

A Re-Introduction to the New Negro Movement and Pioneers of Modern Black Radical Thought

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Abstract

What is Black Radical thought? Who were the key Black Radicals of early twentieth century America? What radicalized them? What were the philosophies, and key tenants thereof, of those Black Radicals? In this essay, I answer those important queries by employing the historical method and critical discourse analysis. Ultimately, this essay is a history of ideas, mentality and thought. This process hinges on the interrogation of the writings and speeches of Black Radicals of Harlem, the Mecca of Black culture, politics, intellectualism and radicalism of the early twentieth century. This essay historicizes these radicals and their philosophies as well as traces their evolution and development.

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Introduction

What is Black Radical thought? Who were the key Black Radicals of early twentieth century America? What radicalized them? What were the philosophies, and key tenants thereof, of those Black Radicals? In this essay, I answer those important queries by employing the historical method and critical discourse analysis. Ultimately, this essay is a history of ideas, mentality and thought, it is *l'histoire d'mentalités*. This process hinges on the interrogation of primary sources and critical consideration of scholarly secondary sources. Primary sources used are the writings and speeches of key Black Radicals. These Black Radicals were based in Harlem, the Mecca of Black culture, politics, intellectualism and radicalism of the early twentieth century. At the turn of the twentieth century New York city had a pre-existing black American community dating back to the British colonial era, as well as a legacy of black American success in business, employment, art and entertainment.¹ The radical ideals of New Negro Era Harlem would reverberate throughout the global African world. This essay historicizes these radicals and their philosophies as well as traces their evolution and development.

Ultimately, it is concluded that my subjects were fundamentally international integrationists, meaning they wished to integrate into the global order or structures. However, what is radical or revolutionary is the ability to dictate and negotiate the integration process and status in the post-integration period. Thus, Black Radical thought is the amalgamation of political, social and economic ideas and philosophies that attempt to dictate and negotiate the global, national and local integration processes, as well as their statuses in the post-integration period. In short, Black Radicalism is the attempt to positively impact the global, national and local order. Simply, As Cedric J. Robinson

describes, they endeavored to “make history in their own terms.”² The traditional definition of integrationism for scholars of the black American experience rests on the historical understanding of a minority group becoming an equal and accepted part of the mainstream/majority in a society. Yet, to define integrationism in such a constricted majority/minority paradigm is too narrow. This limited lens minimizes and distorts the ideologies of not only New Negro Era Radicals but also of anti-colonial movements. Importantly, the West Indian immigrants’ world-view was initially more international integrationist than black Americans.

This variance of initial world-views between West Indian immigrants and black Americans is attributed to three primary causations. First, because of slavery in North America, the American racial project, and Jim Crow, at this time most black Americans were globally isolated and disconnected from the African Diasporic world, even in the Americas. Secondly, and contrarily, West Indian immigrants to the U.S. were already international. Lastly, resulting from West Indian immigration patterns within the British Empire, West Indians had relatives, friends and hometown compatriots in North America, Africa, and Europe. Although educated black American elites, like W.E.B. DuBois, had the privilege and exposure that facilitated an international integrationist world-view, it would be the West Indian immigrants who would introduce and make accessible this perspective to the black American masses. Nonetheless, West Indians, for the most part, were sequestered in Harlem, with most not physically travelling to, or experiencing life in, the rural south.

To that end, the key tenants of Black Radical Thought are: internationalism, Pan-Africanism, self-determination, self-defense, ending economic exploitation and

patronage, Black Solidarity, solidarity amongst the global oppressed peoples, de-colonization and anti-imperialism. Thus, viewed from this perspective, four key Black Radicals of early twentieth century America stand out, they are: Hubert Harrison, Cyril Briggs, Marcus Garvey and Claudia Jones. They were radicalized by racial, class and gendered oppression and marginalization of blacks in America and throughout the world who suffered under the harsh conditions of Jim Crow and Colonialism, as well as the legacies of Atlantic slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave-trade.

My subjects are West Indian Caribbean immigrants who initiated a militant and radical black bloc in Harlem in the first five decades of the twentieth century. They represent key Black Radicals in the development of Black Radical Thought. Although they did not always agree, nor was there saliency in their ideas, they laid the foundation for Black Radicals that followed. To understand significant pillars of their philosophies is to understand the underpinnings of subsequent generations of Black Radicals. They immigrated from the West Indies to Harlem during the importantly vital West Indian wave of immigration between 1900-1924. Hubert Harrison was the first, arriving in 1900 at the age of 17. Cyril V. Briggs also arrived at the age of 17 in 1905. Marcus Garvey, the oldest immigrant of my subjects, arrived in 1916 at 28.5 years old. Claudia Jones, the youngest immigrant of my subjects, arrived in 1924 at the age of 9.³ Prior to my other subjects' arrival, Harrison was already established in Harlem and its radical circles allowing him to mentor other West Indian immigrants like Briggs and Garvey. The foundation that Harrison established facilitated his and Briggs' serving as experienced elders in Garvey's movement. Jones arrived and matured in the shadow of Garvey's movement and its legacies of organizing, cultural pride, and women's militancy.

In the aftermath of McCarthyism and in the wake of statutory reform, in the early 1960s the elites of the Civil Rights Movement and the American power structures reached a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ to marginalize, ostracize, and omit Black Radicals and their legacies from the Black Freedom Struggle and its narrative. Although Garvey’s widow, Amy Jacques, diligently kept his legacy alive in the minds of many black Americans; he, Harrison, Briggs, and Jones were omitted from the synthesized Black Freedom Struggle narrative espoused by the DuBoisites of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Civil Rights Movement. This amounted to a literal and metaphorical sacrifice of the radical Black Left and its traditions by the reformist moderate centrists of the Civil Rights Movement.⁴ Their omission would have long lasting effects on the Black Freedom Struggle.

In his 1967 manifesto, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: from its origins to the present*, Harold Cruse argues that the “Crisis of the Negro Intellectual” is rooted in the failures of the 1920s and perpetuated by the Black Power Era Black Radicals’ lack of interrogation of the ideologies, actions, and repression of the Black Radicals of the New Negro period.⁵ The artists and intellectuals of the New Negro/Harlem Renaissance Era, according to Cruse, made several vital mistakes that would plague black American intellectuals into the 1960s. Their mistakes were: the enthrallment to white intellectuals, the lack of a clear vision and goal, and a blind commitment to integration as the end all to end all. Cruse contends that their mistakes were the result of the lack of the understanding that the answer to the ‘Negro Question’ must include a cohesive cultural, political and economic plan, ideology and vision. The lack of that cohesive approach was manifested in the uncritical embracement of Marxism, rivalries between black American and West

Indian intellectuals, the denunciation of Black Nationalism, and the undermining of the self determination of the black American community. Harlem Renaissance/New Negro Era artists and intellectuals neglected to understand the importance of economic nationalism to their cultural revolution. Thus, they did not control the institutions and means to produce, present and sustain their art or revolution. Lack of economic control resulted in the enthrallment to white patronage, which was paired with an acute sensitivity to their white patrons' ideologies, politics and views. In addition, this gave white intellectuals an undue dominance of ideas and control of the discourse concerning the 'Negro Question'. Moreover, this divorced the Harlem Renaissance's Cultural Revolution from black American political radicalism and nationalism. For Cruse, the failure of the New Negro Era Black Radicals was bequeathed to subsequent generations of black Americans leaving them without an effective legacy, trajectory and vision that persisted into the late 1960s. These subsequent generations were left with the task of developing a vision and ideology best suited to answer the 'Negro Question'.

