October 1945, the press was reporting that the United States was transporting Chiang Kai-shek’s troops to Northern China to fight the Chinese Red Army.

GIs and their family members began badgering Congress to intervene and speed up the pace of demobilization. This produced numerous congressional hearings. Many members of the Congress voiced their concern, but the slowdown continued. On 27 October, the *Daily Worker* reported that GI wives demonstrated in the capital. On 6 November, it reported that a number of West Coast unions listed twenty idle ships that could have been used to ferry troops home. The unions included the ILWU; NMU; Marine Cooks and Stewards Association of the Pacific; Marine Engineers Beneficial Association; Marine Firemen, Oilers, Wipers, and Watertenders of the Pacific; and the American Communications Association.

The *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reported on 11 November 1945 that Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union,

stated that seamen in ports of Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, Tampa, Florida, and Philadelphia, as well as New York, had gone on record as supporting union action against commercial shipping if troop transportation was not speeded up (*Daily Worker*, 11 November 1945). The *Daily Worker* on 27 December carried a report attributed to the *Daily Pacifican* that 4,000 soldiers in Manila marched on Christmas Day to the 21st Replacement Depot Headquarters to protest against cancellation of a scheduled transport sailing home. The GI-run *Daily Pacifican* proved to be a valuable asset for the demobilization campaign. The paper vigorously exposed the lies about lack of ships and printed hundreds of letters from GIs on the question of demobilization.

In his book *Black Fire: The Making of a Revolutionary*, Nelson Peery writes that before going into the army, he had been in contact with the Young Communist League in Minneapolis. In 1944, his all-Black unit was to take part in the battle for the Pacific island of Bougainville. There he attended a U.S. Army Information and Education Service lecture about the Soviet Army victory in the battle of Kursk, which cleared the way for the Soviet advance into Germany. After the lecture, Peery introduced himself to the lecturer, Communist leader Robert Thompson, winner of the Distinguished Service Cross. Thompson took Peery to meet another similarly decorated Communist GI, Hermann Boettcher, a German émigré and veteran of the Spanish Civil War (Peery 1994, 251–54). A week later, Boettcher was killed in action.

From October to December 1945, Peery's unit was stationed on the Philippine island of Mindanao, where he came in contact with left-wing Filipinos. He describes how in December, GIs put forth the slogan, "Home by Christmas."

It was painted on the latrines. It was scratched onto the directional posts at the crossroads. It appeared as if by magic in the recreation rooms and the mess halls. Sometimes it was even painted on the screened-in officers' quarters. It became a matter of pride to find a new and secure place to paint the demand. Wherever Kilroy poked his nose over a fence or a plank, his crossed eyes were looking down at "Home by Christmas." (293)

He writes that in about December 1945, two Communist enlisted men visited him at his base with the purpose of increasing participation of the thirty-five thousand African American GIs in Mindanao in the “Home by Christmas” movement. They told him that they had been directed to him by their Filipino friends. He responded by indicating his concern that the military command would come down especially heavy on African American troops if their regiment acted openly (295–97). After reading this account, I asked Peery if he knew who the two were. He did not.

The *New York Times* reported from Manila on 11 December 1945 that GIs were writing letters by the thousands “to their relatives and friends at home demanding that congressmen who fail to take active steps to speed demobilization be turned out at the next elections.” The paper reported that “rubber stamps bearing the slogan ‘No Boats No Votes’ decorate thousands” of outgoing letters, and that the staff of the GI newspaper *Daily Pacifican* estimates that 17,000 to 18,000 GIs have signed “get us home” petitions.

Into action in Hawaii

I had enlisted in the U.S. Navy in April 1944, four months before turning eighteen, and, after boot camp, was sent to Radio Materiel School to be trained in electronics repair. I arrived in Hawaii as Electronics Technician Mate 3/c on 1 September 1945 to await further assignment. The next day, 2 September, on the battleship *Missouri*, the representatives of the United Nations accepted the surrender of Japan. After about six weeks, I was assigned to the Administrative Command, Amphibious Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet (ADCOMPHIBSPAC), at Pearl Harbor, where I repaired electronics equipment on ships coming into port. This assignment proved to be fortunate for my involvement in the Bring the Boys Home campaign, with which the Communist Party was now deeply involved. All naval vessels that could carry troops—from LCTs and LSTs to large troop carriers—were under our command. Every day we received by teletype a listing of all ships under our command that came into Pearl Harbor, with information about where they were coming from and what they were carrying. Every week, I would send to my senator, James Mead

(D., N.Y.), a listing of ships that came in from Asia empty and the number of troops that they could have carried. One day, the navy chaplain, presumably instructed from above, came to me and said that he heard that I was sending classified information through the mail and strongly suggested that I desist. I made no reply and continued to send this information to Senator Mead. The question was never raised with me again and did not even interfere with my being awarded the Good Conduct Medal upon my discharge.

By November I found the Honolulu Labor Canteen, which, as a racially integrated service center, served as a meeting point for Communists and other left-progressive GIs. One of the leaders of the Communist group was Pfc. (T/5) Tommy Dennis, an African American GI from Detroit, who many years later became managing editor of the *Daily Worker*. Initially, we were not ideologically conditioned to play the role that we should have been playing because of the disorientation produced by Earl Browder's leadership of the Communist Party. Browder had transformed the Communist Party into the Communist Political Association because of his illusions that U.S. monopoly capital would play a progressive role in the postwar period as a consequence of "Big Three Unity"—the wartime cooperation between the USSR, Britain, and the United States. Browder maintained that U.S. imperialism would abandon its predatory character, and contribute to the industrial development of Latin America through equitable economic trade arrangements. Spurred to repudiate this position by the French Communist Party, U.S. Communists had reconstituted themselves as the Communist Party of the United States in July 1945, but, as William Z. Foster pointed out, "It took the work of the next few years to eliminate from the Party the many revisionist moods and practices that had been growing for so long under Browder's cultivation" (Foster 1952, 437).

As a YCLer (member of the Young Communist League), I was invited to join with other Communist-oriented GIs on Oahu who had organized four groups to study Lenin's famous work on imperialism, each group consisting of about eight persons. Beginning about November 1945, my group met every Saturday night in a room booked by one of us in the Honolulu YMCA. The

main problem we had was acquiring the books rapidly, which we solved in a variety of ways: from libraries, family, local comrades, and bookstores. My copy was Eugen Varga's *New Data on V. I. Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which had Lenin's original text on one side of two facing pages and, on the other, new data through the mid-1930s that verified Lenin's projections and analysis.

The Communists and their supporters in Hawaii were active in the Bring the Boys Home campaign in various ways. The Labor Canteen held discussions on the imperialist character of the demobilization slowdown. Letters on the subject were written to the local and GI newspapers. Around December 1945, one of the Communists, Joseph Nahem, wrote a political analysis in the form of a letter to the editor that was published in *Stars and Stripes*, signing it merely "Master Sergeant." Because of the letter's clearly Marxist character, Nahem had not wanted to disclose his name. But Joe was a native-born New Yorker, and spoke with a strong Jewish singsong intonation that carried right into the letter, breaking his anonymity. To his dismay, we all greeted him the day it appeared with "Terrific letter you wrote, Joe."

Many of the Communist GIs were part-time or full-time instructors in the army's Information and Education (I & E) Service. The army had recognized the need to overcome the profascist views that had been widely propagated by the right-wing press and public figures in United States (e.g., the Hearst press, the *Chicago Tribune*, Charles Lindberg) prior to the U.S. entry into the war. Serious morale problems existed among troops who had little or no understanding of the war beyond being aware of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Communists had a good understanding of the issues of the war and it was natural for the army to turn to them as instructors in the Information and Education Service. Of course, the army did not consciously seek out Communists, but when they sought out knowledgeable soldiers, they often turned out to be Communists. Herb Freeman told me that the GIs who were politically active in the Labor Canteen were urged to volunteer for involvement with the I & E programs.

In December, I moved closer to the core group of Communists in a rather strange way. Four of the comrades, Jack Goldring, later a leader of the Communist Party in Bridgeport, Connecticut; Nat Pitashnick and Jack Karan from New York; and one other whose name I do not remember, shared a room at Hickam Field. All had been involved with the I & E Service. Goldring was somewhat older than the others and complained that he could not get any sleep because the others stayed up all night talking. He made arrangements to move to another room. I, on the other hand, had complained to them that I was not happy with my accommodations in the navy's communication barracks, because sailors coming off radio operators' watches during the night were frequently waking me and others up to have drinks with them. Pitashnick and Karan then suggested that I move into their room in the space being vacated by Goldring.

Hickam Field conveniently bordered on Pearl Harbor. Herb Freeman, who was also stationed at Hickam Field, was roughly my height and gave me a one of his corporal's uniforms. I managed to obtain an army ID that I could use to enter Hickam Field at its gate with Pearl Harbor. Since the Army air force's air/sea rescue teams wore navy-style jeans and hats for duty on their boats, I could enter Hickam Field, when off duty and wearing my navy jeans, by showing my army ID and return to duty in Pearl Harbor with my navy ID.

The "mutiny" of 1946

The headline on a page-one story in the 4 January 1946 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* read: "Patterson's 'Off the Beam' / Replies Stir Pacific GIs." The story that followed reported that when interviewed by *Stars and Stripes* reporters during a Christmas stopover in Guam and a New Year's stopover in Honolulu, Patterson indicated complete ignorance of the official policy on demobilization. According to the *Star-Bulletin* story, the *Stars and Stripes* reported:

Arriving at Guam, on his round the world tour, Secretary Patterson said low point men are accumulating two points per month overseas and one in the states and will go home

when enough has been added. . . . Reminded of the 2 point stoppage, Secretary Patterson indicated complete surprise. (cited in *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 4 January 1946)

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* account continued:

In Honolulu [on 1 January] an army reporter asked Mr. Patterson if the war department contemplated any change in releasing men with two years service on March 20. "What is the significance of March 20?" Mr. Patterson asked. The Stars and Stripes reporter explained that General Marshall had said two year men would be released by late Winter and that the statement later had been made more specific with the announcement of March 20 as a definite date. "I was unaware that was the case," the secretary replied.

The *Stars and Stripes* account of its interviews with Patterson immediately brought forth GIs protesting with signs reading "YAMASHITA,³ PATTERSON-THEY DIDN'T KNOW" and "SERVICE YES, BUT SERFDOM NEVER" (AP photo, *New York Times*, 8 January 1946). Further fueling the fire was the publication in the *Stars and Stripes* and the *Daily Pacifican* of a 4 January 1946 announcement by the War Department that only 300,000 instead of the previously planned 800,000 troops would be brought home monthly in the next six months (Garza 1985, 38; Sharp 1976, 192; Sparrow 1951, 476).

On Saturday, 5 January, GIs started coming in from central Luzon in trucks and jeeps and with heavy armor, calling out to other GIs to join their protest. The next day they took to the streets in Manila, marching in columns of four to demand demobilization (Davids 2000).

According the Davids, the GI protesters that came in from central Luzon had just been ordered into combat readiness, being told by their colonel that "we've got to put down the Huks." They had not only been waiting for demobilization, but felt indebted to the Huks. The Huks had cleared the Japanese troops out of a good part of Central Luzon before the U.S. troops landed there in 1944.

The marching columns were turned away at bayonet point from the headquarters of Lieutenant General Styer, Commander of the Army Forces in the West Pacific. According to some accounts, the marching columns of four grew to 2500 men, as Manila-based GIs joined them (Sharp 1976, 193).

On Sunday evening, the GI Communists stationed in Manila met to discuss how to give a positive direction to demonstrations that might turn into riots as the bars filled to overflowing. Among those taking part in this discussion, in addition to Davids, was Lew Moroze, who later served many years as a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party. According to Davids, Communist GI journalists, such as Abraham Chapman of the *Daily Pacifican*, also played important roles in providing the GIs with information about the duplicity of the army authorities on demobilization. The main question at the meeting was whether to call a massive demonstration the next day or wait for it to build up to a climax on Wednesday. The decision was for a Monday demonstration at the city hall. They also sent word to the Huks about their plans for expressing GI solidarity with the Huks.

The demonstration on Monday, 7 January, was indeed huge; GIs again marched four abreast to demand a meeting with General Styer. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* headlined its 7 January edition "Homesick GI's Stage Manila Mutiny Parade." The actions that day, however, were not riotous, but quite disciplined. General Styer finally agreed to meet with a delegation of five soldiers, assembled, in part, by the Communist GI group. Sgt. Sheldon Newberger (probably not a Communist) served as spokesperson for the group of five, which included at least one Communist. The *New York Times* reported that "General Styer scoffed at the allegations of 'double-talk' by the War Department and touched upon changing international situations that might require varying numbers of troops overseas" (8 January 1946). The *Times* headline gives the reaction of the GIs at the protest rally that evening when the delegation reported what General Styer had told them: "Twenty Thousand Manila GIs Boo General; Urge Congress to Speed Sailing."

According to Davids, the rally not only adopted a resolution demanding speedy demobilization, but also adopted a resolution

declaring solidarity with the Huks for their contribution to the war against Japan. The *New York Times* report stated that “particular resentment was expressed toward any plan to use American soldiers to police the Philippines against internal disorders. . . . ‘The Philippines are capable of handling their internal problems,’ was the slogan voiced by several speakers. Many extended the same point of view to China.” The *Times* reported that “a communication from the Filipino Democratic Alliance, which represents the peasants, was read commending the soldiers for their efforts to permit the islands to settle their own difficulties. Considerable was said on the subject of American armed intervention in China and the Netherlands Indies” [now Indonesia]. The paper further reported that the *Daily Pacifican*, which had taken the lead in the demobilization fight, was ordered by the commissioned officers in charge to “stay away from the rally,” and told it would be allowed to print only Associated Press or United Press stories of such demonstrations without coverage by the paper’s staff.

The *New York Times* also reported that on Tuesday, 8 January, GI demonstrations were held in Yokohama, Le Havre, Guam, and Maryland, with 18,000 taking part in the Guam demonstrations, where 3,500 enlisted men and officers of the 315th Bombing Wing of the Twentieth Air Force staged a hunger strike against the demobilization slowdown, as demonstrations spread to other bases in the Philippines (9 January 1946).

In Yokohama, the first attempt at a meeting was broken up by MPs. “Their second one was successful enough to be called a near mutiny and had some very ugly aspects to it. They were threatened with prison by a colonel who told the men they should have been dressed in lace panties. Nevertheless they were able to hold a meeting the next day” (Sharp 1976, 195).

A demobilization rally was set for that evening at Fort Schafter, a major army base on Oahu. Our comrades and friends were deeply involved, in part as members of the American Veterans Committee (AVC), a progressive GI organization formed to offset the right-wing character of the traditional veterans’ organizations. Dave Livingston was a leader in organizing this rally. During the afternoon, General Richardson, who had surprisingly progressive leanings for the commander of the army’s Middle Pacific forces

and had already been somewhat visible for his support of the Labor Canteen, called a thousand noncommissioned officers to a briefing at Fort Schafter. The *Honolulu Advertiser* report of this meeting with noncoms revealed that Richardson took a rather ambivalent position. On the one hand, he urged them not to go through with the mass demonstration, which he suggested might be disorderly, but to have a meeting and elect their leaders to meet with him so that he could transmit their concerns to General Eisenhower and General MacArthur. He urged the noncoms to follow the advice of the AVC about the bad effect of a disorderly meeting (9 January 1945). But the AVC advice to which he was referring was not to call off the meeting scheduled for that evening, but only to keep it from being disorderly.

The Fort Shafter meeting went ahead as planned and was attended by 3,000 GIs from various bases. Sergeant Dave Livingston was one of the principal speakers. Plans were made to gather signatures and money for telegrams to the Congress and the president. An island-wide committee, the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization, was formed, with Dave Livingston, Joe Nahem, and Herb Freeman as cochairs of a steering committee of thirty-seven. The committee subsequently used the Labor Canteen for some of its planning meetings.

A similar meeting took place that Tuesday evening at Hickam Field. My roommates had been conducting a weekly Tuesday evening forum on current events. It was usually attended by some thirty GIs at Hickam Field. "Demobilization" just happened to be the topic already scheduled for that evening. During the day, the Communists circulated "rumors" that there would be a massive demonstration on Wednesday. Instead of thirty, some 3500 hundred GIs attended. We had to set up loudspeakers outside the building since the room seated only several hundred.

The main speaker was Master Sergeant Joseph Nahem. He gave a thoroughly political analysis of the factors behind the slow-down. During the discussion that followed, a chaplain's assistant took the floor and said, "We all know that there are rumors that there will be big demonstration tomorrow. I propose that we elect a committee of forty to organize it." His proposal was adopted with cheers and names were yelled and people volunteered to

serve on the committee. One GI, whom I did not know, said “Let’s put a couple of our Black buddies on the committee.” That was immediately acted upon. We sent out a delegation to the officers’ club to bring one of the commanding officers to the meeting. Around midnight, the delegation returned with Brigadier General Clifford C. McNutt, commanding officer at the Hawaiian Air Depot. Somewhat liquored up, he began with the words, “Look, fellows, I’m with you. I want to go home too.” The *Honolulu Advertiser* report of the meeting did not offer that quotation, but did report that he said that the commanders were merely carrying out orders and “there isn’t anything we can do about it” (9 January 1946). I remember his saying that he would have the Corps of Engineers build a speakers’ platform in the stadium. He added that all members of the committee of forty would be free from duty on Wednesday so they could prepare for the rally, and that if any of their officers objected, they should be referred directly to him.

We stayed up all night making placards and preparing programs and petitions. The Red Cross women served us coffee and doughnuts throughout the night. A motor-pool sergeant came in to tell us that he could provide three jeeps with loudspeakers mounted on them. In the morning I secured one of the jeeps and on my own initiative gathered three air force GIs to ride with me into the Navy Yard. I made sure that I was wearing my navy jeans and regulation white hat to be in proper uniform, whichever way I was viewed with regard to my service affiliation. We drove slowly along the docks to bring our message to the shipborne sailors. I took the microphone and shouted out the message:

The Germans are going home. The Italians are going home.
The Japanese are going home. Why aren’t we going home?
Because the British have our ships. The Dutch have our ships.
The French have our ships. Chiang Kai-shek has our ships.
Let’s use our ships where they belong—to take us home, home, home!
Demobilization action rally tonight, 8 p.m., Hickam ballpark.
Six congressmen will be there. You will be there!

The six congressmen I mentioned were members of a House subcommittee that was in Hawaii for hearings on statehood. They

were to be attending a Republican Party dinner that evening in Honolulu, but plans were made at our meeting the evening before to send a delegation headed by Colonel A. J. Bird, former Hickam commander, to invite them to the stadium rally. Freeman and Nahem, however, went to a reception for the congressmen on Wednesday afternoon and stood on the receiving line. As the congressmen went by to greet the people on the line, Freeman and Nahem invited them to come to the rally later that evening. They agreed.

As we continued along the docks, two navy officers with two sailors with Shore Patrol armbands at their side blocked our path. "Get the hell out of the Navy Yard," they yelled. I was relieved that they took no special notice of me, presumably considering me to be a member of the air force air-sea rescue team. So back we went to continue our efforts at Hickam Field.

Later that afternoon, Dave Livingston scolded me for such unauthorized adventurist activity. I first learned why when I met with Herb Freeman in June 2000. He told me that he and Joe Nahem were shaving in their undershirts in the latrine that morning. Nahem, although not stationed at Hickam Field, had stayed there overnight and was to be the chair of the rally that evening in the stadium. Two MPs came in and told them that they were to be taken to the adjutant general. Freeman, nervous about this, went in his undershirt. Nahem, however, insisted that they take him to his barracks so that he could dress properly for the occasion as a master sergeant should, including appropriate headwear. As soon as they entered the adjutant general's office, he bellowed at them: "The Admiral has been on my ass. He said, 'Get that fucking jeep out of the Navy Yard or I'll machine-gun it.'"

