LIBERATION FROM THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF
THE THIRD WORLD LEFT IN POST-WAR AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces the full intellectual history of the Third World Turn: when theorists and activists in the United States began to look to liberation movements within the colonized and formerly colonized nations of the ‘Third World’ in search of models for political, social, and cultural transformation. I argue that, understood as a critique of the limits of New Deal liberalism rather than just as an offshoot of New Left radicalism, Third Worldism must be placed at the center of the history of the post-war American Left.

Rooting the Third World Turn in the work of theorists active in the 1940s, including the economists Paul Sweezy and Paul Baran, the writer Harold Cruse, and the Detroit organizers James and Grace Lee Boggs, my work moves beyond simple binaries of violence vs. non-violence, revolution vs. reform, and utopianism vs. realism, while throwing the political development of groups like the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the Third World Women’s Alliance into sharper relief. Following developments in Third World thought beyond the end of the New Left, my dissertation further reveals the lasting impact of the Third World Left on academia, and recovers long-marginalized lines of economic inquiry not always associated with Third Worldism, including investigations into non-material economic
incentives, and the various campaigns for welfare and Wages for Housework led by Marxist feminists in the 1970s.

I argue that beyond solidarity, Third Worldism was a method of analysis through which Leftists sought to expand critical thought beyond the limits of political liberalism, economic liberalism, cultural liberalism, and racial liberalism. Armed with the conviction that American capitalism was sustained by cruelty, racism, and exploitation—but recognizing that no mass-revolutionary base existed in the United States—Third World Leftists studied revolutionary anti-colonial movements in order to try to break free from the ‘one-dimensionality’ of mid-century capitalism. Considering Third Worldism in this way heightens not only our understanding of a key moment in the history of the Left, but of the development of a series of critiques of the cultural, political, and economic contours of the ‘New Deal Order.’
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While writing, I have had the opportunity to present my work at the Tamiment Library, 1968—The Global and the Local at Georgetown, The Blacks on the Left Symposium at Emory, The Radical Sixties Conference at Brighton University, the American Historical Association in Washington D.C., The Society for US Intellectual History Conference in Washington D.C., the Futures of Intellectual History Conference at NYU, and the Beyond the New Deal Order Conference at UC Santa Barbara. Even with grants and scholarships, travelling for conferences and research can be very expensive. While working at Houghton I was hosted by my cousins Paul and Anna Maria Radvany. During the semester I spent at the Tamiment Library, Nick Carpenter abandoned his own home literally dozens of times so that I would have a place to stay. On the rare occasions
when Nick insisted on sleeping in his own bed, Matt and Kristin Reynolds and Molly Laufman and Gavin O’Donnell lent me their apartments.

Two chapters of my dissertation have been published in journals. Thanks to Tiago Mata for his help with “In Search of the Socialist Subject: Radical Political Economy and the Study of Moral Incentives in the Third World” in Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology (Vol. 37A, 2019), and to Jon Levy for his guidance on “A Capital for the Age of Growth: Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, and the Critique of Keynesian Civilization,” in Critical Historical Studies (Fall 2019). Traveling for conferences and archival research can be isolating and expensive.

Prior to beginning my Doctorate, I earned a teaching credential at Sonoma State University, where working with Nancy Case-Rico and John Kornfeld helped to prepare me for my work in the college classroom. Universities cannot function without the labor of graduate workers. Yet too often, administrators and deans treat graduate students with condescension and contempt, extracting as much value as they can while belittling our work and misleading the community about our wages, our benefits, and our career prospects in fields which are increasingly defined by contingency and precarity. With a couple of notable exceptions, Georgetown’s administration was no different. I am eternally grateful to my brothers and sisters in the Georgetown Alliance of Graduate Employees (GAGE), who organized for years to force a hostile administration to the bargaining table. I am particularly pleased to have organized alongside Chad Frazier, Cory Young, Keyvan Shafiei, Deidre Nelms, Marya Hunnan, Abby Holekamp, Thom Loyd, Matt Shields, and Hailey Huget. I am also grateful to have studied in a department whose faculty went out of their way to express their unified support for the idea that graduate workers are workers. Thanks also to my mom for designing GAGE’s logo.

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Sahandy. My maternal grandmother Judith Kenez was a piano prodigy, who survived Nazi occupation and the Siege of Budapest, and owned a night-club in Sao Paolo before moving to the United States in 1961. My early interest in history was sparked by her having lived through so much of it. My father’s mother Julia Feldman passed away during the writing of the dissertation, shortly before her one-hundredth birthday. She was as kind and as caring a person as I have ever met, and my becoming a doctor would have made her very pleased.

My sister Alie is so emotionally invested in my success that she told me she thought she was going to throw up and cry during my defense. After seven years on the opposite side of the country I’m very much looking forward to living in the same time zone as Alie and my brother-in-law Arsenni Vaselenko. My parents Jerry and Sonia have been a constant source of love and support. They have always encouraged me in my effort to find work that allows me to spend most of my time reading. In March of 2020 they offered to let us come and stay with them so that we could get a little help with childcare during the pandemic. Eight months later, at the time of this writing, we are still there. I genuinely do not know how I could have finished this dissertation without their help. My daughter Julia is now old enough both to understand that I have written a book, and to demand that I teach her how to read it. She likes running in circles around the kitchen island, jumping on the bed, and telling jokes about monsters. Having her around makes everything better. I first asked Shamie to go out with me more than twenty years ago. Now we’re married and have a toddler and she’s been pretty cool about the fact that I’ve spent most of the past half-decade talking about Paul Sweezy. Shamie has supported me through two years of coursework, a year of exam preparation, four years of research and writing, and what feels like several months spent working on these acknowledgments. Thank you. I’m sorry. I love you.
For Mom, Dad, Shamie, and Julia
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Bibliography
Introduction: Beyond Solidarity: Third World Leftism as Critique of American Liberalism

“As the world revolution spreads and as the socialist countries show by their example that it is possible to use man’s mastery over the forces of nature to build a rational society satisfying the human needs of human beings, more and more Americans are bound to question the necessity of what they now take for granted…This will not happen in five years or ten, perhaps not in the present century: few great historical dramas run their course in so short a time. But perhaps even fewer, once they are fairly started, change their nature or reverse their direction until all their potentialities have been revealed. The drama of our time is the world revolution; it can never come to an end until it has encompassed the whole world.”

- Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Monopoly Capital, 1964

Writing in 1961—near the crest of post-war American affluence—the philosopher Herbert Marcuse bemoaned “the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change” in the United States. This absence, he continued, caused critiques of American capitalism to be “thrown back to a high level of abstraction,” with “no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet.”\(^1\) As Marcuse articulated in a speech delivered at the Dialectics of Liberation Conference in 1967, the central problem was that “we are facing liberation from a society where liberation is apparently without a mass basis.”\(^2\)

Between the build-up to the Second World War and the early 1970s, socialists and liberals alike maintained that the relatively widespread prosperity of the mid-century United States provided the raw material with which to create a better world. To left-

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liberals like John Kenneth Galbraith, the stubborn persistence of poverty, of racism, and of colonial and post-colonial wars could be ameliorated through the election of better politicians and the implementation of better policies. To Marxist philosophers like Marcuse and the Marxian economists Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, these evils were fundamental to the functioning of American capitalism. At the apex of American affluence, Marcuse, Baran, and Sweezy saw the limits of political and economic liberalism exposed. Fueled by war, colonization, and imperialism, the largest expansion of wealth in the history of human civilization had failed to eradicate poverty and had produced a governing class which worked to subvert the will of people in and outside of the United States if their actions threatened their interests, or those of the state as they understood them. Crucially though—and contrary to the predictions of ‘vulgar’ Marxism—the working class of the world’s most advanced economy seemed to pose little threat to the men who the sociologist C. Wright Mills had termed ‘The Power Elite.’

American capitalism had been stabilized by the integration of the industrial (white) working class at home, with the system’s most brutal sorts of exploitation visited on the colonized people of the un- and under-developed world. For this reason, radicals argued, not only was there no radical working class in the United States, but the relative material comfort enjoyed by the bulk of white American workers had combined with the soporific effects of mass consumerism to prevent the emergence of any sort of radical critique of mid-century American liberalism.

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3 C. Wright Mills *The Power Elite* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959 c. 1956). This ignores the degree of actual labor unrest, though it is correct of course that organized labor—while markedly less quiescent than Baran, Sweezy, and Marcuse often supposed—struggled for an accord with the Power Elite, not to overthrow them. See for example, Kristoffer Smemo, Samir Sonti, and Gabriel Winant, “Conflict and Consensus: The Steel Strike of 1959 and the Anatomy of the New Deal Order.” *Critical Historical Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 2017
In their search for potential agents of revolutionary transformation, white radicals in the late 1950s often failed to look beyond the mostly white, industrial working class. Writing in 1963, the Black American critic Harold Cruse argued that Marxists had failed to understand that the question ‘Who will change American society?’ could be answered only with ‘Black Americans and other colonized and semi-colonized people.’ To Cruse, it was the African-American Left which had provided the sort of critical resistance whose absence Western Marxists decried—in part through the networks of solidarity Black Americans had developed with the inhabitants of the non-aligned world. Belatedly, Marxists who remained committed to social revolution came to share Cruse’s belief that Black radicalism in the United States presented an opportunity to unite revolutionary theory and practice. By the mid-1960s, Marcuse and his fellow radical theorists looked increasingly to the formerly colonized nations of the Third World as a force which might transcend American liberalism, and re-ignite the engines of history. At the same time, Black Marxists like Marcuse’s student Angela Davis came to interpret the history of Black liberation struggles as that of a progression toward new understandings of ‘freedom.’ “If the theory of freedom remains isolated from the practice of freedom or rather s contradicted in reality,” wrote Davis, “then this means that something must be wrong with the concept.”

Beyond solidarity, Third Worldism was a method of analysis through which Leftists sought to expand critical thought beyond the limits of all varieties of liberalism: political, economic, cultural, and racial. Armed with the conviction that American

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4 Harold Cruse, “Contemporary Dialectics, c. 1963,” Harold Cruse Papers; TAM 187, Box 3, Folder 38
capitalism was sustained by cruelty, racism, and exploitation—but recognizing that no mass-revolutionary base existed in the United States—Third World Leftists studied revolutionary anti-colonial movements in order to try to break free from the ‘one-dimensionality’ of mid-century capitalism. This did not mean that they were engaging in a mere theoretical exercise. Many on the Third World Left between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s genuinely intended to overthrow the American government. That revolution was their answer reveals something about how they understood the period in which they lived, the questions that led them to those answers however, transcend the era of the New Left; connecting radical critiques of American liberalism(s) developed across the last century. Further, what developed into the Third World critique of the mid-20th century was a product of more than the co-mingling of Black internationalism and Marxism. In response to the global upheavals of the 1930s and 1940s, Freudian psychologists, Keynesian economists, and those operating within a host of heterodox traditions blurred the lines between liberal and Left in their efforts to chart a course through the entwined crises of capitalism and democracy. Considering the Third World Left in this way requires expanding the story beyond the major figures and organizations of 1967 to 1973.

In the end, the Third World Left failed in its ambition to transcend American liberalism. This failure was overdetermined: the product of global economic crisis, deindustrialization, shifting domestic politics, the politics of revolutionary governments in the formerly colonized world, and overzealous and often violent repression from law enforcement. Perhaps more fundamentally, they failed to solve the problem which Marcuse had diagnosed in 1961: that the vast majority of Americans had no interest in
revolution. All of this notwithstanding, significant strategic and analytic errors—in particular a tendency toward ideological stasis on the part of many movement leaders in the mid-1970s—limited the degree to which Third World leftists were able to build movements capable of responding to the changing conditions of the mid-1970s and beyond.

My point is not to judge whether Third World Leftists were right or wrong to embrace Fanonism, Guevaraism, or Maoism. Rather, it is to reconstruct their critique of the inadequacies of American liberalism, and to understand what it was about their material reality which prompted them to take these thinkers seriously, as well as asking how they engaged with these ideas and strategies, and what long-term effect(s) this engagement may have had. Though the Third World paradigm had largely collapsed by the end of the 1970s, Third Worldism helped to transform discourses in the United States around racial and national identity, feminism and gay liberation, and spawned new departments within colleges and universities all over the country. Further, a thorough investigation into the Third World Turn unearths false starts and paths not taken, including alternative approaches to organizing workers and of thinking about economics which deepen our understandings of long-running trends in American political culture. Historians should understand the Third World Turn not (just) as a naïve attachment to utopian political projects, but rather as an effort at drawing on decades of radical internationalist thought to weave together a politics of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-capitalism. Insofar as this represented an effort at constructing a politics which could serve as a counter to the hegemony of mid-century American capitalism, considering Third Worldism in this way heightens not only our understanding of a key moment in the
history of the Left, but of the development of a series of critiques of the cultural, political, and economic contours of the ‘New Deal Order.’

Written primarily by white and male veterans of the student movement, early histories of the New Left took a dim view of the Third World Turn. Seeking to better understand the disappointments of their own political biographies, scholars like Todd Gitlin, James Miller, and Paul Berman diagnosed the turn as a tragic error, which dissolved the bonds of solidarity built by the early-student movement and by Southern civil rights organizers, and which hastened (or even caused) the collapse of the New Left. The most prominent of these works is Gitlin’s *The Sixties: years of Hope, Days of Rage*, which castigates the Third World Left for its romantic attachment to utopian revolutionary projects and its attendant embrace of political violence and ‘identity politics.’ Pathologizing attraction to anti-colonial guerillas as a sort of mass-sublimation of the alienation and isolation of the New Left, Gitlin depicts the turn to the Third World as a “psychological balm” for a generation broken-hearted by the horrors of American imperialism. “Only true-blue believers in the promise of America,” he writes, “could have felt so anti-American. Ours was the fury of a lover spurned.”

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7 Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987). Gitlin has continued to warn of a resurgence of these political tendencies, which he fears threaten to undermine liberal democracy through a political intransigence built on a foundation of vulgar identity politics and historical ignorance.

8 Gitlin, 281

9 Gitlin, 263
Scholars like Gitlin who wrote critically of the Third World Left were right to point out that the tactics presented in Carlos Marighella’s *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* and the aphorisms of Mao’s *Little Red Book* were poor strategic guides for a revolutionary politics within the United States.¹⁰ Liberation strategies developed within the context of anti-colonial peasant-movements in underdeveloped nations could not be successfully imported into a country where the vast majority of Black, Hispanic, and Asian-American people lived within heavily policed urban centers, rather than throughout an ungovernable countryside.¹¹ In addition, the ‘colonized’ within the U.S. occupied a unique position as both victims of colonialism at home and profiteers of colonialism globally. While those on the Third World Left who advocated ‘picking up the gun,’ succeeded in consciousness-raising, and may have saved lives on occasions where activists were confronted by the state, the threat—or at least the perceived threat—of armed Black and Third World militants may have done more to invigorate their enemies and to alienate potential allies. More certain is that, while the police response to the urban uprisings of the 1960s may have provided a short-term boost to advocates of Black Power, the security forces of the United States never lost popular legitimacy, and were ultimately successful in breaking the backs of Third World revolutionary movements through infiltration, prosecution, and violence of their own.¹²

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¹⁰ Leaving aside for now any questions about the morality of revolutionary violence
¹² Malcolm McLaughlin argues that “the trope of guerrilla war provided a justification for the mobilization of armed force against black communities in American cities.” McLaughlin adds that “it was a discourse that made armed force acceptable to liberals who had come to see the ghetto as a dangerous place but one that they were duty bound to reorder and redeem.” Malcom McLaughlin, *The Long Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 103
However, in searching for a usable history, writers like Gitlin, Miller, and Berman allowed condemnation to get in the way of analysis, at times eliding the substance of the political thought of the Third World Left and minimizing the legitimacy of their attacks on the limits of liberalism and social democracy (even if their solutions failed to satisfy).\(^{13}\) In an effort to understand how and why it was that so many of the Left’s most prominent organizations collapsed amidst state repression and internecine violence, they read the ‘turn’ backwards through its ignominious end. In flattening the Third World critique, these historians neglect two key points. The first is that many thinkers took lessons from Fanon, from Che Guevara, and from Mao’s Cultural Revolution beyond the need to take up arms against the state. They looked to these and other figures for ideas on cultural production, the organization of labor, and alternative modes of political economic analysis. The second is that one does not need to argue that a movement’s failures were successes in order to recover elements of critical thought and organizational insight which resonated with contemporary activists, and which resonate today: in particular insights into the relationship between class formation and race.

Recognizing the ways that the situation of Black and other Third World people within the United States was consonant with that of people who were living or who had lived under direct colonial rule, did not require eliding the important distinctions between the two conditions. Rather than naively moving forward as though there was no

\(^{13}\) Like Gitlin, James Miller’s *Democracy is in the Streets* is a work of scholarship written in the late 1980s by a white movement veteran which treats the sixties as a declension narrative from (as Miller’s subtitle reads) “Port Huron to The Siege of Chicago.” James Miller, “*Democracy Is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*” (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). Similarly, Paul Berman—whose post-sixties politics led him to make common cause with the neoconservative foreign policy of the George W. Bush administration—sees the radicalism of the late 1960s as, at best, an embarrassing detour on the road from participatory democracy to liberalism. Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996).
difference between the Watts Rebellion and the Battle of Algiers, or between West Oakland and Cuba’s Sierra Madre, many on the Third World Left recognized that—as with the canonical texts of nineteenth century Marxism—existing anti-colonial strategies would not suffice as the programmatic bedrock of an American revolution. Reflecting on the founding of the Black Panther Party in his memoir Revolutionary Suicide, Huey Newton writes that we read [Fanon, Mao, and Guevara] because we saw them as kinsmen; the oppressor who had controlled them was controlling us, both directly and indirectly. However, we did not want merely to import ideas and strategies; we had to transform what we learned into principles and methods acceptable to the brothers on the block.  

Indeed, for many Third World Leftists, that liberation from the affluent society was a project distinct from liberation from a foreign colonial authority, was—at least at the outset—at the root of their politics.

Beyond polemicizing against the Third World Left, early narratives tended to focus on the late 1960s and early 1970s, but excluded Third World thought in the 1950s and early 1960s. In looking at the peak of the New Left as a discrete period, investigations into revolutionary internationalism—even in more sympathetic accounts—tend to begin with a romantic attachment to the Cuban Revolution. However, viewing the upsurge in Third Worldism as an epiphenomenon of New Left radicalism or as just a response to guerilla war in the underdeveloped world risks obscuring the full context of the Third World turn. Indeed, such an approach risks eliding both the long history of internationalism and solidarity with the colonized and formerly colonized world on the American Left, and a series of long-developing critiques of the limits of mid-century American and European liberalism. Over the past two decades, scholars have expanded

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14 Huey Newton, Revolutionary Suicide (New York: Penguin Group, 2009 c.1973), 116
on understandings of the Third World Turn, in large part by centering the story of activists and intellectuals of color rather than on the white radicals who emulated them. In doing so, these scholars have contextualized the turn within the larger history of anti-colonial discourses circulating among Black intellectuals dating back to (at least) the dawn of the 20th century.\textsuperscript{15}

In his \textit{Black Marxism} (1981), Cedric Robinson writes that “the historic development of Black people in the United States constituted the most total contradiction to Western society.”\textsuperscript{16} Scholars of the Black Freedom Movement and of Black political thought have continued to put slavery and its consequences in the center of the history of the United States and of Western capitalism more generally. Capitalism does not exist in one nation, and the reach of American military and economic power has been global in scope. Thus, any counter-hegemonic project must be similar international.

In reconstructing the political thought and the organizational history of Black (and later Asian and Chicana/o) Internationalism through the middle of the 20th century, scholars have illustrated that the Third World Turn was in many ways a continuation of political and intellectual trends which had been developing for decades prior to the 1960s. As Howard Brick argues in \textit{Transcending Capitalism} (2006), historical inquiry often fails when the scope of analysis is limited to discrete eras: e.g. “the sixties.” By looking “\textit{across} the divide we customarily see between the 1930s and the 1960s,” Brick writes, historians can unearth continuities between eras which are obscured in more “episodic

\textsuperscript{15}See chapter 2
portrait(s)” of American history. A signal achievement of the recent scholarship has been to trace the development of Black internationalism across eras. However, few of these recent works have sufficiently moved beyond the turn as an expression of identification and solidarity with those struggling under colonialism. Scholars have shown that the Third World Left cannot be understood as simply a byproduct of 1960s radicalism. It must also not be understood solely as the most visible expression of a Pan-Africanist anti-colonial politics—inflected with Marxism—which had been operative since the 1910s.

It becomes clear that there were two distinct periods of Third World Leftism during the mid-20th century, and that the Third World Left of the late 1960s and early 1970s was a response to an earlier Third World Left: one which developed between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. This early Third World Left was represented by figures including Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy and others around the journal *Monthly Review* (which Sweezy edited), by the Detroit activists James and Grace Lee Boggs, and by Black nationalists like Harold Cruse who had become skeptical of Marxism. These and other such theorists argued that the most important lesson of the anti-colonial liberation movements sweeping the Third World was that each national context required a distinct revolutionary approach; one which drew on the unique history of that nation. Though emphasizing very different points, they sought to develop revolutionary theories which brought together cultural, political, social, and economic radicalism, and which did so in ways responsive to the particular conditions of the United States in the mid-20th century.

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17 Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006); 3, 9
18 This has also been an achievement of the scholarship on the New Deal Order—which takes as its object of study the period from (roughly) 1933 to (roughly) 1980.
Though they did not solve them, they set out a series of problems which have remained perennial for the American Left: how to construct an emancipatory politics which recognized both the independence, and the interdependence, of racial exploitation and economic exploitation within the United States, and between the United States and the developing world; and how to develop a revolutionary coalition between Third World communities and the white workers who often benefited from the continued exploitation of those communities.

The Third World Left of the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army, and the Weather Underground was not just a reaction—for better or worse—to the non-violent, anti-anti-communist Left of 1962-1967, and was not just a particularly prominent iteration of Black internationalism. It was a series of efforts at addressing the problems laid out by its earlier counterpart over how to balance culture, internationalism, and class-consciousness in ways that could break through the liberal hegemony of the New Deal Order. Implicitly or explicitly, all of the major figures of the 1967-1973 period—from Stokely Carmichael and James Forman to the heterodox economists of the Union for Radical Political Economics—were engaged in debates which had been set out by thinkers like Boggs and Cruse. By the early 1970s, the claims of Asian American and Chicana/o activists began to play a major role, as did—belatedly and with great resistance on the part of much of the Left’s male leadership—Third World feminism.

Amidst the de-industrialization, widening inequality, and cultural revanchism which emerged out of the fracture of the New Deal Order, efforts at forging a sustainable revolutionary coalition fell apart. In addition to structural factors, this failure was midwifed by leading Third World Leftists who were unable or unwilling to continue to
apply the methods of Baran, Sweezy, Boggs et al, that is, to continue to change their analysis in response to the changing political, economic, and cultural terrain. However, though the Third World Left did not win political power in the United States, its history is not entirely one of failure.

At colleges and universities across the country, Third World Leftists transformed academia by building Ethnic Studies Departments. Ideas which developed out of the work of Third World feminists have increasingly entered popular discourses, and have continued to shape the way that those in academia and on the political left understand the relationships between various forms of identity. Further, elements of the Third World Left which did not have a particularly large impact—such as the work of economists influenced by Maoism and the Cuban Revolution—are worth revisiting for their attempts at moving beyond the neoliberal economic assumptions which dominated policy-making during the last half of the 20th century.

Divided into three sections organized chronologically and thematically, my dissertation traces the long intellectual history of the Left’s turn toward the Third World. My arguments are developed through a close reading of material held in over two-dozen archives in the United States and Europe, as well as a substantial volume of understudied published work. The first section traces strains of anti-capitalist and anti-racist critique within the U.S. as they began to coalesce around the idea of the Third World between the late 1940s and early 1960s. The first chapter is an intellectual history of the critique of mid-century American capitalism developed by the Marxist economists Paul Baran and
Paul Sweezy: a critique which achieved its fullest expression in their jointly authored *Monopoly Capital* (1966).19

Little has been written on the left-heterodox economics tradition in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s—in particular, there is little scholarship on the relationship between Marxian economics and the New Left. In connection with their published work and other archived materials, Baran and Sweezy’s correspondence blurs the lines between Keynesian and Marxian political economies, and establishes links between critical theory and political economy. In working to develop what might be described as a critical theory of American Keynesian civilization—in particular their conclusion that Keynesian might work in theory, but not in practice—Baran and Sweezy laid much of the intellectual groundwork for the Third World Turn of the late 1960s and beyond.

The second chapter, (“No Sellout in ’64”) explores the increasingly international character of the Black Left in the early 1960s by focusing on the intellectual biographies of James Boggs, Harold Cruse, and other leaders of the short-lived Freedom Now Party (1963-1965). Though politically unsuccessful, the Freedom Now Party (FNP) was a key site for constructing what would become the Third World politics of the latter half of the decade. Founded by Black radicals working primarily out of Harlem and Detroit, the Freedom Now Party was the first sustained attempt at forging an all-Black political party whose leaders explicitly defined themselves as a part of a global anti-colonial front.

The ideological platforms of the most significant left-of-mainstream Black organizations between 1965-1973—from the Revolutionary Action Movement, to the

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Black Panther Party, to the Revolutionary Union Movement—represented efforts to unify these three components in ways that often explicitly drew on the work of Cruse, Boggs, and others associated with the FNP. What distinguished the Freedom Now Party from the Third-World organizations that formed in its wake was that its attempt to achieve radical ends within (or at least alongside) the parameters of existing party politics, and that it eschewed violence in favor of a sort of militant reformism. Also differentiating the FNP from some later Third World Leftists was an inattention to Black and Third World feminism. The intersection of class and gender, and the ways that women of color were marginalized along multiple axes was largely ignored by the leaders of the FNP. However, from the late 1930s on, a number of Black American women developed analyses of what would later be termed ‘intersectional feminism.’ The work of Shirley Graham Du Bois, Esther Cooper (Jackson), Claudia Jones, Vicki Garvin, and other Black feminists of the 1940s and 1950s has had a profound influence on the Third World Feminism of the 1970s and beyond.

By the time the Freedom Now Party collapsed in 1965, Western Marxist academics like Baran, Sweezy, and Marcuse, had come to share the view of Black intellectuals like Cruse and Boggs that linking the Black Freedom struggle in the United States to the global struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism was essential to the destruction of American capitalism. However, prior to the urban rebellions of the mid-1960s, this position had been largely theoretical. The third chapter of the dissertation (“The Dialectics of Liberation”) details encounters between Hegelian/Western Marxists and Black Internationalists during the mid-to late-1960s. For Western Marxist philosophers and Black activists alike—as well as those like Angela Davis, who
embodied both traditions—the Watts Rebellion and the wave of urban uprisings that followed provided hope that the potential for social transformation existed within the U.S. They argued that, just as American affluence had produced the *objective* wealth necessary for a post-capitalist society, the racism and imperialism on which American affluence relied had produced the *subjective* material necessary: the political rage of Black America.

Reflecting on recent history in a 1971 lecture, Angela Davis spoke for many Black radicals when she argued that “Black people have exposed, by their very existence, the inadequacies not only of the practice of [American] freedom, but of its very theoretical formulation.” To Davis and other political thinkers drawn to the Third World, the organic, domestic manifestation of anti-colonial struggle represented by urban uprisings in Harlem (1964), Watts, (1965), Newark (1967), Detroit (1967), and Washington D.C. (1968) was the essential first step toward the forging of revolutionary socialist consciousness, and the transcendence of the liberal idea of ‘freedom’ which constrained the political imaginations of Black and Third World Americans and their allies.