The normative narrative tells of black American Marxists attacking Black Nationalists and descending into internal fighting between black Americans and West Indians. Ralph J. Bunche too noted the "lack of cohesion due largely to dissensions between American and "foreign" Negroes."⁶ Cruse asserts that West Indians viewed black Americans negatively, viewing them as an enemy to Marxism and working-class goals. However, it is possible, as Cruse observes, some Black Radicals' misunderstanding of the black American cultural, political and material realities left them vulnerable to white Marxist manipulation and exploitation. Perhaps, these Radicals should have consulted American born Ralph Bunche's 1928 essay "Negro Political

Philosophy” to acquire an insider’s perspective concerning black America.⁷ Bunche believed that rural black American existence was that of a peasantry, leading him to assert that:

“it is apparent that a conservative attitude is the Negro’s natural heritage. He is of a peasant class – he is of the soil; ...The mental shackles of peasantry have not yet been discharged. Peasant people have ever allied with conservatism.”⁸

By unpacking Bunche’s statement, the heart of his observation reveals that outside of Garvey, the lack of West Indian understanding of the black American experience and perspective was due to their unfamiliarity with the U.S. rural south.

Contrary to Cruse’s analysis, this essay reveals that Marxist-Leninist Black Radicals did not uncritically embrace Marxism or parrot white American Marxist-Leninists, did not denunciate Black Nationalism, and did have clear answers to the ‘Negro Question’. Cruse’s narrow view of integration inhibits nuance and muffs the implications of international integrationism, leading to his dearth of problematizing the Black Radical’s presumed blind commitment to integration as the end all to end all. The lack of a gendered analysis limits Cruse’s conclusions, engaging a gendered analysis as well as the above-mentioned considerations, this essay brings originality and an analytical divergence from Cruse, leading to fresh and new content and conclusions.

Angela Y. Davis, in her 1981 text *Women, Race and Class*, argues that Claudia Jones “became a leader and symbol of struggle for Communist women throughout the country.”⁹ Jones, who Davis describes as a committed Communist, challenged racism and sexism within the American Socialist and Communist movements. However, Davis marginalizes Jones by dedicating only four pages to her; thus, reducing her to a periphery or cursory figure.

Cedric Robinson, in his 1983 text *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, argues that Black Radical Thought was produced by the cultural understandings, world-view, and language of oppressed black people as well as the specific racial, cultural and material conditions faced. Robinson deals in large strokes consistent with his structural analysis, however, this broadness does not lend well to deeply understanding Black Radical Thought during the New Negro era. Moreover, *Black Marxism* totally ignores Harrison and Jones, and makes parse mention of Briggs. He reduces Briggs and the African Blood Brotherhood to confused Communist puppets.¹⁰ Robinson's oversimplification limits the lessons that can be learned from a closer study of Briggs. While *Black Marxism* aimed at making larger claims by interrogating W.E.B. DuBois, Richard Wright and C.L.R. James, this essay makes more narrow claims while primarily interrogating Harrison, Briggs, Garvey and Jones.

Winston James' 1999 text, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America*, fills a major gap in historiography concerning Black Radicalism during the New Negro Era. Importantly, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* interrogates the lives, careers and legacies of Harrison, Briggs and Garvey, amongst others. However, Jones falls outside the scope of James' study. Nonetheless, James reveals the disproportionate Caribbean immigrant involvement in New Negro Era movements that challenged the status quo on the basis of class and/or race. As a result, James' study explores and analyzes the two main trajectories of Black Radical Thought: Black Nationalism and Socialism.

Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia identifies five major characteristics that explain the level of radicalism that Caribbean immigrants imported with them to Harlem

during the New Negro Era. Those characteristics are: one, a majority consciousness; two, prior political and organizational experience; three, a politically protected status in the United States; four, a lesser attachment to the Christian faith and churches; and five, they had attained a higher educational and occupational level, beyond the reach of black Americans.¹¹ Important to our discussion, James suggests that this experience had a particularly strong radicalizing influence on mulattoes from the islands who had enjoyed certain privileges by virtue of their light complexion in the Caribbean but who found themselves lumped together as ‘Negroes’ with all other blacks in the United States under the ‘one drop’ rule.

My present study is significant for five primary reasons. First, it reclaims and contextualizes the voices, legacies and contributions of historically silenced and omitted Black Radicals of the first half of the twentieth-century. Secondly, it is in this era that one finds foundational ideas, philosophies and perspectives of the Black Power Movement. Thirdly, it is in this era that one discovers the antecedent model for how rivalries amongst Black Radicals play out in devastating ways. Fourthly, it is also in this era that one uncovers the antecedent model for the government repression of Black Radicalism. Lastly, scholars/activists must understand this era to truly understand the Black Power Movement, as well as to develop strategies for contemporary movements. But radicalism needs to be defined.

Defining Radicalism

It is very important to this study that a clear definition of Radicalism and Black Radical thought is developed and stated. Ralph J. Bunche asserts that there are, “generally speaking, two types of political philosophy – (1) conservatism and (2)

criticalism ... Conservatism marries the status quo – it is the creed of those who have no complaints to make, who preach a gospel of “let well enough alone.” Criticalism, on the other hand, is the philosophy of the dissatisfied and disgruntled – it is the philosophy of those who, having grievances to air, desire that changes be made ... change in social, change in political structure.”¹² Winston James defines radicalism as, “the challenging of the status quo either on the basis of social class, race (or ethnicity), or a combination of the two.”¹³ Regarding a definition of radicals, James states that they “are avowed anti-capitalists, as well as adherents of varieties of Black Nationalism.”¹⁴ By implication, radicals are also those who have attempted to unite anti-capitalist and nationalist thought.

Although Bunche’s and James’ definitions are solid foundations they neglect several key elements that would provide a more accurate and holistic definition of Black Radicalism. First, Black Radicalism includes the advocating for gender equality for women and a tripartite analysis of the plight of black women. Secondly, Black Radicalism incorporates a race first Pan-Africanist world-view that informs an internationalist outlook. Thirdly, beyond anti-Capitalism, Black Radicalism is also emphatically anti-imperialist. Fourthly, an African-centered or Afrocentric cultural outlook is integral to a Black Radical approach. Lastly, Black Self-Defense, domestically and internationally, is an organic and fundamental notion to Black Radicalism. Ultimately, as previously stated, everyone is fundamentally international integrationists, meaning they wish to integrate into the global order or structures.

It is not this study’s aim to imply that Black Radicals fulfilled every qualification to be identified as radical. However, the Black Radicals that will be discussed in this essay do embody most of these characteristics, albeit some more than others. For

example, Harrison and Jones embody all the characteristics. While Harrison, Garvey and Jones emphasized and/or empowered women, Briggs was silent on the matter of black women's equality. As the others were anti-capitalism, Garvey was a Black Nationalistic capitalist.

It is important to note that the subjects of this essay: Harrison, Briggs, Garvey and Jones, are not the only Black Radicals for the temporal parameters of this study. Nonetheless, including W.E.B. DuBois, they are the most important of the Black Radicals. Further, other Black Radicals such as A. Philip Randolph, Wilfred A. Domingo and Chandler Owen fall into the camps of the aforementioned radicals. DuBois appears in this essay as a peripheral personage, in part, because DuBois' ideas are so widely covered in scholarship that there is little to no need to resurrect his legacy and ideas. Bunche too appears as a periphery figure, yet he represents the most extreme conservative of the Black Radicals. Ralph Bunche, of this era, was every bit radical as well, although fashioning himself a "pragmatic" radical.¹⁵ Bunche called for self-reliance, the changing of the system and ending capitalism, concentration on local politics and community action, self-segregation, and the employ of a Socialist analysis.¹⁶ But why did these Key Black Radicals emerge from Harlem?

Harlem, The Black Mecca

At the turn of the twentieth century New York city had a pre-existing black American community dating back to the British colonial era, as well as a tradition of black American success in business, employment, art and entertainment.¹⁷ According to James Weldon Johnson, the black American migration to Harlem began early in the decade of 1900-1910 when the "West Fifty-Third Street centre had reached its upmost

development” and was the “result of the opportunity to get into better housing.”