Looking backward, I would acknowledge that there really was not much point in our going into the Navy Yard. In his dissertation on the demobilization movement, Bert Sharp attributes the lack of demonstrations in the navy to a hard line taken by the naval command (1976, 195–96). In reality, we had heard nothing about any hard line, although it may have been true for the marines, where indeed there was a severe clampdown on demonstrations. The sailors, however, were not as dissatisfied with the pace of demobilization as were the army GIs. The percentage of draftees in the

navy was lower than in the army; the percentage of sailors with spouses or children was also lower. Moreover, the navy discharge system was far more favorable than that of the army. With only my mother listed as a dependent and not even a full two years' service, most of which was spent at navy electronics schools in the United States, I was to be released as early as March 1946.

Fifteen thousand GIs packed the stadium that evening, including many WACs (members of the Women's Army Corps). GI ushers wearing armbands marked DAC (Demobilization Action Committee) passed out printed programs. Dressed up for the occasion, I wore my armband over my navy whites. Tommy Dennis also served as an usher. The six congressmen were whisked out of the Republican Party dinner—the Republican Party later complaining that they were kidnapped—and were placed on the platform to listen. Joe Nahem held forth beautifully. There were nine other speakers, including Dave Livingston, Nat Patashnick (one of my roommates), and a representative of the WACs. Before speaking, Nat entertained the audience with a yoyo act.

Petitions were circulated calling for adherence to the policy of discharge of those with two years' service by 20 March and removal of troops from China and other allied nations. As the meeting ended, the ushers collected money for follow-up activities, such as sending messages to Congress and placing ads in U.S. newspapers. I used my white navy hat as a basket for that purpose.

At the end of its account of the rally, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reported that a group of marines on Oahu who had announced a demobilization rally for Friday were called in by their commander and read the navy articles on mutiny (10 January 1946). In another article, the paper reported that General Richardson told the committee that had been formed at Tuesday's rally at Fort Shafter (the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization) that they could hold the rally that they had planned for Saturday, 12 January, at the Fort Shafter Bowl instead of the originally announced school auditorium in Honolulu. Had it known about it, the paper could have reported that General Richardson made a \$400 personal contribution for the committee's work.

The next day, Thursday, Herb Freeman and Joe Nahem were brought to the adjutant general again. They were told that the Republican Party had accused them of kidnapping their congressmen and Joe and Herb were to be confined to quarters until the matter was clarified (Freeman 2000).

That same Thursday, Dave Livingston reported that General Richardson agreed to provide buses to carry GIs from bases all over Oahu to the Saturday rally (*HA*, 11 January 1946). On the same day, however, Marine Lieutenant General Roy Geiger, commander of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific, issued an order forbidding marines to take part in any assembly or meeting on or off the station other than those prescribed in the military daily routine (*HA*, 11 January 1946). That evening, 3,000 GIs (by the *Honolulu Advertiser* estimate), or 10,000 (according to the organizers), gathered at a meeting sponsored by the American Veterans Committee at Scofield Barracks, a large army base on Oahu. The *Honolulu Advertiser* reported that T/5 (Corporal) Tommy Dennis outlined the five-point program presented the day before to General Richardson by the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization: (1) adherence to the 20 March date for release of GIs with two years' service; (2) a monthly 10-point drop in points qualifying for immediate release; (3) discharge points to accumulate after V-J day for overseas service; (4) all shipping and other transportation to be fully utilized; (5) the government to institute a clear foreign policy that will not make a large army necessary. T/4 Fred Zeller of Baltimore said that the army size should be sufficient to occupy the land of our defeated enemies. "Let's not occupy the land of our allies."

The *Honolulu Advertiser* also reported that the six members of the congressional subcommittee met on 10 January at the Labor Canteen with members of the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization and expressed their sympathetic views "with the citizen army's desire to get home as quickly as possible" (11 January 1946).

Objecting to a headline in the *Stars and Stripes, Middle Pacific Edition*, General Richardson issued an order forbidding the GI paper from publishing "discourteous or derogatory remarks made against the President, the secretary of war, the chief of staff

of the Army, or others as individuals . . . although the men of the command may disagree with the policies of the government and express themselves freely thereon.” He did add, however, “there is no other restriction placed upon the freedom of expression of the men of this command and they are at liberty as in the past to voice their protests against conditions in the army as they view them.” The headline that he had objected to was “Patterson Public Enemy No. 1” (*HA*, 11 January 1946).

From Manila, the *New York Times* reported that “letters and news stories critical of the official policies of the War Department and our theatre commanders have been barred from the columns of The Daily Pacifican, widely read army newspaper here, by ‘orders from above,’ according to a statement printed by The Pacifican staff on 11 January. The statement was signed by thirty-three enlisted members of the staff and was handed to American correspondents” (12 January 1946). An editorial in the *Daily Worker* criticized the attempt to muzzle the GI newspapers and called on the labor movement to support the demand for demobilization (12 January 1946).

Meanwhile in Manila, 156 soldier delegates claiming to represent 139,000 GIs met to coordinate their protest strategy. They elected a central committee of six, one of whom was Emil Mazey, prewar president of United Automobile Workers Local 212, and postwar secretary-treasurer of the UAW. They adopted a program to be presented to Secretary Patterson during his scheduled visit to the Philippines the following week (*New York Times*, 11 January 1946). The top point on their agenda with Patterson was demanding to know the reason for putting the Eighty-Sixth Infantry Division on combat status.

The *New York Times* reported that on 9 January, “bayonets dispersed four thousand GIs in Frankfurt” when they “tried to rush the headquarters of the United States Forces in the European Theater with the objective of forcing General Joseph T. McNarney to confront them on their demand to be sent home” (10 January 1946). They continued their protests, however, and two days later the paper reported that they were finally granted a meeting with their general staff officers. They assembled again for an evening protest meeting that the *New York Times* on 11 January headlined,

“GIs in Frankfort Deride McNarney As They Fail to Get Sailing Date.” The paper also reported GI demonstrations in Vienna and London. The *Honolulu Advertiser*, in its report on the demonstrations in Frankfurt, wrote, “There were scattered yells of ‘one meat ball’ when the name of U.S. Secretary of War Robert Patterson was mentioned. One speaker, reading figures from a slip of paper, asserted that more German war prisoners were transferred to the United States in recent months than there were American soldiers shipped home” (11 January 1946). The *New York Times* on 10 January 1946 reported demonstrations by 5,000 U.S. soldiers in and near Calcutta and a meeting attended by several thousand troops in Seoul.

Five hundred soldiers meeting in the Trocadero in Paris not only demanded the removal of Secretary of War Patterson, but also elected a committee of five to meet with U.S. senators about to visit the European theater. They issued what the *New York Times* characterized as “an enlisted man’s Magna Carta,” in which they demanded the following:

(1) Abolition of officers’ messes, with all rations to be served in a common mess on a first-come-first-served basis.

(2) The opening of all officers’ clubs at all posts, camps and stations to officers and men alike.

(3) Abolition of reserved sections for officers at recreational events.

(4) Abolition of all special officers’ quarters and the requirement of all officers to serve at least one year as enlisted men except in time of war.

(5) Reform of army court-martial boards to include enlisted men. (13 January 1946)

Money was collected at the various demonstrations primarily for sending cables to the Congress and to President Truman, and for placing advertisements in newspapers. In Batangas, in the Philippines, \$3,700 was raised to cable protests to the president and the chairmen of the House and Senate committees on military affairs signed by as many as 10,000 officers and enlisted personnel, and for full-page advertisements in fifteen leading

daily newspapers. In Guam, 18,000 GIs raised \$3,600 to send a cable signed by 6,000 soldiers to columnists/broadcasters Walter Winchell and Drew Pearson. A protest cable was sent from Hawaii on 11 January containing 28 telegraphic pages of signatures (Lee 1966, 563).

By 10 January, the GI demonstrations began to show results. General Eisenhower, then chief of staff, authorized overseas theater commanders to send home men not needed regardless of their discharge points. On 11 January, General Richardson announced a change in discharge requirements that would mean the immediate release of more than 6,000 officers and men of his Mid-Pacific Command. General Douglas MacArthur issued instructions from Tokyo to the United States Army in the Pacific that no ship shall return to the United States with an empty berth (*New York Times*, 11 January 1946). On January 13, MacArthur announced a point cut that would make more GIs eligible for demobilization (*HA*, 13 January 1946). John Davids told me that he was dispatched to the United States on 12 January and immediately discharged.

As the GIs began to see that their demonstrations were having effect, the participation in new demonstrations started to decline.

What had been projected as the biggest GI demonstration in Hawaii, on Saturday, 12 January, at Fort Shafter, drew 3,000 GIs. This island-wide demonstration had been called by the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization. It chose seven enlisted men and one warrant officer to go to Washington immediately to express the "GI point of view" to a subcommittee of the Senate Military Affairs Committee and sent a cable to Senator Edwin D. Johnson, chair of the Military Affairs Committee, asking for a date to testify. Among the eight were at least three who had played leading roles in the work of the Labor Canteen: Master Sergeant Joseph Nahem, Sergeant Dave Livingston, and Warrant Officer (jg) Ewart Guinier. The meeting went on record condemning the order by Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger prohibiting demobilization protest by marines on Oahu. Guinier condemned the army policy of not sending "Negro infantrymen as occupation troops for Germany." He said that "many white men died because of stupid discrimination against Negroes on the battlefield." He cited two instances, one on Saipan and

the other in Belgium, where lives were sacrificed because Black troops were not allowed to take full part in the battle (*HA*, 12 January 1946).

Two days later, General Richardson announced that he could not send such a delegation to Washington unless so directed by the War Department (*HA*, 14 January 1946).

In response to the GI demonstrations and the growing support for speedier demobilization they had produced in the Congress, General Eisenhower announced on 15 January a new schedule for demobilization. Although it did not meet the demand for release of all personnel with two years' service by 20 March 1946, it provided for the release of all with thirty months' service by 30 April. Included in the 30 April release date were some with under thirty months' service who had point accumulations enhanced by length of time in combat and overseas duty. The new schedule provided for the release of all those with two years' service by 30 June. Although this was a major concession, it did not meet the demand for release of those with two years' service by March 20. That evening, the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization, at a meeting at the Labor Canteen, declared that the policy on demobilization was "wholly inadequate and fails to meet a single demand of the servicemen" (*HA*, 15 January 1946).

Simultaneously with his announcement, Eisenhower sent out instructions to all commanders ordering a ban on all further protest activity by army personnel. One of the GIs who had to decode Eisenhower's message gave a copy of the decoded text to the Oahu Servicemen's Committee for Speedier Demobilization even before it had been given to General Richardson, who would subsequently issue an order dissolving the committee. The committee was then faced with the problem of dispensing the \$15,000 it had collected for its activities, primarily for the insertion of ads in U.S. newspapers.

One solution was to send a cablegram to every member of the Congress urging support for the demobilization demands. The Western Union clerk incorrectly calculated the amount due and charged only a small fraction of the amount that should have been paid. When he called one of the committee members the next day, he was told that the committee had been dissolved and no further

financial transactions were allowed. I subsequently heard that the money was placed in escrow for appropriate use on some future occasion.

In response to the committee's condemnation of the rejection of its demand for the release of those with two years' service by 20 March, an action that took place after Eisenhower had ordered all protest activity to cease, General Richardson, on 16 January, threatened the three cochairs—Livingston, Nahem, and Freeman—with court-martial and ordered them confined to quarters pending investigation of their remarks at the meeting. The committee nevertheless met again, without their cochairs, and "issued a statement in support of 'the forthright and democratic leadership given by Nahem and Livingston' and expressed concern over the restrictive action" (*HA*, 17 January 1946). Those of us who gathered at the Labor Canteen after reading this account in the *Honolulu Advertiser* were distraught that somewhere along the line Herb Freeman was left hanging in the wind, his name having been omitted from the *Advertiser* report of the protest against the threat of court-martial and confinement to quarters, either by error in the press release or the newspaper report of it. The next day, however, General Richardson announced that all three had been released, after "the investigation determined that while their enthusiasm was somewhat misdirected, it was not enough to warrant punishment" (*HA*, 18 January 1946). A few days after that, Livingston was flown home for discharge. At a reunion of the comrades and friends at Nat Pitashnick's house in New York a year later, he told us that his name was being called over the loudspeaker for two days before he got to the army depot from which the stateside departures took place. A colonel escorted him to the plane and told him that he, the colonel, was under orders from General Richardson to report to him the moment "Livingston had left our area."

Although the role of the Communists and their ideological allies in the demobilization movement was downplayed in the army history and other published materials about it, Secretary Patterson, in a diary entry on 10 January 1946, wrote that General MacArthur told him that the widespread troop discontent was the result of the War Department's announcement of the slowdown

and the work of Communists and discontents in the service newspapers (Sharp 1976, 197).

The Hearst Press and the House Committee on Un-American Activities had their own right-wing, even fascist, agendas, in service of which they gave full play to their distorted version of the role of Communists and their allies in the demobilization movement. Hearst columnist Westbrook Pegler, in his 17 January 1946 syndicated column, claimed that the Communists finagled journalistic assignments on GI newspapers such as *Stars and Stripes*. “These vermin,” he wrote, “are not only protected in their violations of the commonest military laws but protected, as well, in their non-combat editorial assignments.” He compared their defense of their right of free speech to invoking “the Wagner Act to prevent an employer from firing a saboteur and disrupter on the ground that he was being persecuted for ‘union activity.’” (HA, 20 January 1946).

On 15 January 1946, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reprinted a story from the *Stars and Stripes* in which Dave Livingston responded to assertions in the Hearst-owned *New York Daily Mirror* that he had been a “key figure” in the Communist Party before his induction. The paper cited as evidence that he held the view early in the war (i.e., prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union) that it was “phony” and “imperialistic,” that his picture appeared in the *Daily Worker* in 1940 in connection with his having led a strike against a New York silk firm, that in 1943 he was chairman of the Credentials Committee of the Young Communist League and led several student strikes at Columbia University, and that he had been New York State Chairman of the American Youth for Democracy, which the *Daily Mirror* characterized as a Communist-front group. Livingston said it was a lie that he was a key figure in the Communist Party or had been chair of the YCL convention Credentials Committee. He said the *Daily Mirror* was accurate in identifying him with the United Wholesale and Warehouse Workers Local 65. “I was vice president of the organization, which had 17,000 members.” He noted that “nearly 50 per cent of them went to war and I’m quite sure the union’s record and mine compares more than favorably with the Hearst papers’ record on the war.” Livingston confirmed that he had been chairman of

the American Youth for Democracy, which he characterized as a sincere antifascist movement (*HA*, 16 January 1946).

A few days later, Ernie Anderson, counsel for the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which had been investigating the GI demonstrations, claimed, “we have evidence to show that communist agitators actually went into the army for the sole purpose of causing trouble” (*HA*, 20 January 1946).

In all my years as a YCLer and CP member, I never heard of anyone who joined the U.S. armed forces on the advice of the Communist Party. Those of us who voluntarily joined the services during World War II did so purely on our understanding of the need to fight the fascist threat to our people.

On 16 January 1946, the *New York Times* reported an appeal from Winston Churchill to keep GIs abroad, complaining that there were not enough to handle postwar Europe. Imperialism’s new form was taking shape.

Conclusion

The January 1946 demonstrations beginning in Manila that I have described here fell short of achieving their goal of the release of GIs with two years’ service by the promised discharge date of 20 March. These demonstrations did, however, lead to a major acceleration of the demobilization process. Their significance goes far beyond speeding up demobilization. They showed that the citizen-army assembled to confront the fascist threat to the world could not readily be transformed, when its task was completed, into an aggressive military force to sustain imperialist domination over colonized populations. They also showed the validity of Lenin’s views on the importance of ideological activity within the armed forces. It is possible to show the contradiction between imperialism’s claim to be a “liberating” force and its real goal of domination of other peoples.

Through their participation in this GI movement, Communists and other progressives were able to show the need for a foreign policy that would not require huge standing armies. When the Truman administration, with Churchill’s assistance, openly launched the Cold War in March 1946, it was forced to do so

with less military support than it had wished, limiting somewhat its initial scope. During the 1948 presidential election campaign, the Republicans explicitly attacked the Truman administration for what they viewed as the harm caused by excessive haste in demobilization.

In this account of events in Hawaii and the Philippines fifty-six years ago, I have been able to pinpoint actions by Communists and others in one of the many areas of the globe where challenges to the new postwar order arose. Communists and those close to them were committed to the spirit of proletarian internationalism; they felt obligated to oppose the expansionist policies of the U.S. government and its imperialist allies. History has not taken just account of the role played by these activists, not only because historians interpreting the period were under the influence of the dominant anti-Communist ideology, but because those who had taken part were reluctant to tell their stories. A half century of repression starting immediately after the war with the anti-Communist clauses of the Taft-Hartley Act and the Smith Act indictments of Communist leaders impeded academic and public discussion of this role while it was still fresh in the minds of participants.

My recollections and research will, I hope, begin a just reassessment of this time, in the interest of increasing our understanding of imperialism today. I look forward to amplification of this account by others with other experiences and sources of information.

*Professor Emeritus
School of Physics and Astronomy
University of Minnesota*

NOTES

1. A term for U.S. soldiers that was derived from the army's abbreviated property listing for galvanized-iron garbage cans and subsequently taken to mean "government issue."

2. In 1969 Ewart Guinier was appointed professor of Black Studies at Harvard University, where his daughter Lani—so named to denote her Hawaiian birth—is now a law professor.

3. The pairing of Patterson with Yamashita highlighted the GI disbelief in Patterson's claimed ignorance. General Tomoyuki Yamashita, a leading general of Japanese occupation armies, had been claiming that he knew nothing about the well-documented war crimes for which he was executed later in 1946.

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Garveyism and Multicultural Education: Notions of Hybridity and Nonsynchrony in the 1920s Movement

Thandeka K. Chapman

Introduction

In his historical overview, James Banks, noted researcher and advocate of multicultural education, presents this movement as a clear, linear progression. His outline focuses on the educational and other research and scholarship that influenced the evolution of the multicultural education paradigm. Although Banks's overview highlights certain foundational writings, he omits the movement's political overtones by relying solely on the products of academia. Because the overview does not include political contributions to multicultural education, it overlooks important and influential groups. Realizing this limitation, Banks advocates researching all events and movements leading to multicultural education. To strengthen the historical foundation that supports and legitimates theory and research, it is important to consider the various political, often fragmented, events and alliances that influence the ideological framework of multicultural education.

Several volumes of essays could be written on political agency in multicultural education. I focus here on the relationship between Garveyism in the 1920s and present forms of multicultural education. Garveyism was a critical political movement for African Americans that has received minimum attention in scholarship. While the Harlem Renaissance is highly recognized as a fecund

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literary movement for African Americans, the political movements of the 1920s have not been closely examined in relation to their impact on current educational reforms. Garveyism is a key element in the growth of African American cultural awareness, history, and political agency. Marcus Garvey, its founder, was very specific about the beliefs of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) when he stated, "It believes that the Negro race is as good as any other, and therefore should be as proud of itself as others are" (1992, 81). Garvey's insistence that African Americans see themselves as equals with all people, deserving the same rights and respect as whites, is but one example of how his movement forms part of the groundwork for future struggles by African Americans for equity in education.

Due to the magnitude of the heady task of bridging history, theory, and practice, I present this paper in several sections. First, I use neo-Marxist theories of nonsynchrony to frame the discussions of Garveyism and multicultural education (Hall 1996; Hicks 1981; McCarthy 1998). Next, I provide a brief historical overview of the Garveyism movement, focusing on various elements of discord within the organization and in relationships with other organizations vying for power at the turn of the century. The third section of the paper connects various definitions of multicultural education with the Universal Negro Improvement Association's education plans. Last, I show the rationale for the marginalizing of Garveyism in education literature, and advocate recognizing Garveyism as one element in the foundation of the multicultural education paradigm.

Theories of hybridity and nonsynchrony

Garveyism's absence from the history of multicultural education is best discussed through a theory of nonsynchrony within and among people of color. The term *nonsynchrony* was first used in the feminist critiques of Emily Hicks (1981) to encourage Marxist scholars to give adequate consideration to the fact that "not everyone is identical in terms of her consciousness, needs, material and psychological conditions, and desire for change" (220). Hicks asserts that the Left has not been successful in build-

ing a solid foundation for change with various oppressed groups because of leftist assumptions of homogeneity through the use of a class-based rhetoric. Left scholars have not accounted for the hybrid nature of groups of people and the fracturing of power and privilege within these groups. Thus the Left and politicians must embrace the concept of nonsynchrony and acknowledge these distinctive diverse relationships before attempting to form alliances between and among groups of people. She defines *nonsynchrony* as “the concept that individuals (or groups), in their relation to their economic and political system, do not share similar consciousness of that system or similar needs within it at the same point in time” (221). Her argument for highlighting hybridity among and within groups of people is appropriate when scholars revisit the events associated with political movements. In conceptualizations of history, scholars must work through generalizations of groups and tell the stories of intergroup and intragroup politics that affect and are affected by larger societal race, class, and gender struggles.