Chapter 4 (“We Will Not Wait: Strategies of Confrontation”) contrasts the political biographies of James Forman and Stokely Carmichael: two leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) who led that organization’s merger with the Black Panther Party, before taking strikingly different paths in the early 1970s. By the early 1970s, Foreman had embraced Maoism and the militant black

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21 See chapter 3 on the relationship between Davis’s support for revolutionary Black and Third World feminism and her support for the nations of the Eastern Bloc during the 1970s and 1980s.
unionism of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the Black Worker’s Congress (BWC), while Carmichael had come to define himself as a Pan-Africanist. Through Foreman and Carmichael, this chapter explores how ‘vanguard’ organizations including the Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa, and DRUM sought to marshal revolutionary consciousness into a force capable of directly confronting—and ultimately defeating—American capitalism. In particular, this chapter illustrates the variegated strategies articulated by organizations on the Third World Left who rejected non-violence; including not just urban guerilla-war, but transnational diplomacy, labor-organizing, cultural production, and the demand that white churches pay reparations for their complicity in the building and maintaining of slavery.

If the Black Marxism of Forman and the cultural Pan-Africanism of Carmichael came to represent the key ideological divide between the major organizations of the Third World Left, they were transcended to some degree in the Third World feminist organizations which developed as the broader Third World Left—alongside and against which they had formed—collapsed. Third World feminist organizations like the Third World Women’s Alliance and the Combahee River Collective—as well as those not generally considered as part of the Third World Left like Wages for Housework and the National Welfare Rights Organization—were forced by their position within their national communities and as women and exploited workers to engage with the limits of both cultural nationalism and a Black proletarianism tied to industrial labor.

Rather than treating the failures of Third Worldism as an end point, the final two chapters explore what remains and what might be revived from the Third World critique. Chapter 5 (“In Search of the Socialist Subject: Radical Political Economy and the Study
of Moral Incentives in Cuba and China”) builds on previously unavailable archival material—in particular the records of the First Friendship Delegation of American Radical Political Economists—to illustrate how left-heterodox economists studied Maoist and Castroite experiments in non-material incentives in hopes of applying them to the building of a socialist society in the U.S.\(^{22}\) Largely neglected by scholars, the research undertaken by these young radicals has consonances with recent work in behavioral economics, and represents a prescient left-critique of the myopia of the post-war economic mainstream. Grappling with the role of violence in the construction of earlier socialist and communist societies, these economists hoped to develop a path toward socialism which did not rely on either monetary incentives or authoritarian coercion.

Chapter 6 (“‘On Strike! Shut it Down!’: The Third World Liberation Strike at San Francisco State and the Rise and Fall of Third World Studies”) shows how students who identified as citizens of the Third World sought to transform the American university system by agitating for Third World Studies and Black Studies programs. Developing an understanding of their own national histories within the United States as histories of colonialism which were structured and maintained by institutional violence, students saw the creation of these new programs as—in the words of one radical pamphleteer—no less than “a fight to the death to make sure that all the peoples of the Third World, and all human beings in the world have a right to determine their social, educational, economic, and political destiny.”\(^{23}\) While historians have written about the demand for Black


\(^{23}\) Mexican American Student Confederation, San Francisco State College Strike Materials Collection, San Francisco State
Studies in American universities—and have often highlighted the strike at San Francisco State College—Black Studies has frequently been seen as an offshoot of Black Power, rather than as a broader challenge to liberal, multi-cultural education inspired by anti-colonial revolution, and visible in the creation of Chicano Studies, Asian American Studies, and ultimately a host of other ethnic studies programs over the last five decades.

Third World Studies represented more than an effort at securing representation for marginalized communities. Rather, it was a project led by activists who saw the existing university system as key to building and reproducing a liberal capitalism which required that they remain marginal. Indeed, whether in the realm of higher education, cultural production, political economy, labor organizing, or even guerilla war, the Third World turn represented an attempt at addressing a series of connected critiques which had developed over half-a-century and which remain relevant to contemporary political debates: how to construct a political alternative to liberalism which recognizes the interconnectedness of racism, colonialism, and capitalism, and—since the 1970s and 1980s—the exploitation and marginalization of women, and LGBTQ communities. This dissertation presents the turn toward the Third World as a particularly rich period in a multi-decade process of engagement on the part of distinct, but often interrelated and overlapping political and intellectual communities: one whose impact remains visible long after the collapse of the New Left—if often in unexpected and unintended ways.
Chapter 1: A Capital for the Age of Growth:
Monopoly Capital and the Critique of Keynesian Civilization

On December 19, 1955, Paul Sweezy wrote a letter to his long-time friend and sometime collaborator Paul Baran. He told Baran he had “started work on a book,” and while he “[found] it a little hard to define the subject…[the] general problem is the nature of the giant corporation.” Over the next 11 years, until Baran’s death from a heart attack at the age of fifty-four, the two Marxist economists co-wrote a social, political, and cultural treatise on American capitalism in the mid-20th century. The book, later titled *Monopoly Capital* (MC), was the product of an intellectual partnership that had begun in Harvard’s Economics Department in 1939, and which had developed over nearly two decades of correspondence. Convinced that neither orthodox Marxism nor liberal Keynesianism had accurately interpreted capitalism’s ‘monopoly’ phase, Baran and Sweezy set out to do for the 20th century what Marx had done for the 19th: to transcend existing economic paradigms through the exhaustive study of the deep structures of the world’s most advanced economy in order to illustrate the essential irrationality and long-run unsustainability of the capitalist mode of production.

Upon its release, *MC* was met with a reception that might have seemed unlikely to authors who began their project at the height of what C. Wright Mills had derisively labeled: ‘The American Celebration’. Translated into (at least) seventeen languages *MC*

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24 PMS-PAB, November 19, 1955. The letters were provided to the author by Baran’s son Nicholas. They have since been made available at Stanford (Paul Alexander Baran Papers (SC1234), Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.) A selection of the letters has been published. Paul M. Sweezy, Paul Baran, John Bellamy Foster, Nicholas Baran, *The Age of Monopoly Capital: Selected Correspondence of Paul M. Sweezy and Paul A. Baran, 1949-1964* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2017)

was the most widely read and widely cited work of political economy for the New Left, with Sweezy becoming, in the words of one historian, both “the most distinguished American Marxist economist of his generation,” and “as well-known and respected in [Latin American and Asian] intellectual circles as any contemporary American social critic.”

In both his work with Baran and in the pages of the independent socialist journal *Monthly Review* (co-edited first with Leo Huberman and then with Harry Magdoff), Sweezy helped to inform a renewed body of heterodox economic thought, as well as the Left’s turn toward Cuba, China, and other nations of the ‘third world’ for political and cultural models during the late 1960 and early 1970s.

While at times dogmatic in their political conclusions, Baran and Sweezy were theoretically and methodologically ecumenical, engaging with and borrowing from non- and anti-Marxian thinkers, while incorporating insights from psychoanalysis and continental philosophy. Somewhat submerged in the final text of *Monopoly Capital*, this methodological ecumenism is revealed through a reading of Baran and Sweezy’s voluminous correspondence: over a thousand pages of which were exchanged between the two from 1949 to 1964, and which have been unavailable for historical research for nearly fifty years.

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Access to Baran and Sweezy’s letters allows for a critical re-evaluation of their analysis of mid-century American capitalism which emphasizes Marxian methodology over teleology, and which positions their work within a transnational discourse developing between the late-1930s and the mid-1960s among theorists who considered both Soviet communism and liberal capitalism as fundamentally inhospitable to the organic development of the truly ‘free’ subject and the truly rational society. Further, the correspondence reveals the often-surprising ways that their political economy drew on a mode of cultural critique more frequently associated with the loosely connected school of thinkers whom Perry Anderson has labeled ‘Western Marxists.’ In placing Monopoly Capital in the larger context of their correspondence, Baran and Sweezy’s analysis of mid-century capitalism can be re-evaluated—in spite of its faults and gaps—as a key intellectual moment in the search for a new source of radical subjectivity, at a time often considered as a period of political retreat for western intellectuals. Through their Marxian critique of Keynesian civilization, Baran and Sweezy helped co construct an intellectual framework for the turn toward the Third World which came to dominate the politics of the New Left in the years following the publication of their jointly authored work.

In his In The Long Run We Are All Dead (2017), the geographer Geoff Mann reconsiders John Maynard Keynes—modern liberalism’s most influential political economist—as a sort of twentieth century Hegel, and Hegel as a nineteenth century Keynes. Mann argues that like Hegel, Keynes was the author of “a distinctively post-

revolutionary” political economy, one constructed in defense of an idealized version of contemporary ‘civilization.’ Also like Hegel, Keynes saw the possibility of a better order contained within his own—imperfect—society. Tempering his hopes for a perfected liberalism with both a recognition of the precariousness of Western civilization, and of the unjustifiable poverty which that civilization seems to require, Keynes “combines an extraordinary optimism concerning the quasi-Utopian potential of human communities and human ingenuity with an existential terror at the prospect that it might not be realized.”

In his recognition that those discarded and abused by liberal capitalism represent a potential revolutionary threat, Keynes’s political philosophy represents to Mann “simultaneously an immanent critique of both liberalism and revolution.”

At times, both Hegel and Keynes have been derided as eager celebrants of the status quo; a caricature which elides the degree to which Keynes—and many, if not all, of his followers—have recognized and critiqued liberalism’s flaws. Nevertheless, as Mann notes, even the most astute Keynesian critics have been unwilling to reject liberalism entirely, and have been unable to imagine the transition to alternative forms of society “as anything other than the end of the world.” Their political imaginations thus constrained, Keynesians have—even at their most critical—fundamentally acted in service to that status quo.

However, in stretching a liberal critique of liberalism to its limits, Mann’s Keynesians have provided their non-liberal critics with the tools to move beyond liberalism entirely. The most well-known example of this critical move remains Marx’s

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29 Geoff Mann, In the Long Run We Are All Dead: Keynesianism, Political Economy, and Revolution (London: Verso, 2017); 7, 14
30 Mann, 204
31 Mann, 23
inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, through which he dismantled Hegel’s vision of a perfected bourgeois civilization governed by a ‘universal class’ of otherwise disinterested technocrats, bureaucrats, and managers. Decades spent pouring over statistics in the British Library notwithstanding, Marx’s later works—including *Capital*—can be broadly approached as attempts at supporting and expounding upon insights which he had first developed through critiques of Hegel’s political philosophy in the *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (1843-44) and in his *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1844). While many of Marx’s specific predictions have not been borne out, his illustration of how the capitalist mode of production necessitates an alienated and exploited working class—begun in these early philosophic texts—is as resonant in this century as it was at the time of writing.

Baran and Sweezy saw their own ‘opus’ as a sort of *Capital* for the age of American growth, and indeed, this is how most of the book’s contemporaries treated—and criticized—the text. Read in isolation, as an attempt at a positivist critique of the political economy of the United States in the 1950s, Baran and Sweezy’s work remains an important window into currents in Marxist and left-heterodox political economy during the late 1950s and early-mid 1960s. However, engaging with the longer intellectual history of the *writing* of *Monopoly Capital* through a close reading of Baran and Sweezy’s correspondence, reveals their collaboration as less an attempt at doing for

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the capitalism of the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century U.S. what Marx had done for that of mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century Britain, than an attempt at doing to Keynes what Marx had done to Hegel.

In offering an immanent critique of American Keynesianism rather than \textit{a priori} rejecting it for being insufficiently Marxist, Baran and Sweezy helped to create a space for dialogue between the two traditions.\textsuperscript{33} In weaving economic and cultural analyses into an integrated whole, Baran and Sweezy navigated between that more Hegelian ‘young’ Marx—whose concern with alienation animated much of the dissatisfaction with American affluence—and the more economistic ‘mature’ Marx. In placing their critiques of American political economy in an international context, Baran and Sweezy connected them to the global phenomena of imperialism, dependency, and (under)-development. In so doing, the \textit{Monopoly Capital}-critique lent theoretical rigor to the New Left’s anger at American suppression of anti-colonial movements while leading toward the conclusion that the success of those movements—including the Black Freedom Movement within the United States—were essential preconditions to any radical and rational transformation of American society. For Baran and Sweezy, and for many of their admirers, Third World revolution appeared as universal solvent—the only thing capable of breaking down the irrational forces of capitalism, imperialism, and white supremacy.

Reading the Baran-Sweezy correspondence as an attempt at developing a Western Marxist analysis of the political economic undergirding of the mid-century welfare state reveals their work to be more than a relic of the age of affluence. Just as Marx’s own masterwork cannot be properly understood independent of his early left-Hegelianism,

\textsuperscript{33} Sweezy maintained partial correspondences with many of the luminaries of mid-century Keynesianism, including Joan Robinson, Paul Samuelson, Nicholas Kaldor, Heilbroner, and John Kenneth Galbraith, who in 1997 referred to himself as \textit{Monthly Review}’s “oldest and most faithful reader.” Box 21, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University
*Monopoly Capital* is best read as the end product of a multi-decade attempt at developing a sort of critical theory of Keynesianism, and thus as an immanent critique of the civilization which Keynesians sought—and still seek—to defend.

Speaking to an audience at Penn State in November of 1958, Sweezy admitted that contemporary Marxists had no choice but to concede that, contra-Marx’s predictions, “the advanced capitalist countries succeeded in harnessing their productive potentials in such a way as to give to their own peoples a tolerable existence.” Rather than radicalizing in response to capitalism’s deprivations, the workers of the world’s developed nations had been “given enough to keep them from starvation and…subjected to a kind of ideological drugging which made them accept their condition in spite of its increasingly devastating consequences.”

Though resistant to the hosannas of ‘American Celebration,’ Baran and Sweezy found few satisfactory answers in Soviet Communism, believing that the sanctification of Marxism’s canonical economic texts had resulted in an ossified and inflexible doctrine, incapable of explaining the growth of the mid-century welfare state. “When vulgar Marxism tried to take on the more sophisticated bourgeois economists,” Sweezy wrote, “there is unfortunately no doubt about who comes out on the losing end.”

Their willingness to integrate non-Marxian theories into a Marxian framework cannot be fully understood without reference to Baran and Sweezy’s professional training

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35 PMS-PAB, June 22, 1959
in political economy—atypically heterodox in both cases—and to their own experiences with the American state during the Cold War. Born into Manhattan’s upper class in 1910, Paul Sweezy’s background was particularly unusual among radicals of the 1930s. His father, Everett B. Sweezy was vice president of the First National Bank of New York, and sent all three of his sons to Exeter and Harvard, where Paul studied economics at the undergraduate and graduate levels. During a year abroad at the London School of Economics (LSE), the younger Sweezy was exposed to Marxism through reading Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution*, and attending lectures delivered by Harold Laski.36

In 1933, Sweezy returned to Harvard to finish his PhD, where his professors included the Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter.37 Schumpeter’s theoretical work emphasized the role of history, and he proved an able mentor to the young Sweezy. Sweezy later recalled that while Schumpeter had been personally quite conservative, in “deliberately [setting] himself to build a structure of thought which was rival to Marx…he treats Marx with a seriousness that is completely foreign to the way Anglo-American economics treated Marx.”38 Schumpeter argued that long-term growth was fueled by ‘creative destruction’, which like wildfire, provided for the conditions necessary for future growth by destroying existing structures (in this case outdated modes...

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of production and distribution). Schumpeter predicted (grimly) that in the long run, capitalism would tend toward corporatism, restricting opportunities for innovation and eventually extinguishing the flames in which capitalism regenerated. Though he saw individual innovation and entrepreneurship (rather than capital accumulation) as the system’s prime mover, Schumpeter was—like his Marxist interlocutors—forced to conclude that capitalism’s “very success undermines the social institutions which protect it.”

Paul Baran was born to a secular Jewish family in present-day Ukraine in 1909. His father was a Menshevik sympathizer who, according to Sweezy, “welcomed the overthrow of Tsardom…but was dismayed and repelled by the turn of affairs after the October Revolution.” After two years studying economics at the University of Moscow (1926-1928), Baran began to chafe against the stultifying conformity of Soviet academia. In 1928, he moved west to continue his education, first to Berlin—where he received a PhD in 1932—and then under Frederick Pollock at Frankfurt’s famous Institute for Social Research. The Frankfurt-critique would exert a powerful influence over Baran’s thought for the rest of his life. While in Germany, Baran developed a friendship with Rudolf Hilferding, the Austrian Marxist economist whose work on

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39 Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 61
42 Paul A. Baran, quoted in Ibid, 32.
43 PAB-BiogMaterials, 5.
“finance capital” would serve as a major foundation for Baran and Sweezy’s later work. With the climate in Germany worsening during the 1930s, Baran moved again, eventually landing in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1939, where Harvard had accepted him as a graduate student. Both Baran and Sweezy contributed to the Allied war effort by working for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and after being demobilized, both resumed their academic careers. In 1949, Baran was offered a position in the Economics Department at Stanford University, where he remained until his death, at which time he was the only avowed Marxist with a tenured position in an American economics department. That same year, Sweezy and Leo Huberman began to publish Monthly Review.

While Monthly Review was not the only source for socialist analysis in the 1950s, the magazine carved out a unique space by standing, as historian Christopher Phelps has written, “in fundamental opposition to the whole of the capitalist order—economic, cultural, ideological, political, and social.” This stance led Sweezy and Huberman to focus their attention on anti-capitalist movements worldwide, rather than despairing at the lack of radical agency within the United States. Through MR’s publishing wing—Monthly Review Press—the editors exposed American leftists to an international body of

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45 PAB-BiogMaterials, 34-35.


political and theoretical writing with which they might otherwise have remained unaware.  

Despite their pedigrees, Baran and Sweezy’s careers both suffered during the Second Red Scare. While Baran had received tenure before the height of McCarthyism, he did not escape persecution for his political associations, and harassment from Stanford’s administration and alumni community took a heavy toll on both Baran’s physical and emotional health during the last years of his life.  

Sweezy had left Harvard when friends made it clear that his own politics would prevent him from ever receiving tenure, and though occasionally accepting short-term teaching contracts, he never pursued an academic career.  

In 1954, Sweezy was subpoenaed by New Hampshire Attorney General Louis C. Wyman and asked to provide information about a lecture he had delivered at the University of New Hampshire, as well as about his role in Henry Wallace’s 1948 campaign for President.  

Refusing to provide information about the campaign or to incriminate any other participants, Sweezy was found in contempt of 

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49 Baran’s son recalls that his Father’s troubles “were particularly exacerbated by his outspoken support…of the Cuban Revolution.” (e-mail to author, August 8, 2015) As late as 1962, the Palo Alto Times was “[carrying] at least half a dozen letters demanding ‘drastic’ measures against [him].” (PAB-PMS, November 3, 1962) In 1971, documents were stolen from the Stanford University archives detailing attempts on the part of wealthy alumni and trustees to convince university president Wallace Sterling to lower Baran’s pay or fire him. (Larry Liebert, “Stolen Documents Chart Baran Affair in 1960’s,” The Stanford Daily, Volume 160, Number 47, Thursday December 2, 1971: 1,10.)  

50 Department records pertaining to Sweezy’s tenure case remain sealed. Relevant material can be found in the Paul M. Sweezy Papers [2005-2]. Houghton Library, Harvard University.  

51 John Bellamy Foster, “The Commitment of an Intellectual.”
Sweezy spent three years in legal limbo, until Chief Justice Earl Warren reversed the judgment of the New Hampshire Court on June 17, 1957.\footnote{53}{Sweezy vs. New Hampshire, 354 U.S. 234 (1957)}

Pushed to the margins of academia, Baran and Sweezy viewed the postwar boom through jaundiced eyes. Yet, though they were committed Marxists, neither Baran nor Sweezy had ever been members of the Communist Party of America (CPUSA). Both had a complicated relationship with the U.S.S.R., decrying its lack of respect for liberty and refusal to countenance independent thought, while at times fearing that no path toward socialism existed that did not require some measure of authoritarianism in order to push through the necessary structural changes. Late in life, Sweezy recalled the disgust he felt with members of the Party for “waiting until they got the word from Moscow about whether [his work] was something they would be in favor of, or not.”\footnote{54}{Phelps and Skotnes, “An Interview with Paul Sweezy.”} After being refused entry by Soviet authorities when attempting to visit his ailing father, Baran wrote that it was “difficult…not to join the ‘baiters’ and to call those butchers the names that they deserve.”\footnote{55}{PAB to PMS and Leo Huberman, March 28, 1950} Baran and Sweezy further distanced themselves from the Soviet Union following the invasion of Budapest, and Khrushchev’s revelations at the 20th Party Congress, with Sweezy writing “that socialism survives and grows is the greatest tribute that can possible [sic] be paid to its inherent qualities.”\footnote{56}{PMS-PAB June 6, 1956. By 1963, Baran and Sweezy had become convinced that the Chinese had surpassed the Soviets as the leaders of world revolution (Paul M. Sweezy and Leo Huberman, “The Sino-Soviet Dispute,” Monthly Review, 13.8, (December 1961), pp. 337-338 and Paul M. Sweezy and Leo Huberman, “The Split in the Socialist World,” Monthly Review, 15.1, May 1963, pp. 1-20).}
Convinced that socialism was the only answer to a society which was fundamentally irrational, Baran and Sweezy were would-be revolutionaries who rejected both the U.S.S.R.’s claims to moral and strategic leadership of the global socialist movement, and held few illusions about the revolutionary potential of a (white) American working class that they believed to have been contented through the exploitation of colonized peoples abroad.57 Men without a country and without a party, they set out to develop an original critique of twentieth century capitalism by applying Marx’s methodology to an analysis of the political economy of the United States.

Indeed, as Sweezy had emphasized in *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (1942)—at the time the most thorough English-language analysis of Marxist economics in general and of Marxist crisis-theory in particular—Marx’s primary contributions were methodological. The crux of Marx’s method, wrote Sweezy, was the “conclusion that the key to social change is to be found in movements of the mode of production.” Thus, before attempting to develop a revolutionary politics, the contemporary Marxist must first undertake “an exhaustive study of political economy from the standpoint of the laws governing changes in the mode of production.”58 Through this study of the mode of production under monopoly capitalism, Baran and Sweezy hoped to address not only capitalism’s ability to produce equitable growth, but also to determine “to what extent [the system is] capable of furthering the health and happiness of American people.”59

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57 While institutionalized labor presented little threat to ruling class hegemony during the postwar years, there was a great deal of labor militancy through the 1950s and 1960s. Sweezy and Baran largely ignored this militancy, tending to view all white workers as a homogenous, quiescent bloc.


59 PAB-PMS, July 21, 1957.
Developing a theme that Sweezy had begun to explore in the late 1930s, Baran and Sweezy maintained that contemporary analyses of the United States failed to recognize that the economy was no longer characterized by competition, but by consolidation and monopoly, and that “the real capitalist today is not the individual businessman but the corporation.”\(^6^0\) In both his doctoral dissertation of 1937, and a 1939 article for the *Journal of Political Economy*, Sweezy had demonstrated the downward inelasticity of prices under monopoly conditions.\(^6^1\) In *Theory*, Sweezy asserted that under monopoly “there is an inherent tendency for the growth in consumption to fall behind the growth in the output of consumption goods,” and that this disequilibrium “may express itself either in crisis, or stagnation or both.”\(^6^2\)

In and of itself, the notion that capitalism was no longer in its competitive stage was not an original one. Indeed, from Thorstein Veblen’s writing on the separation between business and industry, to Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means on administered pricing and Joan Robinson and Edward Chamberlin on imperfect competition, to James Burnham’s warnings against the ascendant managerial elite, a variegated literature had developed around corporate consolidation within the U.S. and U.K. during the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century.\(^6^3\) Yet to Baran and Sweezy, these insights into the changing nature of

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\(^6^0\) Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, 43.


competition failed to cohere into thoroughgoing critiques of modern capitalism, and as Sweezy later wrote, “for all the attention that has been paid to monopolistic elements in the last forty years…there has never been any attempt by neoclassical economics to relate them to the functioning of the system as a whole.”

In *Monopoly Capital*, Sweezy’s earlier work on competition, disequilibrium, and crisis-theory was joined with Baran’s concept of the ‘surplus,’ which he had elaborated in his influential 1957 monograph *The Political Economy of Growth* (*Growth*). Developed from a series of lectures delivered at Oxford in 1953, *Growth* rejected the belief that capital export from industrialized nations encouraged development in the Third World. Instead, argued Baran, the exploitation of the nations of the periphery by the capitalist ‘center’ “immeasurably distorted their development” by siphoning off whatever surplus they generated. In *Growth*, Baran differentiated between the “*actual* economic surplus…the difference between society’s *actual* current output and its *actual* current consumption,” and “*potential* economic surplus…the difference between the output that

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64 Paul M. Sweezy, *Modern Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 33. Sweezy argued that the writing of Berle, Means, and Burnham on the separation of management and ownership had been “superseded by the researches of the Securities and Exchange Commission,” which “reveal that in the vast majority of even the 200 largest non-financial corporations, a few large stockholders occupy a dominant position.” (Paul Sweezy, “The Illusion of the Managerial Revolution,” *Science and Society*, Vol. 6 (January 1942), pp. 1-23; 5). Of the non-Marxist theorists of ‘monopoly capitalism’ Joan Robinson—who contributed over a dozen articles to *MR*—was perhaps the most sympathetic to Marxism. (Howard and King, *Marxian Economics: Volume 2*, 98). Late in life, Sweezy recalled that while she “was a Keynesian to the day of her death…she was one of the most radical people I knew,” and was “to the left of many of the Marxists, in terms of her instincts and sympathies.” (David C. Colander and Christian A. Johnson *The Coming of Keynesianism to America: Conversations with the Founders of Keynesian Economics* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 1996), p. 84)


could be produced in a given natural and technical environment with the help of employable productive resources, and what might be regarded as essential consumption.”

Baran and Sweezy argued that under monopoly conditions, capitalism produced a growing surplus, absorption of which was the central problem of advanced capitalist economies. “Sooner or later,” write Baran and Sweezy, “[surplus] grows so large that it discourages future investment. When investment declines, so do income and employment and hence also surplus itself.” Thus, a rising surplus leads to stagnation and eventually crisis. This analysis, developed at the height of the post-war economic boom, was potentially problematic. If a rising surplus led to stagnation, then why was the economy expanding? Why had real wages risen, while unemployment declined in the 1950s? For Baran and Sweezy, these phenomena could be explained by the countervailing tendency of spending, both on the part of private firms and by the state. Crucially, the lack of full economic recovery during the New Deal until the military build-up to the Second World War (and later the Cold War) proved that non-military government spending could never be enough to offset the trend toward stagnation. Baran and Sweezy believed that eventually, the waste and irrationality of investing in sales and militarism would cause spending to slow until it could no longer provide for the absorption of the surplus. In the dialectic of American growth, the expansion of the economy held within it the seeds of its own eventual destruction.