Developers overbuilt apartment homes in Harlem while whites found Harlem’s location and limited public transportation undesirable. Yet, for black Americans, Harlem offered the “first chance in their entire history in New York to live in modern apartment houses.” As a result, Harlem quickly became the “intellectual and artistic capital of the Negro world” because it “provided New York Negroes with better, cleaner, more modern, more airy, more sunny houses than they ever lived in before.”¹⁸ At the turn of the century Harlem was a “newly constructed, architecturally attractive, socially dynamic division of a rapidly expanding city.” Harlem of the 1920s was not “a ghetto and nothing about it was substandard.”¹⁹ According to Joyce Moore Turner, Harlem’s “distinctive world [...] entered its own” during the 1890s to the 1920s.²⁰

At the dawn of the twentieth-century, local Caribbean “economies were in dismal shape.”²¹ In response, West Indians immigrated to New York to escape “impoverished living conditions” and “limited educational facilities” that led to their “disenchantment with British rule.” Those immigrants trekked to Harlem in search of “the opportunities they believed New York offered” and were attracted to the “lure,” “glamour and excitement” of New York.²² Exacerbated by fledgling economies, the harsh reality in the Caribbean was that “modestly educated” African descendants had “few opportunities for upward mobility.” Although the colonial governments provided African descendants a “good elementary education” they absolutely “failed to provide adequate jobs for qualified nonwhites.” In the Caribbean colonies discrimination of “all sorts” stalled the “upward occupational and economic opportunities” of local African descendants.²³ The remedy for many Caribbean African descendants was immigration. The most “consistent

magnet” for Caribbean immigrants prior to 1924 was the United States of America. The immigrants were “skilled and semiskilled,” although semiskilled outweighed the skilled as the number of immigrants increased. The volume of Caribbean immigrants “increased dramatically from a few hundred in 1899 to more than 12,000 in 1924.” Those Caribbean immigrants would comprise a “significant proportion of the 140,000 non-white immigrants,” and by 1930 accounted for about “one-quarter of the population of Harlem.”²⁴ Harlem quickly became a “powerful magnet” that seductively attracted a “diverse population from all over the world, especially people of African descent” while rapidly established a “powerful international reputation as the centripetal Mecca of the entire African Diaspora.” The clear majority of early West Indian immigrants to New York settled in Harlem, and a “great proportion” made Harlem their home.²⁵

West Indian radicals of the New Negro Movement possessed an “unrelenting political activism” and were “distinguished activist émigrés.” Importantly, their “extraordinary political self-consciousness” thrust African Diasporan causes onto the global dais.²⁶ Although the “political and social climate of New York and Harlem of the 1920s would intensively radicalize” many of the West Indian immigrants, their lands of origin also facilitated their radicalism.²⁷ They arrived in America with a “long and distinguished tradition of resistance with few parallels in the New World.” These immigrants brought with them a “sense of self-confidence and pride that would have predisposed at least some of them to radical activity, as the harsh racism battered their self-esteem.”²⁸

West Indian immigrants exhibited a “self-confidence, flexibility, intellectual curiosity, and ample view of the world” that allowed them to easily acclimate to the

“bustling clamor of a complex and vibrant city like New York.” In Black Gotham, they benefitted from a “large community of expatriates who fearlessly shared their views and tirelessly looked for ways to change their world.” The West Indian Black Radicals refused to capitulate the “sense of personal dignity and self-worth that they brought with them.” Enervating racism in the Caribbean radicalized many West Indian expatriates. Many of the early Caribbean migrants to New York were “politicized before they arrived in the United States,” with some like Marcus Garvey being “involved with fledgling trade unions” in the colonial territories before their relocation.²⁹ However, The United States was not necessarily the land of milk and honey or much opportunity for African descendant peoples. A reality and terror that unlike West Indians, black Americans had endured since the ‘Death of Reconstruction’.

The Specter of Violence and Terror

Violence was an extreme reality for black Americans at the dawn of, and in the early, 20th century. Lynching and anti-black racial massacres and riots were common place. Particularly for southern black Americans, violence was an ever-present possibility. As observed by Darlene Clark Hine et al,

“White people reacted with contempt and violence to demands by black people for fairer treatment and equal opportunities in American society. The campaigns of the NAACP, the efforts of the black club women, and the services and sacrifices of black men in [World War I] not only failed to alter white racial perceptions but were sometimes accompanied by a backlash against African Americans.”³⁰

Although the ‘Red Summer’ of 1919 was a watershed year, anti-black racial massacres and riots in the post-Reconstruction era began as early as 1886 in the South, Southwest, East Coast and Mid-West of the United States. Anti-black race massacres and riots of the era include: Washington County, Texas (1886), Phoenix, South Carolina (1898), Wilmington, North Carolina (1898), New Orleans, Louisiana (1900), Atlanta, Georgia

(1906), Springfield, Illinois (1908), East St. Louis, Illinois (1917), Houston, Texas (1917), Chicago, Illinois (1919), Elaine, Arkansas (1919), Washington D.C. (1919), Omaha, Nebraska (1919), Charleston, South Carolina (1919), Knoxville, Tennessee (1919), Oglethorpe, Georgia (1919), Bogalusa, Louisiana (1919), Clarksdale, Mississippi (1919), Montgomery, Alabama (1919), Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921), and Rosewood, Florida (1923).³¹ Extra-judicial vigilantism and racial terrorism in the form of lynching was also a chilling reality.

Two or three people were lynched in the United States, on average, every week between 1889 and 1932, totaling 3,745 people. Most of these lynchings occurred in the South with black men as the usual victims. Law enforcement rarely protected a potential victim, yet even if protection was offered, it often was insufficient. Perpetrators of lynchings were never “apprehended, tried, or convicted.” In fact, prominent whites “frequently encouraged and even participated in lynch mobs” and white “politicians, journalists, and clergymen rarely denounced lynching in public.”³² It is under these conditions that Harrison, Briggs, Garvey and Jones developed and articulated their Black Radical ideals.

Key Black Radicals

Hubert Harrison (1883-1927)

Hubert Harrison’s Socialism was confronted with the inability, or disinterest, of the American Marxists to address the ‘Negro Question’. Thus, their patronage hindered the development of a truly radical movement, especially amongst blacks. His thought was that Black Marxists themselves need to be the ones to translate and apply Marxism to the ‘Negro Question’.³³ However, the white worker’s movement’s racism truly answered any

questions and withered his confidence in an integrated labor movement. Harrison's response to anti-black race riots reveals the primary basis for his ideological development, in part due to white labor's participation and promotion of the riots, but fundamentally it is the response of the black Americans: armed self-defense.³⁴

Harrison then began to develop a fundamentally racialized ideology which considered and interrogated the intersectionality of race, class, gender and global citizenship status: a "racial consciousness".³⁵ From Harrison's perspective, his ideology was tapping into a global revolutionary movement that was truly revolutionary, unlike the so-called 'global revolution' of the white workers. Harrison's "race first" response to white labor's "race first" racism emerged into an open declaration of war against white labor.³⁶

Pan-Africanism too played an important role in the development of Harrison's racialized ideology.³⁷ Pan-Africanism smoothly corresponded with Harrison's dream of a global revolution of black people.³⁸ His African-centered Pan-Africanism also served as an intellectual framework to interpret Marxism leading to his call for a Colored International for global Black Labor.³⁹ Furthermore, Pan-Africanism was a pragmatic necessity based upon Harrison's ideological emphasis of independence from white patronage and a 'Black Go it Alone' approach.⁴⁰ Armed self-defense and women's suffrage were also vital pillars of Harrison's ideology and Pan-Africanist approach.⁴¹ Harrison also articulated a radical notion of sexual freedom coupled with radical takes on sex and sexuality.⁴² Sexual freedom, in the context of the African diasporic experience in the Americas is genetically intrinsic to self-determination and agency. Black women, who only at emancipation, gained control over who they had sex with and how they had

it, faced extreme challenges to that right after the death of Reconstruction. Misogyny, patriarchy, White Supremacy, racialized capitalism and imperialism held many black women hostages under the constant threat of rape and terror. Harrison's message was intended to empower black women and broaden the notion of freedom and the freedom struggle itself.⁴³

Harrison was also controversial amongst many black Americans due to his critiques of Black Leadership and the Black Church. He was very critical of religion, particularly Christianity to a degree in which he could be legitimately labeled anti-Christian.⁴⁴ Harrison contended that Christianity has served as a mechanism for White Supremacy, Eurocentrism and to promote docility amongst the oppressed via brainwashing, mental conditioning, and dogma. However, his representation of Christianity amongst blacks was essentialistic, oversimplified, and it ignored radical Black Religion and its tradition. Nonetheless, it was radical and important, especially if we consider Garvey's and the Nation of Islam's movements and ideologies, as well as Frantz Fanon's analysis. Harrison also highlighted what he felt were deficiencies in the approaches of Black Leadership.