Hicks labels the ability to deal with group hybridity as “cultural Marxism,” which she believes can appreciate the needs of various groups of people and begin a discourse that does not privilege one group’s needs and cultural capital over another’s (236). However idealist the notion of cultural Marxism remains, it is applicable to the analysis of historical events, movements, and group dynamics. Using a cultural Marxism framework, the retelling of history creates a full, in-depth picture of events and participants.

Criticisms of the lack of intertextuality of Marxism in constructions of history are not particularly new, and cannot be claimed by one scholar. These criticisms have been leveled against Marxist political scholars, politicians, and historians when they have attempted to speak for, or sometimes silence, people of color and white women. However, in discussions of the politically and socially controversial Garveyism movement, the concept of nonsynchrony is rather helpful in illuminating the complexities embedded in the struggles of the movement and in understanding various alliances welcomed or rejected by Marcus Garvey. Stuart Hall agrees that scholars must be willing to analyze class groups

and their actions from their “cultural, social, national, ethnic, and gendered composition.”

Even the “hegemonic” moment is no longer conceptualized as a moment of simple unity, but as a process of unification (never totally achieved), founded on strategic alliances between different sectors, not on their pre-given identity. Its character is given by the founding assumption that there is no automatic identity or correspondence between economic, political, and ideological practices. (Hall 1996, 437)

Hall is not arguing that race or gender should supersede issues of class, but rather that each construction should be viewed as dynamic, sliding, and intrinsically linked to forms of exploitation. He refuses assumptions of sameness and homogeneity. Both Hall and Hicks address issues of nonsynchrony by viewing struggles for power and property through the politics of the state and its people.

The term *nonsynchrony* can also be applied to other areas of scholarship. In the field of education, Cameron McCarthy has applied notions of nonsynchrony and hybridity to institutional and structural matters that have historically limited or provided educational equity and access. McCarthy proposes that African American history has been marginalized through its linear, narrow research constructions, and he attacks the systems of research that have neglected to interrogate all aspects of race, gender, and class dynamics.

Education has played a central role in the drama of struggles over racial identities and meaning in the United States. But any historical account of the radicalization of American education must avoid the easy familiar narrative. The reproduction of hegemonic racial meanings, the persistence of racial inequality, and the mobilization of minority resistance to dominant educational institutions have not proceeded in a straightforward, coherent, or predictable way. A systematic exploration of the history of race relations in education does, however, lead us to recognition of the agency of oppressed minorities, the fluidity and

complexity of social dynamics, and the many-sided character of minority/majority relations in education. (Hall 1998, 61)

McCarthy stresses the need to explore history using cultural studies in order to view the complexity of historic events. Without an analysis of African American class group dynamics and how these dynamics affect struggles for power, position, and privilege, the history of the group lacks dimension and depth and becomes further marginalized, misunderstood, and misappropriated. Only through the analysis of race, gender, and class can African American history and the evolution of multicultural education be fully understood. Thus, the question of why Garveyism has not garnered the attention of educational historians is best addressed through McCarthy's notions of hybridity and nonsynchrony in education and social institutions.

Historical overview

An analysis of Garveyism in the 1920s cannot be approached without couching the movement's beginnings within the events during and directly after World War I. Gramsci's "crisis of authority" provides a framework for thinking about the relationship between Blacks and government during and after the war. Gramsci states that social-class parties reach a point where traditional forms of organization and the men chosen to lead are reevaluated and changed. A divorce from previous ideas may lead to "violent solutions, for the activities of unknown forces are represented by charismatic 'men of destiny.'"

And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially of peasants and petite-bourgeois) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A "crisis of authority"

is spoken of; this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of State. (Gramsci 1971, 210)¹

An example of Gramsci's theory is the treatment of African Americans after World War I. Upon their return, African American soldiers expected institutional changes similar to the national acceptance and appreciation they received in France from French citizens grateful for U.S. intervention. African American soldiers, who saw glimpses of equality while stationed abroad, returned to America bitter and angry. These soldiers questioned the U.S. bigotry and racism that they had previously believed was a world-wide phenomenon. Seeing that Europeans could value and respect them as "Americans" made returning soldiers anxious to claim the same privileges of citizenship at home that they were temporarily granted abroad (Clarke 1974).²

As these soldiers provoked a new race consciousness with their tales of French hospitality, many whites became nervous for the very same reasons that African Americans became inspired. Fearing that African Americans would demand certain privileges, white people became more diligent about the subjugation of African Americans. The rise in lynching is a testament to increased racial tensions. Lynching was, in part, a means to control African American men seeking democratic rights and political empowerment.

These tensions were driven by economic and social fears as well as racism. Jobs held by African Americans while white citizens were overseas, and the need for more jobs to accommodate all returning soldiers, were sites of conflict that often led to violence. In his detailing the historical events leading to the rise of Garveyism, Cronon writes about the numerous race riots of 1919.

But the riots of the war period were only a grim prelude to the bloody months in 1919 that have been called the "Red Summer," for from June to the end of the year there were twenty-six race riots in American cities. The conflicts were not localized in any one section of the country but developed wherever the two races were living in close proximity

and were competing for scarce housing and employment. (1955, 31)

Many of these riots resulted in large casualties for both African American and white citizens. For example, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 150 African Americans and 50 whites died during several battles over a three-day period (Vincent 1977).³

Violence was a tool wielded by white men to maintain economic and political power. The U.S. government did little to protect the lives of African American men and women, to prosecute the people who entered African American communities and initiated violence, or to support African Americans in their struggles to maintain jobs and property after the war.

In response to racial turmoil and limited job opportunities at the turn of the century, northern and southern cities continued experiencing the largest mass migration of a group of people since the forced relocation of Native American nations. African Americans left the rural South and moved to urban areas to find jobs and housing. This population explosion, and the stratified areas for housing, caused the creation of Black ghettos and overcrowded neighborhoods. At the same time, the influx of African Americans in urban areas also allowed better communication, fellowship, and the sharing of resources. Out of these communities, political allegiances were formulated and “men of destiny” were created. The heightened consciousness, willingness to fight, and closer proximity of black neighbors provided fertile ground for the growth of Garveyism.

Locke foreshadowed the work of Gramsci when he wrote in “The New Negro,” his pivotal 1926 essay: “The Sociologist, the Philanthropist, the Race-leader are not unaware of the New Negro, but they are at a loss to account for him” (Barksdale and Kinnamon 1972, 576). Locke’s writing on the migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North problematized issues of race, government, intellectuals, and class among and beyond African American communities. Locke reasoned that the population shift was the impetus for a psychological shift in the way African Americans viewed their relationship to the United States. Gramsci’s idea of the heroic simple man merges with

Locke's thoughts on the black migrants from rural areas. Both scholars saw the underclass as the political and physical mass that strengthens and carries a revolution against unwanted government practices.

The challenge of the new intellectuals is clear enough—the “race radicals” and realists who have broken with the old epoch of philanthropic guidance, sentimental appeal and protest. But are we after all only reading into the stirrings of a sleeping giant the dreams of an agitator? The answer is in the migrating peasant. (Barksdale and Kinnamon 1972, 577)

In addition, Locke argued against the old traditions of passive aggression against racism and forgiveness for white citizens who willfully or unintentionally harmed Black citizens. Because Locke saw urban areas as a source of strength, he advocated the unification of African Americans, promoted racial pride, and asserted the need for political activism.

In his essay “Governmentality,” Foucault presents a very different, negative picture of large urban centers of ethnic groups. He refers to a change in state versus citizen dynamics as “populational reasoning” (1991, 100). The shift in population forces the state to refocus and organize according to the demographics of certain groups instead of individual families. The family ceases to function as the citizen's central governing body, and is replaced by membership in a particular group.

Interest at the level of the consciousness of each individual who goes to make up the population, and interest and aspirations may be of the individuals who compose it, this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population: the birth of a new art, or at any rate, of a range of absolutely new tactics and techniques. (100)

This focus not only marginalizes groups according to their statistically quantifiable characteristics, but also forces the state to seek new ways to govern.

Bernadette Baker provides one example of how populational reasoning worked against racial and ethnic groups (1998, 124).

Scientists, other academic scholars, and political leaders debated the genetic intelligence of African Americans. Those who believed in genetic inferiority used biological and cultural statistics as evidence of limited intelligence. The evidence for this social Darwinism was constructed using the large populations of the cities, where sizable numbers of subjects could be found. These research findings were used to create unfair social policy and enforce laws meant to subdue and oppress African Americans.

The Galton Society, formed in New York City in 1918, exemplified the use of populational reasoning (Selden 1999). Part of the organization's focus was to prevent the intermarriage of new immigrants and African Americans with U.S. citizens of European origin, who were deemed genetically superior. Selden asserts that the Galton society was working toward the creation of a meritocratic state and the rationalization of a racist order. "To undertake a program for the identification of such differences in culturally bound areas such as intellect, morality, and beauty would be eugenic in a sense, but it would be something more. It would be racist. The plan and the organization were both racist" (Selden 1999, 14). This plan included financing research on the psychological differences between races, the effects of race mixing, and the refinement of the Army Alpha and Beta tests developed during World War I (Selden 1999).

In the detailing of historical events connected to the eugenics movement in the United States, Selden mentions the agency of the groups themselves, not assuming that they were merely acted upon by the state. The populational reasoning that constitutes the political economy of the state was also used within groups to rally support for political ideology fitting the needs and perceived desires of the group; rallying was previously impossible for African Americans because of the rural, spread-out geography of the group. Thus the creation of large urban centers for African Americans also gave birth to numerous African American newspapers, literary and visual artists, businesses, and political alliances. Allegiances shifted from the isolated family to organizations promising to protect families through community building.

It is precisely the agency within the African American urban community that helped to create Garveyism. The Garveyism

movement spread through its central organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Started in 1914 in Jamaica by Marcus Garvey, the UNIA still boasts the largest organization membership of any African American political movement. During its peak years of 1920–1924, the UNIA recorded over one million dues-paying members of African descent, and two to three times that many people participating in various activities. This membership included over 800 chapters in 40 countries on four continents (Vincent 1977). The contributions of Garveyism have been minimized by historians' narrow focus on the "Back to Africa" project. While the UNIA did promote and sponsor the move to relocate in Africa, it was not the primary focus of the organization.⁴

In its newspaper, the *Negro World*, the UNIA emphasized cultural pride, an independent Africa with political power for people of African descent, international solidarity among people of color, and congenial segregation of whites and people of color. It is these tenets of Garveyism that directly relate to the present debates concerning the education of African American children.

The central theme of multicultural education is that classrooms must become learning environments that accept and celebrate students' differences. Although multicultural education purports to benefit the masses of children, regardless of race, class, or culture, the movement sprang from a concern for students of color who were academically penalized for their ways of knowing, learning, and behaving. Even in the year 2003, despite efforts to persuade primarily white homogeneous schools to implement theories of multicultural education, the paradigm remains closely aligned with teaching children of color.

Garveyism and general education principles

Marcus Garvey had strong ideals about education that he shared with the UNIA members through its publications, meetings and seminars. Garvey believed education was a lifelong endeavor necessary for any person of African descent and that

“knowledge is power” for African Americans in a world dominated by Europeans (Hill 1987, 187). He wanted people of African descent to read poetry to find inspiration for future careers and other personal goals, and to read history to know past and present struggles over knowledge. He wanted them to learn foreign languages to broaden their perspectives, math to gain technical skills, and science to combat the stereotypes of Africans as inferior people (Hill 1987). He believed that people should be reading books and articles at home and whenever they traveled. His fear was that without knowledge, the intellectual growth of people of African descent would stagnate, and this ignorance would contribute to their oppression. When he wrote, “Intelligence rules the world and ignorance carries the burden,” Garvey was relating the position of Africans in the diaspora to their state of education and quality of life (Hill 1987, 187).

In addition, Garvey was very specific about the types of reading that are worthy of critical analysis and inspiration. In his first lesson on African philosophy, Garvey gave pointed instruction about how and what to read (Hill 1987). He wanted his followers to read old and new scholarship and to take notes as they read in order to recognize that scholars’ opinions change over time. He told them, “In reading it is not necessary or compulsory that you agree with everything you read. You must always use or apply your own reasoning to what you have read based upon what you already know as touching the facts on what you have read” (Hill 1987, 188). Garvey wanted readers to be critical for many reasons. The main reason was to combat the heavy use of negative images found in the mass propaganda of the eugenics movement, ferreted through the media, textbooks, science, and teacher education (Selden 1999). Garvey also recognized inherent biases of writers from various cultures and social classes. Near the end of his first lesson on African philosophy he states:

In reading books written by white authors of whatsoever mind, be aware of the fact that they are [not] written for your particular benefit or for the benefit of your race. They always write from their own point of view and only in the interest of their own race. Never swallow wholly what a

white man writes or says without first critically analyzing it and investigating it. (Hill 1987, 192)

Garvey believed that great thinkers could be found among all men, but that an evaluation of their views was always necessary. Garvey's challenges of ideas of objectivity and subjectivity resemble the ways poststructuralists and postmodernists today discuss the roles of the author and researcher. Similarly, Garvey valued historical research as a way of teasing out ideas of scholarship and truth. He believed that in order for people of African descent to combat racism, they must be active seekers of knowledge in various forms.

Garvey's theory that knowledge is gained in multiple forms is demonstrated in the enrichment activities sponsored by the UNIA for its members. In explicating Garvey's focus on education, Hill states:

Ethical and cultural instruction—the basis of virtue in Aristotle's ideal state—was one of the basic goals of the UNIA from its inception. Garvey believed in offering instruction both popularly and institutionally, with dual goals of reaching a wide audience and of establishing educational facilities. (1987, xlv)

This instruction was achieved through different formats: speeches, meetings, conventions, dramatic performances, elocution contests, debates, concerts, and film (Hill 1987). Many of these productions and events were performed in parks, combining entertainment with education and enrichment.

More formal education of the UNIA members was established through the Booker T. Washington University and Liberty University. The former was a training program for officers of the UNIA to become skilled laborers. These officers could then serve as engineers and project advisors for the organization. Classes were created to help officers pass civil service exams and gain higher paying government jobs in urban communities.

Liberty University, located in Clarendon, Virginia, was a high school with a dual focus on learning trade skills and racial pride. The school was optimistically touted as the first in a chain of

academies for young people of African descent (Hill 1984). Racial pride was fortified through classes in African American history, literature, and African languages. The trade skills were taught using hands-on learning activities. Liberty University managed to graduate one set of students before closing its doors three years after it opened.

Garveyism and multicultural education

The most prominent link between Garveyism and multicultural education is the importance both movements allot to racial pride. The UNIA wanted to foster a love of Africa and all products of Africa through the organization's teachings, activities, politics, and opportunities. The commitment to helping people of African descent realize their equality and organize around their race is exemplified through the second aim of the UNIA:

It must be the mission of all Negroes to have pride in their race; to think of the race in the highest terms of human living. to think that God made the race perfect, that there is no one better than you, that you have all the elements of human perfection and as such you must love yourselves.

Love yourself better than anybody else. All beauty is in you and not outside of you, for God made you beautiful. Confine your affection, therefore, to your own race and God will bless you and men will honor you.

Never be unkind to your race. Never curse your race. If anything is being done that is wrong by a member of your race, try to put him right. Don't condemn him without hearing him. Give him a chance to do what is right before you denounce him. If he provokes you, try to put up with his ignorance and persuade him to be kind, to be good, to be gentle. (Hill 1987, 207)

The UNIA was combating tangible racism in all government and social institutions. At a time when people of African descent were being told that their cranium size, skin color, mores, and folkways made them inferior, this mass organization was fighting to indoctrinate its members with a sense of respect and racial pride

(Selden 1999). Moreover, this aim promoted education, patience, and brother/sisterhood among people of African descent. In order to reach these goals, the UNIA's educational committees utilized certain aspects of what is now defined as multicultural education.

There are many disagreements on the depth and breadth of multicultural education. A comprehensive definition of multicultural education is used in this essay:

Multicultural Education is a philosophical concept and an educational process. It is a concept built upon the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity that are contained in American documents such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It recognizes, however, that equality and equity is not the same thing: equal access does not necessarily guarantee fairness. Multicultural education is a process that takes place in schools and other educational institutions and informs all subject areas and other aspects of the curriculum. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in the organizations and institutions of the United States. It helps students to develop positive self-concepts and discover who they are, particularly in terms of their multiple group membership. Multicultural education does this by providing the knowledge about the history, culture, and contributions of the diverse groups that have shaped history, politics, and culture of the United States. Multicultural education acknowledges that the strength and riches of the United States are a result of its human diversity. It demands a college and school staff that is multiracial and multiculturally literate, including K-8 staff members who are capable of teaching in more than one language. It demands a curriculum that organizes concepts and content around the contributions, perspectives, and experiences of the myriad groups that are part of American society. It confronts social issues involving race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, homophobia, and disability. It accomplishes this by providing instruction in familiar contexts and building on students' diverse ways

of thinking. It encourages students' investigations of world and national events and how these events affect their lives. It teaches critical thinking skills, as well as democratic decision-making, social action and empowerment skills. Finally, multicultural education is a total process: it cannot be truncated: all components of its definition must be in place in order for multicultural education to be genuine and viable. (Grant and Ladson-Billings 1997, 31)

This definition is the ultimate vision of multicultural education, and quite evolved from Garveyism. It is the definition to which programs claiming to be multicultural must aspire, because few have achieved this level of competence. In the following section, I will connect key ideas from this definition with James Banks's conditions for multicultural education, and the UNIA's attempts to educate African Americans.

The UNIA guidelines only echo the myriad requirements for multicultural education; however, some striking similarities appear between the political movement and today's educational concept. The "Aims of the UNIA" was the organization's formal declaration written to enact social-justice reforms. The first UNIA convention, held in New York in 1920, adopted fifty-four "rights," or objectives, in a "Declaration of Rights" (Vincent 1977). Four of the UNIA "rights" advocate institutional reform in education:

20. We protest against segregated districts, separate public conveyances, industrial discrimination, lynching and limitations of political privileges of any Negro citizen in any part of the world on account of race, color or creed, and will exert our full influence and power against all such.

22. We protest against the system of education in any country where Negroes are denied the same privileges and advantages as other races.

31. We declare that the teaching in any school by alien [white] teachers to our boys and girls, that the alien race is superior to the Negro race, is an insult to the Negro people of the World.

49. We demand that instructions given Negro children in

schools include the subject of “Negro History” to their benefit. (261–65)

These “rights” are closely aligned with Grant and Ladson-Billings’s definition of multicultural education and James Banks’s dimensions of multicultural education. In constructing his history of multicultural education, Banks lists five interrelated dimensions conceptualizing the movement: (a) content integration, (b) the knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) an equity pedagogy, and (e) an empowering school culture and social structure (1995). As does the comprehensive definition, these five dimensions go beyond the skeletal structure of Garveyism and include larger issues of diversity and more subgroups of people. Multiculturalists attend to struggles over prejudice and bias beyond issues of race and do not seek to vilify white people. These scholars are aware of the institutionalized nature of racist educational practices perpetrated by all people and by educational systems.

In Right 20 the UNIA addresses systemic racism by protesting unequal separation in public and private institutions. Although the language is very similar to that used in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the UNIA sought to maintain separate schooling. The UNIA did not advocate integrating the races in educational settings, but acknowledged the discrepancies in resources and privileges between white and African American citizens. Right 20 seeks to eliminate privileging of whites in segregated institutions and industrial markets. The UNIA was demanding equality through citizenship as promised in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Although multicultural education does not envision separate schooling, it parallels Right 20’s concerns for equity and the desire for systemic policy change in education.