68 Baran and Sweezy, Monopoly Capital, 82
69 Ibid, 112-227
As they began their collaboration, both Baran and Sweezy were reading *The Power Elite* by the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills. Asserting that the key institutions of American life were controlled by a small group of elite men, Mills rejected the liberal notion that competing interest groups governed American society. Though never explicitly a Marxist, Mills was—like Baran and Sweezy—one of the rare non-communist intellectuals who resisted the slide toward the liberal center during the 1950s, and like them was captivated by the possibilities of the Cuban Revolution. “This book,” wrote Sweezy was “really the best there is on mid-20th-century US capitalism,” but was ultimately a “bad book…confused and superficial.” Baran and Sweezy felt that Mills’s work failed to approach a full understanding of “the inner nature of capitalist crisis and its role as the engine moving the whole system in determinate directions.” Reading it, wrote Sweezy, made one “painfully aware how badly [their] opus [was] needed.” This sort of criticism was to be a recurring theme for Baran and Sweezy, a frustration with thinkers who recognized pieces of the essential problems of monopoly capitalism, but were unable or unwilling to think about American capitalism as an integrated whole—in particular the Keynesians who understood the need for large deficit spending to create domestic demand, but did not comprehend that the levels of spending required to absorb the surplus and permanently (and rationally) stabilize the system would never be permitted by big business.

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72 PMS-PAB, November 25, 1956 and PMS-PAB, July 18, 1956
74 Condescension toward Keynesians is frequent in the correspondence. Simon Kuznets is “a fool” or “a knave,” (PMS-PAB, February 1, 1962) Paul Samuelson is a dishonest bastard (PAB-PMS, March 2, 1963),
While Baran and Sweezy’s suggestion that disequilibrium would lead to secular stagnation was a critique shared by many of their Keynesian contemporaries, they differed from the Keynesians in that they did not see a permanent solution to disproportionalities of production and consumption arising from within capitalism; the only solution was a rationally planned, socialist society. Baran and Sweezy concluded that while it was *theoretically* possible for a state to maintain equitable, rational growth in times of peace, it was *practically* impossible. Though generally thought to be an example of the successes of Keynesian policies—or at least of the countercyclical spending with which fiscal-Keynesianism came to be associated—to Baran and Sweezy the New Deal was an illustration of the impossibility of Keynesian solutions in peacetime. Insisting that, “the New Deal was a clear failure,” Sweezy noted that “even Galbraith, the prophet of prosperity without war orders, had to admit that the goal was not even approached during the 30s.” To Sweezy, the inability of the New Deal to “accomplish what the war proved to be within easy reach” indicated “that by 1939 the increase of non-defense spending had…reached its outer limits.”

Baran and Sweezy derided left-liberals for their persistent belief in capitalism’s potential to provide for everyone through increased non-military spending; seeing this misguided faith as evidence that they fundamentally misunderstood the nature of democracy under monopoly capitalism. “Keynesian incantations concerning what ‘we’ ought to do about public services and education,” wrote Baran, would only be “meaningful if ‘we’ had anything to say about our economy….but the crux of the whole

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and Galbraith is “a cheap snob—completely gone to pot,” whose *The Liberal Hour* could only be reviewed by bouts of “massive vomiting.” (PAB-PMS, April 12\(^{th}\), 1960)

\(^{75}\) PMS-PAB. (Editor’s note: “assumed to be 1962.”)
matter is precisely that ‘we’ have nothing to say about all of this, and thus our having nothing to say about all of this is precisely the outstanding characteristic of the capitalist system. If ‘we’ had all those rights and privileges,” Baran concluded, “we would have socialism rather than capitalism, and by imperceptibly maneuvering that ‘we’ into the picture, Galbraith and the rest of them inevitably blur all the difference between capitalism and socialism, confuse people’s thinking, and this perform an operation which is strictly in the interest of the ruling class.”

Baran and Sweezy had found much to admire in the General Theory: particularly its insight into capitalism’s propensity toward stagnation. Later in life, Sweezy recalled that it had once been “hard to draw the line…between the left New Deal and the beginning of the Marxist movement.” Yet even when first exposed to the Keynesian critique, Sweezy noted a strain of political utopianism, writing in 1936 that though Keynes had contributed more than any other writer of the period to “laying bare…the coexistence of willing hands and empty mouths,” his work was marred by the “hopelessly optimistic faith that everything can be put right without removing private property.” “It would be a pity,” Sweezy added, “if Mr. Keynes’ progressive work in pure economic theory should lend authority to a political attitude which can only be described as reactionary and obscurantist.”

Indeed, Baran and Sweezy came to believe that in the postwar years, Keynes’s

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76 PAB-PMS, June 17, 1959
77 An insight also found in Kalecki
political economy had been put to just such a reactionary use, and that whatever the
insight of the original critique, Keynesianism had fallen victim to a ‘counter-revolution,’
with Keynes’s followers prejudicing short-run analyses over investigations into the long-
run tendencies of advanced capitalist states, limiting both the scope of their inquiries and
the depths of their understanding.80 Reflecting on the history of Keynesian thought in
1972, Sweezy wrote that though Keynes had rightly understood that “capitalism is not a
system of economic harmonics,” the majority of his followers “cheerfully abandoned this
disturbing and at the same time challenging view and gave themselves over to comforting
speculations about full-employment equilibria, warranted growth rates, and similar
fancies.”81 “It took only ten years of a postwar boom,” added Baran, for economists to
“forget all about” Keynes’s most powerful insights, “and to rediscover Say’s Law dressed
up in mightily dynamic garb.”82

Perhaps most damning was that even when in command of the federal coffers,
Keynesians were unwilling to commit to the necessary levels of spending on anything
other than the military. “Why do the most radical Keynesians when in power,” asked
Baran, “turn away from deficit spending…like the devil turns away from incense?” There

80 Sweezy compared the Keynesian’s limited vision to Marx’s critique of Hegel and “the German
pipsqueaks who came after him.” (PAB-PMS, November 19, 1962). On the post-war shift away from long-
run analyses, see Rosenof’s Economics in the Long Run. Rosenof does not engage with Marxian
alternatives.
81 Sweezy, Modern Capitalism, 87
82 PAB-PMS, January 28, 1958. Baran and Sweezy were similarly concerned about the development of the
market-socialist models associated with the Polish socialist economist Oskar Lange. “It would be silly,”
wrote Baran, “to believe that the same economic theory should be appropriate for both [capitalism and
socialism].” (PAB-PMS, Dec. 1st, 1959. See also Baran’s lecture at Berkeley, where he critiques Leon
Walras’s work on equilibrium as “fallacious at worst and loose at best.” PAB-PMS, April 29th, 1959).
Baran and Sweezy were particularly wary of the experiment with workers’ self-management in
Yugoslavia—though Sweezy felt it important to publish work produced by the Yugoslavs in order to make
clear that MR would never ignore new and important work in socialist-economics for being ‘incorrect’
politically. They feared that the introduction of market-incentives in Yugoslavia (and in Hungary) would
drag the rest of the Eastern European bloc toward Capitalism, the result of which “will be to arrest
development at its present stage,” leading to “retrogression and degeneration.” (PMS-PAB, Aug. 19, 1963)
were two possible answers to this question: either Keynesians did not grasp the implications of their own theories, or (more likely) it was, “not stupidity but the structure of [business] interests.”

Perhaps the issue was not that Keynesianism was essentially incorrect, but that monopolization had altered the structures of the market and of government so as to render impossible the implementation of any genuine Keynesian policies. Without this essential understanding, wrote Sweezy, Keynes’s theory “remains a collection of brilliant insights and stupidities without any overall coherence.”

Echoing the Italian economist Piero Sraffa, Baran wondered if “Keynesianism is the illusion of the epoch rather than Marxism.”

In spite of their insistence that Keynesianism was doomed to fail, Sweezy and Baran continued to engage seriously with Keynesianism rather than rejecting it out of hand. A letter sent from Sweezy to Baran in January of 1951, sheds some light on their commitment to arguing with Keynesianism on its own terms. Reading a manuscript written by Michal Kalecki—the Polish economist whose work, along with that of Josef Steindl, had more of an impact on MC than that of any other theorist save Marx—Sweezy lamented that Kalecki’s insistence on writing outside of any established traditions limited the degree to which other economists could productively engage with his thought.

83 PAB-PMS, August 30, 1962
84 PMS-PAB, September 25, 1962.
85 PAB-PMS, August 30, 1962. Frustration at the closing off of the Keynesian mind was likely tinged with anger at economists who had been sympathetic to the Left in the 1930s before moving to the political center—a move which was a necessary precondition for academic prestige or political influence during a time when even liberal-Keynesianism made one politically suspect. Landon R. Y. Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 12.
86 Though Kalecki’s work on the business cycle and effective demand presaged Keynes’s own, his isolation from the Anglo-American world meant that the macroeconomic revolution which he anticipated remains associated with Keynes’s *General Theory*, rather than with Kalecki’s, “An Attempt at the Theory of the Business Cycle.” In agreement with Keynes that the severity and duration of cyclical downturns could be mitigated through state-management of effective aggregate demand, Kalecki differed in his emphasis on the role of oligopolization and monopolization in the structuring of pricing, profit seeking, and wages, leading him to conclude that no capitalist economy could be sustained over the long-run. (Michal Kalecki,
Though Kalecki was both a socialist and a serious reader of Marx, his disinterest in the labor-theory of value led many of his Marxist contemporaries to assert that, though he was not a Keynesian, Kalecki was not quite a Marxist either. “I wish,” wrote Sweezy, that Kalecki “would make the effort to square his theory with the classical-Marxist tradition: I think, though I’m not sure, that it could be done.”

If Kalecki’s work was a bridge between Marx and Keynes that did not quite reach to either shore, Monopoly Capital was to be a Marxian political analysis legible to Keynesians and Marxists alike. Indeed, Baran and Sweezy did succeed in writing a text that their Keynesian interlocutors were forced to take seriously. Unsurprisingly however, even the most sympathetic Keynesian readers balked at the book’s radical politics, as well as at Baran and Sweezy’s dire predictions about the future of capitalism. Reviewing Monopoly Capital in the New York Review of Books, the democratic socialist economist Robert Heilbroner—a former student of Sweezy’s at Harvard — wrote that while he shared Baran and Sweezy’s belief that capitalism should be replaced by a more rational system, he was “certain that the road to the future will not run as straight to heaven or hell as the one that [MC] describes.” Though in agreement that mid-century American capitalism was beset by racism, war, and poverty, Heilbroner was unwilling to accept that

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87 PMS-PAB, January 29, 1951
these cancers of ‘western civilization’ might prove to be inoperable.

Perhaps more frustrating to the authors was that their more ‘orthodox’ contemporaries found *Monopoly Capital* wanting as a work of Marxist criticism—in particular the book’s emphasis on competition and the *realization* of value rather than on the *production* of value.\textsuperscript{89} To the Trotskyist Ernest Mandel, Baran and Sweezy’s rejection of the radical agency of the American proletariat was more than a political error: it was a failure of method and of analysis. Mandel argued that, in replacing Marx’s surplus value with their concept of the ‘surplus,’ Baran and Sweezy “put their whole economic concept of the present functioning of the capitalist system…outside the realm of the class struggle,” and thus their conclusion that the U.S. working-class had no revolutionary potential is the inevitable product of their first premises, rather than a conclusion based on evidence.\textsuperscript{90}

For both Marxian and Keynesian reviewers, the concept of the surplus was the most problematic piece of the *Monopoly Capital* critique. Dismissing the contention of the orthodox that their concept of the surplus represented a rejection of Marx’s theory of surplus value, Baran and Sweezy insisted that rather than a rejection of Marx, it was “a much more comprehensive and much more complex term….an important contribution to thought beyond Marx.” Baran argued that while in a competitive society his own concept of surplus and Marx’s concept of surplus value were identical, in a monopolizing society, the production process is transformed in such a way that “the whole thing shifts and


\textsuperscript{90} Mandel, “The Labor Theory of Value and *Monopoly Capital.*”
economic surplus is no longer even approximately identical with surplus value but very much larger!!!!”91 It was not that Marx’s theory of surplus value was incorrect, it was that it was an analytic tool designed for a fundamentally different stage of capitalist development.92

Less concerned than orthodox critics with whether or not Baran and Sweezy were true to the Marxist canon, Keynesian reviewers shared a frustration with the opacity of the surplus as a concept.93 Though they were not explicit on this account in the finished Monopoly Capital, Baran and Sweezy’s correspondence makes clear that they viewed the fuzziness of the surplus as a feature of their analysis, rather than a bug. Indeed, the difficulty—or perhaps impossibility—of calculating surplus was itself “an aspect of an irrational order.”94 Anticipating the insistence that the concept of the surplus should not be taken seriously if it could not be clearly measured, Baran insisted that “It cannot be repeated enough that the economic surplus as we use it is not a positive but a critical concept, a tool of analysis with the help of which one should be able to see clearer the fetishistic obfuscations of capitalism.”95

91 PAB-PMS, May 2nd, 1960
92 Sweezy recognized that he and Baran had been insufficiently clear on this account, later writing “At no time did Baran and I…reject the theories of value and surplus value but sought only to analyze the modifications which became necessary as the result of the concentration and centralization of capital.” Paul M. Sweezy, “Monopoly Capital and the Theory of Value,” in John Bellamy Foster and Henryk Szlajfer, eds. The Faltering Economy: The Problem of Accumulation Under Monopoly Capitalism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009 c. 1984), pp. 25-26
94 PAB-PMS, May 13, 1960
95 PAB-PMS, December 19, 1961.
Baran and Sweezy argued that within monopoly capitalism, the principle means by which the surplus is absorbed are “the sales effort” and military spending. Rather than redistributing demand, Baran and Sweezy suggest sales and advertising *create* demand where it would otherwise not have existed at all. Citing an article on automobile traffic, Baran asked if there had ever been “a better illustration of the sheer irrationality of an unplanned capitalism than this contrast between…getting every family to own two and three cars and on the other hand life slowly coming to a standstill because of too many cars?” While superficially similar to Galbraith’s analysis of sales in *The Affluent Society*, Baran and Sweezy’s treatment of the sales effort differed in that they viewed advertising not as a problem to be solved within monopoly capitalism, but as a constitutive element of the system. In *Growth*, Baran had suggested that Galbraith failed to recognize that ‘waste and irrationality, far from being fortuitous blemishes of capitalism, relate to its very essence.”

In thinking through the role of the ‘sales effort’ in surplus absorption, Baran and Sweezy often returned to the work of Thorstein Veblen, with Sweezy noting that their emphasis on the ways in which ‘waste’ had been institutionalized was in some ways a continuation of Veblen’s work on conspicuous consumption applied to the system as a

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98 PAB-PMS, Jan 30, 1957.
whole, rather than the individual consumer. Though Sweezy took Veblen’s work seriously enough to devote the July-August 1957 edition of MR—the centenary of Veblen’s birth—to an exploration of his ideas, he and Baran ultimately saw in Veblen the same inadequacies that they critiqued in their Keynesian contemporaries. As Baran argued in his contribution to the centenary, Veblen was “like other bourgeois theorists who are unable to comprehend aspects of reality in their concrete interdependence with all the other components of the continually changing socioeconomic totality.” Baran argued that without this comprehension, there was no hope of lasting reform (let alone revolution), adding that, much like Galbraith, Veblen “[saw] the existing misery without fully realizing…that it is that very misery that carries in itself the objective chance of its abolition.”

Under monopoly conditions, both wasteful production and wasteful consumption had been “institutionalized,” and with so much of the production process dedicated to sales and to the military, the lines are blurred between ‘socially necessary’ and ‘socially unnecessary’ or ‘productive’ and ‘unproductive’ labor. Thus, it was possible that the share of the surplus by ‘productive’ labor was in fact declining, but that this trend was masked by an increase in unproductive labor—military production, finance, or advertising—which existed only to promote “wasteful” consumption. Waste begets waste, and the greater the amount of wasteful consumption today, the more wasteful

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102 PAB-PMS, July 2, 1958
consumption will be needed tomorrow.\textsuperscript{103}

The above analysis leads to a key aspect of Baran and Sweezy’s critique: the assertion that increasing investment on wasteful production and increasing expenditure on wasteful consumption would not immediately lead to the absolute or relative ‘immiseration’ of the working class. Under monopoly capitalism, working people might in fact be doing better materially than they had under competitive capitalism and thus, the working class would tend not to become radicalized under monopoly conditions until spending on military and sales exhaust themselves. Baran and Sweezy argued that while there are limits to the amount of spending possible on military production and advertising, until those limits are reached, society’s essential irrationality would be apparent not through material pauperization, but through psychological pauperization. Baran submitted that the superficially more-successful American worker would substitute the “psycho-struggle” for the class struggle. This ‘psycho-struggle’ would manifest in “sexual repression, cultural misery, general discontent, boredom, aimlessness…” leading not to any social movement but to “a generally manifested aggressiveness, depression, [and a] sense of emptiness and purposelessness of life.” The result would be a “protracted rotting of society, an extended misery affecting its ruling classes no less than its ruled classes…” and one that would lead, ultimately, to the creation of “fascist man.”\textsuperscript{104}

“Interestingly,” Baran wrote to Sweezy, “the underconsumption theory…becomes less of an economic depression theory and more of a cultural

\textsuperscript{103} PAB-PMS, May 11, 1957

\textsuperscript{104} PAB-PMS, February 3, 1957. Exploring the role of psychology and psychoanalysis in American life in “Marxism and Psychoanalysis,” Baran praised Freud for seeking “to develop a comprehensive theory providing a rational explanation of irrational drives,” and argued “it is incumbent upon Marxism today to take up Freud’s work.” (Paul A. Baran, “Marxism and Psychoanalysis,” in Baran, \textit{The Longer View}, pp. 92-111; 97.
degradation theory." While Baran and Sweezy’s cultural critique sits uncomfortably among dialogues between American political economists, it fits quite naturally within the cultural theories produced by thinkers generally categorized as ‘Western Marxists.’ Western Marxists—notably those associated with the Frankfurt Institute, where Baran had studied as a young man—were Marxian thinkers living outside of the orbit of socialist states, whose emphasis on Marxian method led them away from a mechanistic-materialist Marx and toward a Marx concerned with both mind and materiality. This led them to explore the concepts of alienation, reification, and totality as well as the problems of authority and conformity in modern mass society. Their Marx was “essentially a philosopher of human freedom,” rather than the inerrant prophet of a revolutionary catechism.

The foundational text of Western Marxist historiography remains Perry Anderson’s 1976 Consideration on Western Marxism. Anderson defined Western Marxists geographically—theorists living on the European continent West of the Soviet bloc—and by a rigid distinction between theory and practice. Anderson’s Western Marxists were a product of political defeat, whose alienation from existing socialist movements led to pessimism and to a retreat from politics into philosophy and aesthetics. Anderson critiqued what he saw as the ‘substitution’ of “the original relationship between Marxist theory and proletarian practice...by a new relationship between Marxist theory and bourgeois theory.” While Anderson accurately describes

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105 PAB-PMS March 11, 1957
107 Anderson, Considerations, 88-89
108 ibid, 55
trends in the critical theory of the period, he does not allow for the possibility that critical Marxism might eventually inform revolutionary praxis. After all, most of the classical Marxist canon was produced during times of political marginalization. Ultimately, Anderson’s taxonomization erected barriers that improperly excluded theorists outside of the continent, as well as those who arrived at their cultural critiques through an engagement with political economy.

Scholars including Michael Denning and Christopher Phelps have looked for examples of Western Marxist thought in the United States.\textsuperscript{109} However, they have engaged with an earlier period, and the literature on mid-twentieth century Marxists in Europe and in the U.S. who worked on problems of political economy remains limited. While perhaps more focused on material conditions than those thinkers more commonly associated with the Western Marxist tradition, Baran and Sweezy firmly rejected the notion that Marxism was a “positive science,” with Baran asserting that Marxism was not “an assortment of statements about past and present facts, or a set of predictions,” but rather “an intellectual attitude or a way of thought, a continuous, systematic, and comprehensive confrontation of reality with reason.”\textsuperscript{110} Baran argued that, given the apparent stability of mid-century American capitalism, their critique of the irrational society under monopoly capitalism “remains an ideational, Hegelian criticism, a criticism based on the immanent movement of REASON and not on the concrete movement in society.”\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{111} PAB-PMS, February 3, 1957
revolutionary politics with ‘bourgeois theories’, Baran and Sweezy’s incorporation of insights from outside of the Marxist tradition—whether Keynesianism, Veblenism, or psychoanalysis—helped to direct and inform their revolutionary politics, rather than to diminish them.

A closer comparison with Herbert Marcuse—with whom Baran maintained a lifelong friendship and correspondence—is useful in reevaluating Baran and Sweezy as Western Marxists. Written concurrent to MC, Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man (1964) similarly began from the premise that the revolutionary potential of the Western working class had been extinguished by the “sweeping rationality” of modern capitalism—a rationality that was “itself irrational.” Marcuse argued that the ‘Western’ worker had fallen victim to “a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior,” wherein ideas or goals whose content was in opposition to capitalist logic “are either repelled or reduced…” Unable to envision and articulate alternatives to capitalism, the Western proletariat could not act in ways other than to affirm the system.

Marcuse’s critique of one-dimensionality held a great deal in common with Baran’s work on ‘psychological pauperization,’ and faced similar challenges: some of which Marcuse articulated in a 1959 letter to Baran. While it was true, wrote Marcuse, that modern capitalism ‘progressed’ on a foundation of irrationality and waste, it was also true that “more people are less miserable than they were before.” While firm in his belief that “happiness is an objective content,” and thus that “experienced happiness of the

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112 The Baran Marcuse Correspondence, https://monthlyreview.org/commentary/baran-marcuse-correspondence/, accessed 7/16/2017
114 Ibid, 14
administered masses under capitalism” should not make one sympathetic to capitalism, Marcuse felt it prudent to caution “a little bad conscience,” when attacking a system which had provided real material gains…at least enough to make Marxists “hesitant to restate simply the familiar propositions.” While such counsel might have seemed insufficiently radical to the committed revolutionary, any theorist hoping to articulate a socialist politics for the mid-20th century needed to explain not only how capitalism failed those on the periphery, but how it failed those in the core as well.

Indeed, Baran’s attempt to illustrate the extent of what he referred to as the “heavy, strangulating sense of the emptiness and futility of life [that] permeates the country’s moral and intellectual climate,” (by exhaustively categorizing trends in delinquency, crime, mental illness, addiction, etc.) was a major focus of the last four years of his life, and a frequent topic in his letters to Sweezy during this period. This study of the irrationality of modern capitalism is expressed most clearly in the final two chapters of *Monopoly Capital*, and in two chapters that remained incomplete at the time of Baran’s death, and which remained unpublished for fifty years. Though by no means absent from *Monopoly Capital*, Baran’s work on the irrationality of life in the one-dimensional society appears in the completed text to be subsidiary to the more positivistic elements of the *MC* critique, rather than co-equal.

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116 Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, 281
Ultimately, like Baran and Sweezy, Marcuse—whose book was often attacked for its pessimism—refused to accept entirely that there was no way out of this one-dimensional morass. Accepting that the workers of the industrialized world could no longer serve as a radical vanguard, Marcuse argued that such a vanguard *might* be found “underneath the conservative popular base,” among “the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors.” To Marcuse, opposition from communities suffering the deprivations and exploitation of capitalism without receiving its benefits—those whom Frantz Fanon would memorably term ‘the wretched of the earth’—was *necessarily* “revolutionary, even if their consciousness [was] not.”

In the early twentieth century, theorists of development believed that capital export from industrialized nations encouraged development. Baran rejected this, and illustrated the ways in which the exploitation of the nations of the periphery by the capitalist ‘center’ “immeasurably distorted their development.” Rather than spurring

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119 *Monopoly Capital*, 162. On Baran’s influence on dependency theory, see his correspondence with Andre Gunder Frank, [https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:vm474kd4548/PAB-GunderFrank.pdf](https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:vm474kd4548/PAB-GunderFrank.pdf). Other development theorists influenced by Baran include Immanuel Wallerstein, and Samir Amin. Sweezy saw Amin as the theorist who had most completely understood and broadened Baran’s work, writing Amin “I never cease to be astonished at the total compatibility between your vision…and those which [we] have worked out among ourselves…we feel intellectually closer to you than to any other individual or group in the world today.” (letter to Samir Amin, January 2, 1974), Paul M. Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library. For Baran against modernization theory, see Paul Baran and Eric Hobsbawm, “The Stages of Economic Growth,” *Kyklos* 14 (2): 234-242.
economic growth, the surplus generated in the under-developed world was siphoned off by the more advanced nations, while the citizens of these nations were made to “[endure] the worst features of [feudalism and capitalism], and the entire impact of imperialist subjugation to boot.” For these reasons, aiding in the fight against American imperialism was both a moral imperative for those who cared about the free development of the Third World, and a means of hastening the decline of American hegemony by destroying a key avenue of surplus absorption. The destruction of imperialism, and ultimately capitalism through Third-World revolution, wrote historian Eric Hobsbawm, “offered the powerless revolutionaries of the First World a way out of their impotence.”

It was in these movements, particularly the Cuban Revolution, that Baran and Sweezy invested their hopes for the eventual destruction of capitalism.

“I badly need to see and feel and be revived by a real revolution,” Sweezy wrote Baran in the winter of 1959, “the atmosphere of this country and its academic life is stifling me.” That year, Sweezy and Huberman visited the island, and were given an enthralling tour by Castro and Che Guevara. “This is a beautiful and fascinating place,” Sweezy wrote Baran from the Hotel Nacional, “There is no doubt the revolution is genuine.” Baran visited shortly thereafter, and was similarly enchanted with the young revolution, writing to Herbert Marcuse “if there has ever been a true, beautiful, humane, renewing and rejuvenating revolution made by the people, then it was the Cuban

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120 Monopoly Capital, 144
122 PMS-PAB, December 19, 1959
Baran and Sweezy soon came to believe that for socialism to come to the United States, the Cuban model must spread through the underdeveloped nations, until the imperialist powers were “quite literally fighting a world-wide anti-guerilla war.” While this war may not have been imminent, they believed that if and when it arrived, it would open “a new phase in the global transition process.” It was through their cultural critique of mass society under modern capitalism (and Soviet socialist bureaucracy), that Baran and Sweezy came to place their hopes for the future in the hands of the revolutionaries of the underdeveloped world and of ‘colonized’ peoples within the United States, believing that, in recognizing a shared interest and in developing a shared consciousness, they might re-ignite the engines of history.

Baran and Sweezy’s belief that systemic transformation would come about largely through exogenous forces, rather than internal class friction, allowed them to retain some optimism about the prospects for socialism in advanced capitalist states despite the lack of a radical proletariat in the industrialized world. The global scope of their analysis led them to embrace revolutionary projects in China and Cuba intent on creating a ‘new’, socialist man within a world-economic system still largely dominated by American

125 PMS-PAB, April 26, 1963.
126 Baran and Sweezy’s admiration for the radicals of the formerly colonized world seem to have gone both ways. Indeed, their letters are peppered with mentions of international admirers. For examples, see PAB-PMS, July 12, 1957, where Baran references a letter “in which it is stated that ‘Iran’s academic youth keenly observing the events in the outside world considers PMS and…PAB to be…the ‘greatest living Americans.’ After visiting Latin America in 1964, the critic Ned O’Gorman wrote “[MR’s] editors…Edgard Allen Poe, Walt Whitman and JFK are the Americans I hear most spoke of in South America.” (quoted in Lawrence S. Lifschultz, “Could Karl Marx Teach Economics in the United States?” Ramparts, 12 April 1974, pp. 27-30, 50-64; 54).
capital. When confronted with the charge that their dismissal of the radical agency of the American proletariat was un-Marxist, Baran and Sweezy asserted that they were closer to the spirit of Marx than were their critics. Writing in the pages of *Monthly Review*, Sweezy argued that, “Marx’s theory of the revolutionary agency of the proletariat has nothing to do with an emotional attachment to, or blind faith in, the working class as such.” Rather, Marx “believed that objective forces, generated by the capitalist system were inexorably molding a revolutionary class.” While this revolutionary class may once have been the proletariat of the world’s advanced nations, this was no longer the case. Revolutions must be made, and if a potentially revolutionary class fails to act on its opportunities, it may lose that potential. Fetishizing industrial workers as the necessary agent of revolutionary change was fundamentally ahistorical, un-dialectical, and thus un-Marxist. One did not need to do away with Marx in order to substitute a new radical subject, and for Baran and Sweezy, “the masses in [the] exploited dependencies constitute a force in the global capitalist system which is revolutionary in the same sense and for the same reason that Marx considered the proletariat of the early period of modern industry to be revolutionary.”