For example, he argued for a more radical ideology than Booker T. Washington, who Harrison characterized as "conservative".⁴⁵ Harrison clashed with Washington due to Harrison's encouragement of political engagement, political independence and direct action.⁴⁶ It seems that Harrison may not have adequately interrogated Washington's complete philosophy. Harrison would have benefited from engaging Washington's approach to economic development and entrepreneurship. Peculiarly, Harrison himself didn't really address Black Business or Economics in any meaningful way. Could this

oversight be due to his lack of entrepreneurial experience? One may suggest that as a newspaper editor he would have had to develop some entrepreneurial skills, perhaps. However, he did advocate a “Patronize Your Own” campaign.⁴⁷ Furthermore, as a Socialist he is surprisingly silent concerning the lumpen proletariat; especially considering the growing Black Urbanization of the era. Harrison also criticized the left-leaning W.E.B. DuBois.

Apparently, the NAACP, particularly its white president Mr. Joel E. Spingarn and DuBois, worked with U.S. Military Intelligence in an attack against Harrison. Harrison responded to DuBois, and perhaps sought revenge against DuBois, by attacking DuBois’ “closed ranks” statement in encouraging blacks in America to set aside their grievances against racism in America and support the war effort.⁴⁸ DuBois’ call directly contradicted Harrison’s “race first” and anti-imperialistic tenants. Furthermore, Harrison contended that DuBois and the NAACP were duped and manipulated by American President Woodrow Wilson.⁴⁹ Harrison, like the NAACP, would too use the government as a weapon against DuBois.

Interestingly, Harrison took issue with Garvey over Africa. Harrison articulated an anti-black imperialistic black American move back to Africa. He did not believe that black Americans would return and liberate Africa, or that they were necessary for the development and liberation of Africa. Harrison’s approach directly contradicted Garvey’s moral and divine mission for Africans of the Americas in his ‘Back to Africa’ construct.⁵⁰ Instead, Harrison propagated an approach like Washington’s “cast down your bucket” motif, arguing for blacks to stake their claim and stay in the Americas.⁵¹

Ultimately, Harrison simultaneously advocated for structural international black integration and inclusion and greater personal and community control and autonomy. In Harrison's perspective, his approach would create the space for Booker T. Washington's dream to exist, for DuBois' self-segregation to be successful, and the global political economy that could take the world-wide workers' revolution from theoretical to actual.

Cyril V. Briggs (1888-1966)

Cyril Valentine Briggs joined the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and was part of a Harlem Communist intellectual tradition and a Black Nationalist movement. Briggs, editor of the *Crusader*, would eventually evolve into a rival of Garvey. Initially, racial identity in particular (and identity as a whole) posed unique challenges for the fair-skinned Briggs who was often called the "Angry Blond Negro".⁵² The quest to find his place in American society as an immigrant from a Caribbean European colony coupled with the harsh realities of the American racial project and classifications led to Briggs' early transnational Black Nationalism. Thus, Briggs established the *Crusader* to advocate for an independent Africa, as well as for the creation of a separate and independent Black Nation on U.S. soil. The *Crusader's* unique quality was its assimilation of Black Nationalism with revolutionary Socialism, two presumably "antithetical viewpoints."⁵³ The *Crusader* would be Briggs' contribution to the development of the black American "Africa for Africans" movement. Thus, in the founding edition of the *Crusader*, Briggs asserted that: "The American Negro and the West Indian Negro are in one blood, one in achievement, and one in the aspirations for equal rights and opportunities. They are both the seed of Africa."⁵⁴

Around the *Crusader*, Briggs organized the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) in 1917, which would combine Black Nationalism with Socialist Radicalism, and advocated for the creation of a separate and independent Black Nation on U.S. soil, amongst other

things. Eventually, Briggs would grow to reject the notion of an independent Black Nation on U.S. soil (a stance he may have borrowed from DuBois) concluding that ultimately it would be “unsatisfactory both to the Negro and the white man” due to materialistic, militaristic, political and economic vulnerabilities that such a nation or state would face.⁵⁵ The ABB also reflected Briggs’ participation and guiding influence on the New Negro Movement, especially his notion of self-defense. Central to Briggs’ construction of self-defense was the belief that black Americans could and should fight in the defense of their lives, livelihood and communities.

The ABB was augmented by Briggs’ vigilantly developed and maintained links with the black American press. In most regards, due to his severe and debilitating speech impediment (stutter), writing was the only outlet for his ideas. Publishing articles in black American journals, magazines and periodicals were vital to Briggs’ activism. Therefore, it was out of practical necessity that he cultivated and maintained strong links with the black American press.

However, for Briggs, race is a politicized construct as opposed to a biological one. For example, Briggs asserted that “Negroes who have not the rights of American citizens...are therefore Negroes first before they are anything else.”⁵⁶ Thus, initially, nation was trumped by race reflecting a Black Nationalistic quality. As a result, Briggs urged political solidarity amongst Africans throughout the global Diaspora and on the continent. Yet, by 1920, Briggs reformulated his attention and began articulating a Socialist revolutionary solution to the problem of global racial oppression. Nonetheless, he continued to promote nationalism within the CPUSA until his expulsion from the party in 1942 for his “Negro nationalist way of thinking.”⁵⁷

Seen in this light, his calls for the returning “to the motherland to work out a proud and glorious future for the African race” represented a complex ideological conceptualization of the linkage between diasporic and continental Africans.⁵⁸ He perceived local struggles as cogs in a grander wheel of a global liberation struggle. Briggs theorized that the global racialization of African peoples by the European colonial powers and the United States revealed that “the status of one section of the race surely affects the status of all other sections, no matter what ocean rolls between.”⁵⁹ Then, logically, for Briggs, racial solidarity was a political response to the circumstances confronting Africans and African descendants throughout the Diaspora. In turn, it was not biology that made them ‘Black’, but it was the social, political, and economic realities of oppression and colonialism that made them ‘Black’ and “denied [African Diasporans and continentals] equal rights and the merest justice under any of the existing white governments.”⁶⁰

Briggs was one of many would be Black Radicals that were inspired by Harrison. However, some Black Socialists took note of Harrison’s criticism, observations and concerns with the Socialist Party of America’s (SPA) approach to race relations. Yet, when Harrison resigned his SPA membership in 1914, many continued their membership and support of the SPA, but not Briggs. Briggs moved more left and eventually into the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) in 1919. In 1917, the Black Radicals working with, and influenced by Harrison, founded the People’s Educational Forum (PEF), an intellectual society they created with the intent to engage Marxist theory and contemporary issues without the SPA’s influence or interference. It was out of the PEF that Briggs and other Black Socialists formed the ABB to transform the PEF’s intellectual energy into a

movement spawning organization. Harold Cruse misanalyzes this split by ignoring the ‘Negro Question’ debate he implies is non-existent. However, he does poignantly point out that “this split among Negro Socialists was the root cause of more destructive rivalry in Harlem’s civil rights and labor politics than the records revealed.”⁶¹

Cruse’s assertion that the split resulted over differences of views of the Bolshevik Revolution is an oversimplification.⁶² Indeed Briggs would come to believe that the Russian Revolution’s attention to the ‘national question’ constituted the true path to Black Liberation. However, Briggs’ move further left was in part due to his increased internationalism. Briggs’ progression towards internationalism may not have reflected a desire to move away from race because the creation of Black Internationalism implies a black cultural, national and racial identity as a part of an international model.