In discussing empowering school culture to create educational equity, Banks cites various multicultural school programs that involve parents and students in decision-making processes (1995). Many of these programs are in inner cities, where segregated schools remain the norm. These programs do not focus on desegregation but on the distribution and use of resources for the schools. They seek to make segregated schools more equitable

academically and politically with a homogeneous student population. The resources of the community become valued parts of the school. In the comprehensive definition, instruction evolves from familiar contexts and builds upon the culture and languages of the students. However, multicultural education scholars and the UNIA condemn any form of segregation that begets unequal treatment.

In Right 22 the UNIA specifically addressed issues of unequal schooling. The UNIA advocated that education should be equal for all races. The phrase “system of education” encompasses both elements of the classroom and institutional discrimination, and assumes the need for corrective measures at multiple levels should be assumed. The UNIA pushed for students of African descent to receive the same privileges and advantages as white students, implicating all aspects of curricula. Coinciding with this right, Banks states that a major goal of multicultural education is, “to reform the school and other educational institutions so that the students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience education equality” (1995, 3). Grant and Ladson-Billings’s definition of multicultural education also mentions broader elements of institutional change that promote equity. Banks further delineates the various aspects of educational institutions that must be examined and changed:

For multicultural education to be implemented successfully institutional changes must be made, including changes in the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school. (1995, 4)

Concurring with Grant and Ladson-Billings’s assertion that multicultural education cannot be truncated, Banks states that educational equity can only occur if all segments of the institution are changed. The call for educational reform at the institutional level mirrors the UNIA’s demands for the government to alleviate educational disparities and meet the academic needs of all children.

Right 31 attempts to examine a specific element of education by attacking the perceptions and attitudes of teachers in the

classroom. Understanding that racial superiority can be taught overtly, the UNIA was concerned with white teachers teaching African American students. At the turn of the century, large urban schools became popular for educating the masses of African Americans and immigrants in cities. Then as now, the bulk of the teacher population was white and Protestant. The ability of white teachers to teach students of color was questioned. Education scholars contend that white teachers, young and old, are neither knowledgeable about or receptive to cultures other their own. This ignorance, in the form of language, behavior, and cultural practice, leads to a myriad of problems in educational settings with students of color, and results in their disenfranchisement.

Subtle attitudes and belief systems of teachers concerning the ability levels of their students remain a concern for multicultural educators. In his review of literature on multicultural education, Banks lists cultural deprivation as the dominant teacher education paradigm for teaching students of color (1995). Although intended to enlighten white educators about the home lives of students of color and the cultural differences between these students and their teachers, this theory has crippled the attitudes and perceptions of many white teachers; it continues to be a negative approach to instruction in diverse settings.

Acknowledging that white teachers' cultural biases disenfranchise students of color resonates with Right 31. The failure of white teachers to appropriately respond to students of color validates the UNIA's perceptions that white teachers teach inferiority to students of color. The multiple implications of white privilege for African American students and white teachers continue to be studied. Joyce King has found that unanalyzed elements of race and class bias in teachers' socialization amounts to "dysconscious racism" and often results in unequal treatment of children manifested in discipline tactics, class lessons, teacher/student interactions, teacher assumptions, and other elements of pedagogy (1991).

Right 49 deals specifically with issues of curricular content. The UNIA demanded the teaching of "Negro history" so that African American students would receive historical accounts privileging African American perspectives, events, and actions

over European-centered versions of history. The call for teaching African American history “to [the children’s] benefit” has a long history of its own. The emphasis on who benefits from the inclusion of African Americans into the curriculum addresses Banks’s construction of knowledge and content integration. Because it is “the manner in which the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways the knowledge is constructed within it” (1995, 4), the UNIA doctrine emphasizes the dissemination of the history of African people. The construction of history, and the political and cultural views placed upon its teaching, are as valuable as the facts and information. It is this concern that prompts Banks to state that content integration is only one of several necessary steps in the move toward multicultural education. He further states that simply including content by ethnic authors, their cultural practices, and the histories of people of color is by itself insufficient and unacceptable due to the diminution of the groups. In addition, the UNIA’s emphasis on history foreshadows the assertion by Grant and Ladson-Billings that students need to know who they are and where they fit into the overall history and present-day society of the United States.

The UNIA was very interested in reform of curricular content, and organized a specific delegation to tackle the plethora of issues involving the education of people of African descent. The first agenda “discussing the formulation of a code of education especially for Negroes” is a beginning step toward multicultural education (Clarke 1974). Multicultural education emerged in the 1960s with a focus on content and pedagogy reforms (Banks 1995). The delegation was concerned with African American students’ need for cultural and social validation in classrooms. This would include elements of the comprehensive multicultural education definition, considering the development of self-concept and issues of identity as important education markers and providing groups with a sense of their importance to the shaping of the United States (Grant 1994). Multicultural education allows for students’ discovery of self through an understanding of their ancestors’ contributions to the society in which they live.

The second topic on the agenda, “censoring of all literature

placed in the hands of Negroes” (Clarke 1974), reveals the UNIA’s apprehension about African American children reading literature with negative depictions and stereotypes that discouraged their belief in the intellectual equality of African American people. The UNIA wanted to monitor literature and dispose of those books they deemed psychologically harmful to African Americans. Parents and teachers wanted to evaluate books themselves and decide whether they represented African Americans in negative ways. Scholars Sonia Nieto and Violet Harris discuss the poor literary representations in children’s and young adult books that foster stereotypical racial attitudes, elements of cultural simplicity, and social inferiority. The original *Little Black Sambo* is an example of a potentially harmful book that has been removed from most classrooms.⁵

“Educating the race to discriminate in the reading of literature placed in its hands” is the most powerful of the four items on the agenda (Clarke 1974). The UNIA advocated critical thinking by African Americans. The UNIA’s explicit desire for people to read critically and contextually provides a connection between Banks’s multicultural education as transformative, as well as Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy for oppressed people. Grant advocates critical thinking when he states that students must be given chances to investigate “their world and national events and how these events affect their lives” (1994, 31). Just as Garvey did almost eighty years ago, education scholars are promoting the need for critical thinking as an integral part of multicultural education so that students will understand the social, cultural, and economic forces at work in their communities, as well as their own political agency in battling these forces (Banks 1995; Grant and Sleeter 1997; Ladson-Billings 1995; McClaren 1994).

The last agenda item, “promotion of an independent Negro literature and culture,” connects with radical ideologies of multicultural education (Clarke 1977). This agenda item reflects Afrocentric thought when promoting the education of African American students, by African American teachers, using African history as a focal point. Although many scholars might claim Afrocentrism does not adhere to the spirit of racial and cultural pluralism found in multicultural education, it can be seen as a

radical faction of the multicultural education paradigm. In a less radical fashion, Harris (1997) and Nieto (in Harris 1997; 2000) specify the inclusion of authors from various ethnic and racial groups. These authors make the experiences and ways of being from their cultures multidimensional and complicate one-dimensional views of their communities.

In addition, the ideology behind the decentralization of schools runs parallel to the last item. Schools in African American communities that choose their own curriculum, teachers, etc., can be viewed as independent. For example, Chicago decentralization has been advertised as a way for communities to tailor education specifically to their needs, using only overarching markers and testing to connect with the larger system of education standards. These specific needs often include curriculum that reflects the culture, class, and history of the neighborhoods where the schools are located, as well as an analysis of how the members of the neighborhoods function as part of the city, state, and country. Thus the curriculum becomes distinctive to each school according to location, student body, faculty and staff, and other resources.

Nonsynchrony and hybridity in Garveyism

The UNIA's "rights" for education reflect intellectual and political battles for educational equity and social equality in African American communities that were being fought by numerous groups of people. It is useful to explore relationships between other political and social activists and the UNIA. These complicated relationships reflect the theories of nonsynchrony and hybridity. Although Marcus Garvey shared ideological commonalities with many scholars of his day, his controversial political stances often kept him and the UNIA from joining with other political associations and intellectual communities. The relationships between the UNIA, other African American intellectuals, and various political affiliations illustrate the nonsynchronous nature of African American history and explain why Garveyism has not received significant attention in education.

A prime example of the UNIA's complex dealings with other African American activists is its relationship with Carter G. Woodson. Few scholars dispute Woodson's contributions

to the development of multicultural education. Banks emphasizes Woodson's ideas concerning the "mis-education" of African Americans as paramount in the conceptualization of multicultural education. When reviewing the UNIA "rights," it is easy to assume that there was an exchange of these very ideas between various scholars during the 1920s. It is hard to deny the ideological similarities between Woodson, who wrote several articles for *The Negro World*, and the aims of the UNIA. In his historical overview of multicultural education, Banks credits Woodson with the concept.

In his influential book *The Mis-education of the Negro*, Woodson stated that schools and colleges were mis-educating African Americans because they were being taught about European civilizations but not about African civilizations and cultures of their own people. He described what he felt were the harmful effects of neglecting black history and civilization on the thinking and self esteem of African Americans. (1995, 7)

Woodson wrote *The Mis-education of the Negro* fifteen years after the UNIA first published its Rights. Because Woodson was socially and politically active during this time period, it would be naive to think the largest organized African American political movement at that time did not influence him.

Another connection between Woodson's ideology and the beliefs of the UNIA was the reproach of African American scholars. In *The Mis-education of the Negro* Woodson criticizes African American educators for perpetuating inferior education of African American people. Woodson agreed with the UNIA when he chastised African American educators for teaching racial inferiority and cultural assimilation. He talked about educated African Americans as being "all but worthless in the development of their people," because they have not been taught racial pride or history (Woodson 1990, 2). In addition, Woodson was critical of the Black middle class and its promotion and imitation of white middle-class cultural practices. He believed that white middle-class values and societal contributions were privileged over African

American history and cultural practices. He found the privileging of information especially prominent in school curricula that ranked European history and literature as superior to works by African American authors.

Woodson and the UNIA both berated African American education for being devoid of the political elements necessary to benefit the people. In his book of philosophy and opinions, Marcus Garvey gently criticized Booker T. Washington's program of education reform.

If Washington had lived he would have had to change his program. No leader can successfully lead this race of ours without giving an interpretation of the awakened spirit of the New Negro, who does not seek industrial opportunity alone, but a political voice. (1992, 56)

The UNIA was strongly influenced by Booker T. Washington's argument for education as a way to obtain economic freedom.⁶ However, the UNIA supported education as a political, social, and economic act, just as Woodson advocated political awareness among Blacks. Garvey and Woodson were aligned in their criticisms of the Black middle class, their promotion of racial pride, and their desire for critical thinking; however, they opposed each other on other political and social issues.

Racial, class, and gender dynamics such as those between Woodson and Garvey saturate the history of Garveyism, and complicate the political and social alignments of the UNIA. During the early 1920s, African American leaders from various political affiliations shared podiums at neighborhood rallies and structured conventions. These groups were all seeking to "uplift the race" by changing poor working and housing conditions in African American communities, and working for better education and greater social mobility. Unfortunately, this harmony quickly dissipated as groups struggled for members, voice, and authority.

Most political leaders agreed that a "New Negro" had come into being after World War I. Gramsci's "crisis of authority" and Alain Locke's "New Negro" provide similar explanations for the switch in African American leadership. Due to the changing

nature of the crisis among African Americans, a younger, more radical leadership overthrew the older leadership, perceived as more submissive. This New Negro was more willing to argue openly for the civil rights of African Americans, as opposed to the patient and subversive methods used by the older leadership.

While the UNIA and other African American intellectuals agreed on the emergence of the New Negro, they disagreed on the proper direction for political activism. Many intellectuals welcomed white philanthropic contributions, and sought assimilation. Baker discusses how “being educated” has been connected with constructions of whiteness and a desire to mirror the white middle class (1998). According to Baker, the closer to assimilating, culturally and biologically, African Americans became, the smarter and more educated they appeared. Garveyism fought against assimilation on all levels. In fact, Garveyism gained support from Ku Klux Klan factions because of Marcus Garvey’s strong stance against the social and biological mixing of races. Interestingly, it was over the very issue of support to and from the KKK that Carter G. Woodson broke entirely from publishing in the *Negro World*. The fleeting KKK support was created solely around the issue of miscegenation, since both groups vocally endorsed violence as a solution to their conflicts (Vincent 1977).⁷

Many African American intellectuals of lighter skin or mixed racial heritage perceived the UNIA’s stance against miscegenation as a personal attack on their identities and ways of being in the world. Historically the Black middle class has been comprised of predominately lighter-skinned African Americans with histories of miscegenation in their family genealogies (Seltzer and Smith 1992). The UNIA attacked the Black middle class for perpetuating the color line between light- and dark-skinned Blacks and for its attempts to gain social acceptance by assimilating the culture and behaviors of whites (Cronon 1974). Tensions between light- and dark-skinned Blacks still remain around issues of privilege and access in the African American community and the larger society. Today lighter-skinned Blacks are more likely to be hired and promoted in the workplace (Landry 1987).

Marcus Garvey was not only cognizant of shadism as a form

of oppression, but he recognized the double-edged sword of class in the macrosociety of the United States and in the microsociety of African American communities. This recognition of class is illustrated in the inclusion/exclusion demographic patterns in UNIA membership. Although many of the UNIA leaders were members of the Black middle class, the majority of the foot soldiers were dark-skinned, working-class African Americans. These African Americans were drawn to Garveyism because of the emphasis on the struggle and merits of African people and culture as well as the call for social action.

The UNIA's struggle to incorporate issues of class into the race debates is demonstrated in their brief alliances with other political parties. Temporarily in harmony with socialism and communism, the UNIA quickly became impatient with these political parties' responses to concerns of racial equity. The UNIA never claimed a particular political orientation, citing its need to stand alone and represent Africa and the African diaspora. Socialism was rejected because it remained focused on assimilationist class issues, and negated issues of racial oppression. Articles in the *Negro World* criticized African American socialist leaders for miscegenation and token representation by white political organizations.

Communism also fell short of UNIA approval because of its heavily laden economic vision, and its funding by white philanthropists. The UNIA rejected any political organization that was indebted to white philanthropists. The acceptance of white philanthropic gifts conflicted with the goal of economic and social strength for Africans using African resources and monies. It was the leaders of the various political groups and Black intellectuals who led the fight to remove Garvey from the UNIA and to destroy the movement.

Yet socialism, Garveyism, and communism share common threads. All three organizations relegated women to strict roles within their organizations. Women were granted leadership status over other women, concerning "women's issues." Rarely were they allowed to command the interests of both men and women in these organizations. Women were viewed as needing physical and moral protection from men, but as equals in the sexually

segregated political parties. Furthermore, the three parties all stressed the role of class in the struggle for social and economic equality.

Conclusions

Prospering during a time when social Darwinism and eugenics were the new tools the federal government used to control African Americans (Baker 1998), Garveyism brought a sense of pride to people of African ancestry throughout the United States and abroad. To combat the propaganda of eugenics at the turn of the century, Garveyism proclaimed Africans as gifted, talented people whose culture and knowledge were not only valid, but even superior.

Probably no Black leader has moved so profoundly so many Black people during his own lifetime as did Marcus Garvey. Though most of his specific proposals and projects did not come to material fruition, he stimulated a revolution in Black consciousness more far-reaching in its implications than the mere financial success of Black Star Line or the Negro Factories Corporation could possibly have been. (Barksdale and Kinnamon 1972, 565)

These claims of superiority instilled a sense of racial pride among people of African ancestry previously not accomplished on such a grand scale. Standing on the shoulders of African American leaders and intellectuals from Reconstruction and beside other race men and women at the turn of the century, Garveyism was a forerunner of intellectual and cultural enlightenment for masses of African Americans within and beyond the borders of the United States.

Even though the goals and ideals of the UNIA are problematic to past and present scholars, the organization's promotion of opportunities to seek equality should not be minimized. Moreover, it is these same flaws that show the hybridity of groups; interrogating assumed continuity and homogeneity. "The fact is that dynamic relations of race, class, and gender do not unproblematically reproduce each other" (McCarthy 1998, 68; McCarthy and Apple 1997, 25). Let Garveyism, its flaws and strengths, be a guide and

example of the complex elements that must be unpacked to gain a broader, more complete view of all history.

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

NOTES

1. While the United States is not divided by strict class differentiation in the way of the French, the state, run by privileged whites, could be seen as the ruling class during the 1920s.

2. Many African Americans remained overseas and filed for French citizenship. They felt the French were more welcoming and liberal.

3. Other cities having race riots in 1919 included: Elaine Arkansas; Chicago; Omaha; Knoxville; Washington, D.C.; Longview, Texas; Waukegan, Illinois; and East St. Louis, Illinois. These cities suffered the highest casualty rates of Blacks and whites during this time (Vincent 1977, 35).

4. The UNIA was primarily focused on the economic independence of African people. This focus included the creation of cooperative grocery stores, restaurants, laundries, garment factories, dress and millinery shops, a greeting card company, a phonograph record company, and a publishing house (Vincent 1977, 103).

5. Violet Harris voices the need for active discrimination against books that do not properly represent the cultures of African Americans and other people of color. Due to the large push to produce multicultural literature, many companies are producing inaccurate, inappropriate materials that reproduce stereotypes and biases. (Harris 1997)

6. Marcus Garvey wrote to Booker T. Washington of his plans to visit the United States, and requested a meeting with him. Garvey did not arrive in the United States, however, until shortly after Washington died.

7. The UNIA also separated because of the relationship with the KKK. Many members believed it was wrong to receive and give support to the KKK because opposition to KKK violence was softened by the relationship. In contrast, those members who thought the KKK support was useful believed that KKK pressure would convince more members to go back to Africa to escape the rampant, sanctioned violence of the KKK.

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Richard Wright's "Red Ladder": Marxism, Race, and Anticolonialism

Rachel Peterson

Many a black boy in America has seized upon the rungs of the Red ladder to climb out of his Black Belt.

—Richard Wright, *White Man Listen!*

“After Marxism had laid bare the skeleton of society, there remains the task of the writer to plant flesh upon the bones out of his will to live” (Wright 1978, 44). This injunction, made in the 1937 “Blueprint for Negro Writing,” expresses the inextricable connection between Marxism and art that Wright envisioned as the foundation of all radical political action. Wright continually foregrounded the necessity of a historical-materialist understanding around which to organize a revolutionary literature. Writing becomes a means through which to expose the “bare” bones of society and to build a consciousness capable of changing them.

Wright considered race to be central to this consciousness, and his ambivalent relationship to the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA), his understanding of Marxism-Leninism, and his concern with issues of colonialism and racism combine to advance a compelling reconfiguration of both categorical and practical Marxist applications. Wright, as the foremost Communist writer during the late 1930s and recognized as a spokesman for African Americans, was distinctly aware of the utility of Marxism to

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address racial inequity, yet was simultaneously cognizant of the difficulties associated with its practice in the United States.

Because of Wright's bitter public break with the Communist Party and seemingly ambivalent assessments of Marxism thereafter, Wright has been seen as repudiating Marxism altogether. While Wright certainly attacked U.S. and European communism, he maintained clear and crucial principles of Marxism-Leninism as valid until his death, nearly twenty years after he left the Party. Specifically, Wright continued to assert the necessity of consciousness to revolution, invoked a materialist interpretation of world events, and advocated the use of a vanguard to lead a mass democratic struggle to end oppression. Moving from a literary concern with Marxism as a creative tool to a recognition of its utility in anticolonial movements, Wright continually explored the relations between Marxism as a science and the specificities of different conditions, which made his understanding of Marx one of adaptive instrumentality. Accepting unquestioningly the validity of Marxism, Wright also insisted that it be broadly adapted to particular historical conditions, and insisted on translating the principles of class consciousness and struggle into their corresponding racial dimensions. In his understanding of class consciousness in colonial liberation as an often racialized entity, Wright elucidates the congruity of Marxism and nationalist, race-based movements.