Baran and Sweezy’s hopes for anti-colonial revolution as a vessel for socialist subjectivity connected with their hopes for America’s Black population. They believed that like economic reform, full racial equality could never be achieved under capitalism, but asserted that while “the Negro masses cannot hope for integration into American society as it is now constituted… they can hope to be one of the historical agents which

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will overthrow and put in its place another society…” In 1963, after reviewing material that Baran had drafted on Black life under monopoly capitalism, Sweezy proposed “an entirely separate section on Negroes in US society.” If the central theme of the opus was correct, and monopoly capitalism was leading to a large un- and under-employed labor force, then the position of African-Americans would be the first to worsen, with the leaders of big business exploiting racial thinking to further divide an increasingly desperate labor force. Baran predicted that “Negroes, unlike whites, are likely increasingly to reject white US society and to solidarize with the colored majority of the human race. As the latter goes increasingly socialist, US Negroes will do likewise.”

“It is the confluence of discrimination and economic misery,” Baran wrote to Sweezy, “which makes the Negro an explosive force today.” Given the impossibility of achieving economic and racial justice under monopoly capitalism, Baran and Sweezy maintained that the realization of the Black struggle held the key to the development of a real revolutionary subjectivity within the United States for both black and white Americans alike. “Only a Negro shaken up by a revolution will become a human being,” wrote Baran, “in fact, he has a gigantic historical opportunity of turning the white into a [human being] in the process of blowing up the setup which degrades and dehumanized black and white.” If with the exception of the African-American population, the US labor force would tend not to become radicalized until after the collapse of monopoly capitalism, what then was the job of American socialists? Baran and Sweezy felt that the

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129 Baran and Sweezy, Monopoly Capital, 280
130 PMS-PAB, February 26, 1963. That same year, MR’s summer issue was James Boggs’s The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Worker’s Notebook.
132 PAB-PMS, July 18, 1963
responsibility of the socialist in the advanced capitalist nation was to “expose and
denounce the in- and anti-human campaign of imperialism against all progress and
decency on the one hand, and keep alive a core of revolutionary rationality against the
time when the breakdown of the imperialist metropolises begins in earnest.”

The sentiment that African-Americans (and other marginalized groups) within the
U.S. constituted a potentially revolutionary force had become increasingly widespread
among radical Black activists and intellectuals, and would become common currency
among the student Left of the 1960s. Though these ideas did not originate with Baran and
Sweezy, their ability to integrate them into a larger analysis of monopoly capitalism was
a significant step in helping to articulate the interdependence of anti-imperialist, anti-
racist, and anti-capitalist movements. By attempting to prove that racial equality was
unrealizable within ‘Keynesian civilization,’ Baran and Sweezy sought to illustrate that
socialism was the necessary—if insufficient—pre-condition to the victory of the Black
Freedom struggle.

In his *Transcending Capitalism* (2006), Howard Brick convincingly illustrates the
inadequacy of the traditional narrative of post-war intellectual history. By
reconstructing the development of the ‘postcapitalist visions’ which informed much of
American social and political thought between the 1910s and the 1970s, Brick forces
historians to look “across the divide we customarily see between the 1930s and the

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134 PMS-PAB, April 26th, 1963
135 Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought*
(Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006)
1960s,” and to reject “ruptured, episodic portrait[s] of modern American intellectual history” which obscure key continuities between eras.  

Following Brick’s formulation, Baran and Sweezy’s critique is best understood as rooted in the debates of the late ‘30s and early ‘40s—when the precariousness of liberal capitalism demanded a more capacious approach to political-economic problem solving—and as evolving through the rise of American affluence in the 1950s and early 1960s. The shift away from popular front experimentation and toward Keynesian triumphalism which characterized the intellectual trajectories of so many of Baran and Sweezy’s liberal contemporaries—and which resulted in Baran and Sweezy’s political and intellectual isolation—obscured the degree to which their critique of American capitalism developed along with the growth of the mid-century welfare state, and not just in reaction to it. Considering Monopoly Capital in this way reveals links between the fluid left-liberal milieu in which Baran and Sweezy’s careers began, and the New Left-political economy which emerged in the wake of the book’s publication. A similar phenomenon existed on the Black Left. Many of the leading African-American communists and Pan-Africanist socialists of the 1930s and 1940s emerged from the 1950s—in spite of severe repression from both the militarized forces of white supremacy and from the weaponization of anti-Communism—to mentor a new generation of Black Freedom fighters.  

Following Paul Baran’s death, the American economics profession was left without a single openly Marxist tenured professor, and when MC was released it was,

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136 Brick, Transcending Capitalism, 3; 9
137 On the links between the Black Left of the 1930s-1950s and the Black Left of the 1950s-1960s see chapter 2 and chapter 5 of this dissertation
according to radical political economist Herbert Gintis, “practically the only [place] the interested reader could turn for an indigenous American Marxist economics.” Anti-Left animus within the academy was on the wane during the mid-1960s and by 1967 there were twenty-six avowed Marxist economists teaching in American universities, a number that increased substantially following the forming of the Union for Radical Political Economics (URPE) in 1968. Considering the rise in work in radical political economy at the end of the 1960s, the sympathetic but skeptical left-Keynesian Martin Brofenbrenner suggested that if the “change in the economics profession’s intellectual climate…continues for a generation, it may constitute a scientific revolution.” Though the number of institutions granting PhDs in heterodox economics grew from zero to fifty-three between 1970 and 1979, ultimately, no such ‘scientific revolution’ came to pass, and radical and heterodox economics were pushed back toward the margins of academia.

139 Frederic Lee, A History of Heterodox Economics, p. 59. The material collected in URPE’s archives makes clear the influence MC had over the burgeoning sub-field. MC is the explicit starting point for essentially all articles on development published in the Review of Radical Economics (RRPE) between 1969-1976. Rare is the issue of RRPE from this period without dozens of references to Baran and Sweezy’s work. [Union for Radical Political Economics and Review of radical political economics records, #3791. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.] On the history of URPE, see Lee, A History of Heterodox Economics, pp. 50-77 and Thomas E. Weisskopf, “Reflections on 50 Years of Radical Political Economy,” Review of Radical Political Economics December 14, vol. 46, no. 4, pp 437-447.
Keynesianism too was marginalized both by policy-makers and by many economics departments between the 1970s and the early 21st century. However, the 2007-8 recession has led to a renewed interest in Keynesian political economy, and the sluggish and inequitable recovery which followed has contributed to a resurgence of economic theorizing which places stagnation at the center of its analysis. The most notable of these new texts is Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* In exhaustively illustrating that the ‘natural’ tendency of mature economies is for the rate of return on inherited wealth to exceed the growth of income, Piketty shares with Baran and Sweezy—and with many of his Keynesian forbears—the belief that the increasing concentration and consolidation of wealth is a dangerous impediment to the maintenance of a rational political economic order. Submitting that the only solution to the current crisis is a globally coordinated tax on inherited wealth, Piketty—who lacks the sanguinity of the mid-century Keynesians—holds little hope that such a tax might be implemented. Yet, like the Keynesians who preceded him, Piketty is uninterested in political solutions external to Keynesian civilization. In immanently critiquing liberal capitalism in order to defend liberal capitalism, Piketty—like Keynes and Hegel—inadvertently reveals the utopianism of the liberal capitalist vision.

As Geoff Mann writes, “the explicit goal of Keynesianism, is definitely not to create some ‘hybrid’ or ‘mixed economy’…it is rather, to propose something novel; to describe

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142 Thomas Piketty *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014). Piketty expresses this through the equation \( r > g \), with \( r \) being the rate of return on wealth and \( g \) being the rate of growth of the national income.

143 Here I follow Geoff Mann in considering Piketty a ‘Keynesian’ in the sense that both are devoted to saving “liberal capitalist civilization from the Ricardian principle both know his historically been essential to it: scarcity, the rent scarcity generates for the rentier and—always lurking beneath the surface—the ‘rabble mentality’ inevitable to the dishonorable mass poverty scarcity produces.” Mann, *In the Long Run*, 353
a means by which freedom, solidarity and security can be fully realized at once in a rational social order.” At its core, Monopoly Capital was a critique of this goal, and an assertion that even at its best, the Keynesian vision represents a paradox: while dreams of socialist revolution may appear utopian, they are no less so than Keynesian bromides about equitable wealth distribution within the existing global political economy. Though Baran and Sweezy’s critique led them to embrace Maoist politics and guerilla violence, their Third Worldism was, at its core, an interrogation of the Keynesian vision, an expression of their belief that, in the long run, Keynesian civilization cannot be sustained.

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144 Mann, In The Long Run, 49
Chapter 2: “No Sellout In ’64”:
Black Nationalism, Western Marxism, and the Contested Third World
Politics of the Early Third World Left

In the years Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy spent studying revolutionary movements abroad, they largely failed to notice the most vibrant source of radicalism at home: a Black Freedom movement whose strategists and activists often defined their own struggle as a part of a global rebellion against colonialism and white supremacy, and increasingly against capitalism as well.145 It was not until 1962—over a decade into their correspondence and seven years into the writing of Monopoly Capital—that more than a passing reference was made to the problem of anti-Black discrimination, and it was not until the following year that Baran and Sweezy decided to devote a section of their opus to ‘the Negro Problem.’146

At first, Baran and Sweezy’s interest had been in illustrating the cruelty with which African Americans were treated under monopoly capitalism. However, by the end of 1962—perhaps influenced by their relationship with James and Grace Boggs—they had come to the conclusion that, more than an especially stark manifestation of the irrationality and inhumanity of American capitalism, the Black movement was the surest

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145 This sort of omission was common among white social critics—left and liberal—during the period, who usually referenced African Americans as victims rather than as potential agents of their own liberation, if they referenced them at all.
146 On December 3, 1962, Baran wrote Sweezy that “another matter of importance which calls for at least minimal note-taking is the racial question.” Monthly Review had published articles on American racism through the 1950s, but almost always as illustration of the cruelty of the American State. (e.g. “Two Nations—White and Black,” author Monthly Review, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 1956, pp., 33-49). Sweezy did devote space to Black Radicalism in Monthly Review as early as May, 1960’s ‘Review of the Month,’ on “The Negro Awakening,” in which he expressed his hope that the Southern protest movement would spur college students around the country to “join the movement for the liberation of mankind itself from the crippling bondage of a society ruled by the furies of private interest.” (Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, “The Negro Awakening,” Monthly Review, Vol. 12, No. 1: May 1960, pp. 1-5.) Yet aside from this brief review (and despite a growing interest in Pan-African socialism and a focus on Third World radicalism), Sweezy does not seem to have consistently treated the question of Black Freedom as integral to the broader anti-capitalist project until late 1962 at the earliest.
foundation upon which American radicalism might be built. The problems faced by
African Americans, wrote Sweezy, were “the most intractable of all those faced by
monopoly capitalism,” and were “absolutely incapable of being seriously ameliorated, let
alone solved, short of a thorough-going social revolution.”147 Observing the intransigence
of segregationists, by 1962 Sweezy determined that “Negroes are on the way to being
transformed...into an embittered and potentially revolutionary enemy within the
gates.”148 Soon devoting considerable space in the pages of *Monthly Review* to currents in
domestic Black politics, Sweezy expressed a particular interest in activists and
intellectuals who sought to ally the Black movement with anti-colonialist elements in the
Third World, including (among others): James Baldwin, W.E.B. Du Bois, Shirley
Graham Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Robert F. William, and William Worthy.149

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147 PMS-PAB, March 25, 1963
October, 1962; pp. 337-345, 345. Though Sweezy and Baran were decidedly in favor of full social equality
for African-Americans, their writing is at times marred by demeaning and condescending stereotyping of
Black Americans; e.g. Sweezy’s claim that until the early 1960s, Black Americans had been “relatively
docile hewers of wood and drawers of water.” (345)
149 Notable *Monthly Review* articles from this period on Black Radicalism include: James Boggs, “Black
of the Birmingham Crisis,” *Monthly Review*, Vol. 15, No.5: September 1963, (65-78); Marc Schleifer,
1964 (504-510); Sweezy’s relationship with James Boggs and his wife Grace Lee Boggs seems to have had
a particular influence on Sweezy’s thinking on Black radicalism, as well as Baran’s during the last year of
his life. Biographies about, and works of social and historical analysis written by these figures are too
numerous to list, but a sampling of works which engage specifically with the internationalism of these
figures include: Robert F. Williams, *Negroes With Guns* (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1962); Gerald
& The Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Gerald Horne, *Race
Frank Rosengarten, *Urban Revolutionary: C.L.R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (Jackson:
University of Mississippi, 2007); Bill Mullen, *Un-American: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Century of World
Revolutionary Lives of James and Grace Lee Boggs*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
2016)
The notion that the political destinies of Black Americans were tied to the victims of imperialism and colonialism in Latin America, Asia, and in particular Africa, was not a creation of the mid-twentieth century. The foundational event in the creation of what developed into the Black internationalism of the 20th century was the Haitian Revolution (1791). The example of Haiti illustrated that efforts to rationalize and maintain systems of colonization and slavery within a liberal order which was premised on the principle of individual liberty were unsustainable, and that such contradictions created the conditions for political violence, and potentially for the destruction and transcendence of the old order. In particular, the Haitian Revolution suggested that this rupture might be brought about through a process of self-creation and self-definition on the part of the colonized and the enslaved. More than one hundred years would pass before another nation broke so decisively from its colonizers. However, through the 19th century, figures like Martin Delaney understood the emancipatory struggle of Black Americans to be a part of a global war against white supremacy.

In the 1910s and 1920s, Marcus Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and Cyril Briggs’s African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) related the struggle of Black Americans to Black Africans, with Briggs drawing explicitly on

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150 Indeed, it was not even a creation of the early 20th century, as Sean Malloy notes, the radical Black abolitionist Martin Delany was referring to African Americans as “a nation within a nation,” as early as 1852. Sean Malloy, *Out of Oakland,* 57
152 Where revolutionary solidarity is born, so too is counter-revolutionary solidarity
Marxist categories of analysis. In the 1920s, Briggs—along with figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance like Claude McKay and Langston Hughes—identified the struggle for Black Freedom in the United States with the Comintern. Guided by the theoretical innovations of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, Soviet victory showed that paths could be forged toward revolutionary power in what classical Marxists had held to be pre-revolutionary situations, e.g. in nations which lagged behind the industrial powerhouses of Western Europe and the United States. Though not a chief concern of either Lenin or of Stalin—or of most white socialists in the United States at the time—both heads of Soviet government declared that Black Americans constituted an oppressed nation within the United States; one whose exploitation exposed the hypocrisy of ‘democratic’ capitalism.

In the 1930s, Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia sparked a surge of pan-African sentiment inside and outside of the United States; a milieu within which influential black internationalists including George Padmore, C.L.R. James, and Paul Robeson joined critiques of capitalism and of global white supremacy, and African-American Communists invoked the ‘internal colony’ thesis to explain their relationship to the United States. During this ‘Popular Front’ period (1935-1939) the CPUSA positioned itself as the Left-wing of the New Deal coalition. Overtures between American communists and left-liberals were representative of a broader blurring of ideological lines.

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154 Vanguard, combined and uneven development footnotes
155 Lenin, “Statistics and Sociology,” and “Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions,” Stalin Black Belt
during the 1930s, among activists, theorists, social scientists, political advisors, and policymakers.\textsuperscript{157} This left-liberal heterodoxy notwithstanding, Roosevelt relied on the Solid South for his governing margins, and this ‘Southern Cage’ structured the growing American welfare state. Thus, the New Deal period led to significant material improvements in the lives of Black Americans while concretizing the idea that the federal government had a responsibility to provide for the suffering and the downtrodden, \textit{and} reinforcing systems of exploitation and exclusion which stood in direct contradiction to that progress.\textsuperscript{158}

Depression ended with America’s mobilization for war in Europe; a War whose “great promise,” writes historian Nikhil Pal Singh, “was that black aspirations for justice and the interests of American world-ordering power would coincide.”\textsuperscript{159} Returning from Europe and the Pacific at the end of the Second World War, Black Americans demanded democracy at home after giving their lives for democracy abroad. However, in the years of the Second Red Scare (1948-1953), many of the leading figures on the Black Left in the United States—most famously Paul Robeson—were made to suffer for their ties to Soviet Communism.\textsuperscript{160} As the Southern Civil Rights Movement emerged following the

\textsuperscript{157} Paul Sweezy later wrote that, during the early years of the Roosevelt administration, it had been “hard to draw the line...between the left New Deal and the beginning of the Marxist movement.” Phelps and Skotnes, “An Interview with Paul M. Sweezy,” PMS-PAB, September 19, 1962. On the intersections between Marx and Keynes see M.C. Howard and J.E. King, \textit{A History of Marxian Economics, Volume II: 1929-1990} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 91-108. Howard and King argue “that the \textit{General Theory} was more of a watershed for Marxian political economy than for bourgeois economics.” (105) The injection of radical social science traditions into more establishment liberal institutions was mirrored in the realm of popular arts and entertainment in what Michael Denning has termed “the laboring of American culture” during the 1930s. Michael Denning, \textit{The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century} (London: Verso, 1998).


\textsuperscript{159} Nikhil Pal Singh, \textit{Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 103

end of the McCarthy period, the first wave of African decolonization, and the declaration of Afro-Asian solidarity at the Bandung Conference of 1955, provided both a sense of global connectedness, and a point of leverage to use against an Eisenhower administration which had little interest in the plight of African Americans, but recognized the public relations peril of Jim Crow as the United States vied with the Soviet Union for the favor of newly independent nations governed by Black people.161

Both the meaning of, and the political possibilities inherent to, political solidarity with the nations of the Third World took on a very different valence at the height of African decolonization.162 At the end of the 1950s, only nine African nations could claim full independence. By 1961 however, that number would jump to twenty-three, with twelve African countries joining the United Nations in 1960 alone.163 As a consequence, writes historian James H. Meriwhether, “Fraternity with and pride in things African swept through black America,” and “the image of a free and independent Africa animated the diasporic consciousness of African Americans.”164 Writing in the fall of 1961, the

161 Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). Though it did little to stop the Federal Bureau of Investigations from asserting that they were a front for the U.S.S.R., the leading organizations of the Southern Civil Rights Movement were forced to distance themselves from many of the political figures (including Jack O’Dell) who had sustained the Black Left during the worst days of McCarthyism.


historian John Henrik Clarke dated the rise of what he termed ‘The New Afro-American Nationalism,’ to February of that year; sparked by the murder of Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Concurrent to African decolonization, revolution in Cuba—and the successful defense of that revolution in the face of American aggression—suggested that a committed radical movement could achieve victory against even the most powerful forces of reaction.

Critical or otherwise, much of the literature on what came to be called the ‘Third World Turn’ within the United States—when the American Left began to look to the colonized and formerly colonized nations of the Third World for political inspiration—depicts it as reactive; a romantic response to the excitement of decolonization and eventually of guerilla war. Yet, Third Worldism was also proactive: the result of a multi-decade search on the part of leftist activists and intellectuals—in particular those on the Black Left—for new sources of radical agency. Beyond forging bonds of solidarity, Third Worldism represented an attempt at developing a coherent revolutionary politics that could adapt the tools developed in the colonized and decolonizing world in order to transform the First World of American capitalism.

In 1964, George Breitman—the chairman of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—described three components which he saw as vying for dominance within

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model of economic democracy, mass political participation, and antiracist global modernity.” Robeson Taj Frazier, 6

the Black Internationalist Left in the United States in the early 1960s, and which I argue were at the core of all subsequent Third World movements in the United States: “its proletarian composition, its nationalism, and its largely latent socialism [which is] implicit in its anti-capitalist animus and orientation...”

Ultimately, the major organizations of the Third World Left of the late 1960s and early 1970s—groups like the Black Panther Party and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during its Black Power period—were all engaged in (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts at forging a lasting revolutionary political coalition which balanced these three elements of Third World internationalism.

In tracing the development of these trends within Black radicalism between the late 1940s and the early 1960s, the contributions of three figures in particular are representative of the transition from the Black Internationalism of the Popular Front period (1935-1948), through the rise of Bandung internationalism in the 1950s, and toward the revolutionary anti-colonialism of the 1960s: W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, and Robert F. Williams. In conceiving of the battle for African-American equality as part of a global war on white supremacy, Du Bois envisioned a growing alliance between Pan-Africanism and Pan-Asianism through the spread of internationalist-socialist politics. Led by his own involvement with the Pan-African movement toward an iconoclastic brand of Trotskyism, James continued to hew to a belief in the revolutionary role of the

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167 George Breitman, letter of June 3, 1964, Box 47, Folder 10, George Breitman Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University Libraries. whose dedication to the cause of Black Freedom often led people to assume that Breitman was himself a Black man. In a chapter included in an edited volume of Breitman’s writing on Malcolm X, Malik Miah notes that he “thought Breitman was black, as did many of the new black members in Detroit, because of his insights into the problems of strategy for black liberation.” Malik Miah, “George Breitman on Black Liberation and Marxism,” pp. 23-32 in Anthony Marcus ed., Malcolm X and the Third American Revolution: The Writings of George Breitman (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanities Books, 2005)
industrial proletariat even as he found himself drawn to the Black Freedom Movement. Twenty-four years James’s junior and more than half-a-century younger than Du Bois, Robert F. Williams may have had more of an immediate impact on the radical Black internationalism of the early 1960s than either. His embrace of armed self-defense against the forces of white supremacy helped inspire the revolutionary nationalism of Black Power politics. Though achieving very different degrees of fame and influence during their own political and intellectual careers, it was these figures more than any others whose criticism and activism advanced debates within the internationalist Black Left in the early 1960s.

The first Black man to earn a doctorate from Harvard, America’s preeminent scholar on issues of African-American and Pan-African freedom for half-a-century, a founder of the NAACP, and the author of perhaps the most incisive work of Reconstruction-era history ever written, the impact of W.E.B. Du Bois extends far beyond the scope of this chapter.168 A chief organizer of Pan-African conferences in 1919, 1921, 1923, 1927, and 1945, the confiscation of his passport by the American government prevented Du Bois from attending the 1955 Bandung Conference. After joining the Communist Party in 1961 at the age of 93, Du Bois spent the last three years of his life as a citizen of post-colonial Ghana.169 In a 1957 speech, Du Bois argued that living within the more materially developed world had left Black Americans politically

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169 Kevin Kelly Gaines, American Africans in Ghana: Black expatriates and the civil rights era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006)
underdeveloped. For this reason, Du Bois argued that “American Negroes can no longer lead the colored peoples of the world, because they far better than we understand what is happening in the world today. But we can try to catch up with them.”

Declaring that “socialism is expanding over the modern world and penetrating the colored world,” Du Bois urged his American readers to “think, work, and vote for the welfare state…curbing the power of private capital and great monopolies” that they might “stand ready to meet and cooperate with world socialism as it grows among white and black.”

Du Bois was one of a number of prominent Black Leftists, including Richard Wright and Paul Robeson—who at the height of his fame was perhaps the most famous Black American in the world—who had sought to forge bonds of political solidarity with Africans and Asians, as well as with the Soviet Union, during the 1930s and 1940s. Though he famously turned apostate during the early 1940s, of these three figures, it was only Wright who claimed membership in the CPUSA during this period. Though neither Robeson or Du Bois joined the Party between the 1930s and the 1950s, they refused to bend to the pressure of state anti-communist persecution during the height of the domestic Cold War, or to denounce Stalin. This intransigence brought them both considerable social and professional hardship during the McCarthy period, and led to the

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173 State-persecution seems to have taken a greater toll on Robeson, who battled depression and mental illness during the early 1960s, than on Du Bois. Robeson’s Stalinism in particular has been a matter of significant controversy up to the present day: a controversy which resurfaces whenever an organization or institution seeks to honor his contributions to American cultural history. Though aware of some of the crimes of Stalin’s regime, Robeson was one of many figures on the Black Left who refused to side with a United States which maintained legal apartheid in its southern states over a Soviet Union which—at least rhetorically—stood on the side with people of color.
confiscation of both of their passports by the government of the United States. During the Second Red Scare, Du Bois found himself pushed to the margins of the NAACP, whose newspaper—which he had founded—parroted the liberal anti-Communist line in order to maintain what influence it had on the political mainstream. In spite of this marginalization and repression, Du Bois managed to maintain a presence in public life during the early-mid 1950s. Even as the popular front organizations of the Black Left were hounded out of existence during this time, historian John Munro argues that Du Bois “was adept at pursuing his anti-colonial politics through remaining available venues,” in particular the American Labor Party (ALP), on whose ticket Du Bois ran for Senate in the state of New York in 1950. When the U.S. Left began to tentatively re-emerge at the end of the 1950s, Du Bois’s ability to remain engaged in public affairs—as well as the admiration and good will felt for him by leading anti-colonial figures like Kwame Nkrumah—allowed him to position himself at the forefront of the international anti-colonial movement. Thus, it was Du Bois, more than any other figure, who oriented the Black Freedom Movement within the United States toward an implicitly socialist anti-colonial internationalism.