Briggs’ description of racial violence and lynching in the United States as part of the same system that produced “wage slavery, [the] exploitation of women and children and the imperialism that finds vent in ‘colonies’ and crown possessions in Africa, Asia, and the West Indies,” highlighted an approach to Pan-Africanism that indicated a broader internationalist perspective.⁶³ Briggs viewed local forms of racial oppression as contributors to global structures of race, class, and nation, and thus required building a political movement that could reach beyond the boundaries of the African Diaspora. Briggs viewed the Pan-Africanist liberation struggle as part of a global revolution that required black people to “make common cause with the Indians and the Irish Republicans, with Soviet Russia and the Turkish Nationalists and with all other forces now, or in the future, menacing the British Empire in particular and the capitalist-imperialist world in general.”⁶⁴ Though he urged an alliance with any movement against

empire, racial oppression, and capitalism, he praised Soviet Russia in particular for what he believed was its ability to facilitate the convergence of these movements. Indeed, he found that the Bolsheviks' attitude toward Africa, India, and the Irish "from the international standpoint" was "totally different from and wholly opposed to imperialism" facilitating solidarity amongst African, Asian, and even Irish liberation in a worldwide anti-imperialist movement.⁶⁵ Perhaps Briggs underestimated the USSR's own imperialist aims, but his assertions reveal his international integrationist view.

Briggs argued that the Workers' Party would help weaken White Supremacy, grant black people access to its numerous publications and presses, and offer them membership in the Comintern, the global organization embodying "the very essence of the Negro Liberation Struggle in its program."⁶⁶ Thus, Briggs conceptualized the proletariat as those engaged in anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles in the non-white world, not a movement of only European workers. More comprehensively, his point that Africans were not the only victims of capitalism reflected an insistence that racism was married to global capitalism which meant that unifying African Diasporic and non-African liberation struggles was the absolute ideal. Ultimately, Briggs sought to draw connections between the freedom struggles of oppressed peoples globally by emphasizing that "the cause of freedom, whether in Asia or Ireland or Africa, is our cause."⁶⁷

Self-defense was also an important tenant of Briggs' philosophy. The 'Red Summer' of 1919 and the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma racial massacre heightened Briggs' call for and commitment to Black Self-Defense. In fact, Briggs used the Tulsa massacre and black American acts of self-defense in it, as recruitment propaganda for the ABB.⁶⁸ In an October 1921 issue of the *Crusader* we find an ABB advertisement proclaiming that

“The Klan Forces Us to Protect Ourselves!”⁶⁹ In fact Briggs’ response to the Ku Klux Klan’s Grand Goblin’s statement that the KKK was akin to the ABB, further disclosed his view of self-defense. He contended that the

“A.B.B. is a protective and liberative organization called into being as a result of the terroristic tactics of the Ku Klux and the general frame of mind of the anglo-saxon element from which the Ku Klux membership is drawn. The A.B.B. is not anti-Catholic, anti-Jew, anti-alien or anti-anybody else, but simply pro-Negro. It seeks not Negro supremacy but Negro protection and liberty.”⁷⁰

The language used to describe new membership in-take and organizational structures of the ABB were very militaristic. In fact, he explicitly called for the secret organizing of a “great Pan-African army.”⁷¹ In the international context, Briggs fashioned the ABB as an important component of the development of a global anti-imperialist army. This army should be viewed as an international expression of Briggs’ notion of Black Self-Defense.

Briggs would eventually grow critical of his former mentor, Harrison, and colleague, Garvey. His criticism of Harrison is rooted in Harrison’s racialism and steadfast commitment to an independent Black Nation-State on U.S. soil. As Harrison moved away from Marxism, Briggs moved towards Marxism. Those opposite directional trajectories resulted in the disintegration of the saliency between these radicals’ positions. Furthermore, Harrison’s stance on unionism and the Worker’s Party were in direct contradiction to Briggs’ outlook.

Initially, Briggs was an ally and member of Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), however, Briggs would become one of Garvey’s and the UNIA’s harshest critics. As late as December of 1919, Briggs was encouraging his readers and ABB members to join the UNIA proclaiming that “the two organizations were but parts of one movement – that movement to free Africa and raise the status of the Negro everywhere.”⁷² However, by December 1921, Briggs’ view on Garvey had

changed. Briggs, too, took issue with Garvey over Africa. Although Briggs did believe that black Americans should form an international army and liberate Africa, he did not share Garvey's belief that black Americans were necessary for the development of Africa. Briggs' approach too, directly contradicted Garvey's moral and divine mission for Africans of the Americas in his 'Back to Africa' construct. Instead, Briggs also propagated an approach like Washington's 'cast down your bucket' motif, arguing for blacks to stake their claim and stay in the Americas.

Briggs' March 1921 assertion that "Africa will eventually be freed of white control. However, the time is not yet ripe," placed him in direct confrontation with Garvey, despite the statement's "Join the U.N.I.A." closing.⁷³ Briggs' re-adjusted approach included the admonishing of Garvey's African repatriation campaign. In fact, Briggs now proclaimed to endeavor "to Strengthen the Position of the American Negro in order to Use it in the Struggle for a free Africa."⁷⁴ It is important to note that the liberation of Africa, as seen by Briggs, would have to come after the establishment of a Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth. Briggs stated that:

"the Negro can *possibly* – even *probably* – achieve his salvation through the Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth, does not mean, however, that he can achieve it *only through that means*. Other groups have saved themselves in the past without engaging in a death struggle with Capitalism. World-wide substitution of the Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth for the vicious Capitalist System is only one way whereby oppressed *races* may save themselves from the oppression engendered by the functioning of imperialist capitalism. Of course, it has the virtue of offering the most complete salvation since saving not only from alien political oppression but from capitalistic exploitation by members of its own group as well. It has the advantage for the Negro race of being along the lines of our own race genius."⁷⁵

The CPUSA then attempted to position Briggs and the ABB to move the UNIA towards a more class-conscious perspective and to situate the ABB as a mass-based movement to challenge the UNIA. Briggs would also eventually solicit the aid of the U.S. federal government to help destroy Garvey and his movement.

Although DuBois was in fact a Socialist himself, Briggs had disagreements with several of DuBois' assertions and approaches. Like Harrison, Briggs took issue with and attacked DuBois' "closed ranks" statement and potential cooperation with American Military Intelligence. Briggs also felt that DuBois' gradualist approach to African independence and decolonization was extremely problematic and conservative. Briggs, the consummate propagator of Black Self-Defense particularly took offense to DuBois' and the NAACP's lack of aggressiveness regarding pressuring the U.S. government to pass and sign an anti-lynching bill.