Wright's absorption of Marx and efforts to relate it to revolutionary Black nationalism in the United States and the diaspora contributes to the vital project of melding racial and class struggles into a unified offensive against capitalism and its attendant imperialism. While noting the interstices among race, class, and colonialism, this study aims to map Wright's approach to these relations. Accordingly, rather than offering a comprehensive rendering of the complex intercourse between these forces, I intend to demonstrate Wright's sustained commitment to Marxism and nationalism. This is a project made necessary by efforts to compartmentalize Wright as aligning with either Marxism or Black nationalism. Wright's awareness that a nationalism-based movement is necessary in certain areas where relations still

retain feudalistic components reflects an understanding of anti-colonialist struggle and corresponds with the thinking of such contemporaries as Frantz Fanon, George Padmore, and C. L. R. James. His insistence that Marxism is integral to understanding these relations and accomplishing liberation similarly belongs to a continuum countering efforts to divide the revolutionary forces of nationalism and anticapitalism.

The erasure of this crucial aspect of Wright's work is also part of the hegemonic project to obscure the potential of such alliances. Given the opinion of many—for example, Haki R. Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), who wrote in 1978 that "the marxist line is to subordinate Black nationalism and Pan Afrikanism for world internationalism, which is to white people only a voiced principle" (1978, 52)—perspectives that counter such characterizations contribute to fortifying current practical and theoretical work. This essay, while not dealing with his better-known work, which has been widely treated elsewhere, focuses on his theoretical writings of the 1940s and 1950s.

Wright's collection of short stories, *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), garnered considerable attention, and the widely read *Native Son* (1940) and *Black Boy* (1945) established his stature as a leading literary figure. This position, combined with the development of the influential Wright school of realist literature, his 1947 expatriation from the United States, and his assessments of fascism and communism in *The Outsider* (1952) and other works, suggests that Wright's political insights are key to attempts to theorize the relationship between art and revolution. Wright believed that Marxism is necessary to reveal the "skeleton of society," and that the writer has the responsibility to build on this frame the means to envision and create a just, or socialist, world. The central propositions of his thinking were that the science of Marxism is indispensable for understanding the world, and that the artist is crucial to providing an alternative.

Wright's introduction to Marxist theory and practice accompanied his involvement with the Communist Party, which he joined first as a member of the John Reed Clubs in 1932 and in which he quickly rose to a position of prominence. Already

serving in the CPUSA-led League of American Writers and the American Peace Mobilization and as the Harlem correspondent for the *Daily Worker*; Wright additionally became, in Daniel Aaron's estimation, "the Party's most illustrious proletarian author" (1973, 43; Solomon 1998, 160, 281). Despite increasing tension within the Party regarding Wright's often-unflattering depiction of white Communists, his support of Black nationalism, and his disillusionment with the abandonment of racial struggle during the Popular Front, Wright remained a high-profile member of the CPUSA until his 1943 withdrawal (Aaron 1973; Fabre 1973; Webb 1968; Walker 1988). His break with the CPUSA has been coopted ever since by anti-Communist analysts from Harvey Klehr (1992) to Wilson Record (1964) and Harold Cruse (1967), largely due to his publication of an account of his separation, "I Tried to Be a Communist," in the *Atlantic Monthly* in August and September, 1944, and later ambivalent statements about the CPUSA in interviews.¹ These moves have understandably been seen as a denunciation of his ties to the Left, or, worse still, as his collaboration with McCarthyism, and as such have been read primarily as propaganda (Foley 1993, 170–71, and 1997, 536, 538; Breitman 1978, 389).² The publication in 1977 of an expansion of the *Atlantic Monthly* article as *American Hunger* further obfuscated his appreciation of Marxism, and ignited a controversy between those who focused on its anti-Communist rhetoric and those who dismissed the book as baseless diatribe. A careful reading of the article and *American Hunger*, along with other critical Wright nonfiction texts, however, reflects his continued adherence to a radical interpretation of the racial situation throughout the world, and his appreciation of Marxism's humanist and analytical potential.³

Wright describes his introduction to Marxist theory as an epiphany; he recalls that in his initial enthusiasm, he

was amazed to find that there did exist in this world an organized search for truth of the lives of the oppressed and the isolated. . . .

It was not the economics of Communism, nor the great power of trade unions, nor the excitement of underground

politics that claimed me; my attention was caught by the similarity of the experiences of workers in other lands, by the possibility of uniting scattered but kindred people into a whole.

. . . I did not want to make individual war or individual peace. (1977, 62–63)

The recognition of his unity with the people of "one-sixth of the earth" (1977, 63) brought a sense of exhilaration and purpose to Wright that sustained his allegiance to Marxism until his death. In addition to instilling an awareness of his position as a worker and a Black man in a global context, Marxism provided a system of analysis through which to interpret the world, a way to untangle the history and ideologies that had bound him to oppression. His colleague Ralph Ellison said of Wright's in introduction to the CPUSA that Marxism provided Wright with the "sense . . . that he was living in a world in which he did not have to be confused by the mystifications of racism, [from which] Wright harnessed his revolutionary tendencies" (1986, 208).

Wright was also struck by the integrated nature of the CPUSA. In *American Hunger* and *White Man, Listen!* (1957), Wright relates his unavailing search to find condescension and other racist expressions among his fellow members. He was disarmed to find himself welcomed into a group seemingly without racial prejudice. This was Wright's first experience of being treated as an equal by whites, and it had a profound effect on him, embedding a long devotion to the Party and its goals. When he assessed in a 1956 lecture the place of Marxism in colonial situations, where it could not be applied directly without constructive appropriations, Wright reasserted the radical potential presented by a consciously interracial antiracist program:

But that ideology does solve something. It lowers the social and racial barriers and allows the trapped elite of Asia and Africa and black America the opportunity to climb out of its ghetto.

. . . Many a black boy in America has seized upon the rungs of the Red ladder to climb out of his Black Belt.

And well he may, if there are no other ways out of it. Hence, ideology here becomes a means towards social intimacy.

. . . The role of ideology here served as a function; it enabled the Negro or Asian or African to meet revolutionary fragments of the hostile race on a plane of equality. (1957, 44–45)

Finally, like many other African Americans, Wright believed the CPUSA to be unequalled in its fight against racial injustice in the Uted States; as he said in a 1946 interview a few years after his acrimonious departure from the CPUSA, “the only party which has made an effort in favor of the blacks is the American Communist Party” (1977). Wright’s summation of these efforts, however, reflects his ultimate sense of the failure of the CPUSA as an organization, distinct from Marxism as a science: “regrettably, in twenty-five years of struggle, it has achieved strictly nothing” (Kinnamon 1993, 96).

This later cynicism has its roots in Wright’s recognition that for colonized peoples, a nationalist consciousness was indispensable in fomenting radical change, a position curiously at odds with the Party’s antipathy towards Black nationalism that went beyond the cultural realm (specifically what is often referred to as revolutionary Black nationalism), despite its Black Belt thesis, which is based in the understanding of internal colonialism in the United States. During his relationship with the CPUSA, Wright continually foregrounded a racialized understanding of social revolution within the United States. Rather than dismissing Black nationalism as “reactionary,” as the Party did, Wright saw it as a potentially radical force in forging a political consciousness. Wright insisted that African Americans possess “a nationalism that knows its origins, its limitations; that is aware of the dangers of its position; that knows its ultimate aims are unrealizable within the framework of capitalist America” (1978, 42). Like his close friend C. L. R. James, who, in the words of Robin D. G. Kelley, realized that “race consciousness among the masses of Negroes was simultaneously an expression of class consciousness” (1996, 115), Wright clearly linked the potential of Black nationalism to anticapitalist struggle, and recognized that such a consciousness

would be integral to achieving total social equality.

While acknowledging that the mobilization of Black nationalism inherently carried certain "dangers," Wright felt that the Black writer could "weed out" its negative manifestations "and replace them with hardier and sturdier types" (1978, 49). These new forms would demonstrate that the independent struggle of African Americans could disrupt U.S. colonialism and capitalism without having to be subsumed into the category of class struggle. Wright was keenly aware that what E. San Juan later designated "race or racially based political calculations, under specific conditions, may define the content and form of class struggle," thereby containing "an autonomous effectivity" (1992, 48). While Black nationalism itself is a complex entity with multitudinous expressions, definitions, and lineages, from, for example, Black capitalism to Negritude to "scientific pan-African nationalism," and racial identity is only one component, Wright maintained that only a revolutionary political nationalism was appropriate—in other words, racial oppression could only be abolished through anti-colonialism and anticapitalism. At the same time, Wright believed these forces had to be met by a unified resistance among people of color, and theorized that culture was a key means to encourage the formation of a radicalized consciousness and commitment.

This understanding of the position of race in struggle led Wright to recognize that Black nationalists like Marcus Garvey filled a vital need among Black people, as C. L. R. James put it, to "provide some salve for [their] humiliated pride" (1996, 83). While Wright did not dispute that the CPUSA served an important purpose, he felt that before African Americans could participate in class struggle for racial and economic equality, they must develop a sense of confidence. Implicit in this development would be a repudiation of U.S. hegemony. In *American Hunger*, Wright describes his contact with Garveyites:

Theirs was a passionate rejection of America, for they sensed . . . that they had no chance to live a full human life in America. Their lives were not cluttered with ideas in which they could only half believe; they could not create illusions which made them think they were living when they

were not; their daily lives were too nakedly harsh to permit of camouflage. (1977, 28)

African Americans then were not likely to become entrapped by a false consciousness; conditions in the United States prevented this. Wright believed fears that in the United States “oppressed minorities” would attempt to adopt the affectations of the ruling class with the goal of social ascendancy were unfounded. Instead, Wright thought that U.S. racism was so acutely entrenched at all levels that African Americans could not participate in the oppression of others, and therefore shared a unique consciousness. “The workers of a minority people, chafing under exploitation, forge organizational forms of struggle to better their lot. Lacking the handicaps of false ambition and property, they have access to a wide social vision and a deep social consciousness” (Wright 1978, 38). Wright situated this unencumbered, broadened social vision within the potential of Black nationalism (in combination with class consciousness) to galvanize a vanguard.⁴

Wright was convinced that nationalism served as a vehicle for collective action that would inevitably lead to the dismantling of capitalism. While he saw Garvey’s ambitions for an independent African state improbable under the current conditions in the United States, Wright recognized that such a program had radical possibilities as a mobilizing force. As he stated, “It was when the Garveyites spoke fervently of building their own country . . . that I sensed the passionate hunger of their lives, that I caught a glimpse of the potential strength of the American Negro” (1977, 29). Wright advocated the harnessing of this nascent strength to achieve revolution.

Within the CPUSA, Garvey’s nationalism was viewed as a threat to interracial class solidarity, and was, therefore, as Wright characterized the Party’s position, “black chauvinism” (1978, 42; Naison 1983, 108-9; Hutchison 1995, 39-47). As stated in the 1930 Resolutions of the Communist International on the Negro Question, the CPUSA opposed “a reactionary Negro separatism, for instance, represented by Garvey [who] pursues only the political aim of diverting Negro masses from the real liberation struggle against American imperialism” (*Resolutions of*

the Communist International 1980, 14–15). Wright instead saw Garvey's nationalism as facilitating mass action among African Americans, and therefore of positive value. The CPUSA also recognized Garveyism's organizational power, and accordingly expended great effort to recruit supporters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, admiring their tenacity, yet also hoping to derail the burgeoning nationalist movement (Solomon 1993, 33–36).⁵

As the CPUSA moved into the reform-oriented Popular Front, Wright's Black-nationalist sympathies led to inevitable antagonism within the Party, some of which can be observed in his negative depictions of the CPUSA and subsequent disagreements with the Party over *Native Son* (Horne 1993, 211–12; Solomon 1998, 160, 281). Wright, in a personal letter to *New Masses* editor and proletarian novelist Mike Gold, responded to criticisms of his first novel, protesting that if he followed the CPUSA's "advice and wrote of Negroes through the lens of how the Party views them, I'd abandon the Bigger Thomases. . . . [I]t is still possible for a wave of nationalism to sweep the Negro people today" (Fabre 1973, 185–56). Gerald Horne, in *Black Liberation/Red Scare*, describes the strained relations this book caused between Wright and members such as Ben Davis, who had previously supported Wright, but found the depictions of the CPUSA in *Native Son* were atypical, even if the novel "was a terrific indictment of capitalist America" (1994, 61; Foley 1993, 209). Elsewhere, Wright recounts being told to discontinue writing biographies of certain Black revolutionaries, being told that "we Communists don't dramatize Negro nationalism" (1977, 102).⁶ Clearly, such a position was at odds with Wright's confidence in racial consciousness as an agent for mass transformation. Cedric Robinson contends that for Wright, "it was not sufficient for black liberation that his people come to terms with the critique of capitalist society . . . it was necessary that blacks transform the Marxist critique into an expression of their own emergence as a negation of Western capitalism" (1983, 428).

In "Blueprint for Negro Writing," published in 1937, Wright elaborated on the relationship between nationalism and class-based social movements. Framing his discussion in literary terms,

Wright explicitly links creative expression with Black liberation, invoking nationalism as a driving force. Wright sees a nationalism justified in its capacity for “self-possession” as a foundation to be built upon, which would ultimately be expressed as “the interdependence of people in modern society” (1978, 42). Wright placed on the Black writer an awesome responsibility: “to do no less than create the values by which the race is to struggle, live and die,” and in the execution of this duty, “Marxism is but the starting point.” Wright suggested that revealing “the horrors of capitalism” was a negative response to historical conditions, while showing “the faint stirrings of a new and emerging life” was a positive point to begin establishing active resistance, or again, to “plant flesh upon those bones” that Marxism exposed (1978, 44). In this, Wright attributes to Marxism the ability to analyze historical conditions in a meaningful way, thus serving as a structure on which to build a radical consciousness. The dialectic between consciousness, its expression, and radical change is articulated by Wright in a formula that stresses the role of culture and self-awareness as a people: if a Black writer hopes “to do justice to his subject matter . . . a deep, informed, and complex consciousness is necessary; a consciousness which draws for its strength upon the fluid lore of a great people, and moulds this lore with the concepts that move and direct the forces of history today” (1978, 43).

The vanguardism expressed in Wright’s delegation of the Black writer to a leadership role within African American struggle was also applied to his understanding of the African American’s position in relation to other movements seeking radical change. He claimed that African American “organizations show greater strength, adaptability, and efficiency than any other group or class in society.” Wright chastises Black writers for not having generated the same “consciousness and mobilization for economic and political action” (1978, 38), arguing that the inactivity of Black writers has resulted in a “gap” between the writer and those the writer seeks to represent. Wright saw a similar chasm between Communist Party organizers and the African Americans they were organizing, “a distance so vast that the agitators did not know how to appeal to the people they sought to lead” (1977, 37). Wright

designates the Black writer as a sort of translator of experiences and a vehicle for leadership. At the same time, rather than imposing a vanguard of intellectuals leading others, Wright repeatedly argues that the masses themselves may serve as a "blueprint" for action. As a means of breaching the distance between "leaders" and "the people," Wright urged the Black writer to absorb and channel the experience of African Americans into a materially and expressively nationalist consciousness that would encompass a class consciousness as well; as he says in *American Hunger*, "the main concern of a revolutionary artist was to produce revolutionary art" (1977, 89). This art would not express merely a sort of innocuous, ornamental cultural nationalism but one committed to change of the most fundamental sort.

Asserting that Marxism "restores to the writer his lost heritage," Wright advocated the veneration of that heritage as a critical step in developing an actuating consciousness (1954, 43). If, as Marx pronounces in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (1979, 103), the writer needed to confront, repossess, and reconfigure this history. Thus tradition and culture were integral to the formation of an identity that would counter the alienating effects of a history of deculturation and oppression, and the Black writer was in an especially advantageous position to attempt such recovery. In "Blueprint," Wright admonishes "those who shy away from the nationalist implications of Negro life" to examine African American cultural traditions, particularly folklore, arguing that "here are those vital beginnings of recognition of value in life as it is lived, a recognition that marks the emergence of a new culture in the shell of the old." Accordingly, much of the work Wright's "Blueprint" and *Uncle Tom's Children* perform is conveying the strength and centrality of this tradition, and insisting on its relation to anticapitalist struggle. As Wright states, with the initiation of this process, once "a people begin to realize the *meaning* of their suffering, the civilization that engenders that suffering is doomed" (1978, 41). Believing that the writer was obligated and in an ideal position to facilitate this course, Wright's "Blueprint" acted as, in

Ellison's summation, "a projection of his own plan for action," as a "literary and intellectual" leader (quoted in Graham and Singh 1995, 324–25). This leadership was intrinsically political; Wright considered the struggle for self-expression through literature critical to liberation, as "without intellectual weapons what hope is left to Black Americans, who have already been deprived of economic, social and political weapons?" (Kinnamon and Fabre 1993, 95). Thus the role of the Black writer was to call to action and also to provide a voice for the disenfranchised. As his contemporary Frantz Fanon exhorts, a writer should be "the awakener of the people" and "the mouthpiece of a new reality in action" through the production of "fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature" (1963, 223).

Wright attributes his own development as an artist to his introduction to Marxism: "here at last in the realm of revolutionary expression was where Negro experience could find a home, a functioning value and role" (1977, 63). It was over the dimensions and position of this role that Wright's conflicts with the Party eventually emerged. Long after his departure from the CPUSA, however, Wright continued to ascribe the internalization of Marxism as integral to the Black writer's capacity for expression. In 1953, Wright traced the lineage of the Harlem Renaissance thus: "William E. B. Du Bois was one of the predecessors of the 'New Negro' movement. The pressure to avoid . . . Western discrimination arose from him, and can be explained by the ideas of Marx, whose philosophy was the seed from which the 'New Negro' was born" (Kinnamon and Fabre 1993, 156). Here again Wright argues that a materialist self-understanding was the source of African American political and cultural activism, and as such a requisite "starting point." Wright's genealogy of the New Negro resonates with current interpretations as well; authors James E. Smethurst and William J. Maxwell similarly argue that the early progenitors of the New Negro developed with the encouragement of Communism. Tracing the relationship of lesser known and high-profile "New Negroes" such as Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, these scholars suggest that Communist parties in the Soviet Union and in the United States played a critical role in bolstering the development of the New Negro, through

patronizing talent and by offering a platform of racial equality unparalleled in its rigor among U.S. political parties at that time (Smethurst 1999; Maxwell 2000).⁷

Wright further links the contributions of Marxism with the development of the African American writer, during and following the appearance of the "New Negro," in his 1956 lecture, "The Literature of the Negro in the United States." In this piece, Wright rehearses his own initial epiphany upon being introduced to Communism through describing the importance of the Russian revolution to other writers of color:

Soviet Russia rose and sent out her calls to the oppressed.

. . . Alien ideologies gripped men's minds and the most receptive minds in our land were those of rejected Negroes. Color consciousness lost some of its edge and was replaced in a large measure by class consciousness; with the rise of an integral working-class movement, a new sense of identification came to the American Negro.

. . . [H]e found a new sense of oneness, a new integration; it was possible once more for him to write out of the shared hopes and aspirations of millions of people. (1957, 141–42)

Wright assigned considerable significance to this realization of Marxist universalist implications, believing that for a people as dislocated and "othered" as African-Americans, physical and conscious "integration" was a vital component of self-understanding and solidarity with other oppressed peoples. For the Black writer aspiring to bring radical change, "perspective," defined as "a question of awareness, of consciousness," depends upon learning "to view the life of a Negro living in New York's Harlem or Chicago's South Side with the consciousness that one-sixth of the earth's surface belongs to the working class. . . . [T]he Negro writer must create in his reader's minds a relationship between a Negro woman hoeing cotton in the South and the men who loll in swivel chairs in Wall Street and take the fruits of her toil" (1978, 45–46). His recognition of these relationships stakes a political position that not only knows the general contradiction of capital and labor but also the specific contradictions of race within the

U.S. social formation, and advocates in response a worldwide solidarity among all oppressed people.