Born in 1901, the Afro-Trinidadian C.L.R. James turned to Marxism in the mid-1930s, after a period as a non-Marxist pan-Africanist. Inspired by Trotsky’s History of the Russian Revolution (1932), James’s The Black Jacobins (1938) was, like Black Reconstruction, a work of history from the bottom-up, one which placed working people in the foreground of a grand revolutionary narrative. In 1940, James (along with Max

174 Munro, The Anticolonial Front, 190-194
Shachtman) broke from the Trotskyist SWP over their conception of the Soviet Union as a ‘degenerated workers’ state.’ Shortly thereafter, James formed a faction within Shachtman’s new Worker’s Party (WP) which became known as the Johnson-Forest Tendency (JFT) after the revolutionary sobriquets used by James and the Ukrainian-born Marxist Raya Dunayevskaya (J.R. Johnson and Freddie Forest respectively). Arguing that the U.S.S.R. had reverted to a form of ‘state capitalism,’ and that no existing ‘socialist’ states were worthy of the name, James and Dunayevskaya committed themselves to the search for new, non-Soviet sources of socialist agency.\textsuperscript{176} Joined in this pursuit by Grace Lee (later Grace Lee Boggs), the writings of Johnson-Forest placed particular emphasis on the generative role of Black activism, the creativity and spontaneity of the masses, and the need for theorists to return to the Hegelian elements at the root of Marx’s thought.\textsuperscript{177}

Though marginal in terms of both numbers and audience, Johnson-Forrest had an outsized influence on the nascent Third World Left through the involvement of Grace Lee and James Boggs.\textsuperscript{178} The relationship between the Boggses and James came under political strain after 1956-7, when James prioritized the Hungarian Revolution over anti-colonial movements, and finally broke in 1963 over whether the Black struggle was fundamental to the proletarian revolution (James’s position), or whether displaced and

\textsuperscript{176} A bureaucratic collectivist state was one where the means of production were controlled by a new class of party elites. On the Johnson-Forest Tendency and State Capitalism see C.L.R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee Boggs, \textit{State Capitalism and World Revolution} (Chicago: C.H. Kerr Company, 2013 c.1950); Rosengarten, \textit{Urbane Revolutionary}, 9-116; and Ward, \textit{In Love and Struggle}, 101-116


\textsuperscript{178} Like the line about the Velvet Underground, the history of the Left can leave one with the impression that while only a handful of people were familiar with the work of the JFT, all of them became prominent Marxian theorists.
marginalized Black workers represented a new ‘universal class’ (the position held by the Boggses).\textsuperscript{179} Though splitting with James over the precise historical role of Black America, the Boggses continued to be animated by the question that had led to the break from the WP two decades earlier: how a dialectical study of American political-economy might reveal the next agent of revolutionary transformation.\textsuperscript{180}

President of the Monroe North Carolina chapter of the NAACP, Robert Williams achieved notoriety in the late 1950s after forming an all-Black rifle club to defend the local community from the Klan. Forced to flee the United States in August of 1961 ahead of trumped-up kidnapping charges, Williams settled in Cuba where he continued to agitate for Black liberation on his radio program \textit{Radio Free Dixie}, in his newsletter \textit{The Crusader}, and with the publishing of his book \textit{Negroes with Guns} (1962). In 1963, a correspondence between Williams and Mao Zedong was instrumental in pushing Mao to release his “statement supporting the American Negroes in their just struggle against racism and discrimination by U.S. imperialism.”\textsuperscript{181}

Though not opposed to non-violent tactics when the situation called for them, Williams feared that pacifism was quickly “becoming a sophisticated term for self-imposed paralysis.”\textsuperscript{182} Convinced that the violence of state-backed white supremacy must be met in kind, Williams exhorted his readers to “be willing to suffer jail…to suffer

\textsuperscript{179} Ward, \textit{In Love and Struggle}, 198-218. Ward notes that though James did prioritize Ghana after 1957, he did so because he saw it as a model of ‘popular insurgency,’ in action, rather than a portent of global Black solidarity.
\textsuperscript{181} \url{https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-33h.htm}, accessed 5/22/2018
death…and to kill for freedom!” Though in some ways ideologically rigid, Williams professed no theory or platform beyond Black liberation, and made common cause with all those who he deemed to be sufficiently committed to that goal. His unflinching embrace of armed self-defense made Williams a potent symbol for those who found King insufficiently radical, but who were not interested in the particular brand of religious separatism on offer from the Nation of Islam. Additionally, the support Williams received from revolutionary Cuba and China helped to legitimize both as allies of the Black Freedom Movement. Williams’ revolutionary nationalism was particularly influential on the founders of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM—about more below), and—in part through RAM—on the political thinking of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

Largely ignored by Du Bois, James, and Williams, was a fourth trend which developed beginning in the late 1930s and which—though marginalized by the male leadership of the major organizations of the Third World Left—remerged as an influential force at the end of the 1960s: anti-capitalist Black and Third World feminism. Never achieving the fame of their male counterparts, the writing and activism of pre-figurative Third World feminists like Claudia Jones, Esther Cooper Jackson, and Shirley Graham Du Bois similarly establishes continuities between the internationalisms of the Popular Front and the New Left, and helped to lay the foundation for later Black and

183 Robert F. Williams, “[untitled article], The Crusader, Vol. 4, No. 8 (May 1963), pp. 2-4, 3.
Third World feminist theorists and activists. Though their contributions to what would later be termed ‘intersectional feminism’ received scant attention during the early 1960s, these and other Black internationalist women played a major role in the developments of diplomatic ties between activists in the United States and those in the Third World, and—through their positions as writers and editors—in structuring debates within the Third World Left.

Born in Trinidad, Claudia Jones (Claudia Vera Cumberbatch) moved to New York as a child, and became drawn to Pan-Africanism and Communism in her early twenties. During the 1940s, Jones wrote for the Communist Party’s Daily Worker and served as the executive secretary of the CP’s National Negro Commission (NNC). Jones’s writing


186 McDuffie, 96-7

during this period—in particular her 1949 article “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!”—placed a particular emphasis on the ‘triple oppressions’ faced by working-class Black women.\(^{188}\) Twenty years before theorists like Frances Beal and Angela Davis (See chapter 4), Jones drew on her own reading of Marxism to argue that, occupying a position of “super-exploitation,” Black women in the United States had the potential to serve as “a powerful level for bringing forward Negro workers—men and women—as the leading forces of the Negro people’s liberation movement, for cementing Negro and white unity in the struggle against Wall Street imperialism, and for rooting the Party among the most exploited and oppressed sections of the working class and its allies.”\(^{189}\) In 1955, Jones was deported to England due to her membership in the Party; she spent the final decade of her life in the United Kingdom, and upon her death in 1964, she was buried in Highgate Cemetery: directly to the left of Karl Marx.\(^{190}\)

Born in Virginia to parents active in the struggle for Civil Rights, Cooper joined the Communist Party in the late 1930s along with her husband James Jackson. In 1940, Cooper completed a Master’s thesis in which she argued for the organization of Black women working in domestic service.\(^{191}\) Her thesis records that “Negro women” in domestic service have “suffered from lack of employment standards, long hours, and low wages, exclusion from social insurance and legislation, and social stigma attached to the occupation,” as well as having “been forced to receive lower pay and to work under


\(^{189}\) 122, https://libcom.org/files/claudiajones.pdf. Though emphasizing the multiple oppressions working women of color faced, Jones maintained that “the Negro question in the United States” should be prioritized over the women’s movement.

\(^{190}\) McDuffie, 7

\(^{191}\) See Erik S. McDuffie, “Esther V. Cooper’s ‘The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism’: Black Left Feminism and the Popular Front,” American Communist History 7, no. 2 (2008): 203-209
lower standards than white employees,” and argues that the exploitation of the 600,000 Black women working in domestic service can only be ameliorated through unionization.192 In 1941, Cooper Jackson became the executive secretary of the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC).193 In her capacity as executive secretary, Cooper Jackson travelled to the Soviet Union and to London, where she met with major Pan-Africanist figures including Kwame Nkrumah and W.E.B. Du Bois.194

By the time Shirley Graham married W.E.B. Du Bois in 1951, she had earned two degrees at Oberlin, had had a successful career in theater as a part the New Deal Federal Theatre Project (FTP), and had joined the Communist Party.195 From 1958, she and Du Bois spent much of their time outside of the United States, including visits to the Soviet Union and China.196 In 1961, the couple moved to Ghana. Having grown close to Kwame Nkrumah, Graham Du Bois remained in Ghana following her husband’s death in 1963.197 Over the next half-decade, she played a key role in the building of networks of internationalist solidarity by hosting American radicals including James Jackson and Malcolm X as they travelled through Accra.198

194 Erik McDuffie, 153
195 Gerald Horne, Race Woman
196 Horne, Race Woman, 153; 158.
197 Horne, 178-185
198 Horne 185-193. Of these three women, the two who survived beyond the late 1960s continued to play active roles on the Third World Left. Following the 1966 coup against Nkrumah, Graham Du Bois resumed the peripatetic life she had maintained before settling in Ghana, including spending time in China during the Cultural Revolution, where she hoped to convince Mao to provide material support to the Black revolution in the United States. Between the mid-1960s and her death in 1977, Graham Du Bois spent a considerable amount of time in the United States—including a stint as a professor at Amherst and a visit to Oakland where she met with members of the Black Panther Party (Horne, 260) Staying in the U.S. for most
During the early 1960s, the most significant contributions to debates in Black internationalism made by Shirley Graham Du Bois and Esther Cooper Jackson may have been through their role in the founding and editing of the journal *Freedomways*. Along with the *Liberator*, *Freedomways* was a key location for debates over nationalism, proletarianism, and socialism on the Black Left during the early-mid 1960s, and both journals placed particular emphasis on the relationship between the movement at home and struggles against imperialism and colonization abroad.

Focusing more on African liberation than on Cuba or China during the early 1960s, *Freedomways* aimed—in the words of one contributor—to “speak not only for the struggling Afro-Americans but also for the African, Caribbean and Latin American peoples fighting for freedom and independence against colonialism.” The editors hoped that, by engaging with the global anti-colonial struggle, *Freedomways* would help to interpret and to guide “the new forms of economic, political, and social systems now existing or emerging in the world.” Though keeping one foot firmly planted in the Popular Front milieu in which its founding editors had come of age, *Freedomways*—

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201 Kaiser, “Five Years of Freedomways,” 105
published a number of pieces which anticipated the more militant revolutionary nationalism of the Black Power period—particularly following the ascension of Jack O’Dell to the position of associate editor in 1963.²⁰²

If *Freedomways* was committed to understanding the relationship between the Black Freedom Movement at home and anti-colonialism abroad, *Liberator* was explicit in positioning itself as a theoretical organ of militant Black nationalism and internationalism.²⁰³ Though he would soon break with the magazine’s editorial staff, the dominant voice at the *Liberator* between 1963-1964 was that of Harold Cruse, whose calls for a revolutionary cultural nationalism helped direct the journal’s approach to politics during this period. Though both journals embraced a radical politics, the editorial staff of *Freedomways* tended to shy away from the harsher anti-liberal rhetoric that could be found in the pages of *Liberator*.²⁰⁴ Ultimately it was between these two related political tendencies—the post-popular front internationalism of *Freedomways* and the uncompromising proto-Black Power politics of *Liberator*—that the politics of the Third World Left of the mid-late 1960s emerged.

The first significant organizational effort at bringing together the three components which Breitman had described was in the short-lived Freedom Now Party

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²⁰⁴ see for example the anecdote Tinson relays about Askia Touré’s report from the National Afroamerican Student Conference in 1964, which was turned down by *Freedomways* before finding a home in *Liberator*. (Tinson, 132-3)
(1963-1965). Founded by Black radicals working primarily out of Harlem and Detroit, the Freedom Now Party (FNP) was an attempt at forging an all-Black political coalition whose leaders explicitly defined themselves as a part of a global anti-colonial front. Reconstructing how socialist internationalism, proletarianism, and revolutionary nationalism were elaborated by, and contested among the leadership of the FNP reveals a great deal about the development of Third World thought.

Speaking in Harlem in the summer of 1963, the radical Black journalist William Worthy—one of the founders of the FNP—asked his audience to consider what would happen “if Fidel Castro were President of the United States instead of John F. Kennedy?” Worthy announced that in such a world, “Bull Connor would be given a fair trial and then shot. Ninety five percent of the police would have to flee to South Africa for political asylum [and] J. Edgar Hoover would be thrown into an integrated jail.”205 Connecting the FNP to anti-colonialism abroad was a strategy designed to create a symbiosis between the local and the global. “This broadened struggle,” Worthy argued, “will be recognized by the Nkrumahs, the Nassers, the Kenyattas, the Ben Bellas, and the Castros as the hope for Negro liberation in this country. Their hands abroad will be strengthened…just as our backbone at home will be strengthened.”206 The FNP’s commitment to radical internationalism is evidenced throughout its public statements and platforms, with the preamble to the Michigan Freedom Now Party Platform declaring the FNP to be “[aligned] with all liberation movements throughout the world!”207

206 William Worthy Speech “A Call to Action by William Worthy: it is in our power to change the world.” The Militant, Monday, August 19, 1963
As a correspondent for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, William Worthy had reported from Communist China (1956-7) and post-revolutionary Cuba (1961). The first of these trips resulted in the confiscation of his U.S. passport, and the second—undertaken without legal documents—resulted in a trial and a conviction (which was later overturned). Worthy’s willingness to flaunt anti-communist persecution in the U.S. had earned him credibility among those on the Black Left who viewed American capitalism and American racism as linked.208 In June of 1963, addressing an audience in Cleveland, Worthy called for African-Americans to reject the hesitant reformism of the Democratic Party, and to “[strike] out…to remove their chains, instead of relying on the corrupt and dishonest two-party system just to alleviate the pressure of the chains…”209

Among the first to answer Worthy’s call was the radical lawyer Conrad Lynn. A former communist who had left the CPUSA in the 1930s after realizing that his “loyalty to the colored people of the world was far greater than [his] loyalty to a political party,”210 Lynn had since dedicated his life to fighting for Black Freedom: most prominently through his defense of two African-American boys accused of rape in North Carolina’s *Kissing Case* (1958).211 Like Worthy, Lynn had visited Castro’s Cuba, and both looked to that island’s social revolution as a model for what a small but committed band of radicals might accomplish. Viewing the relationship of Black Americans to the

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210 Conrad Lynn, *There is a Fountain: The Autobiography of Conrad Lynn*, 2nd edition (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1993), 67. According to his own autobiography, Conrad Lynn was purged from the CPUSA in 1937 “for protesting the lack of party support for Trinidadian oil workers.” …Part of the problem for Lynn and many other black communists was that they viewed the main enemy of black people to be in the United States, not overseas.” (Lynn, 193)
211 On the Kissing Case see Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, pp. 90-136
U.S. as essentially similar to, but not identical to, the relationships between colonized peoples and colonial powers abroad, they hoped that studying the revolutionary movements of the Third World would provide insights into how a radicalized Black vanguard might win power in the U.S.

Supported in their efforts by an impressive collection of activists and intellectuals including James Boggs and the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. in Detroit, and Harold Cruse in New York, Lynn and Worthy set about building a political alternative for the Black electorate. Though few details of early meetings remain, by August 23, 1963—four days before the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—the New York Times had announced the establishment of “An All-Negro Party for ‘64” under the “acting chairmanship of [Lynn],” and the Freedom Now Party (FNP) was born.

Guided by a platform primarily written by Cruse, and campaigning in San Francisco, New Haven, and New York, the activists of the Freedom Now Party focused their electoral efforts on Michigan, where local organizers collected 22,000 signatures—well in excess of the 15,000 required to make the ballot statewide. Running a slate of thirty-nine candidates for state-wide and local offices, the FNP set a goal of five percent of the vote (roughly 100,000 votes total): enough to ensure ballot-access in subsequent elections. The FNP hoped to capture local offices while securing enough support nationally that they could, in effect, hold the Black vote hostage. Cleage characterized this strategy as a “new method of confrontation,” writing that the “22 million Negroes in

the city of Detroit and the State of Michigan...[held] the balance of power in the State, and that if they continued to develop into a national party, could “determine who is going to be President of the United States.”

Decrying the pace with which Northern Democrats pursued Civil Rights legislation, Michigan-FNP Senate candidate Ernest C. Smith asked, “What would happen to the Democratic Party if they woke up one bright November morning and found that the Negro vote was no longer in their hip pocket?”

Early Election Day reports provided hope that the FNP would meet, or perhaps even exceed, the five-percent threshold. However, when the votes were counted, it was clear that the Party had fallen far below the necessary totals, and by 1965—less than two years after being founded—the FNP collapsed.

The simplest explanation of the failure of the FNP to generate even the relatively modest electoral goal of 5% of the statewide vote in Michigan, and of the Party’s subsequent collapse, is that the relationship between the two major Parties and Black voters had shifted significantly between the founding of the Party in the summer of 1963, and the Party’s unravelling in 1965. In 1960, both the Kennedy and Nixon campaigns had competed for Black votes while working hard to avoid alienating segregationists. Though Kennedy ultimately secured over two-thirds of the Black vote that November, this represented a slight decline in the level of Black support for the Democratic Party from its previous peak in the elections of 1948 and 1952 (though it was a slight increase over the share of the Black vote that went to Adlai Stevenson in 1956). Kennedy’s

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relative success with Black voters may well have been the difference in the then-swing states of Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, and Michigan.218

While Black voters helped deliver Michigan, New Jersey, and Missouri, the Party still relied on the support of segregationist Democrats in the solid south, and through 1962, whatever gestures Kennedy made in support of Civil Rights—including increasing the number of African-American employed by the federal government—was overshadowed by the administration’s failure to introduce a civil rights bill.219 It was not until the summer of 1963 that Kennedy—unnerved by the brutality of the white political and business establishment in Birmingham, Alabama and fearing the prospect of retaliatory violence—announced that he would be sending a bill to Congress. However, through that fall, it appeared that the intransigence of congressional conservatives would cause the bill to die in committee. This was the context in which the Freedom Now Party came together: under a Democratic administration which took nearly three years to introduce a civil rights bill which seemed doomed by the Party’s own conservative wing.

If the Black electorate had continued to waver between the two parties however, the combination of Kennedy’s bill—carried forward by Lyndon Johnson following JFK’s assassination—and the Republican Party’s nomination of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater—who opposed the Civil Rights Act—made the choice clear. Faced with the frightening prospect of a Goldwater administration, more than nine out of ten Black voters cast their ballots for Johnson. In 1960, Kennedy had won Michigan by 67,000 votes. In 1964, Johnson won the state by more than a million. Whatever power the Black

vote had held in 1960—and which the organizers of the Freedom Now Party hoped to use as leverage—was swept away by the Johnson landslide. Once in office, Congress’s passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ended whatever prospect remained that the Black vote would return to the Republican Party.

That the civil rights bills of 1964-5 represented the pinnacle of inside-outside Civil Rights work was an illustration of the limits of that approach to political organizing. Tremendous achievements though the bills may have been, their focus on the victims of de jure segregation offered little to Black people in the North and West. And while—like the New Deal—Great Society legislation disproportionately benefited communities of color by targeting urban poverty, it was insufficient to the task at hand, and did little to upset more fundamental divides in political power, or to challenge the violence of urban policing. Thus, many of the activists drawn to the Freedom Now Party concluded that the extraordinarily productive legislative period 1964-1965 made clear that they had been wrong to maintain even one foot inside the existing structures of American politics: any future transformation must come from outside the electoral system.220

Unable to capture significant popular support, the Party has received little attention from historians. However, one need not ascribe ahistorical significance to the FNP as a political party to recognize its role in structuring the trajectory of the American Left. Though the party failed to achieve any of its electoral goals, the debates over

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220 At least at the national level, Boggs (about more below) saw promise in winning office at the local level, and in the early 1970s, Third World activists like Amiri Baraka similarly saw promise in working to win Black control of cities like Newark and Detroit through the campaigns of politicians like Kenneth A. Gibson and Coleman Young. Once actually in power, these and other Black mayors of the period 1968-1980 tended to disappoint the activist networks that had brought them to power. See Coleman Young, Hard Stuff: The Autobiography of Mayor Coleman Young (New York: Viking Press, 1994); Tom Adam Davies, Mainstreaming Black Power (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017) and Robert C. Holmes and Richard W. Roper eds., A Mayor for All the People: Kenneth Gibson’s Newark (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019)
proletarianism, nationalism, and socialism within the FNP transcended petty fights over the particular failures of a particular party. For Cruse, it reaffirmed his belief that Black Radicals must secure and develop an independent cultural base before they could begin the long work of transforming American society. For Boggs it laid bare a future where Black Americans had only two options—Black control or Black genocide. Representing the white-Marxist Left, Sweezy viewed the failure of the FNP and the ultimate impossibility of Black separatist rebellion as hopeful signs that, after consolidating power, the Black Freedom Movement “will see the sheer necessity of seeking, which also means to create, allies outside their own ranks. Not…among whites, but among Reds.”

In bringing together a collection of the most insightful Black internationalists of the early 1960s, the FNP-experience helped lay the groundwork for the turn toward the Third World which came to increasingly characterize radical political thought during the late 1960s and beyond.

The FNP’s most visible legacy was in the development of Black Power politics in Detroit, where Party leaders included members of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and UHURU, and where participation in the FNP served as a political training ground for much of the future leadership of the Republic of New Africa (RNA), the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), and the Black Workers Congress (BWC).

While historians of Black radicalism have situated Detroit as a key location for the development of Black internationalism,

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222 Distinguishing the Freedom Now Party from the Third-World organizations that formed in its wake was that it represented an attempt to achieve radical ends with one foot remaining within existing party politics.
223 On the relationship between the LRBW and the FNP see “An Interview with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers,” editorial Files of Leviathan Black Movement League Tapes, Wisconsin Historical Society. On the role of the FNP in the development of Black Power politics see: Peniel Joseph:
scholars have not sufficiently recognized the Freedom Now Party campaign in particular as critical to the development of the ‘Third World Turn.’

In an unpublished polemic written shortly after the ‘64 elections, Harold Cruse wrote that the “The FREEDOM NOW Party movement [was] the most unique and challenging new trend in Negro affairs…and it served to bring out into the open for the first time the entire gamut of hidden weaknesses and incompetencies within the Northern Negro movement.” A close reading of Cruse’s broadside—in which he fulminates against the political errors of the rest of the FNP’s leadership—alongside the published, and unpublished work of Boggs, Sweezy, and others, helps to provide a fuller context for the battle lines that divided Black internationalists in general, and the leadership of the Freedom Now Party in particular during a period of transition between the first and second generations of the Third World Left.

“There is much to be learned,” Cruse wrote, shortly after the FNP’s collapse, “about why [political parties] fail.” To Cruse, the “underlying issues surrounding the Freedom Now Party had become…so clear-cut and graphic that it afforded the best of social laboratories for political investigation that [he had] ever encountered.” Cruse was sharply critical of the political tendencies of the rest of the FNP leadership, writing

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224 The only article which does engage with the FNP in some length as key to the development of Black internationalist politics is Van Gosse’s “More than Just a Politician: Harold Cruse and the Origins of Black Power.” At the time of his writing, Gosse did not have access to Harold Cruse’s untitled polemic on the Freedom Now Party. (Author e-mail with Van Gosse, 10/1/17).


226 Cruse, untitled polemic, 312.
that the Party, “represented practically every hidden and buried ideological issue that had long lingered in Negro consciousness half-digested, half-debated and unresolved,” resulting not in “a rational, analytical…political party, but an emotional battle of racial confusion, downright naivete, and political incompetence.”

Though Cruse never shied away from calling his targets out by name, in his published works he has a tendency to obscure his own role, often referring to an unnamed member of the Liberator editorial board or some similarly vague figure. In his unpublished polemic however, he attacks the political errors of Boggs, Worthy, Lynn, Sweezy, and others in clearer terms, describing his personal, in-the-moment frustrations with these figures. Cruse maintained that in spite of the Party’s brief life and lack of electoral success, “the seriousness of the FREEDOM NOW Party situation [could not] be underestimated.”

Cruse believed that from the start, the FNP was doomed by the fundamental irreconcilability of reformist means and radical ends, by an impatience born of an overly romantic attachment to the Third World, by conflict over a radical politics emphasizing political-economy versus one focused on cultural radicalism, and above all else by “the unresolved conflict between nationalist and integrationist tendencies.

While these themes had run through Cruse’s writing since the end of the 1950s, it seems that they were crystallized by his experiences with the FNP.

The most significant divides centered around Cruse himself. Like Worthy and Lynn, Cruse had been inspired (at times in spite of himself) by travels to revolutionary

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227 Ibid, 312. Elements of Cruse’s attacks were later published in his 1964 essay “Marxism and the Negro,” and in his Crisis of the Negro Intellectual (1967).
228 For an example of this see Cruse, Crisis, 416-7
229 Cruse, untitled polemic, 378
230 Ibid, 306
Cuba. In his influential 1962 essay “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” Cruse related the anti-colonial radicalism of the Cuban Revolution to the Black Freedom Movement in the U.S. Published in Studies on the Left, Cruse’s essay argued that the revolutionary wave sweeping across the underdeveloped world had upended the traditional Marxist notion that the industrial proletariat held the key to radical transformation. “What is true of the colonial world is also true of the Negro in the United States,” wrote Cruse, and thus in the United States “the Negro is the leading revolutionary force, independent and ahead of the Marxists in the development of a movement towards social change.” Cruse’s declaration that “the revolutionary initiative has passed to the colonial world, and in the United States is passing to the Negro,” both challenged the parochialism of ‘Western Marxists,’ and signaled a shift toward the Third World in the political thinking of the Black Left.

Cruse was particularly interested in developing a domestic variant of the revolutionary nationalism that characterized anti-colonial movements abroad. Cruse reasoned that since white American society was fundamentally incapable of integrating African Americans along equitable lines, then white American society must be rejected, and as “the American Negro is the only potentially revolutionary force in the United States…from the Negro himself must come the revolutionary social theories of an

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232 Ibid, 13
233 Among those influenced by Cruse’s essay was RAM co-founder Donald Freeman. See Muhammad Ahmad, We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975. (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company), 97
234 Here Cruse refers not those whom Perry Anderson and others have defined as ‘Western Marxists,’ but rather to the mostly white Marxists in the United States and Europe who continued to assert the revolutionary preeminence of the industrial working class into the mid-20th century
economic, cultural, and political nature that will be his guides for social action.” Of these, it was Black nationalist culture that most interested Cruse. Writing later in the decade, Cruse defined his understanding of ‘Cultural Revolution’ as “revolutionizing…the entire American apparatus of cultural communication and placing it under public ownership.” It was Cruse’s hope that the nationalizing of Black culture along these lines could lead to the development of a Black consciousness capable of uniting the movement’s integrationist and nationalist wings.

After Cruse, the figure most integral to the development of the ideological program of the Party was James Boggs. Active in radical politics in Detroit for nearly twenty years, Boggs—perhaps the leading organic intellectual of the Black labor movement—had come to broader prominence with the release of his *The American Revolution* (1963). First published in *Monthly Review* as a special double-issue, Boggs’s brief book argued that increasing automation in industrial production would lead to higher unemployment, a burden that would fall disproportionately on Black workers. Made obsolescent by technology and denied the benefits of the welfare state, these displaced Black workers would come to represent a potentially revolutionary force distinct from the (white-dominated) industrial working class.

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236 Harold Cruse *Rebellion or Revolution*, 112
237 Writing in June of 1964, at a time when the FNP had yet to “[adopt] a clear-cut ideology or a correct and comprehensive program,” George Breitman told a friend that Cruse and Boggs were the “most notable” thinkers among “a number of revolutionary nationalist intellectuals of diverse backgrounds…trying to fill that gap.” George Breitman Tamiment, Box 47, Freedom Now Party, letter (to George—undetermined), June 3, 1964
Boggs too was attracted to the Cuban Revolution, though less out of an interest in the inculcation of revolutionary nationalism than in how revolution in Latin America would impact material conditions within the United States. Assuming that Cuba was the first of what would soon be a cascade of toppled right-wing governments, Boggs concluded that these revolutions would deprive the U.S. of “their main source of super-profit” while revealing to American citizens the degree to which “their luxurious standard of living has been won, in part, at the expense of the peasants and workers of Latin America.” Boggs argued that coming to terms with this would “help deepen the general revolutionary crisis in this country.” Like Cruse, Boggs pushed back against vulgar Marxian teleology and its millenarian hopes for the industrial working class. Believing “the basis for a revolution is created when the organic structure and conditions within a given country have aroused mass concern,” Boggs was optimistic that an increasingly displaced Black proletariat, existing precariously within a weakened imperial metropole, might be the spark that could ignite The American Revolution.

The FREEDOM NOW platform remains the clearest evidence of the Party’s efforts to join together the three trends which George Breitman had described, with Cruse arguing for the primacy of nationalism, Boggs for the primacy of proletarianism, and Breitman, Sweezy, and other figures who were more peripheral to the FNP, for the primacy of socialist internationalism. Seeing in the FNP an opportunity to create a distinct Black political culture, and to develop what he referred to as ‘community-ethnic consciousness’, Cruse looked to Harlem—the home of Black culture—as the logical base

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239 James Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 73
240 Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 74
241 Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 88
of the movement. Arguing that increased automation was creating the conditions for a radical Black politics by displacing Black industrial workers, Boggs looked to Detroit—the base of Black industrial labor-power—as the locus of the movement.