Marcus M. Garvey (1887-1940)

Of all the radicals discussed in this essay, Marcus Mosiah Garvey is hands down the most travelled. Because of his travels, upon his arrival in the United States Garvey had lived and worked amongst African Diasporic communities in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Great Britain, and other parts of Europe, he also travelled throughout the American rural south. These experiences granted Garvey a deeper insight into African Diasporan culture(s). In the words of Garvey biographer Tony Martin, Garvey had "lived in Black communities, worked amongst the people, shared their joys and sorrows. He had agitated on their behalf and noted their weaknesses. And he had listened, learnt and reflected on what he learned."⁷⁶

Unlike other Black Radicals of the era, Garvey was a huge fan and supporter of the conservative nationalist Booker T. Washington. Inspired after reading Washington's biography, *Up From Slavery*, he endeavored to establish "the Black man's government," "King and kingdom," "president," "country," "ambassador," "army," "navy," and "men of big affairs."⁷⁷ After extensive travel, research and study, Garvey formulated his

Garveyism philosophy of race first, self-reliance and nationhood. To transform his philosophy into a global social movement, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities (Imperial) League which was later shortened to the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), in 1914 in Jamaica and 1918 in Harlem.⁷⁸ “The title of the new organization revealed Marcus’ desire to improve the condition of Africans all over the world, be they in the West Indies, Afro-America, Africa itself or anywhere else. Marcus used the word “Negro” as a convenient means of denoting all persons of African descent.”⁷⁹

Elucidating his international integrationist perspective, the UNIA founded the Negro Factories Corporation, *The Negro World* periodical and the Black Star Line. Garvey, unlike Harrison and Briggs, was a Black Nationalist capitalist and founded the Negro Factories Corporation and the Black Star Line to foster trade between black America, the Caribbean and Africa. Garvey also took up Briggs’ mantle of “Africa for the Africans” and advocated for racial separatism.⁸⁰ Viewed from this light, Garvey was, in part, an international capitalistic racialized Pan-Africanist. His internationalist racialized Pan-Africanism led to his calling for the 1920 First International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World. Garvey contended that “the real doctrine of the Universal Negro Improvement Association [was] the doctrine of universal emancipation for Negroes, the doctrine of a free and redeemed Africa!”⁸¹ Further, Garvey wanted all blacks to become members of the global upper and middle classes. His discourse on women highlights that.⁸²

However, unlike Briggs, Garvey was not as hostile towards Christianity; however, he advocated a black-centered version that has been dubbed ‘Ethiopianism’. He

articulated the notion that God is black, or that there is a black God. He informed his followers that “we shall worship [God] through the spectacles of Ethiopia.”⁸³ Garvey’s UNIA also took on religious undertones, such as a racial catechism and the notion that Garvey was a prophet and martyr. Christian Garveyites, primarily in the African Methodist Episcopalian (AME) church, developed a theological idea of Black Americans’ preordained mission to liberate Africa from white rule and White Supremacy. This perspective exhibited Garvey’s elitist and imperialist view of Africa and Africans crystallized by the UNIA’s objective to “assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa” that ringed of the white Christian missionary outlook.⁸⁴

In fact, in South Africa we find that “Africans affiliated with white American missions and with Booker T. Washington deepened the connections between American Negroes and Africans, setting the stage for Garveyism,” transnationalism and transnational identity, as well as a “global black consciousness.”⁸⁵ Further, for “many South African blacks, Garvey became a Christ-like martyr figure, and Garveyist dreams of liberation swept across South Africa in prophetic and startling new dimensions,” and that would unite “national struggles for racial equality in a global struggle for civil rights, human rights, and the end of apartheid.”⁸⁶

Garvey biographer Tony Martin identifies Garvey’s poem, “The Black Woman,” published in the Saturday, April 30, 1927 edition of *The Negro World*, as a crystallization of Garvey’s view of black women. From its inception, the UNIA relied heavily upon women to organize its international, national and local structures. Moreover, as emphasized by Manning Marable, up to 2/3 of Garvey’s grassroots infrastructures and institutions were women. Integral to this process were the UNIA’s women dominated and

centered Black Cross Nurses and Universal Motor Corps. The UNIA's key recruiting and propaganda tool, *The Negro World*, was initially distributed with the help of Garvey's first wife, Amy Ashwood Garvey. The UNIA provided black women a platform to earn recognition, respect and leadership. *The Negro World* had a page specifically designed to give a platform to black women and exalt them. In *The Negro World*, black women discussed their roles "in the family, in the arts, in politics, in history." Elucidating the important, vital, and acclaimed role women played in the UNIA, Garvey's son Julius asserted that his father believed the UNIA "would have developed further and faster if it had more women in comparison to some of the wimpy men that we have."⁸⁷

Two women: Amy Jacques Garvey and Louise Little, operating at different levels of organization and development, represent the quintessential UNIA women's experience, role, and stature. Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey's second wife, was involved in the international and national UNIA leadership. In that capacity, she helped build and expand the movement. Exploiting a space for challenging the black patriarchy of the time and within wings of the UNIA, her strong will, independence, and platform made some of the UNIA male leadership uncomfortable. Jacques Garvey even wrote and published an essay in *The Negro World* that "lampoons, lambasts black men... and tells them they gotta get out of the way and that black women will lead the revolution." Louise Little, a working-class Trinidadian immigrant wife of a U.S. born black minister and UNIA member, Earl Little, joined and/or started UNIA chapters throughout the Mid-West. Mrs. Little was her husband's partner a co-conspirator and she played an active role in the UNIA as a grassroots believer, member, organizer, and leader. Mrs. Little was the

secretary of the Lansing (MI) UNIA and wrote the reports of meetings and organizational activities for *The Negro World*.⁸⁸

Consistent with Garvey's pro-black views, the UNIA championed a positive black self-image and held black beauty contests. Furthermore, unlike Briggs' *Crusader*, *The Negro World* did not publish advertisements for products and services that could be interpreted as being rooted in a negative black self-image. It is through Garvey, we find the most staunch and pervasive articulation of the 'Black is Beautiful' notion. According to Mariamne Samad, Garvey wanted "black women to look at themselves in a new way, as beautiful" during a time when "black women were domestics" or "at the bottom of the rung of whatever service line they could be in." In the vein of a positive black self-image and racial pride, Garvey promoted a notion of racial purity that was explicitly anti-miscegenation. Garvey's racial purity stance was also paired with a general disdain for mixed-blood black Americans, particularly leaders.⁸⁹ His disdain was heightened by his belief that he was wrongfully, maliciously and wickedly targeted by "very light-colored" African Diasporic rivals.⁹⁰ As their rivalries intensified, Garvey often would resort to attacking rivals' fair-skin and mixed ancestry, with Briggs and DuBois bearing the brunt of most of it.⁹¹ Ironically, he never mentioned his hero, Booker T. Washington's, fair-skin and mixed ancestry. Garvey argued that:

"Du Bois represents a group that hates the Negro blood in its veins, and has been working subtly to build up a caste aristocracy that would socially divide the race into two groups: One the superior because of color caste, and the other the inferior."⁹²

Garvey too took issue with DuBois' "closed ranks" statement.⁹³ Garvey also had major disagreements with his Black Radical contemporaries, such as the Communists and Nationalists.

The Communists endeavored to gain control of the leadership and direction of the black American masses, reckoning that to accomplish this they had to either infiltrate or subvert the UNIA. Thus, they doggedly pursued both strategies throughout the 1920s. It appears that Garvey held no particular or notable hostility towards the Communist's agenda. However, he fervently believed that blacks need be a strong, independent and self-reliant global force as opposed to being simply an appendage to another struggle. Regarding the U.S. situation, Garvey contended that in a racist nation, white workers were too deeply infected with racism. Therefore, any substantial and meaningful unity based merely on class-consciousness between white and black workers would be a long time off. Garvey perceived that the:

“fiery communists are fighting against one class interest for the enthronement of theirs – a group of lazy men and women who desire to level all initiative and intelligence and set a premium on stagnation...I am against the brand of communism that is taught in America, because it is even more vicious than all other ism's put together. In America it constitutes a group of liars, plotters and artful deceivers.”⁹⁴

Garvey's response to Marxist-Leninism, as demonstrated by the above quote, too revealed his desire for internationalist integrationism. Although Garvey was diametrically opposed to American Marxist-Leninists, his remarks provided for an open-door policy towards international Communism indicating a different posture internationally. Perhaps Garvey's strategy was rooted in the hopes of a post-revolutionary world and reflected the reality that Marxist-Leninism was eminent to the character of international Black Radical thought.