The expansive implications of an absorption of Marxism can also be seen in Wright's 1940 explanation of his motives in writing *Native Son*, "How Bigger Was Born." Wright connects his protagonist's "hopes, dreams and despairs" to the author's own realization, upon reading the histories of "Russian revolutionaries," that there was potential for "far-flung kinships . . . [between] the American Negro and other people possessing a kindred consciousness" (1993, 515). In this essay, Wright maintains that he had in his life encountered "a million Biggers," who shared a common sense of alienation and exploitation. In 1945, he explicitly linked Bigger Thomas's racial and economic oppression with other forms of capitalist, imperialist abuse in his comment that in his depiction of Bigger his "description of Negro life is no more horrible than Karl Marx's picture of the English workingman during his time" (Kinnamon and Fabre 1993, 84). Wright's comparison, rather than obliterating racial distinctions, seems a means for him to insist that Bigger's specific experience as an African American makes explicit a critique of capitalism. Through such universalizing, he defends his own characterization of Bigger, which had been attacked for its negative, violent representation. Through such an equation, Wright both suggests the commonality among oppression's many victims and reinforces Bigger Thomas's position as a figure representing class disparity and its accordant consciousness. The emergence of a consciousness aware of the "kinships" spawned by capitalism would be the foundation for the "real connections" envisioned by Marx and Engels when they wrote, "only this will liberate the separate individuals from the various national and local barriers, bring them into practical connection with the production (including intellectual production) of the whole world" (1976, 51). While Wright's essay focuses on Bigger as embodying class exploitation, elsewhere he foregrounds Bigger's nationalist implications, believing the ambivalent reception of the novel by some Communist critics reflected their discomfort with these dimensions (Foley 1993, 196; Ellison letter, 22 April 1940; Mullen 1999, 31–36; Carreiro 1999).

Wright's assessment of Marxism's contribution to Black consciousness is echoed in his historical analyses. In *Twelve Million Black Voices* (first published in 1941), for example, Wright contextualizes each picture with a narrative explicating current economic and social conditions of African-Americans, and thoroughly analyzes the historical roots of contemporary conditions in slavery, colonialism, and racism in the North and in the Jim Crow South. In his characterization of social relations during the nineteenth century, Wright concludes that "the opinion of the nation divided into two opposing constellations, a world of machines and a world of slaves. Two groups of leaders sprang up: the Bosses of the Buildings and the Lords of the Land" (1969, 26). Throughout the book, Wright traces the history of the collaborative effort of bosses and lords to exploit African Americans through industrial and agricultural labor. Moving from the Black Belt to the North in the twentieth century, Wright focuses on the colonialist attempt to destabilize and suppress cultural traditions and the capitalist drive to exploit labor and divide workers through racial hierarchies; both worked to enhance the power of "the Bosses and lords," while "black folk remain out of touch with the quickening fluids of American hope" (1969, 117). In this work, perhaps more than any previous, Wright examines the debased but essential nature of African American labor, concluding that "day after day we labor in the gigantic factories and mills of Western Civilization; but we have never been allowed to become an organic part of this civilization; we have yet to share its ultimate hopes and expectations, its incentives and perspectives, which form the core of meaning for millions, have yet to lift our personalities to levels of purpose" (1969, 127). At the same time that African Americans were excluded from the nation, "we black folk, our history and our present being, are a mirror of all the manifold experience of America," embodying both suffering and resistance, and commanding "a consciousness and memory such as few people possess" (1969, 146).

The distinction Wright draws between those who share in the ideology and incentives of capitalism and those who stand outside its realm again implies the improbability that African

Americans will become class collaborationists. Wright links this peripheral relationship to their central economic and symbolic role, a discrepancy begetting a people so ostracized and oppressed that the common hegemonic appeals fall short for these groups of laborers in the South and North. Again, this reasserts the notion that the writers Wright addresses are far beyond the snare of false consciousness, or expedient coalitions. In *Twelve Million Black Voices*, Wright attempts to give voice himself to the millions who are not commonly heard, but whose struggle has direct relevance to any anticapitalist movement. Wright goes on to contend that this distancing makes the identification and consciousness stimulated by literature an absolute prerequisite to action.

Wright's ideas were apparently congruent enough with the CPUSA's approach to race for Wright to play a prominent role in the Party in the 1930s. In the Popular Front, however, it became increasingly evident to Wright, as C. L. R. James recounts, that "Russian communism . . . betrayed Negro revolutionism" (1997, 211). Wright's final separation from the CPUSA was, in fact, precipitated by the sudden reversal of Communist Party policy upon Germany's invasion of the USSR. With this turn, the CPUSA adopted a more conciliatory analysis of race relations in the United States, agreeing to stop supporting union strikes and highly visible protests against racial discrimination, especially in the defense industry and military. As the Popular Front progressed, the CPUSA position "changed from one that at least attempted to be revolutionary to one that is today openly tied to American imperialism and the Roosevelt war machine" (James 1996, 117; Gerassi 1993, 82, 87–88). Wright refused to subordinate the struggle for racial equality to the expediencies of CPUSA policy.

His experience with the Party convinced Wright that the CPUSA, which he had long regarded as an unparalleled champion of Black liberation, was more loyal to the Soviet Union than to its Black constituency. In short, the CPUSA seemed to become more reform-oriented and liberal throughout the Popular Front, and Wright held fast to his radical convictions. Indeed, Wright believed that the obvious contradictions of the proposed U.S. commitment to protecting the world from fascism, while similar

conditions existed within its own borders, provided a compelling platform to stage struggles against oppression at home (Jackson 2000, 322–23, 331). African Americans were aware of this paradox, Wright believed. He wrote in a *New Masses* article, "Not My People's War," published five days before the German invasion of the Soviet Union:

The Negro's experience with past wars, his attitudes towards the present one, his attitude of chronic distrust, constitute the most incisive and graphic refutation of every idealistic statement made by the war leaders as to the alleged democratic goal and aim of this war. (1941, 9)

While the CPUSA moved from pacifism to support for the war effort, Wright was less malleable. His acute understanding of these contradictions in the CPUSA line and the fight against European racism first led him far beyond the popular notion of a double victory. For Wright, the war against racism needed to be fought before democracy could be realized and defended.

Wright's departure from the CPUSA, and in particular his later account in *American Hunger*, have often been read as a renunciation of Marxism and as a marker of his own inward turn away from radical politics toward existentialism. Wright seemed to resent any appropriation and simplification of his expressions either for anti-Communist propaganda or for endorsing CPUSA approaches with which he disagreed. He related the attempts by others to use his words against each other to his position as a person of color, stating that in the volatile and divisive context of the early 1950s, "all public utterances are dragged willy nilly into the service of something or somebody . . . [a]nd especially is this true of the expressions of those of us who have been doomed to live and act in a tight web of racial and economic facts" (1995, 45). Wright's motives and attitudes have thus often been misrepresented, belittling his complexity and ignoring the fact that, as Michel Fabre writes, "Wright did not abandon his Marxist point of view. He was merely forced to admit that the socialism practiced by the American Communist Party did not give enough attention to the fight against racism and the development of the individual" (Fabre 1973, 230).

Indeed, in 1946, Wright told an interviewer that he left the Party because “it was not militant enough,” and that he considered himself to be “far left of the left” (Kinnamon and Fabre 1993, 61)—hardly the words of someone attempting to assume an anti-Communist stance. Again, in 1954, Wright affirms that “as an American Negro whose life is governed by racial codes written into law, I state clearly that my abandonment of Communism does not automatically place me in a position of endorsing” capitalism, indeed, it was the racial “policies, political and economic, of the non-communist world . . . that led me to take up Communism in the first place” (1954, xii). Rather than signaling a move away from revolutionary politics, Wright’s departure from both the CPUSA and the United States marked his move toward an integration of his previous understandings of the relationship of anti-capitalism to anticolonialism, and an application of this synthesis to the international scene, specifically Africa’s Gold Coast. After his move to France, Wright’s growing friendship with Césaire, Fanon, James, Padmore, and Sartre, the growth of powerful anticolonialist movements in Africa, and his own longstanding sense of Marxism’s global relevance resulted in Wright becoming primarily occupied with international resistance throughout the 1950s.

This period was marked by the publication of three works of nonfiction, *Black Power* (1954), *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (1956), and *White Man, Listen!* (1957), that focus on colonialism in Africa and the emergence of new nations, particularly Ghana. Wright’s understanding of anticolonialism is based on a Marxist-Leninist analysis of class and national struggle and expands upon his previous study of revolution in the United States. Consequently, Wright’s account of the history of Ghana in *Black Power* is similar to his treatment of African American history in *Twelve Million Black Voices*; both give particular attention to specific forms of economic exploitation and their cultural effects on the population, relating the growth of racism to the spread of capitalism. Wright explains current social relations in terms of colonialism, a system he describes as “a vast geographical prison whose inmates were presumably sentenced

for all time to suffer the exploitation of their human, agricultural and mineral resources" (1954, 11). He declares in his introduction that he uses "Marxist methods to make meaningful the ebb and flow of commodities, human and otherwise, in the modern state, to make comprehensible the alignment of social classes in modern society" (1954, xiii), and delineates the history of European imperialism in Africa that bound the majority of colonized peoples in a precapitalist state. Wright notes that racism functioned in the extraction of human and other natural resources as an ideological justification for the unequal relations inherent in the process of exploitation, and traces the genealogy of racism to the need for "new sources of human instruments," specifically to the growing scarcity of white indentured servants. In his insistence that "racial theories sprang up in the wake of slavery," Wright marks the inevitable and familial linkage between economic class, race, and imperialism. Wright advances the now commonly accepted notion of race as socially constructed in order to establish divisive hierarchies and to legitimate oppression. Wright then demonstrates how Nkrumah's mobilizing of a national racial consciousness to end economic slavery reversed this formula, attacking structural racism to undermine the economic base and thereby destroy both racism and capitalism (1954, 8–9, 153).

Wright understood African social relations as feudal, altering the capacity for and expression of class struggle. As Lukács writes, for those occupying the "many strata within capitalism whose economic roots lie in pre-capitalism, class consciousness is unable to achieve complete clarity and to influence the course of history consciously" (1968, 55). Accepting such inapplicability, Wright still insisted on the capacity of the oppressed in colonized countries to affect history through the amalgamation of national consciousness and class consciousness. African colonies provided an apt example of Lukács's conception of the internal social and economic relations existing under the rule of capital, but remote from its hegemonic structures. Though exploited principally in the competition for raw materials, cheap labor, land, and markets that characterizes international capitalism, most in Africa and in the American Black Belt remained outside the immediate

organizational capacity of industrial production, and thus maintained a unique position, necessitating an alternative agency for radical change.⁸

With this in mind, Wright endorsed a racialized consciousness, one that had measured the place of people of color in girding the unequal relationships of capital and gained a critical sense of its own composition and its power. This awareness would inevitably lead to a disruption of the system of oppression itself; thus each independence movement imposed damage on capitalism. “The political rallies of the African Gold Coast reached an intensity of passion that actually frightened Europeans who did not realize that these political rallies were not just politics, but attempts at forging a new way of life” (1957, 67). This “new way of life” threatened the foundations of economic monopoly through its anti-imperialist activities; again Wright supports national liberation as an agent for radical world change. In Ghana’s generation of “a sweeping nationalism that was bent not only upon creating new institutions for the people, but also new emotional attitudes, values, and definitions” (1954, 56), all old structures based in colonialism would be destroyed; hence nationalist struggle was inherently a revolutionary attack on the capitalist domination that necessitated imperialist ventures and racism as a justification.

Since under monopolistic rushes for international hegemony, “capitalism has been transformed into imperialism” (Lenin 1974a, 202), struggles against oppression would accordingly change form in those places where imperialism was most felt. Because the essence of nationalist movements was to dismantle imperialism, capitalism would necessarily sustain a fatal attack both ideologically and in terms of its dependence on international exploitation. Wright’s recognition of the value of nationalism led him to endorse means of attack that corresponded with Lenin’s. At the same time, he questioned the efficacy of current Communist systems of organization. Clearly, specific conditions necessitate a customizing of methods. As Lenin writes in “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” “The categorical demand of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within

definite historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country) that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch" (1972, 400–401). Wright's analysis of Ghana's history and contemporary liberation movement, like his study of the United States in *Twelve Million Black Voices*, reflects this attention to peculiar concrete conditions mandating a framework for resistance specific to each. Wright shared Fanon's censure of those who would "treat the *dosar* or village like a factory cell" and attempt to "destroy living tradition in the colonial framework" (1963, 113), believing this resulted from too rigid and insensitive theoretical applications. His criticism of Communist approaches to colonial conditions reinforces his similar assessment of the CPUSA, that practitioners were inflexibly imposing a model too dismissive of the relevance of race both as a source of oppression and opposition.

Although he discounted Communism's pertinence to colonized territories, Wright insisted that Marxism was an indispensable "starting point" for any radical consciousness and political action. His position echoes Césaire's at this time, who pronounced that "Marx is all right, but we need to complete Marx" through the process of Negritude (2000, 86). Similarly, Wright advocated a critical appropriation of Marxism, one that amalgamated its interpretive powers and call to action with race- and nation-based strategies and experiences, thus molding the tool itself to increase its utility. Even if its strict application in Ghana was inappropriate due to the lack of a proletariat, Marxism could serve as a mechanism by which to analyze the world and organize the oppressed (Wright 1957, 34–35). Furthermore, Marxism-Leninism also dealt with national struggles where feudal relations existed and therefore could provide a framework for understanding the structures of British dominance and the altering of Ghana's economic infrastructure by colonialist enterprise. The fickle nature of the petty bourgeoisie and its ultimate complicity with neocolonialism and capitalism were eventually demonstrated in Ghana. Lenin had warned that struggles that are simply nationalist and not explicitly anticapitalist are inherently dangerous, and may replace one elite

with another (Aidoo 1983, 144–55).

Wright wrote to Kwame Nkrumah, “You have taken Marxism, that intellectual instrument that makes meaningful the class and commodity relations in the modern state; but the moment that instrument ceases to shed meaning, drop it. Be on top of theory, don’t let theory be on top of you” (1954, 350). Wright implores Nkrumah to continue to adapt his tools to the real conditions in his country, and to reconfigure previous models in his construction of a new, egalitarian society. Wright’s characteristic attention to the material conditions peculiar to a particular struggle required a means of resistance specific to these structures, and this process of constant retooling thereby necessitated an instrumentalist approach to current theory. C. L. R. James shared the conviction of Wright and Césaire that revolutionary anticolonial movements must adapt Marxism to suit the racial nature of their domination. In his own study of the Gold Coast, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, James observed that “Marxism is a guide to action which takes into account that always changing relationship of forces in an always changing world situation. But political analysis and political directives can only go thus far. They are a guide, not a blueprint” (1977, 74).⁹

If Wright saw Marxism’s use to be primarily one of function, in his own thinking he (perhaps unconsciously) demonstrated critical features of a materialist dialectic that were more indispensable to his interpretations than his advice to Nkrumah would suggest. Deeming anticolonial struggles as the rational against the irrational, Wright proposes a unique interpretation of colonialism, which at the time provoked some hostility among other participants at the 1954 Bandung, Indonesia, conference because of its seeming denigration of African culture.¹⁰ Wright posited that imperialism helped further the destruction of its own capitalist base through violence that ignited a desire for rebellion, and by destroying cultural practices that might bolster imperialism, such as “gummy tribalism” (1954, 344). As Aimé Césaire postulated in *Discourse on Colonialism*, colonialists often, with seeming benevolence, allowed the practice of traditional religions that endorsed “a hierarchy of life forces” and in this ensured the victorious rule of “the

big companies, the colonialists, the government" (2000, 59).

Additionally, where these religions were replaced with the Christian system of social stratification, Wright believed that the cruelty of "civilizing" efforts through missionaries and assimilationists served to enable readiness for liberation, "an irrational Western world helped, unconsciously and unintentionally to be sure, to smash the irrational ties of religion and custom and tradition in Asia and Africa. THIS, IN MY OPINION, IS THE CENTRAL HISTORICAL FACT!" (1957, 60; emphasis in original). Wright, in keeping with Marx and Lenin, had often portrayed religion as a stultifying force, in the United States as well as in Africa, and in his lecture "Tradition and Industrialization," denounces "mystical visions of life that freeze millions in static degradation" (1995, 50). In this, Wright can be viewed, in the words of Nina Kressner Cobb, as "the apostle of western values and modernization" (1982, 234), deprecating traditions that often contained elements of nationalism in them, as Fanon posits in *The Wretched of the Earth*. However, Fanon, like Wright, recognized that such "tribalism" could be a potentially dangerous force if it were not situated within nationalism. He warns, "We find in underdeveloped countries fierce demands for social justice which paradoxically are allied with often primitive tribalism. . . . [I]t leads up a blind alley" (1963, 204) or a ground from which oppressors can manipulate competing interests.¹¹ Nkrumah himself admonished those who create "a fetish out of communal African society," a practice that led some to believe that colonialism "was preceded by an African Golden Age or paradise," and insisting instead that "socio-economic policies recognise" how imperialism had irrevocably altered Africa (1967, 88–89).

Wright's previously expressed belief that all African Americans are too completely oppressed to be able to issue petty-bourgeois demands and ultimately betray revolution and support capitalism was unfounded in the United States. It proved no more true in Africa; elements exist in both places that are primarily concerned with consolidating their own power in a capitalist system.. Wright saw the possible peril when, in response to Lenin's urging, socialists "render determined support to the more revolutionary

elements in the bourgeois-democratic movement for national liberation . . . and assist their rebellion” (1974b, 151–52). In Ghana, where nationalist members of the petty bourgeoisie became prominent through the revolution and eventually proved reactionary, this process contributed to counterrevolution and undermined the creation of African socialism (Aidoo 1983). These class tensions and divisions internal to the nationalist antiracist movement reveal the tenuous, even antagonistic, relationships among nationalist, racial, and class struggle. Such challenges of nation-building after colonial occupation only increased with the emergence of neocolonialism as a replacement for direct imperialism, with the use of mercenaries and missionaries, the imposition of economic and political treaties (now embodied in the work of the International Monetary Fund), efforts to disrupt relations between African nations, the assault on nationalist identity with only slightly more veiled racism, and, most overtly, through “puppet, conservative, racist regimes, military bases and occupation” (El Kholi 1967, 21). In connection with these conflicts, Lenin stressed the specificity of each struggle and Wright warned that, in places like Ghana, Marxism needs to be utilized flexibly to address the nation’s peculiar imbrication of oppressive forces.

Considering Wright’s perceived condescension toward Africa, his own assessment of his ability to understand colonialism and revolution is significant. In *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference*, Wright asserts his commonality with, and qualifications for reporting on, Third World revolutionaries:

I feel that my life has given me some keys to what they would say or do. I’m an American Negro; as such, I’ve had a burden of race consciousness. So have these people. I worked in my youth as a common laborer, and I’ve a class consciousness. So have these people. I was a member of the Communist Party for twelve years and I know something of the politics and psychology of rebellion. These people have had as their daily existence such politics. These emotions are my instruments. (1956, 15)

Believing that his own experiences would, like Marxism, be an apparatus for participating in an anticolonialist forum, Wright

also translated these experiences into those of Africans and Asians across the world, and in this implicitly acknowledged a synthesis of race, class, and resistance that is distinctly non-Western, but instead rooted in a practical apprehension of the conditions specific to colonized Asia and Africa.

Wright identified the particular role of those who, like himself, were privy to a range of experiences and forms of knowledge as a vanguard that would transform the "politics of daily existence" into a unified program specific to their national struggle. Again, Wright assigns Marxism a key position in this process, situating it as an anchor from which international anticolonialist, antiracist struggles were constructed and maintained. On his way to Ghana, Wright conversed with some African students who embodied this internalization of Marxism's transcontinental utility and who also seemed to share his epiphanous appreciation of Marxism as a tool. He notes of the students that

one undeniable fact informed their basic attitudes. Russia had made a most tremendous impression upon the minds of these world's outsiders. From where these colonial boys stood, Russia's analysis of events made sense. The first inescapable fact was that it was only from Russia—not from the churches or the universities of the Western world—that a moral condemnation of colonial exploitation had come . . . the historic events of the past forty years had made them feel that the only road into the future lay in collective action, that organized masses constituted the only true instrument of freedom. (1954, 28)

The students' alienation was contextualized by Marxism, and they also benefited from the recognition integral to Marxism-Leninism that the "organized masses" would lead the struggle, even in the absence of a proletariat. Thus the intellectual, in Africa, Asia, or the United States, was obliged to apply these principles to the already experientially politicized consciousness of colonial peoples in a volatile combination of experience and acumen that would disarm colonial powers. Thus Wright places considerable faith in the process through which "some of them would soak up Marxism and would return home feeling a sense

of racial and class solidarity derived from the American Negro's proud and defensive nationalism . . . the Gold Coast boys could take Marxism and adapt it to their own particular African needs" (1954, 65). Wright's advocacy of Marxism as a tool honed by nationalistic interest again asserts a unique application of various revolutionary strategies that characterizes Wright's understanding of consciousness and mobilization.