Though the combination of these tendencies would ultimately prove unstable, the FNP platform is a snapshot of a particular moment in the history of African-American radicalism, an interstitial period before the rise of Black Power politics, when self-described revolutionaries continued to believe that radical ends might be secured by reforming—rather than rejecting—the existing institutional structures of American politics. The platform represents less a break from the integrationist politics of the NAACP and Martin Luther King Jr., or from the separatist nationalism of the Nation of Islam (NOI) than an attempt at reconciling the two movements, with Cruse arguing that “unless [these] tendencies are united into a new political synthesis, the full impact of Negro potential cannot be brought to bear on American society.”

Cruse concluded that the FNP had demonstrated something which “was always true but which [had] now become a political truism, [that] the Negro Integrationist is congenitally unable either to lead or build an all-black grassroots movement…in the Northern ghettos.”

242 “Freedom Now Party: Draft National Platform,” Liberator. Vol. IV, No.2, February 1964, (4-5) http://domesticdiversity.com/Liberator/Issues/64-02%20Liberator.pdf, accessed 10/21/2017. Cruse’s original draft can also be found in The Harold Cruse Papers at the Tamiment Library. In addition to demands for housing, basic income, and education, the platform cautioned against pursuing economic growth through imperial war. (Cruse, FNP, 10. Though gendered here to refer only to men, it is of note that the word ‘Black’ was used to refer to those of African and Asian descent) Claiming that the U.S. had been “long degraded and dehumanized by the yokes of imperialism and neo-colonialism,” (Cruse, FNP, 29) the authors demanded the admission of China to the United Nations, an end to attempts at undermining the Cuban Revolution, and finally “the end of the colonial system, with all the subject peoples being entitled to immediate self-determination and national liberation.” (Cruse, FNP, 31)

243 Ibid, 314. A great deal has been written on Cruse’s critique of integrationists and separatists. In sum, Cruse felt that these two ‘extremes’ had dominated the political thinking of the Black left in the 20th century, and (in what may have been one of his more generous moments), wrote that while “both wings have very valid aims. What is missing from the Negro movement is…a tactical understanding of what aspects of Nationalism and Integrationism to emphasize at the proper time.” (Cruse, untitled, 286). The charge of naïve integrationism was levied principally against Worthy and Lynn, whom Cruse dismissed for
Cruse’s skepticism toward both integration and Marxism notwithstanding, he respected Paul Sweezy; suggesting that whatever his faults, Sweezy was “not a fanatic zealot such as found in other Marxist factions.” Indeed, Sweezy and Baran never shared the sanguinity of Marxists who asserted that socialism would mean the immediate dissipation of all racial animus. While Sweezy supported the Southern Civil Rights movement, his primary interest in black liberation remained its relationship to a broader emancipatory project in the U.S. To that end, he analyzed the politics of the Black Left in the larger context of the struggle for American socialism. Like Cruse, Sweezy believed that though “the Negro masses cannot hope for integration into American society as it is now constituted…they can hope to be one of the historical agents which will overthrow and put in its place another society…” His (and Baran’s) reasoning for this, however, hewed closer to the thinking of Boggs than of Cruse, in that they believed that a wave of anti-imperial revolutions would put a strain on the resources of the welfare state, and that Black workers would be the first to bear the brunt of economic austerity.

Baran and Sweezy’s thinking on race extended from the model of advanced capitalist economies developed in *Monopoly Capital* as inevitably trending toward stagnation, the effects of which would be felt first by the most exploited sector of the

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not “honestly believing that the party should or could be all Black.” (Cruse, 307) Though of course not sympathetic to Cruse’s condemnation of his own role in the Party’s dissolution, Conrad Lynn, writing in his 1979 autobiography, agreed that it was the conflict between integration and separatism that “bedeviled and finally scuttled” the FNP. (Lynn, *There was a Fountain*, 187).

244 Cruse, untitled polemic, 312

245 After reading Boggs’s *American Revolution*, Baran had written to Sweezy that “the race issue has to be faced as…something additional, related to but also independent from the class conflict,” and that while “only a socialist society could and would create the general atmosphere” in which racism could be overcome, “the mere solution of the socio-economic problem would not do it.” (PAB-PMS, July 18, 1963)

246 Baran and Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, 280
working class. In a 1963 letter to Baran, Sweezy had articulated the connection between stagnation and Black liberation, writing that with the exception of the World Wars, the condition of African Americans had never improved *relative to the pace of improvement of the rest of the American working class* during the twentieth century. For this reason, Sweezy posited that “Negroes, unlike whites, are likely increasingly to reject white US society and to solidarize with the colored majority of the human race…” At which point they will “become not only strangers within the gates but also enemies”: a force capable of bringing the anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-capitalist war home.247

Because Sweezy promoted revolutionary nationalism abroad, Cruse was flummoxed to find that Sweezy did *not* support the nationalization planks in the FNP platform. In particular, Cruse was frustrated by the fact that Sweezy—who had travelled to Cuba to study the impact of Castro’s economic nationalization plans—seemed to have done very little thinking about what Cruse referred to as “ghetto economics.” “How does one account,” asked Cruse, “for Paul Sweezy’s theoretical volubility about every single aspect of the Cuban Revolution…as opposed to his very studied, reticent, wait and see, non-committal skepticism about the direction of the Negro movement in America?”248 To Cruse, Sweezy’s position indicated that even the best of the white Marxists would never take the Black movement as seriously as they took revolutionary movements in other countries. “Sweezy…might be impressed at what the Castroites did in Havana to promote the INVA Housing program,” wrote Cruse, “but he ought to take a closer look at the

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247 Sweezy to Baran, March 9, 1963
248 Cruse, untitled polemic, 331
environ of the Hotel Theresa in Harlem where Castro and his boys shacked up on his last visit.”

While it is no doubt true that Baran and Sweezy had been late to recognize the independence of the Black Left, what Cruse saw as a dismissal was, at least in part, a logical product of their approach to the study of social and economic structures, in particular their belief that the economics of Black America could not be studied outside of the larger context of monopoly capitalism. “It is the confluence of discrimination and economic misery,” Baran wrote to Sweezy, “which makes the Negro an explosive force today.”

They believed that, given the impossibility of achieving economic and racial justice under monopoly capitalism, the Black struggle was “necessarily revolutionary,” in that its realization would necessarily mean the overthrow of the system in its totality.

Sweezy’s analysis of Black radicalism would evolve during the 1960s, but in 1963-5, he saw the FNP as something of a transition between Black Muslimism—which he viewed as a priori a retreat from politics—and a new wave of Black internationalism represented by the Revolutionary Action Movement, whose political program Sweezy had excerpted in the pages of *Monthly Review*. If the Freedom Now Party attempted to balance inside-outside tactics—working within the existing structures of the American political system while (at least rhetorically) rejecting that system’s legitimacy—the Revolutionary Action Movement’s operated entirely outside of the bounds of traditional politics. Formed in 1961-2 by radical students at Ohio’s Central State College, it was in part through the close study of Cruse’s “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-

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249 Ibid, 346
250 PAB-PMS Juy 18, 1963
American” that RAM’s leadership developed their revolutionary politics. Though never achieving the fame or notoriety of the Black Panther Party (either in their own time or in the popular historical imagination), RAM prefigured the Panthers’ vanguard politics, as well as the BPP’s ten-point platform, which was indebted to the twelve-point program which the Revolutionary Action Movement laid out in 1964.\footnote{Max Stanford, \textit{We Will Return in the Whirlwind}, 99. The Panthers formed out of an East Bay chapter of the Revolutionary Action Movement.}

Though originally inspired by Cruse, by the mid-1960s, RAM had grown closer to the politics of James and Grace Lee Boggs, appointing James as the group’s Ideological Chairman, and Grace Lee to the position of Executive Secretary.\footnote{Though it is uncertain what role he would have been willing to play had he lived, Malcolm X was elected International Spokesman of the Revolutionary Action Movement, and Robert F. Williams International Chairman. (Stanford, 99)} After the FNP’s collapse, Max Stanford travelled to Detroit where he met with James and Grace to discuss the reasons for the Party’s failures, and how RAM might avoid such errors in their own organizing.\footnote{Stanford, 91} In RAM, Sweezy saw an alternative to separatist Black nationalists (like the NOI), whose political \textit{methods} represented a break from the reformist politics of the NAACP, but whose \textit{goals} did not fundamentally challenge capitalism. Writing in \textit{MR}, Sweezy praised RAM’s Max Stanford’s “profound understanding of the world situation,” in particular his understanding of radical struggle as not just “a method of seeking immediate goals but as a form of education and a method of raising the political consciousness and the militancy of the oppressed.”\footnote{Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, “The Colonial War at Home,” 8. See Chapter 3 for more on RAM}

Ultimately, the support that Sweezy offered the FNP was not because he thought the Party might succeed, but because he thought it would fail—and that this failure would serve to further radicalize urban Black populations by showing them the impossibility of
equality within the system—thus emboldening and strengthening groups like RAM. Sweezy argued that when the activists of the Southern movement ultimately defeated Jim Crow, they would see the lesson already learned by Black freedom fighters in the urban North: that integration within capitalism is insufficient.\textsuperscript{256}

Cruse was critical of Sweezy’s embrace of the Revolutionary Action Movement in part out of a belief that they were too international in their outlook—prioritizing their relationship to the global struggle rather than working to articulate a particularly African-American politics that could unite America’s Black population behind a revolutionary platform.\textsuperscript{257} Cruse concluded that in order for the movement to advance, its leading thinkers must first “thoroughly understand the economic, political, and cultural peculiarities of America.” Only then would they be “able to mold and manipulate these American factors within the context of a many-sided movement.”\textsuperscript{258}

Cruse differentiated between nationalisms that envisioned a future for Black people within the United States and those that did not. Seeing no hope for Blacks within the U.S., Cruse argued that, ‘African Nationalists’ had no interest in building up a Black-American social-cultural apparatus, or engaging in long-term questions of political economy. Conversely, Revolutionary Nationalists planning for a future in America were obligated to take seriously questions of culture, economics, and politics.\textsuperscript{259} In this light, it

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\textsuperscript{256} Aware of the condescension implicit in a white, Harvard-educated, banker’s son professing that King’s movement was at a theoretically primitive stage, Sweezy preferred—as he admitted in a letter to a friend— “to quote the more radical Negro theorists without too explicitly defining MR’s own position at this stage.” (Paul Sweezy to Andre Gunder Frank, June 2, 1964, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Box 5, Houghton Library)
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\textsuperscript{257} Cruse writes that while Sweezy was right to praise RAM’s grasp of the international situation, the party was “very weak on the American situation.” (Cruse, untitled, 271)
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\textsuperscript{258} Ibid, 269
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\textsuperscript{259} Cruse, TAM, box 6, “Subject: The Afro-American Youth Cultural Conference, April 1965,” by Harold Cruse
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seems that Cruse’s differences with Sweezy on the issue of Black Nationalism may have been smaller than Cruse himself believed them to be. The main divisions were not over Black Nationalism \emph{per se}, but over whether the new (post-1963) Black Nationalism was necessarily \emph{international}, and whether a Black Nationalism that was not exclusively revolutionary could serve as laboratory for the development of a Black Nationalism that was. To Boggs and Sweezy, Cruse’s emphasis on developing a revolutionary national culture within the United States risked the development of the (false) notion that cultural hegemony was a substitute for political and economic power. While this was a vulgarization of Cruse’s position, this critique did presage the rise of figures like Maulana Karenga of the US Organization, who Huey Newton famously dismissed as “porkchop nationalists” whose belief that “culture will automatically bring political freedom” represented a path to political reaction.  

Boggs and Sweezy both pushed back against what they viewed as a de-emphasizing of political economy and of the role of the Black working class in Cruse’s writing, as well as what they perceived as a lack of political program. Cruse found Boggs’s objections particularly frustrating, asserting that—in spite of his protestations to the contrary—Boggs had failed to move beyond basic Marxian categories. Continuing to believe in the existence of a universal class capable of leading the transition from capitalism to socialism, Boggs had simply replaced the industrial proletariat with the \emph{Black} industrial proletariat. Cruse submitted that in breaking with doctrinaire Marxism, Boggs had convinced himself that he was “freed from every aspect of leftwing Socialist

\footnote{260 Huey P. Newton’s Interview with The Movement (1968)
indoctrination that ran counter to Negro social reality,” when in fact, he remained prisoner to vulgar Marxist categories.\(^{261}\) Cruse argued that while the Black movement was the only potentially revolutionary movement in the United States, it was not revolutionary yet, and would not be so until after a period of Black control of Black economic, cultural, and political life. “It is significant,” wrote Cruse, “that Boggses essay is called *The American Revolution* but not the Negro Revolution in America.”\(^{262}\)

Ultimately while the chief unit of Cruse’s was Black America, the chief unit of Boggs’s analysis was America itself—the most advanced capitalist state in the world and for this reason the key to global socialist revolution. While Cruse’s anti-capitalism was in some sense ancillary to his commitment to Black Liberation, for Boggs, the two were inextricable. Cruse argued that in looking to Black Americans for radical agency both as part of a global freedom movement, and as the most radical sector of the American labor force, Boggs had led himself into a sort of paralysis, wherein he “has two very considerable ‘revolutionary forces’…and does not know what to do with them, or how to deploy them.”\(^{263}\) As per usual, Cruse attacked Boggs with the charge of black-and-white integrationism, a charge that fell flat given Boggs’s own writing—both public and private—in 1963-4, a period in which Boggs was quite skeptical about the prospects for an integrated movement.\(^{264}\)

\(^{261}\) Cruse, untitled polemic, 362
\(^{262}\) Ibid, 356
\(^{263}\) Ibid, 366
\(^{264}\) On Cruse’s criticisms of Boggs as unfair/ unrepresentative see Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* 242, fn38. In Conrad Lynn’s autobiography, he quotes a letter from Boggs in which Boggs writes of the FNP that if “white radicals are saying that they must be in the party in order for it to be a party, then I am against the damn party.” (185) To George Breitman, both Boggs and Cruse had erred in reifying current racial division as permanent and static. In a letter sent while the FNP platform was being developed, Breitman praises Boggs and Cruse for “their aspiration to provide an ideology for revolutionary Negro nationalism of a non-religious type,” but suggested that their analysis failed in “assuming the indefinite perpetuation of the existing conditions of the
To Boggs, the key differences between the Black movement in the United States and revolutionary movements in the Third World were geographical and technological. Unlike the peasants who toiled in the Chinese and Vietnamese countryside, the super-exploited of the United States occupied America’s urban centers. While the underdeveloped economies of the Third World had required brutal transitions from agricultural to industrial production in order to build up sufficient capital, the affluence of the United States meant that rather than training in technology or heavy machinery, the urban Black population had to “prepare itself for the socially necessary activities of political and community organization, social services, education, and other forms of establishing human relations between man and man.” Viewed through this lens, Johnson’s War on Poverty—including training for jobs which would soon be wiped away by the “cybercultural revolution”—seemed to Boggs designed to keep “the poor out of the political arena”: a desperate attempt at forestalling the radicalization of the urban Black underclass. In this, Boggs followed W.E.B. Du Bois’s position that the semi-colonial status of Black Americans had left them in a state of political underdevelopment.

In an article published in 1964, Boggs had written that while he “believed in democracy,” he did not believe “in being too damn democratic.” Boggs’s experience with the FNP campaign deepened this already jaundiced view of democracy. Writing to Sweezy shortly after the Party’s collapse, Boggs declared that contra the stated goals of the FNP, “the struggle is not for more Democracy in the world but for the recognition

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265 The City is the Black Man’s Land,” 38-9
266 Ibid, 39
267 James Boggs, “The Black Revolt,” 504-510
that Democracy…is the last-ditch cry of capitalism to save itself.” 268 Increasingly, Boggs came to believe that this power must develop “into a new political form which is not democracy or not achievable as long as we maintain democratic illusions.” 269 In working to adapt the focoism that had won the Cuban Revolution to America’s urban geography, Boggs came to envision Black-controlled cities as “beachheads,” where “black revolutionary governments would be in the most strategic position to contend with and eventually defeat [the] national power structure.” 270 Focusing on the cities of the North and West led the Boggses toward a politics whose global scope demanded local action. Approaching politics through this global-local matrix would be key to the political praxis of organizations like the Dodge Revolutionary Movement, which demanded Black control of mostly Black assembly lines through a critique of international finance-power and imperialism.

During the latter half of the 1960s, the Boggses continued to emphasize political power, while Cruse moved further away from the internationalism of his earlier writing and increased his focus on the need to nationalize the cultural apparatus. “Without cultural revolution,” Cruse wrote in Rebellion or Revolution (1968)—the collection of essays which followed Crisis—the Negro movement has no point of departure from which to compel the necessary social impact to effect structural changes with the social system.” 271 For Cruse, any revolution which was not “cultural in content”—that is, one which did not emphasize the need to revolutionize the “cultural apparatus”—would be no

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269 ibid
270 “The City is the Black Man’s Land,” (43)
271 Harold Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution, 156
revolution at all, and would be merely a rebellion: an explosion of anger and frustration without the potential to transform society. Boggs never accepted the elevation of culture as the *sine qua non* of the Black American Revolution, writing that “Mao Tse-Tung, cultured as he was, did not sit around and talk about the virtues of being yellow…Because he [knew] that all the culture in China could not stand up against Western civilization.”

At root, many of these disagreements could be reduced to arguments over the application of a Marxian (or perhaps more accurately Hegelian) view of the unfolding of history. Nearly all of the participants believed that a properly dialectical understanding of the history of Black Liberation in America would allow them to identify the surest source of radical, emancipatory subjectivity. After the Party’s collapse, Boggs viewed the FNP as a crucial stage in the dialectic of Black Liberation, writing in 1966 that the FNP had “contributed to establishing the idea of independent black political power inside the northern freedom movement.” In his contention that the failure of the FNP was a necessary step in the radicalization of the Black Freedom Movement, Sweezy had argued much the same.

Though distancing himself from the Marxism of his youth, Cruse maintained “the one thing Marx left behind that is contemporaneously valid is the method of dialectical

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272 Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution*, 159
thinking.” Cruse believed that by focusing on Black labor power, Boggs had failed to achieve “a fundamental grasp of the dialectic of American social developments.” Had he done so, suggested Cruse, Boggs would have recognized that the politics of labor must be subordinated to the broader politics of “Negro Community-Ethnic consciousness in economics, culture, organization, and administration.” In his 1964 essay “Marxism and the Negro,” Cruse asked why it was that socialists like Boggs “assumed that everything in society is subject to the process of change except the historical role of the working class in advanced capitalist nations?” To Cruse, a proper view of history demanded that revolutionaries follow “the paths of social consciousness that clearly reveal future possibilities, rather than the dead ends of the past.” It is difficult to read this and not come away with the idea that Cruse is willfully misreading Boggs (and Sweezy), both of whom would have agreed that the Black working class of the United States was not at the vanguard of world revolution, merely that they were the only vessel through which revolution might come to American shores.

275 Cruse, untitled polemic, 373
276 Ibid, 373
277 Cruse, Marxism and the Negro, 148
278 Ibid, 155
279 At various points, Cruse was accused (convincingly) of developing political critiques out of personal vendettas. In a particularly vicious review of The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Julian Mayfield wrote that a sufficient critique of Cruse’s book would have to be nearly as long as its subject “for on almost every page and in almost every footnote there are distortions, malevolent misinterpretations and—it must be said—outright lies.” Mayfield writes that “except for his chapter, ‘Capitalism Revisited,’ Mr. Cruse is not concerned with constructive effort. He is clearly out to settle scores with those who, it seems to him, have made it up the ladder apparently at his expense.” For more specific examples, including a particularly amusing take on Cruse’s critique of Lorraine Hansberry, and an occasion wherein Cruse threatened to “go back to the states and write the worst things I can think of about you and your damned revolution,” to some Cubans who delayed in serving him dinner, see Julian Mayfield, “Crisis or Crusade: A Review of Harold Cruse’s Crisis of the Negro Intellectual,” Box 21, Folder 11, Julian Mayfield Papers, Sc MG 339, Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library. The only figure associated with the Freedom Now Party who Cruse believed had achieved a correct understanding of the dialectic of American history, was the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. Named the ‘Man of the Year’ by The Liberator in 1963, Cleage was a relative latecomer to the FNP, but quickly came to dominate the Party apparatus in Michigan. (The Man of the Year announcement was in Liberator, Vol. 111, No. 12, December 1963.) Leader of Detroit’s Shrine of the Black Madonna Church, Cleage’s politics were driven by his convictions.
Often, the essential figure in debates over the dialectic of Black Liberation and the future of the northern Black Freedom Movement—and perhaps the only figure who would have been capable of bridging the divides with the Freedom Now Party was Malcolm X.\(^{280}\) Murdered just after the Party’s collapse—Cruse made note of Malcolm’s death between the writing of pages 261 and 262 of his polemic—Malcolm was likely the only contemporary from which all those associated with the FNP drew inspiration.\(^{281}\) In an obituary for the *Ghanian Times*, the actor, writer, and activist Julian Mayfield memorialized Malcolm as “the only leader of national stature who understood and believed in every fiber of his body that the black man in the United States had no real future within the framework of U.S. capitalism, and that the black race would be signing its death warrant if it threw in its lot with the world’s most formidable imperialist

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\(^{280}\) In Grace Lee Boggs’s autobiography, she mentions that she asked Malcolm X to be a senate candidate for the FNP ticket in 1964. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change*, 134

\(^{281}\) Cruse, untitled polemic, 262. Cruse and Boggs had taken Malcolm X seriously well before his break with the Nation of Islam. Boggs’s “Liberalism, Marxism, and Black Political Power,” (1962) praised Black Muslims for “doing something no other Negro organization has attempted: rehabilitating Negroes spiritually and morally to the point where they feel that they are men in every sense of the word,” (James Boggs, “Liberalism, Marxism, and Black Political Power,” 158) and when Cruse submitted his draft of “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” to *Studies on the Left*, he asked the editors to send a copy to “Minister Malcolm X.” (Wisconsin Historical Society, *Studies on the Left*, Box 2, Cruse, Harold W., 1961-1963, letter of April 11, 1962.)
Killed during a period of personal political transformation, Cruse, Boggs, et al looked to Malcolm less for where he had been then for where (they believed) he was headed at the time of his death. Debates over interracial coalitions, nationalism and internationalism, socialism, and the degree to which economics or culture should be prioritized were often reduced to claims of what Malcolm would have said. “When Malcom X was assassinated,” Boggs wrote, “every radical in the country and every group in the movement began to seize on some slogan Malcolm had raised or some speech he had made or some facet of his personality in order to identify themselves with him or to establish support for some plank in their platform.”

Lacking a figure like Malcolm X capable of uniting the components of FREEDOM NOW; the Party remained an uneasy coalition of influential thinkers who were ultimately not able to successfully influence one another.

The lack of a unifying figure or platform was key both to the Party’s dissolution, and to a failure to develop a unified perspective on new trends in Black internationalist and Third World politics as the 1960s progressed. In spite of their differing political

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283 James Boggs, “Black Power: A Scientific Concept Whose Time Has Come” in Racism and the Class Struggle: Further Pages from a Black Worker’s Notebook. Angela Dillard notes that “Cleage regarded Malcolm X as a political ally despite their religious and ideological differences,” and shortly after Malcolm’s murder, he and George Breitman held a debate over whether or not Malcolm X was on the way to becoming a socialist. (Dillard, Faith in the City, 274). Later that year (1965), Breitman argued that though Malcolm X had not been a Marxist, he was drawing closer to socialism at the time of his death through his study of “the colonial revolution,” and through “discussion with Castro and Che Guevara and Algerian socialists and socialists in Ghana, Guinea, Zanzibar…[and] the United States.” (George Breitman, Malcolm X and the Third American Revolution: The Writings of George Breman) The following year, James and Grace Lee argued that the joining together of the nascent Black Power movement with the Vietnamese revolutionaries represented “the revolutionary task which Malcolm was undertaking and the reason why he was assassinated,” (James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs, “The City is the Black Man’s Land,” Monthly Review, Vol. 17, No.11, April 1966, pp. 35-46), while Cruse maintained that the most important lesson to be learned from Malcolm’s life was his focus on Harlem as the locus of a potential black revolutionary movement. “Harlem is key,” wrote Cruse, “the way Harlem goes so goes all Black America.” (Cruse, untitled polemic, 373)
commitments, in observing the rise of Black Power, Boggs, Cruse, and Sweezy remained in broad agreement about the need for the African-American movement to develop a revolutionary politics responsive to the history and to the contemporary material reality of the United States. In this is contained a key irony of the Third World Turn: that to its most sophisticated theorists, the study of revolutionary anti-colonialism abroad led to the conclusion that Americans could succeed only by building on their own national history. “The radical wing of the Negro movement in America,” wrote Cruse in the postscript to *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, “sorely needs a social theory based on the living ingredients of Afro-American history. Without such a theory all talk of Black Power is meaningless.” 284 In April-May of that same year, Boggs’s “Black Power: A Scientific Concept Whose Time Has Come,” made a similar claim. Relating the rise of Black Power to the Maoist challenge to Soviet socialism, Boggs argued “the uniqueness of Black Power stems from the specific historical development of the United States.” 285 Yet from this point of consensus, Boggs and Cruse continued to diverge, with Cruse insisting that a real program for cultural self-determination was necessary if Black Power was to be anything more than an abstraction, and Boggs warning against the tendency to “redefine and explain away Black Power as ‘black everything except black political power.’” 286

These two paths—the urban proletarianism of Boggs and the cultural nationalism of Cruse—would continue to define radical Black internationalism through the 1960s and into the 1970s, with the Revolutionary Union Movements representing a ‘Boggssian’ path, those striking for Third World and Black Studies programs a more ‘Crusean’ one, and the

284 Cruse, *Crisis*, 557
286 Boggs, “Black Power,” 177
Black Panther Party’s attempts at achieving a multi-racial, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist coalition as combination of Boggsian and Crusean Black internationalisms. The Freedom Now Party and the Black Panther Party—as well the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party (YLP), and the mostly Chinese-American I or Kuen and Red Guard Party—were similar in their efforts to borrow from anti-colonial radicalism in order to develop their own anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist projects. However, these later Third World groups, born in the last days of the long post-war boom, as escalating violence against anti-colonialism at home and in South-East Asia had laid bare the inadequacies of Great Society liberalism, differed from the FNP in their total hostility to the politics of reform, and increasingly, in their embrace of political violence as a means to secure the future they desired.\footnote{287} Perhaps most crucially, these later Third Worldist formations often failed to apply what Boggs and Cruse knew to be the most important lesson of the Freedom Now Party: the need to develop a radical politics responsive to the unique conditions of the United States.

\footnote{287} Political violence, and its relationship to questions of reform, rebellion, and revolution within the Third World Left, is the subject of a later chapter in this dissertation
Chapter 3: “To Start Over a New History of Man”: The World Black Revolution Comes to the United States

“Any Afro-American revolt would...constitute a unique form of urban guerilla warfare. The match and gasoline would be his most effective weapon. Four hundred years of violent deprivation can be transformed into an indomitable fighting spirit that may burst forth on the American scene with an intensity more fierce than a hundred hydrogen bombs.”