While touring the U.S. in 1922 Garvey began associations with white racist and white terrorist organizations that would also lead to confrontations with his fellow Black Radical contemporaries and moderates alike. He unapologetically defended his decision by stating that the “Ku Klux Klan is the invisible government of the United States of

America. The Ku Klux Klan expresses to a great extent the feeling of every real white American.”⁹⁵ He continued with an assertion that would heighten Briggs’ now negative view of him⁹⁶:

“The attitude of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is in a way similar to the Ku Klux Klan. Whilst the Ku Klux Klan desires to make America absolutely a white man’s country, the Universal Negro Improvement Association wants to make Africa absolutely a black man’s country...So you realize that the Universal Negro Improvement Association is carrying out just what the Ku Klux Klan is carrying out – the purity of the white race down South – and we are going to carry out the purity of the black race not only down South, but all through the world.”⁹⁷

Briggs identified the KKK as the ABB’s enemy and was careful to establish that the ABB was not the black version of a KKK. Garvey’s assertions implied a completely antithetical understanding. For his part, Harrison criticized Garvey’s extravagant claims, massive ego, organizational leadership (or lack thereof), the conduct of his stock selling and financial schemes, his politics and practices.⁹⁸

Claudia Jones (1915-1964)

Compared to Harrison and Briggs, Claudia Jones was the most sophisticated and committed Marxist thinker. Jones was “impressed” by the work of International Labor Defense (ILD) and joined the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and the Young Communist League (YCL) in 1936 becoming the most “celebrated black female communist in the 1940s.”⁹⁹ In 1950, at age thirty-five, Jones was the “highest-ranking black woman” in the CPUSA and was the secretary of the CPUSA’s National Women’s Commission and “well known on the Left.” Jones was very active in Harlem’s cohort of “artists and intellectuals” as well.¹⁰⁰ For Jones, Communism was best suited to address the oppression of black Americans, including women. Jones’ philosophy hinged on internationalism, Black Solidarity, community action, inter-racial solidarity, transnationalism, the view that the Civil Rights Movement was a liberation movement,

the Communist 'Black Belt' thesis, and the notion of the tripartite oppression of black women (or to restate it: the intersectionality of race, class and gender). As observed by Mary Helen Washington, Jones "developed a model of feminism that put working-class women at its center."¹⁰¹ As Jones biographer Carol Boyce Davies framed it, Jones "studied and raised issues of class, race, and gender and the particular condition of black women, within formal CPUSA contexts," with identity factoring greatly into Jones' outlook and approach.¹⁰² In fact, identity is what drove Jones' activism.

Jones' identified herself as Caribbean, black, woman, and Marxist. For example, in her statement before being sentenced to prison Jones exclaimed that "[you] dare not, gentlemen of the prosecution, assert that Negro women can think and speak and write."¹⁰³ Jones felt that her identity (race and gender) played a central role in her persecution by the American government. In fact, Jones states that:

"I was deported from the USA because as a Negro woman Communist of West Indian descent, I was a thorn in their side in my opposition to Jim Crow racist discrimination against 16 million Negro Americans in the United States in my work for redress of these grievances, for unity of Negro and white workers, for women's rights and my general political activity urging the American people to help by their struggles to change the present foreign and domestic policy of the United States."¹⁰⁴

Jones always emphasized her West Indian identity.¹⁰⁵

Jones championed Black Solidarity and community action.¹⁰⁶ For her, community action involved four levels: local, regional, national and international; and should be the basis for a certain level of organization. It is in this context that one finds Jones' advocacy for Black Self-Determination as a "programmatic demand" and "guiding principle" to establish the "broadest Negro unity and the broadest Negro and white alliance".¹⁰⁷ However, that did not prevent her from, and perhaps led her to, challenging racism and sexism within the American Progressive and Communist movements. Jones

addressed the delicate ways that white Marxist-Leninists and/or Progressive women exhibited “chauvinism” toward black working-class women, such as admonishing their black domestic workers for not being “friendly” enough, by patronizingly “informing” black working-class women about how exploited they were---as though they were too dull to critically analyze their own oppression, by betraying their view of black working-class women as child-like by calling them “girl,” or by dehumanizing black working-class women by referring to them simply as “the maid.”¹⁰⁸

Her acceptance of the Communist ‘Black Belt’ thesis led to her view of the Civil Rights Movement as a liberation movement. The ‘Black Belt’ thesis advanced the notion of a colonial model, meaning that black Americans in the Deep South represented a colonized Black Nation-State. For her, this Communist perspective placed them at the “forefront of the struggle for equality of the Negro people.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Jones rejected the contention that the Black State issue was ended by black Americans who chose domestic integration at all costs, such as the moderate NAACP. Like Harrison before her, Jones continued to advocate for the establishment of a Black State, which in her view represented true Black Self-Determination. For Jones, it “is only by helping to interconnect the partial demands with the right of self-determination that we Communists, in concert with other progressive forces, can contribute guidance to the struggle for complete equality for the Negro people.”¹¹⁰ As revealed by Jones’ statements quoted above, she also advocated for inter-racial solidarity in the vein of Briggs. However, one is presented with a seemingly contradiction between Black Solidarity and Self-Determination on one hand and inter-racialism on the other. However, perhaps one finds reconciliation in her internationalist theorizing.

Like Briggs, Jones articulated an internationalism that included the multi-racial global oppressed. However, moving beyond Briggs' construction Jones forwarded a notion that included all oppressed people not just workers. Jones viewed the move from race and racial solidarity to international inter-racial solidarity as a process. Like her predecessors, Jones took issue with DuBois' "closed ranks" statement in encouraging blacks in America to set aside their grievances against racism in America and support war efforts, as well as his potential cooperation with American Military Intelligence and his (and the NAACP's) lack of aggressiveness in regards to pressuring the U.S. government to pass and sign an anti-lynching bill.¹¹¹ Jones also critiqued the normative narrative in American education that omitted the black American anti-war effort during the First World War.¹¹² Importantly, Jones' most radical sentiments resided in her contributions to ameliorating the plight of black American women.

Unlike Briggs and DuBois, who ignored women's issues and/or held very paternalistic views towards women, Jones would emerge as a black pioneer in the fields of women's rights and Black Feminism. Jones asserted that women are oppressed in all classes of society, and that black women were triply oppressed. In doing so, she introduced the intersectionality of race, class and gender. As Harrison did with the SPA regarding the 'Negro Question', Jones took issue with the CPUSA hierarchy that marginalized women, black women in particular. However, like Briggs, Jones never left the CPUSA. Nonetheless, Jones felt the CPUSA neglected the problems of black women. For example, she felt that the CPUSA ignored the unique problem faced by black women of the rape of them by 'White Supremacists', as well as the ignoring of their anti-war and peace sentiments. Jones viewed black women as the most oppressed people and that a

Marxist-Leninist Party was best suited to address their condition. Jones, without any evidence or data to support her claim, asserted that women enjoyed full equality in the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, one is left to wonder and speculate about her views of Black Self-Defense, especially regarding the protection of black women against rape.¹¹³

Jones' analysis, similar to the impetus for Garvey's 'Black is Beautiful' campaign, caused her to observe that black women were rejected for not meeting "white ruling-class standards of 'desirability'" like light-skin, within the American Left. Her criticism that CPUSA members and Progressives failed "to extend courtesy to Negro women" was portentous in its inferences: "even on the Left, black women were considered inferior to whites."¹¹⁴ In short, Jones married "certain aspects of theoretical Marxism with a practical application," particularly the "aspect of Marxism that detailed support for workers' struggles and the critique of capitalism, the thinking through one's reality and social condition from an informed analytical position with the knowledge of class relations, and the logic of an international workers' mass movement." Vladimir Lenin's critique of imperialism, feminism's "location of women in these various class relations," and Black American politics' "critique of racism" rounded out her analysis.¹¹⁵

Why is the New Negro Movement the root of the Black Power Movement?