In his conception of the role of the Black writer in the United States or the African intellectual, Wright posits a construction of the vanguard closely aligned with that of Lenin and the early C. L. R. James. Detached in many ways from their specific classes, writers and students are in especially advantageous positions to lead the struggle against capitalism and its current incarnation, imperialism. Possessing a "double vision" produced by their position as Western educated, yet placed by their race outside the workings of that culture and society, Black intellectuals in Africa and America are privy to capitalism's ideological and physical machinations and capable of deconstructing its defenses, of seeing from within and without.¹² According to Wright, the "contradiction of being both Western and a man of color," produces a "third point of view," imbued dialectically with the recognition that "I and my environment are one, but that oneness has in it, at its very core, an abiding schism." These internal contradictions, Wright argues, produce the necessary understanding to "reshape the world" (1957, 79).

Wright's obvious affinities with other people of color who had, as colonized bodies educated by the colonizer, probed this schism to produce a dialectically informed strategy of resistance helped clarify his Pan-Africanist perspective late in life. Given the friendship between Césaire, Fanon, James, Padmore, Sartre, and Wright, it is not surprising that a similar approach to colonialism is evident in their work, one that, as Cedric Robinson argues, "largely forsook orthodox Marxism in order to explore . . . the moral and cultural derationalization of the colonial metropole; the revolutionary roles of the peasantry, of the lumpen proletariat, of impacted traditional cultures" (Robinson 1995, xxii). Nor is it surprising that the latter three men spent time as Nkrumah's guests

following the revolution. Each arrived at a similar assessment of the significance of Ghana's revolution, placing great hope in this example while aware of barriers to its longevity and expansion throughout Africa. The theoretical affinities of these men are evident in their Pan-Africanist, materialist analysis of Ghana's revolution and of race relations in general. Wright's intellectual and political ties at this time reflect his efforts to find an alternative to the CPUSA's approach, and his thinking bears the influences of his community.¹³

Wright's experience with the CPUSA, particularly during its Popular Front variations in line, was marked by his sense that the Party marginalized racial struggle and attempted to censor its artists. He discerned antagonism between the practice of Communism and the theory of Marxism and insisted repeatedly on the need for African Americans to find a viable "expression" of nationalism that reflected the racial and economic character of imperialism. Similarly, in the colonized countries of Africa and Asia, Wright advocated the evolution of a consciousness predicated in nationalism, a racial unity that, in gaining freedom for the nation that was being exploited economically, would necessarily undermine capitalism. Wright always sought to resolve the antagonism between class and race, tempering his criticism of the Communist Party in the United States by attributing to Marxism great liberatory potential. In his vigilant attention to the specificity of oppression throughout the world, and his thirty-year search for an effective weapon against class and race exploitation, Wright found consciousness to be the melding agent, transmuting the ambivalent position peculiar to those oppressed through race and class simultaneously into a foundation for revolution.

Program in American Culture
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

NOTES

1. Wright's controversial 1944 article served as the final severance of his relations with the CPUSA. This well-known fact is recorded in his correspondence with Ralph Ellison, who kept Wright informed of the negative responses of Party

members and fellow travelers with whom Ellison remained in contact for a brief period after Wright's departure. See letter dated 5 September 1944 (Richard Wright Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 97, Folder 1314. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.)

2. The presence of a memorandum to the U.S. State Department in which Wright discussed Nkrumah's reverence for Lenin and the influence of Communism in Ghana's government could contribute to the sense that Wright openly collaborated with anti-Communism in the United States. Considering his physical renouncing of the United States for France and his sympathy for liberation movements, it seems unlikely that Wright would have knowingly supplied such information to the United States (Horne 2000, 170–71).

3. This piece was also published in *The God That Failed* (Crossman 1950), a collection of essays by writers who had also left Marxist movements, and that as a whole abetted the anti-Communist project. Wright's *American Hunger* has been dismissed by many who consider it inaccurate as well as acrimonious. While there are some chronological inconsistencies and an unmasked acrimony, it should not be completely disregarded. Indeed, this text contains valuable insight into Wright's positive impressions and absorption of Marxism and the CPUSA, and also conveys his politicization and growth as a writer. Additionally, those who denounce this book simultaneously dismiss this expression of Wright's racial politics, which emerge as a central reason for his disillusionment with the Party. Wright's critique of the sectarianism and authoritarian atmosphere within the Party has admittedly been enlisted by anti-Communists as proof of the Party's dogmatism.

4. C. L. R. James also shared this sense that "the contrast between their situation and the privileges enjoyed by those around them have always made the Negroes of that section of society the most receptive to revolutionary ideas and the radical solution to social problems." Because of this alienation, "it is absolutely impossible for Negroes to achieve equality under American capitalism" (1996 71). In this, African Americans could operate as the vanguard for a socialist revolution in the United States and elsewhere.

5. While the CPUSA accepted and even celebrated some cultural manifestations of nationalism, it insisted on Black/white unity, undertaking a 1934 campaign to undermine "outspoken Bourgeois tendencies toward Negro Nationalism" which were equated with "white chauvinism" (*Resolutions of the Communist International* 1980, 18, 20; see also Naison 1983, 108). Such integration was considered imperative to building a powerful movement and to demonstrating an adherence to Marxist-Leninist premises regarding solidarity. Several recent works have documented the tolerance of the CPUSA for expressions of cultural nationalism, for instance Foley 1993, Maxwell 1999, and Smethurst 1999. While it is clear that the CPUSA did not in any way censor its artists' representations of folk culture or nationalism during the mid-1930s, these relatively innocuous cultural expressions are quite distinct from Black nationalism as a political program.

6. Wright also commented on his apprehension that *Native Son* might be misunderstood by members of the CPUSA. In "How Bigger was Born," he describes

his fears with the following implicit critique: "What would my own white and black comrades in the Communist party say? . . . Politics is a hard and narrow game; its policies represent the aggregate desires and aspirations of millions of people. Its goals are too rigid and simply drawn, and the minds of the majority of politicians are set, congealed in terms of daily tactical maneuvers. How could I create such complex and wide schemes of associational thought and feeling . . . without being mistaken for 'a smuggler of reaction,' 'an ideological confusionist,' or 'an individualistic and dangerous element'?" Wright claims that he resolved these concerns by reasoning that "honest politics and honest feelings ought to be able to meet on common healthy ground without fear, suspicion and quarreling" (1991, 525). This piece, written two years before he actually left the Party, encapsulates many of his reasons for leaving: a feeling of repression, dogmatism, and division that he associated with the Party.

7. Currently, treatments of Black writers involved with the CPUSA from the 1920s to the 1930s seem, to some degree, invested in exculpating the Party from charges that it attempted to limit Black nationalism, and instead present the Party as encouraging artistic development and free expression, with the positive result of forwarding African American agency within Party. For example, in *The New Red Negro*, Smethurst claims that while the Party may have officially downplayed nationalism, "in practice Leftist African American artists continued to represent and recreate the African-American folk voice" (1999, 45), which seems to suggest that nationalism as political program was synonymous with folk culture. William Maxwell's *New Negro, Old Left* goes further, linking such "primers in blackness" as *Native Son* and Ellison's *Invisible Man* with the "stultification line" that suggested that Black writers had little autonomy within the CPUSA, a combination that 1960s "black nationalist aesthetics [may have] borrowed from anticommunist liberalism . . . wielded against the integrationism of earlier black radicals" (1999, 3–4). As Foley asserts in *Radical Representations*, the CPUSA's focus on integration and tolerance of Black nationalist folk art can thus be read as "a way of celebrating the multicultural character of American society and arguing for the key role played by blacks in many aspects of the national experience" (1993, 190). Undoubtedly, the CPUSA encouraged its artists, and the accounts of its mishandling of Black writers are overdone; and the nationalistic work of Wright and others does offer evidence that the Party was not as dogmatic as often depicted (Wald 1994, 146–48). The understandings of nationalism offered by current cultural historians, however, at times seem somewhat detached from the very politicized version Wright, and others like James, came to embrace.

8. Recognizing that in the Black Belt and on the Gold Coast, precapitalist relations dominated, Wright saw that calls for proletarian revolution would have no value. As one of his characters in a 1956 dialogue, "The Miracle of Nationalism in the African Gold Coast," contends, the Soviet Union provided an important example of effective organizing; however, on the Gold Coast, there is "practically no industrial proletariat and, hence, Marxist ideology is, in the long run, of little or no interest to us. . . . Let us organize our people on the basis of a struggle for national freedom" (1957, 157).

9. Césaire again had an interpretation of the limitations of Communist theory similar to James and Wright. In relaying his experiences with Martinican Communists, Césaire states that “I criticized the Communists for forgetting Negro characteristics. They acted like Communists, which was all right, but they acted like abstract Communists. I maintained that the political question could not do away with our condition as Negroes. We are Negroes, with a great number of historical peculiarities” (interview with René Depestre, in Césaire 2000, 85).

10. As Margaret Walker recounts in her biography, *Richard Wright, Daemonic Genius*, Wright’s “Tradition and Industrialization” infuriated some participants because of his “condescending statements on ‘the fragile and tragic elite of Africa’ and their need for Western industrialization over against maintaining their religious traditions, cultural mores and customs” (1988, 282).

11. W. E. B. Du Bois, in advocating a combination of Pan-Africanism and socialism similar to Wright’s conception, also suggested that Ghana should undertake “the education of all its youth on the broadest possible basis without religious dogma . . . making them modern, intelligent, responsible men of vision and character” (1987, 297).

12. Wright’s conception of a “third view” has clear affinities with Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness.

13. The efforts of these men to combine two powerful forces, Marxism and nationalism, were threatening enough to imperialist nations that British, French, and U.S. (as well as Soviet) intelligence agencies kept Fanon, Padmore, and Wright under surveillance. James’s expulsion from the United States also implies that others saw the real potential for world revolution in such a fusion. Walker and Webb discuss Wright’s surveillance, as well as similar hostile attention to the other figures (Walker 1998, 298–300, 343; Webb 1968, 375–77). Paul Buhle also discusses the FBI’s harassment of James that preceded his incarceration on Ellis Island and deportation as an “undesirable alien” (1988, 109–10).

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A Short Note on *MEGA* IV/32: Catalog of the Partially Reconstructed Personal Libraries of Marx and Engels

Pradip Baksi

It has been reported that when Frederick Engels died in 1895 the combined library of Marx and Engels contained some 2100 titles in 3200 volumes (the two libraries had been joined together after the death of Karl Marx in 1883). Some 1450 titles out of these 2100 have been identified and located so far. In 1999, the Akademie Verlag of Berlin brought out a catalog of these titles, prepared at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences by a team of German and Russian scholars. It is a *Vorauspublication* (prepublication) of the *MEGA* (*Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* [Complete Works of Marx and Engels]), section IV, volume 32. It contains the result of some seventy-five years of search and research. The work began in the middle of 1920s in the archives of the Social Democratic Party of Germany at Berlin, continued in the Marx-Engels Archives at Moscow and Berlin, and was completed at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences under the auspices of the International Marx-Engels Foundation located at the International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam.

This library contains works on economy, history of economics, philosophy, social and natural sciences, general history, history of socialism and of the workers' movement, encyclopedias,

Nature, Society, and Thought, vol. 15, no. 1 (2002)

dictionaries, textbooks of different languages, memoirs, biographies, treatises on literary studies, many classics from the field of *belles-lettres*, and publications on military science. The books are in ten languages. A third of them are in German, a quarter each are in English and French. Some sixteen percent are in the Cyrillic scripts of the Slavic languages.

The English manufacturer, social reformer, and early socialist Robert Owen tops the list of authors with sixteen single titles. He is followed by Marx's mentor in the circle of Left Hegelians, the radical theologian and critic of religion Bruno Bauer, with fifteen titles. The Russian scholar of public law and historian of comparative law, a friend of Marx and Engels in the realm of scientific research, Maksim Maksimovich Kovalevskij; and a representative of the Russian revolutionary movement abroad, Pyotr Lavrovich Lavrov occupy the next position, with fourteen titles to the credit of each. They are followed by the Russian revolutionary and political adversary of Marx and Engels, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, with twelve titles. The next slot goes to one of the most important authors for the young Marx, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, with eleven titles. Marx broke off with Proudhon intellectually in 1847 with the polemical treatise *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

Marx's political colleague and rival Ferdinand Lassalle, the Italian economist and publicist Achille Loria, and the Turkophil Tory David Urquhart come next with ten titles each. There are eight titles by the British agronomist William Marshall and seven titles each by Edward Bibbins Aveling, Ernest Belfort Bax, Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshavskii, Gabriel Deville, and Eugene Dühring. Next come Marx's long-standing Russian correspondent and translator of *Capital*, Nikolai Francevich Daniel'son; a follower of Lassalle, Bernhard Becker; and Marx and Engels's personal friend and professor of chemistry at Manchester, Carl Schorlemmer, with six titles each. The library also contains the intellectual point of departure of the young Marx—the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

It is well known that in London Marx used the library of the British Museum. Perhaps this explains the absence of Darwin or Senior or Macaulay in his personal collection. For them one will have to look into the voluminous excerpts-filled notebooks of Marx and Engels, which are being published in the remaining thirty-one volumes of Section IV of the *MEGA* (of these, so far, nine volumes have been published). Some eight hundred volumes of their personal library contain forty thousand pages, where the “sites of readings” are underscored and/or provided with marginal notes.

The journey undertaken by the personal library of Marx and Engels is itself an interesting part of the political history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Built out of the ground stock of their family libraries, it increased through decades-long acquisitions and gifts and, at times, decreased owing to reasons beyond the control of Marx or Engels.

The first documented reference to Marx’s personal library dates back to May 1849. At that time police persecution forced Marx to part company with some five hundred titles in his personal collection. He handed over the books to his friend Dr. Roland Daniels of Cologne. The books were kept in the cellars of the warehouse of the wine-merchant brothers of Dr. Daniels. The collection arrived in London in 1860 but stolen in transit were the whole of Fourier, Goethe, Herder, Voltaire, and books by many eighteenth-century economists, as well as many volumes of the Greek classics. After Marx’s death, his library was joined with that of Engels, who had by then acquired a considerable number of books on military science. On Engels’s death, the books went to Bebel and Singer. The books were put in twenty-seven boxes and sent to the office of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in Berlin, where they became part of the SPD library. The people administering the library were careless about this legacy. Many comments on the margins were lost through the bookbinders’ cut. When the Nazis come to power, the books were scattered. Books in the secret Prussian State Archives at

Berlin-Dahelm were thrown out. Soon the universities followed suit. At the conclusion of the Second World War, the “Trophy Commission” of the victorious Red Army, spread over more than twenty garrisons, further scattered the remaining titles. Beginning with the 1950s, a systematic search was initiated in the German Democratic Republic for the titles *ex libris* Marx and Engels. The present catalog is the result of this and similar efforts through 1999.

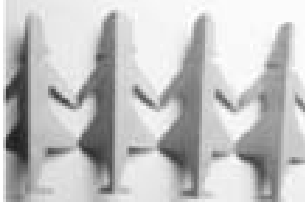
This catalog is more than a mere bibliographic survey. The catalog permits one to gain an insight into the conditions in which Marx and Engels carried out their scientific, political, and publishing activities on questions that lay at the basis of their research. If their path of investigation and its historical phases are not fully taken in account, then Marx-Engels studies at times passes over into the realm of speculation and wishful constructs. Such, for instance, is the case with the alleged three sources and three component parts of Marx’s legacy. It is widely held (at least since Lenin’s 1913 article on the theme), that Marxism grew out of classical German philosophy from Kant to Hegel, the utopian socialism of Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon, and the English political economy of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill. Marx and Engels set the idealist dialectic of the first on its feet, transformed the utopia of the second into a science, and overcame the limits of the bourgeois perception of the third. Marx-Engels studies has superseded and continues to overcome this partial and hence incorrect understanding.

Marx and Engels lived and worked in many countries of Europe—in Germany, France, Belgium, and England. The international perspective that they acquired as early as the 1840s influenced their work. This is especially true of Marx. It appears from the various volumes of the *MEGA* and from a survey of the still unpublished notes and manuscripts preserved at Amsterdam and Moscow that Marx not only studied a large number of disciplines—law, philosophy, history, political economy, technology, agriculture, chemistry, physics, geology, mathematics, physiology, ethnology, and others—but also studied the history and conditions

of a large number of countries and regions—among them Germany, France, England, Ireland, Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, the Balkans, Italy, Spain, the United States, Latin America, Algeria, India, and China. The legacy of Marx is founded upon and consists of these studies. Knowledge of the scope of these horizons of encyclopedic depth is a necessity for the contemporary students of Marx and fighters for socialism.

The sources for this note are a press release entitled “Akademie Verlag veröffentlicht Verzeichnis der Bibliotheken von Marx und Engels” and an article by Jens Bisky, “Unvollständiges Verzeichnis der Arbeitsmittel Zweikampf mit Stoff und Verfasser: Ein Verzeichnis der Privatbibliotheken von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels,” *Berliner Zeitung*, 7 January 2000. Both were sent to me by Prof. Manfred Neuhaus of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in a letter dated 20 January 2000.

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BOOKS AND IDEAS

by *Herbert Aptheker*

Herbert Aptheker, a founding editor of Nature, Society, and Thought since 1987, died on 17 March 2003. He was a frequent contributor to the journal. A collection of his papers was published by MEP Publications in 1987 under the title, Racism, Imperialism, and Peace. His work was honored in a special commemorative issue of the journal under the title, African American History and Radical Historiography: Essays in Honor of Herbert Aptheker (volume 10, nos. 1 and 2), also published in cloth by MEP Publications (1998). The following brief contributions to his BOOKS AND IDEAS, a regular feature of NST since volume 9, were received shortly before his death. Bettina Aptheker reports that Subversive Southerner is the last book her father read.

A Moral Reckoning

A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. New York: Knopf, 362 pages.

This is an excellent book. It carefully, even exhaustively, examines the literature concerning the genocide. It establishes the reality and the horrendousness of that crime; it does so polemically in rejecting contrary literature. It is important also in showing the complicity of the Vatican in the crime. But what it does not

Nature, Society, and Thought, vol. 15, no. 1 (2002)

do—and the considerable literature on the subject does not do—is to place the anti-Semitism historically. That is to say, this book like the others tends to present the fierce anti-Semitism only as something growing out of Christian mythology and especially the alleged Jewish involvement in the crucifixion.

A whole literature has evolved denying or downplaying the genocide. This is effectively dealt with in this book. But what this book and its kindred literature fail to do is to demonstrate the connection between anti-Semitism and the surrounding socioeconomic conditions.

Historically anti-Semitism has been a device of ruling circles and classes to blame socioeconomic failures on the Jews. This central fact does not appear in Goldhagen's book nor in its related literature. Until this relationship between the socioeconomic reality and anti-Semitism is demonstrated historically, one does not have a sufficiently illuminating picture of anti-Semitism as a whole.

To conclude on a positive note, however, this volume depicts anti-Semitism and refutes all recent efforts to downplay its reality. Thus, for a picture of what anti-Semitism has been and continues to be, there is no better source than the writing of Goldhagen.

Subversive Southerner

Catherine Fosl's new book, *Subversive Southerner: Anne Braden and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Cold War South* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 320 pages) is a splendid book, worthy of a splendid person. Anne Braden is now in her 80s, and living in Kentucky. She and her husband Carl, who passed away in the 1970s, were inspiring figures in the antiracist and antiwar movements of the late twentieth century. Both were noteworthy in terms of *active* struggle, as in their historic efforts to break racist housing in Kentucky. Carl was jailed twice, but of course kept firm, as did Anne. That they were both from the South and principled opponents of racism and reaction was a notable source of encouragement for all in those difficult but very significant years.

The book itself is a source of significant information about

the momentous struggle of the post–World War II era. It is also very well edited. The foreword by Angela Davis highlights the significance of these native white Southerners standing firm for peace and justice throughout the McCarthy era.

It is splendid that we have this forthright record of well-spent struggles for justice and freedom.