– Robert F. Williams, 1967

In August of 1965—nine months after the Freedom Now Party failed at the ballot box, eleven months after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and five days after the Voting Right Act was signed into law—the residents of Watts rose up. Though not the first major urban rebellion of the 1960s, Watts seemed to many radicals to signal a sea-change in the struggle for Black Freedom. While the precipitating incident was an episode of police brutality, Watts was a response to decades of segregation, exploitation, and violence visited on Los Angeles’s Black community. Juxtaposed against the failure of the FNP, the spontaneous uprising revealed a stark disconnect between a would-be vanguard, and the urban Black population they hoped to mobilize. Though the rebellions in Watts and elsewhere were radical in their challenge to the state’s monopoly on violence, the rebellions were not always positioned as analogous to, or a part of a broader struggle against, imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism.

290 Indicative of the disparity in police tactics in white and black Los Angeles is that, as Max Felker-Kantor notes, in 1965, “the number of reported Part I incidents—homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft—in the predominantly African American 77th Division was 92.7 per 1,000 residents with an arrest rate of 29.9,” while “in the white West Los Angeles Division...the Part I offense rate was 39.0 but the arrest rate was 3.8 per 1,000 residents.” Max Felker-Kantor, Policing Los Angeles; Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018, p. 22). On Watts see also Gerald Horne, Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s (Carter G. Woodson Institute Series) and Jordan T. Camp, Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), pp. 21-42.
This ideological uncertainty notwithstanding, for many leftists, Watts and the wave of urban rebellions that followed demonstrated that the potential for ‘agents and agencies of social change’ existed within the United States. Just as American affluence had produced the raw \textit{objective} material for a revolutionary transformation, the racism and imperialism on which American affluence relied had produced the \textit{subjective} material necessary: the radical anger of Black America.\footnote{This risks the idea that (mostly) white theorists were doing the intellectual work while waiting for the largely anonymous black masses to provide the action. However, Sweezy and Marcuse did not argue that Black and Third World people should follow the theoretical interventions of \textit{One-Dimensional Man} or \textit{Monopoly Capital}. Rather, they maintained that it was through the action of the colonized that new theories might be created. They saw their own intellectual work as a part of a dialectical process by which a certain strain of anti-capitalist critique might survive before being shaped into something new by the Third World vanguard.} Most important, unlike guerilla campaigns in Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam, these urban rebellions represented an organic, domestic manifestation of anti-colonial struggle.\footnote{Both the U.S.S.R. and the P.R.C. released statements in celebration of Watts. (Horne, 270)}

While Western Marxist academics like Baran, Sweezy, and Marcuse, had come to share the view of Black intellectuals like Cruse and Boggs that linking the Black Freedom struggle in the United States to the global struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism was essential to the destruction of American capitalism, prior to the urban rebellions of the mid-1960s, this position had been largely theoretical. Like the July Days in Petrograd a half-century before, spontaneous urban uprisings seemed to represent both a fulfillment of the prognostications of radical Leftists, and—at least temporarily—to serve as an implicit repudiation of those who had imagined themselves to be the leaders of the next American revolution, as well as those who sought reform within existing structures of governance. A generation of leaders who had come of age between the 1930s and 1950s now stood by and watched as events overtook them. Reflecting on the
transformative power of the urban rebellions in her autobiography, Angela Davis wrote that “Out of the ashes of Watts, Phoenix-like, a new Black militancy was being born.”

Increasingly, American leftists inspired by the revolutionary movements of the Third World came to conclude that, as violence was fundamental to the functioning of both colonialism and capitalism, it was only through violence that colonialism and capitalism could be destroyed. Rejection of the status quo is not sufficient to create change, and revolution does not inevitably flow from rebellion. Thus, the task confronting Third World leftists within the United States was to mold anger and alienation into revolutionary consciousness, while working to marshal this new consciousness into a vanguard force capable of striking against monopoly capitalism. Beginning in 1964 with the first wave of urban rebellions in the United States, this chapter traces the entangled histories of Western Marxism and Black Internationalism through the urban uprisings of the 1960s, as activists and intellectuals operating in both traditions came to reject non-violence in favor of militant Black and Third World resistance as the essential step toward the forging of revolutionary ‘man’ and the transcendence of monopoly capitalism.

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293 Davis, *Autobiography*, 144

On April 18 1955, President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia addressed delegates representing twenty-nine Asian and African nations in the city of Bandung. Declaring that “The passive peoples have gone, the outward tranquility has made place for struggle and activity. Irresistible forces have swept the two continents,” Sukarno warned the delegates not to be pacified by formal independence, but to continue to reject colonialism in both its traditional and modern forms, which included: “economic control, intellectual control [and] actual physical control by a small but alien community within a nation.”

Mobilizing the political strength of 1.4 billion citizens of Asia and Africa—including those still under colonial rule—the Bandung Conference declared in favor of peaceful cultural and economic cooperation, along with respect for national sovereignty, racial equality, and human rights. Though the direct impact of the Afro-Asian Conference is contested, during the decade that followed, thirty-two African nations claimed their independence from European nations.

Bandung’s commitment to non-violent neutrality notwithstanding, the UK, France, and in particular the United States, understood any efforts on the part of non-aligned nations to chart independent paths to modernity as a direct threat to their political

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and economic power. While the nations gathered at Bandung had not explicitly taken a side in the Cold War, the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference—which met in Cairo in the wake of the Suez Crisis of 1956 and which included representatives from forty-five countries—stood more firmly in opposition to the powers of the First World, and in March of that year, Ghana’s declaration of independence initiated a wave of African de-colonization which included seventeen countries between 1957-1960. Though closely observed by Black Americans who saw African independence as analogous to their own freedom struggle (see Chapter 2), by the early 1960s—the so-called ‘Year of Africa—the impact of African decolonization on the American Left was overshadowed by events in Cuba.

To those sympathetic to Third World revolution, Cuba (and later Vietnam), made clear there were limits to the sorts of self-determination acceptable to the United States and its allies. More importantly, Cuba showed that there were limits to America’s ability to impose its will on the nations of the developing world. Shortly after Castro’s 26th of July Movement overthrew Fulgencio Batista and established a non-Communist revolutionary state ninety miles from American soil, the Eisenhower Administration began efforts to undermine and ultimately overthrow the new Cuban government; efforts which continued under the Kennedy Administration. Following the farcical Bay of Pigs

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Invasion, Cuba’s humiliation of the United States strengthened the revolution both internally and internationally, and by December of 1961, Castro was proudly identifying himself as a ‘Marxist-Leninist.’

Of particular importance to the nascent Third World Left were Castro’s expressions of solidarity with Black Americans. Travelling to New York to address the United Nations in 1960, Castro and his retinue declined to stay at the Shelburne Hotel in midtown Manhattan, choosing instead to accept an invitation from Malcolm X to stay at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, where Castro was visited by (among others) Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, and India’s Jawaharlal Nehru.301 Though Black revolutionaries seeking sanctuary in Cuba were often disappointed by the reality of race relations on the island, the relationship between Cuban and African-American radicals served a useful propaganda purpose insofar as it allowed both parties to point out the hypocrisy of an American government which demonized the Cuban revolution in the name of a freedom which it denied to its own Black citizens.302 As Besenia Rodriguez has written, Castro’s warm reception in Harlem illustrated that Black ‘Nationalists’ in the United States saw themselves as part of an international coalition bound together by an anti-colonial politics which transcended racial identification(s).303

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If there was a single thinker whose writing on the rising ‘anti-colonial international’ structured debates among Third World Leftists during the 1960s—particularly those surrounding the utility of violence—it was the revolutionary theorist Frantz Fanon. Though he did not live long enough to see his ideas debated by the New Left, Fanon’s ‘decolonized dialectics’ applied a Hegelian-Freudian lens to the psychology of colonialism and liberation, and it was often through this Fanonian lens that those on the left—both in the U.S. and within the Third World—sought to understand the rise of anti-colonial militancy.304

Born in Martinique and trained as a psychiatrist, Fanon studied in Lyon, where he developed an interest in the psychological impacts of colonial domination.305 Radicalized during the first years of the Algerian Revolution after treating both French torturers and their victims, Fanon dedicated the rest of his brief life to anti-colonial struggle.306 Racing against the leukemia which would soon kill him, Fanon dictated much of his Les damnés de la terre (1961) from a hospital bed in Bethesda, Maryland. Translated into English as The Wretched of the Earth in 1963, Fanon’s final work rejected a doctrinaire Marxist analysis which asserted that the primary division in the world was between those with capital and those without. Fanon argued that “it is not the factories, the estates, or the bank account which primarily characterize the ‘ruling class,’ but rather their colonial

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305 Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008 c.1952)
domination of the nations of the Third World.\textsuperscript{307} Corollary to this was that contra Marx, it was not the workers of the industrial nations—complicit as they were in the West’s colonial plunder—who were the key to revolutionary transformations. Rather it was the people of the Third World, in particular the peasantry, who held the potential to overcome colonialism, imperialism, and racial capitalism.

In underscoring the division between the colonizer and the colonized, Fanon was not dismissive of anti-capitalism. Indeed, he maintained that material relations—both between metropole and periphery and within peripheral nations—were what structured colonialism. After a primary extractive phase, wrote Fanon, “the colonies have become a market” serving “metropolitan financiers and industrialists” whose interests would be best served by the defense of “economic agreements.”\textsuperscript{308} Rather than “the devastation of the colonial population,” the military’s role is to maintain order, policing the population to ensure that those who step out of the established channels of negotiation, compromise, and reform are punished.

Though emphasizing consumption within the colony rather than the siphoning off of the colony’s surplus by imperial powers, Fanon’s conclusions held much in common with those reached by Baran and Sweezy in \textit{Monopoly Capital}. In particular they agreed that while the revolutionary impulse necessarily begins within the colonized nations, the revolution’s success requires an eventual alliance with the workers of the developed nations. “The European masses,” writes Fanon, “would do well to confess that they have often rallied behind the position of our common masters on colonial issues,” they must

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\textsuperscript{307} Frantz Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004 c.1963), 5
\textsuperscript{308} Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, 26-27
\end{flushleft}
“decide to wake up, put on their thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of Sleeping Beauty.”  

Fanon’s text is replete with passages like the following, which do not flinch in their defense of revolutionary violence. “At the individual level,” Fanon writes, “violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence.”  

Yet, lines like this cannot be reduced to an uncritical fetishizing of violence. For Fanon, violence for its own sake is not revolutionary, nor is violence which, though motivated by justified anger, lacks a clear purpose. “Racism, hatred, resentment, and ‘the legitimate desire for revenge’ alone,” he writes, “cannot nurture a war of liberation.” While violence is insufficient, it is only through violence that the colonized could wake up to their colonial position, and ultimately to their power and to their historical role. “After years of unreality,” Fanon writes, “after wallowing in the most extraordinary phantasms, the colonized subject, machine gun at the ready…discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation.”  

Though colonial occupation was structured by violence, Fanon’s colonizers recognize that violence can disrupt profit, and would therefore prefer not to employ force so visibly. Rather, “the enemy endeavors to win over certain segments of the population…and the police force are instructed to modify their behavior…even [going]  

309 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 62  
310 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 51  
311 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 89  
312 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 21. The philosopher Stefan Bird-Pollan writes that “the important theoretical move in Fanon’s analysis is the claim that the subject is essentially the capacity to choose,” and “violence” is a form of “self-authorization” on the part of a colonial subject: an assertion of the potential to become free. Bird-Pollan, Hegel, Freud and Fanon; 163, 165
so far as to introduce the terms ‘Sir’ or ‘Ma’am.’ To Fanon, even small concessions risk sapping the revolution of its strength and, mollified by the shift to more subtle means of control, a colonial people might come to see reforms as something which the authorities have gifted to them, rather than something which they have won. Without the jarring reminder of the violence upon which the system rests, the colonized might sublimate their fear, their anger, and their disappointment into behaviors which reinforced their colonial condition, becoming willing—if unwitting—participants in the system which exploits them. Just as violence sustains the revolution and the revolutionary, so does the state’s response. “Far from breaking the momentum,” writes Fanon, “repression intensifies the progress made by the national consciousness…it is reinforced by the bloodbath in the colonies which signifies that between oppressors and oppressed, force is the only solution.”

While Fanon’s emphasis on violence did not represent the sort of bloodthirstiness imagined by his less careful readers, it was no mere theoretical exercise. In linking the psychology of violence to the actual practice of anti-colonial war, Fanon worked toward a generalized strategy for anti-colonial revolution, in which the peasantry and the lumpenproletariat—rather than the industrial working class—encircled the towns within colonized territories, and ultimately the global countryside encircled the imperial metropole. Efforts at following this element of Fanon’s thinking by bringing guerilla war to the United States—often through the substitution of the urban guerilla concept for the peasant armies of the Third World—came to characterize much of the rhetoric and

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313 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 89
314 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 92
315 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 32
strategy of the most vocal representatives of Third World Leftism in the United during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Fanon’s call for a global force of peasants to wage war against the power of the West was a far cry from the more legalistic non-alignment and anti-interventionism of the “Declaration on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation” issued at Bandung in 1955. In rejecting the idea of neutrality or non-alignment as almost ontological impossibilities, *The Wretched of the Earth* presaged the more militant anti-colonial politics of the mid-1960s and beyond. This was *not*, as might be supposed, because Fanon was guilty of the same Manicheanism which he criticized in the defenders of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Though Fanon recognized the world as divided between the colonizers and the colonized, he saw siding with the oppressed as a means of destroying both the colonizer *and* the colonized. As with Marx’s proletariat, the role of the Third World revolutionary was not to dominate their former colonial masters, but to transcend the logic of colonial domination.

Nowhere was this struggle against colonial domination more vital to the political hopes of the Third World Left than in Vietnam. On March 2, 1965—after being authorized by Congress to “take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty”—Lyndon Johnson began a sustained bombing campaign in North Vietnam. Though the

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United States had had a presence in Vietnam for decades, Operation Rolling Thunder signaled a massive ramping up of hostilities, including the beginning of ground war. By the end of 1967, almost 500,000 Americans were serving in Southeast Asia in what was both a counter-revolution against an anti-colonial insurgency, and a proxy war between the United States and its allies on one side and the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China on the other.  

Even before Johnson’s escalation, the issue of Vietnam had held a particular salience for radicals within the U.S. On July 4, 1964, members of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) issued a statement of “Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers,” in which they declared their solidarity with the Vietnamese against the shared enemy of U.S. imperialism. In 1964, speaking at the “International Conference for Solidarity with the People of Vietnam Against U.S. Imperialist Aggression for the Defense of Peace,” held in Hanoi, Robert F. Williams greeted his audience “in the name of Afroamerican freedom fighters who are waging a determined liberation against mainland American colonialism,” and thanked the Vietnamese for inspiring Black Americans by “the great successes scored by the Vietnamese people in their armed struggle of self-defense and liberation.” To Williams and like-minded radicals, Vietnam represented an important test case for Third Worldists in a way that even Cuba had not: as the first national liberation movement to fight directly against the United

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319 RAM, “Greetings to Our Militant Vietnamese Brothers,” Black America (Fall, 1964), p. 21
320 Robert F. Williams, The Crusader, Vol. 6, No. 3 (March 1965)
States, victory for the NLF would prove the ultimate vulnerability of the forces of reaction.

The war in Vietnam was a major propellant of the mostly white, student New Left as well. On May 2, 1964, the youth affiliate of the Progressive Labor Movement—which grew out of a split with the American Communist Party (CPUSA) in 1961 over the CP’s ‘revisionist line’—announced the formation of the May 2nd Movement (M2M). The M2M led the first significant student-protests against the War, and announced their support for the “damned of the earth” who “are struggling for justice and salvation whatever they choose to call themselves.”\(^{321}\) Though opposed to American militarism, and though embracing what they referred to as an “anti-anti-communist” point of view, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—the most influential formation of the student New Left—lagged behind PL in embracing opposition to Vietnam as a cause. Indeed, as late as the Fall of 1963, SDS had difficulty putting together a group of students to protest America’s involvement in Southeast Asia.\(^{322}\) This changed following Johnson’s escalation in February of 1965. Escalation under an administration of ‘good liberals’ disillusioned SDS activists about the possibilities of reform, and of working in coalition with liberals, and the complicity of universities in the war effort—both in housing ROTC programs and in developing the tools of chemical warfare.\(^{323}\)

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Progressive Labor later organized the first student delegation to post-revolutionary Cuba. On the history of Progressive Labor see John F. Levin and Earl Silbar (eds.) *You Say You Want a Revolution: SDS, PL, and Adventures in Building a Worker-Student Alliance* (San Francisco: 1741 Press, 2019)


\(^{323}\) The recognition of a growing political gap between liberals and even non-socialist (let alone communist) leftists had begun with the Cuban Missile Crisis, when it became clear that the liberals of the Kennedy administration were happy to risk the destruction of humanity in their efforts to keep the Soviet Union in check. Sale, 55
Though eclipsed by the War in Vietnam as a galvanizing issue for the U.S. Left, Cuba continued to play a major role both in the political imaginations of American radicals, and in the coordination and funding of anti-colonial revolution within the nations of the Third World. In January of 1966 Havana was host to 512 delegates representing eighty-two nations from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Out of this first ‘Tricontinental Conference’ the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL) was formed. An extension of the movement which had begun in Bandung, the Tricontinental marked what the scholar Anne Garland Mahler has described as the “shift from Bandung-era solidarity based around postcolonial nation-states and a former experience of European colonialism to a more fluid notion of power and resistance.” Indicative of this new mode of assertive anti-colonial militancy was Che Guevara’s famous “Message to the Tricontinental,” in which Guevara imagined a “bright future” ushered in by “two, three or many Vietnams.”

Guevara’s belief that global anti-colonial war could be fomented through the work of small bands of committed revolutionaries (focos) was premised on his own experiences in Cuba between 1956-1959, and was synthesized and popularized in both his Guerilla Warfare (1961) and in the French revolutionary Regis Debray’s Revolution

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325 On the tricontinental, see Garland Mahler, From the Tricontinental to the Global South
326 Mahler, From the Tricontinental to the Global South
327 https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1967/04/16.htm, accessed 12/27/2018. The message was Che’s last communique before his capture and execution while working to foment guerilla war Bolivia.
Despite Guevara’s own failure to replicate the tactics which had won him such success in Cuba, elements of *foco* theory—adapted to the urban geography of American cities—influenced the tactics of a number of Third World organizations in the U.S. and around the world, as did Guevara’s emphasis on the forging of the revolutionary ‘new man’ through the process of guerilla war.329

A key difference between Bandung and the Tricontinental was that the latter welcomed organizations which were seen as illegitimate by their own governments. Legitimacy was conferred not by the international community which included First and Second World nations, but rather by a commitment to a politics of, and an identification with, militant anti-colonialism: a commitment exemplified by Che Guevara’s martyrdom in Bolivia. This was particularly important in the mid-1960s, as a number of left and left-leaning post-colonial governments had fallen victim to coups orchestrated by forces to their Right.330 For this reason, Black and Third World radicals within the United States were understood to be a part of the Tricontinental in a way that they could never quite have been a part of the Bandung world. Consonant with this shift was an increasing


329 Frederic Jameson writes that for Guevara and Debray, guerillas are “something entirely new, for which the prerevolutionary class society has no categories: new revolutionary subjects, forged in the guerilla struggle indifferently out of the social material of peasants, city workers, or intellectuals, yet now largely transcending those class categories.” Frederic Jameson, “Periodizing the 60s,” *Social Text*, no. 9/10 (1984): 178-209, 202.

330 Examples include: Brazil (1964), Algeria (1965), Indonesia (1966), Ghana (1966)
alignment—in rhetoric and propaganda if not always in actual material or diplomatic ties—with the People’s Republic of China rather than with the Soviet Union.

During the late 1950s, the Soviet Union had shied away from open support of anti-colonial revolutions in favor of ‘peaceful coexistence,’ presenting the Chinese with an opportunity to position themselves as the leaders of the global Third World. This opportunity widened following the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the unwillingness of the USSR to go to war over Cuba was seen by many militant anti-colonialists as a betrayal.\(^{331}\)

Following the rise of Leonid Brezhnev in 1964, the Soviet Union refocused efforts on Third World leadership, a process which was aided considerably by the chaotic inward turn of the Cultural Revolution in China. However, while the Soviet Union provided significantly more aid to Third World countries during this period, Maoism, largely untethered from the immediate concerns of realpolitik, became an increasingly influential ideological force—particularly in the West.\(^{332}\)

In May of 1966, elements of the Chinese Communist Party loyal to Mao Zedong had announced a ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.’ Urging a renewed proletarian struggle against “counter-revolutionary revisionists,” Mao exhorted the masses to “criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature and art, and publishing, and seize the leadership in these

\[^{331}\] Friedman, 114
\[^{332}\] Friedman, 200-205. Further damaging the Soviet position relative to that of the PRC was a hesitancy on the part of Soviet leaders to risk escalating the 1967 Arab-Israeli War: a conflict which they had played a significant role in provoking through a series of diplomatic missteps. While the Soviets pushed for an armistice, both Cuba and China encouraged the Arab states to press on, with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai asking Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq to “continue the war at any cost.” (Friedman, 187-188, Zhou Enlai quoted in Friedman, 188) Following the 1967 conflict, solidarity with Palestinian Liberation—and opposition to Israel as both a colonizer and a client state of American imperialism—became a touchstone for Third World activists in the United States, while serving to deepen the divisions between the Black Power and Civil Rights movements. (Michael R. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018)}
cultural spheres.” Disseminated through *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-tung*—more commonly referred to as *The Little Red Book*—Mao’s statements on the need for constant ideological struggle, the threat of revisionism, the dangers of bureaucracy, the revolutionary role of the youth, the need to put politics in command, and the necessity of conflict, self-criticism, and violence, soon became ubiquitous in the rhetoric of the Third World Left.

Like Castro, Mao saw opportunity in America’s treatment of its Black citizens, and when offering vocal support for the waging of ‘people’s war’ against Western imperialism, he made sure to include the struggle of Black Americans against the United States. In the mid-60s, as urban rebellion swept across America’s cities, observers and participants in the uprisings came to see themselves as part of a global anti-imperialist front that appeared to be both increasingly organized and increasingly militant.

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335 Though released somewhat after the period in question, Mao’s “People of the World, Unite and Defeat the U.S. Aggressors and all their Running Dogs” (May 23, 1970), is indicative of the anti-U.S. pro-liberation rhetoric adopted by China during and after the Cultural Revolution.

Representative of the new generation of Black militants inspired to direct action by the urban rebellions of the early-mid 1960s was Max Stanford of the Revolutionary Action Movement, who saw in Watts “the single spark that starts the prairie fire.” Sanford maintained that the rebellions would soon give way to “urban guerilla warfare,” characterized by “sporadic rioting” by day and “all-out warfare, organized fighting and unlimited terror against the oppressor and his forces” by night. In working to incorporate the events of Watts into his larger schema of monopoly capitalism, Paul Sweezy came to share much of Stanford’s analysis, suggesting that if the Civil Rights Movement was analogous to Bandung, then Watts represented the opening of the “decolonization phase of the struggle.” Sweezy further praised Stanford’s “profound understanding” of “the crucial role of struggle…as a form of education and a method of raising the political consciousness and the militancy of the oppressed.” Though agreeing with Stanford that revolutionary consciousness would be forged in the fires of urban rebellion, Sweezy was less sanguine about the near-term prospects of the uprisings, warning that “an oppressed population which is increasingly concentrated in a multitude of widely dispersed ghettos cannot set itself the goal of nationhood in the straightforward sense that, for example, the Vietnamese people have been fighting


337 Ahmad, “The World Black Revolution,” 17

for.” Though recognizing that demography was a check on the ability of Black Americans to wage war against the U.S. from within, Sweezy agreed with the leaders of the Revolutionary Action Movement that “to wish for a world revolution which does not put colored against white and which makes no appeals to the past history and revolutionary solidarity of the colored peoples is exactly the same thing as wishing for no revolution at all.”

Along with his co-editor Leo Huberman, Sweezy believed that the state repression which met the uprisings would awaken Black Americans to their condition as colonized subjects. “Anyone who examines with care the reports of what happened in Los Angeles,” Sweezy and Huberman wrote, “can hardly help being struck by the extent to which the struggle there resembles the struggle of the native against colonialism…”

Given this colonial status, Sweezy saw the violence of the ‘rioters’ as anything but “senseless and irrational.” Confronted with the brutality of the police and the national guard—who employed lethal force in defense of “the existing system of property with its corollary social relations”—violence on the part of the rioters was nothing less than a declaration of their fundamental humanity and thus of their right to self-determination. “There are strong indications,” concluded Sweezy, “that the explosion in Los Angeles has had…a humanizing and liberating effect on the ghetto dwellers of the city.” In their emphasis on the potentially transformative effect of the Watts rebellion, and on the residents of Watts as colonial subjects, Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman were drawing

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339 Sweezy and Huberman, “Decolonization at Home,” 10
340 Sweezy and Huberman, “The Colonial War at Home,” 9. The African-American population hovered between 10.5 and 11% during the 1960s, and the total non-Hispanic white population staying above 80% through the late 1970s, thus, even a united front of Third World peoples within the U.S. would have required the eventual support of a significant proportion of the white population.
341 Sweezy and Huberman, “Decolonization at Home,” 2
342 Sweezy and Huberman, “Decolonization at Home,” 6
explicitly on the recently translated work of Fanon. “Could there be a more striking confirmation,” Sweezy asked after Watts “of Frantz Fanon’s dictum that ‘colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence.’”

More than that of any other American organization of the mid-1960s, the Revolutionary Action Movement evinced both a belief in the efficacy of urban guerillism and a more theoretical critique of black reform and white Marxism developed through a reading of Black history. Similar to Herbert Marcuse’s claim that ideas which risk “transcending the established universe of discourse” within one-dimensional society “are redefined by the rationality of the given system,” RAM’s leadership rejected the very concept of democracy as insuperably poisoned by the oppressive systems of caste and class on which its American variant relied. The transcendence of American democracy would, argued Max Stanford, require the creation of a “Revolutionary Black International”: a force capable of “uniting Africa, Asia, South and Afro-America in world people’s war against U.S. Imperialism.”