It is in this era that one finds foundational characteristics, ideas, philosophies and perspectives of the Black Power Movement.¹¹⁶ It also is in this era that one discovers important antecedent models for how rivalries amongst Black Radicals play out in devastating ways as well as for the government repression of Black Radicalism. Thus, scholars/activists must understand this era to truly understand the Black Power Movement, as well as to develop strategies for contemporary movements.

The ideals, tenants and characteristics of Black Radical thought in the New Negro era and the Black Power era share remarkable similarities. Those shared tenants and characteristics are internationalism, Pan-Africanism, self-determination, self-defense, ending economic exploitation and patronage, Black Solidarity, solidarity amongst the global oppressed peoples, de-colonization, anti-imperialism, and gender equality. Activists and adherents in both eras were radicalized by racial, class and gendered oppression and the marginalization of blacks in America and throughout the world. Simply, they were radicalized by the harsh conditions of the American racial project and colonialism and de-colonization, as well as the legacies of slavery and the slave-trade.

Government repression was a fierce reality faced by New Negro Era Black Radicals. In fact,

“Black suspects were an important target during the first Red Scare. “Radicals” continued to be monitored in the twenties and thirties. During World War II outspoken African Americans narrowly avoided federal repression. The most significant continuity from 1919 to modern times was the twin fear that black militancy was communist-inspired, and that it was particularly directed toward achieving “social equality,” even intermarriage, with whites.”¹¹⁷

The Bureau of Investigation (BI), the predecessor of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), used black agents to infiltrate and spy on Black Radical organizations, and to serve as agent provocateurs to create disunity within and between Black Radical organizations.

The federal government also suppressed periodicals, restricted the travels of Black Radicals, falsely imprisoned Black Radicals and deported Black Radicals. In fact, the first black BI agent was hired to infiltrate Garvey’s UNIA, moreover, the first black agents were initially hired only to investigate black suspects.¹¹⁸ It is important to note that the “Bureau’s extensive use of black undercover informants and infiltrators, [was] a practice necessitated by the inability of white agents to penetrate racial organizations and gain the confidence of black militants.”¹¹⁹ Theodore Kornweibel, Jr poignantly notes that:

“J. Edgar Hoover’s role in this process cannot be overestimated. In spearheading the Bureau of Investigation’s anti-radical crusade in 1919, he fixated on the belief that racial militants were seeking to break down social barriers separating blacks from whites, and that they were inspired by communists or were the pawns of communists. These notions became imbedded in the FBI and its director. Hoover’s hostility toward Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement of the 1960s was shaped by the fears which Hoover conjured up in 1919 and which he helped cement into the Bureau’s institutional memory.”¹²⁰

Thus, the federal government’s political intelligence apparatus which took shape during and after World War I became a permanent establishment and operated unchecked into and during the Cold War era.¹²¹ That same political intelligence apparatus would be deployed against Black Radicals and their organizations during the Black Power era.

The FBI launched a Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to surveil, infiltrate, discredit, and disrupt domestic political organizations. COINTELPRO was a series of covert, and often illegal, operations. Those operations included murders, assassinations, agent provocateurs, illegal search and seizures, creation of false rivalries and animosities, undercover agents, spies, and the sending of potential ‘false’ lovers based upon psychological profiles. Most important to this discussion is that declassified FBI records indicate COINTELPRO targeted groups and individuals that the FBI regarded as subversive, including Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement organizations, organizers, and activists, as well as a myriad of organizations that were part of the broader New Left.¹²²

Bitter rivalries between Black Radicals of the New Negro era serves as an early antecedent model for how these enmities play out in devastating ways. These New Negro Era Black Radicals cooperated with authorities against one another, publicly disparaged one another, and often followers of various movements would violently clash with one another, just as during the Black Power era. For example, Harrison, like DuBois did against him, would also use the U.S. federal government as a weapon against DuBois.

Briggs would also eventually solicit the aid of the U.S. federal government to help destroy Garvey and his movement. Both Briggs and Garvey would also use the U.S. federal government as a weapon against DuBois. Intriguingly, the duplicitous use of the government to attack other black leaders is questionable. This activity seems to directly contradict all their ideologies. None of them ever resolve this contradiction nor acknowledge it either. Their actions did not just hurt one another, and their credibility, it ultimately hurt the aims, goals, objectives and interests of the very people they all purported to help: the global black masses. We will see the very same drama play out and contribute to the destruction of the Black Power Movement. Developing natural rivalries and conflicts over hegemony and dominance, COINTELPRO promoted and caused and/or exacerbated them between and within Black Power Movement organizations and personalities. COINTELPRO activities led to the false imprisonment, based upon entrapment and the endeavors of agent provocateurs, of Black Power adherents. COINTELPRO created bloody and bitter rivalries between organizations, fostered mistrust and animosities within organizations based upon regionalism and personality cults, and exploited those divisions by manipulating actors in those rifts into utilizing law enforcement apparatuses against one another.¹²³

Conclusion

The New Negro Movement commenced during the wake of the ‘Death of Reconstruction’ and the on-set of Jim Crow in the U.S., as well as the entrenchment of colonialism in Africa and the U.S.’s entry into global politics with the Spanish-American War. The emergence of Socialism, World War I, and the Bolshevik Revolution also define the global political economy that shaped the world of the New Negro Era. That

global political economy was compounded by the domestic status of black Americans during the 'Nadir Period' which was marked by the condition of 'near slavery' of black Americans characterized by lynchings, anti-black racial massacres, rape, and stark income inequality. Yet, Harlem's unique station, history and culture provided a Black Radical incubator during a time of American racial terror. As has been demonstrated, the Black Radicals of the New Negro Era were fundamentally international integrationists. They endeavored to dictate and negotiate the integration process and status in the post-integration period with the goal of achieving global Black Sovereignty expressed explicitly as Pan-Africanism, self-determination, self-defense, and gender equality. Viewed from this perspective, Hubert Harrison, Cyril Briggs, Marcus Garvey and Claudia Jones stand out as four key Black Radicals of early twentieth century America. Radicalized by racial, class and gendered oppression and marginalization of blacks in America and throughout the world, they rejected the harsh conditions of Jim Crow and Colonialism, as well as the legacies of slavery and the Atlantic slave-trade.

My subjects, who were not DuBoisites, not members of the NAACP, and not mainstream radicals, laid the foundations for, expanded, and/or invented key Black Radical ideals. They also mentored and/or cultivated other non-mainstream Black Radicals. Importantly, they infused internationalism into Black Radical discourse and philosophy. The framing of their struggle and outlook in international terms reveals a desire to view their status in global terms. Being immigrants in a foreign land within the local black community heightened their internationalist outlook. Articulating their status in international terms, they theorized a fair and equal international integration of a global black community and/or nation. But despite Harold Cruse's assertions, New Negro Era

Black Radicals were not blind Marxist-Leninist puppets. They challenged white Marxist-Leninists over the ‘Negro Question’, and admonished white Marxist-Leninists’ racism and patriarchy. New Negro Era Black Radicals’ infighting undermines Cruse’s U.S. born blacks versus West Indian immigrant false binary. Furthermore, New Negro Era Black Radicals did not cull Black Nationalism, they embraced it.

This essay has also introduced three important ideas that are vital to a deeper understanding and interrogation of the Black Power Movement at the end of segregation during the late 1960s and early 1970s. First, it is in the New Negro Era that one finds foundational ideas, philosophies and perspectives of the Black Power Movement. Secondly, it is in this era that one discovers the antecedent model for how rivalries amongst Black Radicals play out in devastating ways. Thirdly, it is also in this era that one uncovers the antecedent model for the government repression of Black Radicalism. It should be noted that J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI owe their genesis to the effort to destroy Marcus Garvey and their COINTELPRO tactics were created to destroy all New Negro Era Black Radicals. American Military Intelligence, the grandfather of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), played a significant role in the repression of Black Radical Thought as well. The bitter rivalries and the use of those state apparatuses to attack one another highlight this reality.

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