Mountain View, California
28 February 2003

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BY JAMES S. ALLEN

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This political memoir documents work by Black and white Communists and their allies in the Deep South during the Great Depression. It reveals dramatic and specific concrete details of organizing under severe repression, suggesting reconsideration of the starting date conventionally assigned to the Civil Rights movement.

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University of Minnesota, Physics Bldg.

116 Church Street S.E.

Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112

Phone: 612-922-7993; Fax: 612-922-0858

E-mail: marqu002@umn.edu

Web: www.umn.edu/home/marqu002

Book Reviews

The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: An Artist's Journey, 1898–1939.
By Paul Robeson Jr. New York: John Wiley, 2001. 333 pages,
cloth \$30.00.

To convey the outstanding contributions to art and humanity by Paul Robeson, his son, Paul Robeson Jr. has embarked on a two-volume biography of his father. *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson*, under review here, covers his father's life from 1898 to 1939. It highlights in encyclopedic detail the world renown of Paul Robeson as concert singer, actor, movie star, and recording artist. It then discusses the process involved in the transformation of Paul to political activism. Paul Jr. promises to go into the later developments more fully in a second volume, which has not yet appeared.

Interest in the man whom right-wing, racist, anti-Communist forces tried to expunge from history cannot be satiated. The present book joins recent biographies by Sheila Tully Boyle and Andrew Bunie (2001) and Lloyd L. Brown (1997), and it is safe to prophecy that there will be many more.

Interest in Paul Robeson builds, even amid repressive forces that will not give him his due. It is precisely the powerful blows that Robeson struck both with his art and his political activism against the chauvinist war hawks obsessed with U.S. world rule that continue to stick in the craw of the most reactionary sections of the U.S. corporate ruling class. Witness the refusal to issue a well-merited and otherwise usual postage stamp honoring Paul Robeson on his centennial. In view of the current U.S. unilateral global war drive,

Nature, Society, and Thought, vol. 15, no. 1 (2002)

Robeson's stand for world peace is more timely and potent than ever. The Robeson legacy is important, and the need is real to bring it to youth and others from whom it has been withheld. Paul Robeson Jr. makes an important contribution by challenging the die-hard McCarthyite cultural/political vandals from the outset.

This book is not just another biography. It adds new dimensions. First, it draws on priceless sources such as the Paul Robeson archives accumulated by Paul Jr. and colleagues over many years. It includes his mother Essie's diary and his father's own notes. It also includes a privileged source that Paul Jr. cites often and that other scholars are unable to replicate—that is, “conversations with my father.” This is in fact a family biography, featuring not only Paul, but also his wife Essie and Essie's mother, Mrs. Goode, who the author says practically raised him. In addition, there are running autobiographical vignettes by the author himself throughout the book.

A major thrust of the book is to portray the “inner” Paul Robeson. An excess of intimate matters tumbles before the reader, such as love letters and detailed family finances. Paul Robeson himself addressed the issue of this kind of approach. In his 1958 autobiography, *Here I Stand*, he wrote:

Although many personal experiences are related in the succeeding chapters, I have sought to present my ideas about a subject infinitely more important than any personal story—the struggle of my people for freedom.

An especially important part of the book is the author's insightful analysis of the early, pre-activist Paul Robeson. The author makes clear that his father was not trying to advance himself by bowing to white ruling-class supremacy. Instead, he argues that even as his father strove for individual artistic excellence, he was guided by the strongly held belief that he was thereby helping to advance the cause of the equality of the African American people. Of necessity, he had to work around and neutralize white supremacists in power. He had a built-in commitment to his people. His father, William Robeson, whom

he deeply revered, impressed on him that success would not only be for himself, but for “the race.”

This built-in commitment was alive when the young Robeson stood up to the vicious physical assaults of the Rutgers football squad and then went on to become a football great and put Rutgers on the map. It was alive when, in a statewide New Jersey high school oratorical contest, he chose to hail the Haitian slave revolt led by Toussaint L’Ouverture. It was alive when he selected as his Rutgers senior essay the Fourteenth Amendment and the need to implement it. Lloyd Brown argues that the young and politically immature Paul Robeson did not show in that essay awareness that the amendment was interpreted by the powers-that-be to cover up the mass flouting of the rights of the African American people and the need for militant struggle by them and their allies to make the amendment meaningful (Brown 1997, 101–2).

This built-in commitment was further alive when he delivered his enthusiastically received valedictorian’s address at the Rutgers graduation. In this speech, delivered at the time of World War I and its bloated chauvinism and home-front violence, he diplomatically but unmistakably called for the rejection of racist discrimination and the building of Black-white unity. The commitment was certainly alive in the post-Rutgers, post-Columbia Law School years. During this period, in 1925, he launched a career as a concert singer with a program of the songs of the freedom aspirations of the African American people—the spirituals.

As his singing and acting career unfolded, he continued to face racism every inch of the way. When this Renaissance Man appeared in plays with interracial casts, he faced threats of violence inspired by race hatred. He came to realize that individual excellence could not alone eliminate racism. For example, he noted that the monumental scientific contributions of Albert Einstein did not save him from rabid anti-Semitism and persecution by Hitler in Nazi Germany. Also, when Robeson himself gave performances in the United States, he often had to use the freight elevator and eat in the kitchens of hotels.

Through this commitment and such experiences, Paul

Robeson's transformation to political activism was underway. Catalysts in this process were both positive and negative. Positive were his early contact with the anticolonial African liberation movement; his encounters with the socialist Soviet Union (where, he said, for the first time in his life he felt free); his bonds with the multiracial working class, especially in Wales and the United States; and his favorable impressions of U.S. Communists, especially during the Great Depression. Negatives included monopoly-spawned war, fascism, and repression, and their fanning of racism.

Struggles against war and fascism became top priorities for Paul Robeson. The keystone was his involvement in the defense of the Spanish Republic (1936–1939) against the Spanish fascist General Franco and the armies of Hitler and Mussolini. In this struggle Paul and Essie put their lives on the line to go to the front of the raging civil war. There Paul sang to the heroic interracial Abraham Lincoln Brigade and in turn was inspired by them.

At a mammoth rally for Spain in London July, 1937, Robeson said:

The artist must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterized by the degradation of my people, deprived of their lands, their culture, they are in every country save one denied equal protection of the law. . . . [C]onscious of my course, I take my place with you.

His son notes that this stand by his father expressed the responsibility of the artist to humanity (293).

Unfortunately, the book is weakened by the author's straining throughout the volume to distance his farther from the Communist Party, USA. His statement that his father had an "arm's length" relationship with the Communist Party is dubious. Evidence in this book and elsewhere says the opposite. To cite a few examples:

Paul Robeson publicly expressed his admiration for the Communists in their role in saving the nine framed-up African American Scottsboro youths from execution (223). Some fifteen years later he appeared as a witness for the CPUSA in the

infamous Smith Act thought-control cases. Robeson also took part in a 1949 reception in Harlem for the Communist defendants and democratic rights. A photograph taken at the time shows a warm and friendly relationship among Robeson; Benjamin Davis, a member of the New York City Council and a national leader of the CPUSA; and Henry Winston, later national chair of the CPUSA (Editors of *Freedomways* 1998, 180f).

In addition, Paul Robeson shared important goals with the Communist Party: commitment to full African American equality and the extirpation of racism; building the multiracial labor movement; upholding the alliance of the working class and racially oppressed peoples; support for women's rights, world peace, anti-imperialism, and self-determination of people worldwide; working-class social science; and the vision and struggle for a socialist United States.

Overall, this biography is a valuable addition to Robeson literature and an important contribution to the ongoing struggle embodied in his life. While it focuses on the tribulations of the "inner Paul Robeson," it is anchored in his inspiring artistry and dedication to the people. Robeson said at a celebration late in his life:

Though I have not been able to be active for several years, I want you to know that I am the same Paul, dedicated as ever to the worldwide cause of humanity for freedom, peace, and brotherhood. . . . Not only for equal rights but an equal share.

Paul Robeson Jr.'s stirring remembrance of his father's tremendous artistic accomplishments deepens the inspiration derived from Paul Robeson, humanity's champion.. The people's Paul Robeson cannot be suppressed!

George Fishman
New Haven, Connecticut

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Progressive Heritage: The Evolution of a Politically Radical Literary Tradition in Canada. By James Doyle. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002. 322 pages, cloth \$39.95.

“*Die Arbeiter haben kein Vaterland*,” Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto, and they also explained that the ties between a specific nation and the literary production that might occur within its boundaries are loosened when an economy undergoes globalization: “National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature” (1976, 488). Recognizing the transformation of a global economy into modern imperialist relationships, Lenin saw the mission of the proletariat in internationalist terms:

It is their task, in the interests of a successful struggle against all and every kind of nationalism among all nations, to preserve the unity of the proletarian struggle and the proletarian organizations, amalgamating these organizations into a close-knit international association, despite bourgeois strivings for national exclusiveness. (Lenin 1972, 454)

Or, as Marx and Engels put it, “United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat” (1976, 503).

Yet, even though capitalism would soon find national boundaries a nuisance—a restraint on production and trade—the creation of nations was, as Lenin also explains in his work on self-determination, a historically necessary event in the creation of a market and means of distribution free of feudal restraints.

Unified by language and centralized government, nations contributed efficiency to the revolutionizing of the means of production. The experience of the proletariat during the capitalist period has been situated within nations. The nation remains, at least in an immediate and geographic sense, the site of class struggle:

Though, not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie. (Marx and Engels 1976, 495)

Literary production within the historical experience of nationhood has revealed, when carried out by members of the “close-knit international association” of which Lenin speaks above (that is, by adherents of the Communist International), an understanding of the historical and economic forces that were part of nationhood. Such writing has also been an opportunity for the “proletariat of each country” to “first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.”

Previous studies of what James Doyle calls “the evolution of a politically radical literary tradition” have been outstanding but have covered only the United States or Great Britain. James Doyle’s carefully researched and well-written *Progressive Heritage* has now done for Canadian literature what Walter B. Rideout’s *Radical Novel in the United States, 1900–1954* (1956) does for the literature of the United States and Ian Haywood’s *Working-Class Fiction* (1997) accomplishes for Britain. It is curious that Doyle mentions neither Rideout nor Haywood. Indeed Doyle’s book examines the interrelationships of literary history and politics very much as Rideout does. Doyle does mention Daniel Aaron’s *Writers on the Left* (1961), a chronicle of U.S. radical writing that also rather oddly fails to mention Rideout’s work—despite Aaron’s book being dedicated to Howard Mumford Jones, for whom Rideout wrote an early version of his survey as a Harvard doctoral dissertation. Like Rideout and Aaron as well as Haywood (who had, however, fewer pages to devote to his survey), Doyle places the works chronicled both within the

Left in his nation and within the individual political itineraries of his authors. While the focus is national, as is the focus of the other books, impulses from the Soviet Union are seen at work as they reach Canada.

Speaking at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935, Georgi Dimitrov warned that the fascists were disseminating their ideology by taking possession of the people's history:

The fascists are rummaging through the entire history of every nation so as to be able to pose as the heirs and continuators of all that was exalted and heroic in its past. . . . Communists who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the art of the people . . . in a genuinely Marxist spirit, who do nothing to link up the present struggle with the people's revolutionary traditions and past . . . voluntarily hand over to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation. (quoted in Heinemann 1985, 158)

In Canada, as in the United States and Great Britain, writers in the Communist Party committed themselves to interpreting the national past in terms of the growth of socialist consciousness. Doyle convincingly proposes Margaret Fairley, who arrived from England before World War I and long served the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), as "perhaps the most influential of the Marxist Communists who attempted in the twentieth century to establish a politically radical view of Canadian literary history" (1). Many CPC historians, however, turned directly to the events of the Canadian national past rather than to its treatment in literature.

Gustavus Myers, a U.S. resident, had usefully provided in his *History of Canadian Wealth* (1914) a well-documented economic and social reading of Canadian history that progressive Canadian writers could draw upon. Stanley Ryerson's *1837: The Birth of Canadian Democracy* (1937) saw the revolt led by Mackenzie and Papineau in 1837 as the Canadian bourgeois revolution, the same reading that Communist Party of Great Britain intellectuals Christopher Hill and A. L. Morton would take in their influential books on the English Revolution of 1640. With the revolutionary

credentials that Ryerson provides, the name given the Canadian volunteers in the Spanish Civil War could have been nothing other than the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

In 1946, Ryerson convened a Party conference to set Communist Party of Canada historians the task of writing “people’s histories” of Canada; the same task that A. L. Morton had accepted at a meeting of the Historians Group of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Morton’s *People’s History of England* (1938) was the result in Britain, and, although Doyle’s bibliography includes Morton’s much-admired and still-popular book, he does not pause to show how the Canadian and English efforts were part of the same project and part of an international initiative. Ryerson would himself write the Canadian counterpart to Morton, a two-volume people’s history of Canada: *The Founding of Canada* (1960; rev. 1962) and *Unequal Union: Confederation and the Roots of Conflict in the Canadas* (1968; 2d ed., 1973). In these volumes Ryerson writes, as did Morton, from the Marxist historical perspective in which, as Doyle says paraphrasing Ryerson, “it is not ideas but people in their material relations to nature and to each other that make history” (247).

Margaret Fairley’s *Spirit of Canadian Democracy: A Collection of Canadian Writings from the Beginnings to the Present Day* (1945) grew out of her articles in the CPC newspaper *Tribune*. Like similar efforts in England—such as T. A. Jackson’s *Trials of British Freedom* (1937) and Edgell Rickward and Jack Lindsay’s *A Handbook of Freedom* (1939)—Fairley’s anthology was neglected by academic reviewers and then vilified in the anti-Soviet frenzy of the postwar period. In her varied writings, Margaret Fairley provides the basis for a Marxist reading of Canadian literary history, but, like the Marxist interpretations of Canadian history, her work has not been adequately acknowledged in Canadian academic circles.

Poetry and novels have suffered less neglect than literary history. The Communist (and Roman Catholic) poet Joe Wallace enjoyed bouts of popularity, and George Ryga will continue to be acknowledged as a major poet. Irene Baird’s *Waste Heritage* (1939) is a powerful socialist-realist account of political action in the 1930s written by a nonmember of the Party. H. Dyson

Carter's many novels remain of interest. Indeed much of the value of books like those of Doyle, Rideout, and Haywood is in reminding literary historians of work that they unfairly neglect and cataloging it for future researchers. Doyle calls attention to the achievement of works of biography as well, granting literary status to Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon's *This Scalpel, the Sword* (1952), a biography of Norman Bethune, and to retrospective writing about the political life by Oscar Ryan and Dorothy Livesay, among others.

If, however, the writing surveyed in this book deserves to be read in the future, it is not because it provides diversity in the literary curriculum, as Doyle's conclusion seems to imply, but because the Marxist claim to a more penetrating insight into economic, social, political, and even psychological reality will become too urgent to ignore. Marxism indeed suggests that other perspectives on history and culture must in time wither away.

Quebécois writers receive deserved attention in this book, outstanding among them being Jean-Jules Richard, but the necessity for their inclusion—which no one would deny—returns us to the paradox that this review addressed at the outset. Doyle omits “Finnish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish” writing (9), implicitly limiting “Canadian” to the nationhood established around the English and French languages and cultures that were the foundation upon which Canadian capitalism prospered. The CPC authors chronicled here looked beyond that formulation, striving to build international socialism. It is not that these authors had no country but that they sought to become citizens of the world. Their message could be no less than, as Marx and Engels put it in a language that no doubt also produced Canadian literature in German immigrant communities, *Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch!*

Victor N. Paananen
Professor Emeritus, Department of English
Michigan State University

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ABSTRACTS

Erwin Marquit, “The Demobilization Movement of January 1946”—Massive demonstrations erupted at military bases throughout the world in early 1946 with the demand to reverse the slowdown in demobilization of the U.S. World War II armed forces. Drawing on the experience of his own participation (in Hawaii), personal interviews, and research, the author reviews the background and course of these demonstrations. He focuses on the contributions of U.S. Communists and their political allies to the successful outcome of this unprecedented GI movement.

Thandeka K. Chapman, “Garveyism and Multicultural Education: Notions of Hybridity and Nonsynchrony in the 1920s Movement”—Because of the controversial stances of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) on miscegenation, the KKK, and class privilege in African American communities, the influence of Garveyism on U.S. secondary and postsecondary education has not been adequately examined. Yet this movement played a crucial role in African American history, and helped to lay the foundation for later African American political and educational movements. Citing prominent scholars in multicultural education, this essay draws multiple connections between the paradigm of multicultural education and UNIA ideology concerning African American educational needs.

Rachel Peterson, “Richard Wright’s ‘Red Ladder’: Marxism, Race, and Anticolonialism”—Richard Wright’s ambivalent relationship to the Communist Party of the United States has often obscured his assessment of the role of Marxism in anticolonial

struggles. His nonfiction reveals a consistent engagement with Marxism and an effort to meld a national racial consciousness with proletarian revolution. Marxism provided indispensable recognition of one's imbrication with the world's forces. Wright endorsed a literature and a politics uniting these strains in a call to action, underscoring the centrality of Marxism in the dialectic between class and race in revolutionary struggles for Black people in the United States and Africa.

Pradip Baksi, "A Short Note on MEGA IV/32: Catalog of the Partially Reconstructed Personal Libraries of Marx and Engels"—On the basis of advance information provided by the publishers of section IV, volume 32 of the *MEGA* (complete works of Marx and Engels in the original languages), the author outlines the contents of the partially reconstructed listing of books owned by Marx and Engels.

ABREGES

Erwin Marquit, « Le mouvement pour la démobilisation de janvier 1946 »—Au début de l'année 1946, des manifestations massives ont éclaté un peu partout dans le monde au sein des bases militaires pour revendiquer la relance de la démobilisation des forces armées des Etats-Unis engagées dans la deuxième guerre mondiale. En s'appuyant sur l'expérience de sa propre participation (à Hawaii), sur des entretiens personnels et des recherches, l'auteur passe en revue le climat politique et le déroulement de ces manifestations. Il s'intéresse particulièrement à la contribution des communistes des Etats-Unis et de leurs alliés politiques au succès sans précédent de ce mouvement de soldats.

Thandeka K. Chapman, « Le garveyisme et l'éducation multi-culturelle : les idées de l'hybride et du non-synchronique dans le mouvement des années 1920 »—A cause des positions discutables de l'Association Universelle de l'Amélioration des Nègres (UNIA) sur le métissage, on n'a pas suffisamment étudié

ni le KKK, ni les privilèges de classe au sein des communautés afro-américaines, ni l'influence du garveyisme sur l'éducation secondaire et supérieure aux Etats-Unis. Pourtant, ce mouvement a joué un rôle crucial dans l'histoire afro-américaine, et a contribué à poser les fondations politiques et sociales des mouvements afro-américains qui ont suivi. En citant des spécialistes experts en éducation multiculturelle, cet essai établit des liens multiples entre le paradigme de l'éducation multiculturelle et l'idéologie de l'UNIA; concernant les besoins éducatifs afro-américains.

Rachel Peterson, «L'échelle rouge» de Richard Wright : marxisme, race et anticolonialisme — Les rapports ambivalents de Richard Wright avec le parti communiste des Etats-Unis ont souvent obscurci son jugement sur le rôle du marxisme dans les luttes anticoloniales. La partie non romanesque de son œuvre révèle un engagement constant par rapport au marxisme, et tente de faire coïncider la conscience nationale et de race avec la révolution prolétarienne. Le marxisme est un outil indispensable pour comprendre l'imbrication de l'individu avec les forces du monde. Wright a, dans les domaines littéraire et politique, dépassé ces contraintes par un appel à l'action, en soulignant la position centrale du marxisme dans la dialectique entre classe et race dans les luttes révolutionnaires de la population noire aux Etats-Unis et en Afrique.

Pradip Baksi, « Une notecourte à propos du MEGA IV/32 : un catalogue des bibliothèques personnelles de Marx et Engels partiellement reconstruites » — Sur la base de renseignements préliminaires de la part des éditeurs de la section IV, volume 32 du *MEGA* (œuvres complètes de Marx et Engels dans leur langue originale), l'auteur expose à grands traits le contenu de la liste partiellement remise à jour des livres possédés par Marx et Engels.