If Baran and Sweezy’s Monopoly Capital was an attempt at applying Hegelian-Marxist methodology in order to update Capital for the mid-twentieth century, RAM’s 1966 manifesto, “The World Black Revolution,” can be seen—as historian Bill Mullen has written—as “literally a reimagining of the tenets of Marxist thought dating back to the 1848 publication of the Communist Manifesto.” Like the Manifesto, “World Black Revolution,” declared the existence of a new revolutionary class, one “haunting” the

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343 Sweezy and Huberman, “Decolonization at Home,” 7
“ruling circles of U.S. imperialism and its lackeys,” and one with “nothing to lose but the chains that are both around their bodies and minds.”346 Also like the Manifesto, “World Black Revolution” was written in a moment of great optimism, buoyed by what appeared to be the first salvos in the war against reaction, and lacked a clear path to taking political power. While Stanford was, of course overly confident in his estimations of both the strength and revolutionary élan of Black America, the rebellions in the summers of 1964 and 1965 did augur a clear shift in patterns of unrest, and between 1963 and 1972 there were at least 750 urban rebellions in over 500 cities.347

Characterized both by genuine insight into the weakness of existing radical paradigms, and by a theoretical and programmatic vagueness and an embrace of guerilla tactics which had no chance of success within the United States, “The World Black Revolution,” presents all of the contradictions of the late ‘60s Third World Turn. The pre-figurative-Third World politics of the Freedom Now Movement had been characterized by an uneasy alliance between proletarianism, black nationalism, and socialist internationalism. These traits were similarly present in the writings of the Revolutionary Action Movement, but with a key distinction: rather than attempting to balance these three in a way which might be appealing to a broad swathe of black voters, RAM asserted an equivalent commitment to the revolutionary nationalism of the young Harold Cruse and the black proletarianism of James Boggs while entirely eschewing ‘bourgeois’ electoral politics in favor of underground organizing in furtherance of the coming guerilla

346 “The World Black Revolution,” 26
struggle.\textsuperscript{348} Added to this was RAM’s embrace of violence as a legitimate tactic, as well as an assertion of ‘Blackness’ as a form of radical self-definition. Essentially translating FNP-politics for a post-Watts America, RAM played a direct role in the birth of both the Black Panther Party and the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, often while connecting these younger activists to an earlier generation of Black internationalists.\textsuperscript{349}

The earliest public statements of Black Panther Party co-founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale—including the famous 10-point program—were less explicitly internationalist than RAM’s “The World Black Revolution.”\textsuperscript{350} By 1967 however, Newton was emphasizing the Party’s connection to Third World revolutionary movements, and his essays were peppered with allusions to Guevara, Fanon, and Mao. Key to this analysis was Newton’s understanding of the urban police department “as a brutal and illegitimate occupying force [and] the immediate barrier to self-determination” for Blacks in the United States.\textsuperscript{351} Drawing parallels between the colonized of the Third World, and those colonized within the United States through the shared experience of police violence, Newton was convinced that it was “Only with the power of the gun,” that

\textsuperscript{348} Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford, Jr.) \textit{We Will Return In The Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975} (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2007), 122. In RAM’s early years, the organization was close to Grace Lee and James Boggs. In her autobiography, Grace Lee writes that “In 1965, a half-dozen members of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) stayed in the basement of our house for a week putting together an issue of \textit{Black America}.” Grace Lee Boggs, \textit{Living for Change}, 134., James Boggs was (according to Stanford) the original ‘ideological chairman’ of RAM, and Grace served as ‘executive secretary.’

\textsuperscript{349} Huey Newton writes dismissively of the West Coast branch of RAM with which BPP-co-founder Bobby Seale was involved—writing while “they claimed to function as an underground movement...instead of revolutionary action, they indulged in a lot of revolutionary talk, none of it underground.” Huey Newton, \textit{Revolutionary Suicide} (New York: Penguin Group, 2009 c.1973), p 72. Involved with a RAM front group on the campus of Merritt College. (Newton, 73; 110-114). Newton contends that he and Seale broke with the West Coast chapter of RAM over their commitment to armed self-defense (Newton, 114). Stanford offers another version of the story, that Seale was “purged from RAM for drunkenness and for stealing the BSU’s funds,” “History of RAM—Revolutionary Action Movement,” \url{https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/1960-1970/ram-history.pdf}, accessed 12/06/2018

\textsuperscript{350} Sean Douglass, \textit{Out of Oakland}, 58-9

\textsuperscript{351} Bloom and Martin, \textit{Black Against Empire}, 67
Black Americans “can…halt the terror and brutality perpetuated against them by the armed racist power structure,” and that “only by the power of the gun can the whole world be transformed into the earthly paradise dreamed of by people from time immemorial.”

Reflecting on the early years of the Black Panther Party in his *Revolutionary Suicide*, Huey Newton writes of the work of Fanon, Mao, and Che Guevara that “we read these men’s work because we saw them as kinsmen; the oppressor who had controlled them was controlling us, both directly and indirectly. However, we did not want merely to import ideas and strategies; we had to transform what we learned into principles and methods acceptable to the brothers on the block.”

Though the Party would later split over the question of guerilla war (see Chapter 4), during the late 60s the BPP remained united around the necessity to adapt the tactics which had secured victory in Cuba, Algeria, and China to the inner-cities of the United States. Indeed, Newton came to believe that an assault against the U.S *from within* was the only way to bring down the war machine. “Black people in America,” wrote Newton, “are the only people who can free the world, loosen the yoke of colonialism, and destroy the war machine…America cannot stand to fight every Black country in the world and fight a civil war at the same time.”

[353] Huey Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 116
The primary goal of organizations like RAM and the early BPP (1966-1968), was to develop cadres of radical black internationalists to serve as a vanguard force within the United States. However, radicalizing Black Americans was a first step in a broader project which required the inclusion of other national communities, as well as some significant number of white Americans. The problem of how to gain committed support of at least some of those who—like white students—not only did not understand their own condition as one of coloniality, but might have directly profited from the continued exploitation of people of color at home and abroad, was a principle concern of the Dialectics of Liberation Conference, held in London between the 15th and the 30th of July in 1967. Organized by the ‘anti-psychiatrists’ David Cooper and R.D. Laing (though Laing eschewed the label), the Dialectics of Liberation featured presentations from a collection of the most significant voices on the American and Western European Left, including: Marcuse, Sweezy, C.L.R. James, the journalist John Gerassi, the beat poet Allen Ginsberg, the anarchist thinker Paul Goodman, and Stokely Carmichael. Also in attendance at the Dialectics, was Angela Davis, who was then on her way from Frankfurt to San Diego to study with Marcuse. Not formerly a participant, Davis spent much of her time in London discussing revolutionary politics with Stokely Carmichael and the West

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355 Two editions of speeches given at the dialectics have been published. David Cooper (ed.) To Free a Generation: The Dialectics of Liberation (New York: Collier Books, 1969) and David Cooper, Stokely Carmichael, R.D. Laing, Herbert Marcuse, and Paul Goodman The Dialectics of Liberation (New York: Verso, 2015). My understanding of the conference is based largely on recordings provided to me by Peter Davis who directed and produced hours of footage from the Dialectics. This collection includes Anatomy of Violence—Dialectics of Liberation and the Demystification of Violence. Film. Directed by Peter Davis. (Vancouver, British Columbia: Villon Films, 1967), as well as recordings of talks given by Herbert Marcuse, Stokely Carmichael, a panel featuring John Gerassi, R.D. Laing, Carmichael, Ginsberg, Cooper, and Emmet Grogan (co-founder of the Diggers); and as later interviews with the psychotherapists Joseph Berke and Leon Redler, and with the director Ian Sinclair.

Indian radical Michael X. As Cooper writes in the introduction to a published collection of Congress presentations, the Congress participants were committed to thinking through “new ways in which intellectuals might act to change the world.” In particular, as posters around London announced, the organizers saw the Congress as “a unique gathering to demystify human violence in all its forms, the social systems from which it emanates and to explore new forms of action.”

In his presentation at the Congress, the anthropologist Jules Henry urged his listeners to consider that while it might seem hopeless to expect a man “to be against the war in Vietnam if [his] pay has gone up because of it,” anti-colonial revolutions “prove that man can create new options where there seemed to be none.” Gerassi urged his listeners to break free of “the liberal’s myth,” that “through the rule of law justice ultimately triumphs,” and to recognize that if moved by the horrors of imperialism abroad and racism at home, the white American middle class must “join our suffering brothers in their struggle,” and must “do so not for material gain,” but “on moral grounds.” In his Speech on “The Future of Capitalism,” Sweezy argued that the very concept of the Third World risks eliding the reality that First and Third World are mutually constitutive: capitalist development requires underdevelopment, and the First World could not have

come into being without the creation of the Third. Bringing Sweezy’s material totality down to the level of the individual consciousness, David Cooper suggested that the task which lay ahead was to move beyond “perceiving the Third World as it is, in itself,” and to “perceive the more obscure reality of the presence of the Third World in us.”

The two most discussed presentations were those given by Stokely Carmichael and Herbert Marcuse, perhaps the most representative, and the most recognizable members of their respective intellectual and activist milieus. Agreeing with Sweezy that “without putting the affluent society in the framework of the Third World it is not understandable,” Marcuse spoke of “the inseparable unity… of productivity and destruction, of satisfaction of needs and repression, of liberty within a system of servitude,” which he saw as the structuring logic of post-war capitalism. Marcuse saw the fundamental problem facing radicals in the mid-1960s as the need to unify two potentially transformative forces which were “disjointed”: the life and death struggle for “quantitative change” being waged within the underdeveloped countries—and in the underdeveloped pockets of urban America—and the various movements for “qualitative change” in the developed countries. Arguing that on some level the controlling interests of monopoly capitalism recognized the mortal threat posed by the potential unification of the quantitative and qualitative, Marcuse concluded that “it is precisely against this truly fatal possibility that the affluent society…is mobilized and organized on all fronts, at home as well as abroad.”

364 Marcuse, “Liberation From the Affluent Society,” 179
365 Marcuse, “Liberation From the Affluent Society,” 179
Though he would have surely rejected the comparison, much of Carmichael’s speech was concordant with Marcuse’s writing on one-dimensionality. Arriving in London as perhaps the most famous—and most notorious—Black radical of his generation, Carmichael railed against normative Western notions of beauty, of progress, and of culture, which he believed had infected the minds of Third World people both in and out of the United States, causing them to deny their own history in pursuit of integration into a society to which they should be hostile. To Carmichael, the progress of the Civil Rights Movement was evidence that Black people could never reach freedom within a world dominated by Western military power, Western money, and Western concepts. “Our history demonstrates,” he told the audience, “that the reward for trying to peacefully coexist has been the physical and psychological murder of our people.” The only path forward was for Black Americans to declare their solidarity with the Third World, and to declare their willingness to meet the violence of colonialism with violence of their own.

A narrative of the Congress has developed which recalls it as a gathering shaken by Stokely Carmichael’s rejection of Eurocentric Marxism in favor of Third World radicalism. In his autobiography, co-written with Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, Carmichael dismisses the Congress as concerned only with the psychology of the (white, European) man; an exercise in masturbatory psychoanalysis which not only failed to engage with the movements of the Third World, but whose speakers seemed not even to

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367 An exception to this trend is an essay by Brian Thill, who pushes against the idea that Marcuse and Carmichael were pursuing irreconcilable visions of liberation. Brian Thill, “Black Power and the New Left: The Dialectics of Liberation, 1967,” *Meditations* Vol. 23, No. 2, (Spring 2008), pp. 118-135
recognize “the existence or relevance of our perspectives, concerns, or analyses.”

He writes of his determination to go “dead up against the entire weight and momentum of the Eurocentric bourgeois intellectual, individualistic direction of the conference.”

Carmichael’s interpretation is echoed in a surprisingly credulous passage by biographer Peniel Joseph, who describes his talk as “an audacious speech, bold enough to criticize sacred principles of historical materialism in a room filled with some of the world’s foremost Marxist theorists.”

Though Carmichael did have at least one contentious exchange with white audience members, Gerassi, Sweezy, Marcuse and others spoke at length about the need to look to the Third World for leadership, and Lucien Goldman, Marcuse, and Sweezy were not the sort of ‘doctrinaire’ Marxists who might take offense to Carmichael’s Third Worldism. The Trotskyist Ernest Mandel might have, but perhaps ironically given the context, he skipped his scheduled presentation to visit revolutionary Cuba. Ultimately, this discrepancy may come down to memory, a self-serving narrative, or the fact that Carmichael spoke on July 18th, following only Laing and Gregory Bateson among the scheduled speakers. Though he notes having seen C.L.R. James, Carmichael’s recollections may be largely shaped by Laing’s talk “Meditations between the individual and society,” which was perhaps the only one he saw before giving his own speech.

If Carmichael’s experience at the Dialectics left him convinced that continental theory offered nothing to Black and Third World people at war with the United States,

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369 Carmichael and Thelwell, 573
371 Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Folder: YGS Personal, Dialectics of Liberation Schedule of Lectures. Appended notes on Sweezy’s schedule praise some talks (Goldmann’s was a “quite good lecture and very good Marxist separation of recent French tendencies), give backhanded compliments to others (Marcuse was “Better than I expected”), and are sometimes entirely dismissive (Paul Goodman is a “pain in the ass” and David Cooper’s talk was “incomprehensible.”)
Angela Davis left London certain that the success of the Black movement would require both a multi-racial political coalition and a serious engagement with Marxism. Guided by her reading of Black history, Davis’s “Lectures on Liberation” draws on Frederick Douglass’s autobiography to illustrate the interdependence of Douglass’s physical and psychological journeys from slavery to freedom. “The first phase of liberation,” writes Davis, “is the decision to reject the image of himself which the slave-owner has painted, to reject the conditions which the slave owner has created, to reject his own existence, to reject himself as a slave.” Only the enslaved, Davis write “is actually conscious of the fact that freedom is not a fact, it is not a given, but rather something to be fought for, it can exist only through a process of struggle.” This contradiction, wherein the understanding of freedom is made possible through freedom’s absence, is the driving force of liberation.

It was Davis’s understanding of the dialectical relationship between freedom and un-freedom which later drew her to the movement to abolish incarceration: the American prison being the site where the metaphor of the internal colony was made most brutality

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372 Angela Davis, Autobiography, 150-151. While Carmichael may have seen the principle divide on the Left as between activists like himself and theorists like Marcuse, those on the ground in Detroit and Newark did not necessarily see much difference between the two. Following the Detroit uprising, the revolutionary socialist organization News & Letters rejected efforts by politicians to tie Carmichael to the unrest, writing of Carmichael that “He was in Havana; the action was in Detroit. He was talking, not acting.” (Black Mass Revolt (A News & Letters Committee Publication) Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Reel 2 of 9, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University)


374 Davis, “Lectures on Liberation.” Seeing the criminalization of Black and Third World people as the logical extension of the state’s reaction to the urban rebellions of the 1960s, Davis’s understanding of the dialectical relationship between bondage and freedom—as well as her own experience with incarceration—would lead her to the belief that the criminalization and incarceration of Black and Third World people was the logical extension of the state’s reaction to the rebellions of the 1960s, and that political prisoners represented the vanguard of the revolution. (Angela Y. Davis ed., If They Come in the Morning...Voices of Resistance (New York: Verso, 2016 c.1971)
manifest. A Professor at UCLA beginning in 1969, Davis’s open affiliation with the Communist Party, as well as her association with Herbert Marcuse and her identity as a revolutionary Black woman, led to her being fired by the University’s Board of Regents.\(^{375}\) Within a year of her firing, Davis reached new heights of fame and infamy as the most famous fugitive—and then as the most famous prisoner—in the United States. Accused of providing arms to the teenaged Jonathan Jackson—who then used them in a failed effort to trade hostages for the freedom of his brother George—Davis spent nearly two months on the run as the 3rd woman ever to be listed on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted List. Arrested in October of 1970, and incarcerated for over a year, Davis was found not guilty in June of 1972. During the period of her trial, the demand to ‘Free Angela Davis,’ mobilized anti-racists, anti-capitalists, and anti-imperialists through the First, Second, and Third World. Following her acquittal Davis continued to apply her understanding of the dialectic of freedom and un-freedom in ways that made clear to her that gender (and later sexual identity) were essential nodes of struggle along with race, nation, and class. (see Chapter 6)

\(^{375}\) Davis’s active membership in the CPUSA and her reluctance to critique repressive policies in the stodgy and socially conservative nations of the Eastern Bloc—in particular the German Democratic Republic where Davis was feted on official state visits in the early 1970s—may seem somewhat discordant with the image of Davis as global symbol for Black and Third World revolutionary feminism. Davis’s membership in the Party is rooted in her youth—her mother was active in the Southern Negro Youth Congress—in the legacy of the CPUSA’s anti-racism, and in what she perceived as a unique depth of political vision and a level of organizational sophistication among Communists in Southern California during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, she remained a Communist in part due to solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. (Angela Davis and Tony Platt, “interview with Angela Davis,” Social Justice Vol. 40, No. ½ (131-132). Davis’s continued defense of the Party may also reflect a reality of Third World revolutionary movements—they were often trained and sustained by the largesse of the GDR and other nations of the Soviet bloc, and by official Communist Parties loyal to the Soviet Union (this was particularly true of the South African anti-apartheid movement). Paul Farber writes that Davis’s writing worked to “[bypass] the American cultural fascination with the Berlin Wall and attempted to reorient people toward other divisions: in particular, the liberation politics of struggle against Cold War strategies of containment and, with greater focus, the harsh, politicized, and racialized contours of the U.S. prison system.” Paul Farber, A Wall of Our Own: An American History of the Berlin Wall (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), p. 95.
As the attendees of the Dialectics of Liberation conference gathered in London, rebellions sprung up in cities along the American rust belt. Uprisings in Cincinnati (June 12) and Buffalo (June 26-July 1) predated the Congress by a couple of weeks, while those in Newark (July 12-17) and Detroit (July 23-28) occurred during the two weeks of the Congress, with significant rioting in Milwaukee coming two weeks after the Congress concluded.376

While unrest had continued in 1965 and 1966, before the summer of 1967 no urban uprising had reached the levels of destruction and violence seen in Watts. The Los Angeles police department had relied on national guard troops to put down the Watts Rebellion, but in Detroit local police and national guard were deemed insufficient and, at the request of Michigan Governor George Romney, Lyndon Johnson sent in the army to quell the unrest. Parallels to an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam were unmistakable, as soldiers who had recently been deployed overseas rolled through the streets of Detroit in tanks carrying heavy artillery. Interviewed in 2002, Chrysler Foreman Thom Armstead recalled that “when the 102nd airborne came to town that was really the defining moment…at that point, people felt that the United States of America had declared war on Detroit’s black community.”377 Reflecting on the rebellions in the


Fall of 1967, Jack O’Dell likened the presence of federal troops in Detroit to the presence of slave-catchers in the antebellum North following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. “As in 1852,” wrote O’Dell, “it is true today. The line between Mississippi and Michigan, between Birmingham and Newark is rapidly being obliterated.”\textsuperscript{378} The war against Southern Blacks had spread to the North, and the war against colonized people in the Third World had come home.

That the global revolution had entered a new stage was a sentiment shared by many of the young radicals active in Students for a Democratic Society. By the Spring of 1967, SDSers—increasingly skeptical about the prospects of non-violent protest—had begun to move toward a (mostly still abstract) idea of ‘revolution.’\textsuperscript{379} In the summer of 1967, the National Office passed a motion declaring the organization’s “solidarity with the anti-imperialist aims of our brothers in Bolivia, Santo Domingo, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru” in “their struggle against so-called liberal government.”\textsuperscript{380} Though cautioning against “radical illusions about ‘revolution,’” Tom Hayden wrote of Newark that “the conditions slowly are being created for an American form of guerrilla warfare based in the slums,” adding that “The riot represents a signal of this fundamental change.”\textsuperscript{381} At SDS’s annual convention that July, support was declared

\textsuperscript{379}Kirkpatrick Sale, 210-225. Sale cites a member of Columbia SDS who reflected that “the meaningless of non-violent, ‘democratic’ methods was becoming clear to us in the spring of 1967. The Civil Rights Movement was dead. Pacifism was dead. Some Leftists…knew it early. But it took the rest of us a while to give up the sweet life of the democratic life for revolt.” (Dotson Rader, quoted in Sale, 224)
\textsuperscript{380}Students for a Democratic Society Records, 1958—1970, Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Library, Archives, and Museum Collections, Madison, Wisconsin
\textsuperscript{381}Hayden, Rebellion in Newark, quoted in Sale, 231
for RAM and for the rebellions. Over the second half of 1967, an increasing emphasis on solidarity with Black and Third World revolutionaries in and out of the United States led SDS further away from their original focus on the nation’s college campuses as the hub of the radical Left, and toward the position that white students should operate in support of the Black and Third World ‘vanguard.’ In these efforts, members of the organization which had refused to declare an official ideology during its first half-decade were increasingly identifying as Marxists.

To a range of radicals, the ’67 rebellions illustrated that the progress made in the United States in the 1960s—the product of a massive grassroots mobilization on the part of African Americans and their allies which forced a Democratic White House and Congress to pass both Civil Rights laws and the most robust expansion of the welfare state since the 1930s—was not an indication that American liberalism was working, but rather that it was not, and indeed could not work. Written in 1983, Manning Marable’s *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* remains the most thorough and incisive critique of the ways that American wealth was generated from the exploitation of its Black citizens in ways similar to the exploitation of colonized nations; leading to the systematic underdevelopment of Black America. Arguing that poverty must be understood in relative, rather than in absolute terms, Marable argues convincingly that “it is in the light of capitalist America’s remarkable success in producing an unprecedented standard of living for the majority of its indigenous white population that Blacks’ and

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382 Sale, 242. Sale notes that the statement “took a surprisingly strong position for tis time” on the colonial relationship of women to men.”

Hispanics’ material realities must be judged.” Marable illustrates that, though Black and Hispanic Americans experienced growing rates of employment and higher wages during the mid-1960s, they were the first to feel the brunt of economic slowdown during periods of economic contract and crisis, and they suffered job-loss and wage cuts at dramatically disproportionate rates relative to white Americans.

If the wealthiest country in the history of the world, in the midst of a multi-decade economic boom, governed by a liberal president backed by a liberal majority in congress, was unwilling to devote sufficient resources to the eradication of Black poverty at home—while spending billions of dollars each year killing Vietnamese peasants abroad—then there was little cause for hope. The apogee of the Great Society had revealed the limits of the mid-century liberal order, and had contained within it the seeds of its own unmaking.

The above notwithstanding, many on the Left—including many who identified or who had once identified with Third World politics—maintained that meeting American violence with violence was a mistake. The most consistent voice against revolutionary violence from within the Black Left, was that of Martin Luther King Jr. Travelling to Los Angeles in the wake of the Watts uprising, King noted that for Blacks living in the North, “the nonviolent movement of the South has meant little.” After all, added King, the Southern Civil Rights Movement had “been fighting for rights which theoretically are

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384 Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America, 48
385 Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America, 50-54
386 In her dissertation, historian Ashley Howard illustrates the participants in urban uprisings were disproportionately drawn from the ranks of the un- and underemployed. Ashley M. Howard, “Prairie Fires: Urban Rebellions As Black Working Class Politics in Three Midwestern Cities.” PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012
already theirs.” King had seen in Watts evidence that the condition of Blacks in South-Central Los Angeles must be understood through the lenses of both racism and capitalism, going so far as to say that he would “minimize the racial significance and point to the fact that these were the rumblings of discontent from the ‘have nots’ within the midst of an affluent society.” Yet, while he empathized with the anger of those who joined this, and later uprisings, King maintained that the turn to violence was both a moral and strategic error. Reflecting on the rise of Black militancy in his 1967 *Chaos or Community?* King criticized calls “for retaliatory violence” by those whose “Bible is Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth.*” Rejecting the notion that Black revolutionaries in the United States must look to the Third World for leadership, King writes that “the hard cold facts today indicate that the hope of the people of color in the world may well rest on the American Negro and his ability to reform the structure of racist imperialism from within.”

King continued to emphasize the interconnectedness of racism, poverty, and imperialism through the final years of his life, lamenting that “the Negro still lives in the basement of the Great Society.” Echoing King’s critique of the limits of 1960s

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388 Martin Luther King Jr., quoted in Clayborne Carson ed. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York: The Heirs to the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., 1998), 292. Jack O’Dell writes that Watts and later urban uprisings had succeeded in “finally [sensitizing] the Freedom Movement to a full recognition that…the movement must now become a movement of the poor—a movement to overcome the results of institutionalized racism and exploitation.”

389 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1967, 56.

390 King, *Where Do We Go From Here*, 59. Though obviously differing on strategy, King’s belief that Black Americans represented the best chance at bringing American imperial violence to a halt was shared by Huey Newton.

391 King, *Where Do We Go From Here*, 1967; 86, 19
liberalism, the socialist-pacifist labor organizer Bayard Rustin argued that absent guarantees of adequate jobs, housing, and education, Black communities would be forced to conclude that “unless they riot, they will get nothing.”\footnote{392} Beyond their well-known moral commitments to non-violence—commitments often put to cynical use by those seeking to undermine movements for racial justice—both Rustin and King maintained that violence was at best ineffectual, and at worst would spark a backlash of fanatical white supremacist reaction.\footnote{393}

Even for many on the Left who did not share Rustin and King’s moral fidelity to pacifism, the turn toward violence was an error both of analysis and of strategy. Skeptics of the Third World Turn expressed concern that would-be revolutionaries in the United States would try to import whole-sale a philosophy designed for a very different national context. Writing in \textit{Freedomways}, John Henry Jones warned that “the growing popularity of Fanon’s writings among Afro-American youth and intellectuals is indicative of their own…need for a basic philosophy and strategic theory,” adding that “revolution can neither be imported or exported.”\footnote{394} Reflecting on Fanon’s influence as part of a critical review of Eldridge’s Cleaver’s writing, Harold Cruse dissociated himself from his earlier revolutionary nationalism by mocking Cleaver’s self-identification as a ‘Fanonist,’ and noting that while “the wish to emulate these Third World movements in the United States is understandable, the revolutionary leaders in the Third World would find Cleaver’s access to publishing houses and television studios incomprehensible.”\footnote{395}

\footnotetext{393}{King, \textit{Where do We Go From Here}, 59}
substantively, Cruse wondered of the American Fanonists, “What is the method of social change to follow demonstrations, the oratory and polemics, the jailings, the agony, and the exiles.”

Perhaps the most perceptive critique of Third World Leftism during the late 1960s came from James and Grace Lee Boggs. The Boggses were committed revolutionaries who had played a role in directing the American Left’s turn toward the developing world—and who continued to draw inspiration from Amilcar Cabral, Mao, and other Third World theoreticians. However, as early as 1965, they were concerned that Black militants had become overly reliant on “spontaneous action by the masses,” premised on the errant belief that “the masses are ready [and] that ‘all’ Negroes are itching for the barricades.” By the end of the decade, the Boggses had become convinced that groups like the Panthers had failed to adequately develop a revolutionary ideology applicable to the unique conditions of the United States, and that “those who lack a revolutionary ideology…usually end up, when the movement has lost its steam, in purely defensive or desperate actions or with the outworn dogmas of the past.” More convinced than ever of the need to liberate the people of the world from the power of American capitalism, the Boggses argued that Third World Leftists in the United States must “reaffirm the importance of ideology in revolution and the importance of the revolutionary intellectual to the revolutionary process,” before any real revolutionary politics would be possible.

396 Cruse, “The Fire This Time?,” 116
399 ibid
Eschewing violence, King had sought to move beyond binaries of reform and revolution through a politics of pacifistic, non-Marxist socialist internationalism: a path which seemed threatened—if not foreclosed—by his assassination on April 4, 1968. The historian Peter Levy calculates that between April 4th and April 14th, “looting, arson, or sniper fire occurred in 196 cities in thirty-six states plus the District of Columbia,” in what was the “greatest wave of social unrest [in the United States] since the Civil War.”

Reflecting on the turn toward militancy following King’s murder, Paul Sweezy wrote that “the strategy of nonviolence is dead; and only the credible threat of economically costly violence can compel concessions to black demands.”

Indeed, by the summer of 1968, Third World Leftists—including activists from marginalized national communities who saw the Black freedom movement as a model for their own liberation—were convinced that, even if the success of violent revolution was uncertain, there was no path to equality and self-determination through non-violent protest. Third World revolutionaries had come to share Frantz Fanon’s belief that compromise, reform, and non-violence were—whether wittingly or not—acts of complicity. In accepting the concepts of equality and universality as defined by the colonizer, anything short of direct confrontation with the forces of monopoly capitalism served to validate a system which was fundamentally premised on violence and exploitation.

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400 Levy, The Great Uprising, 153. Levy notes that studies of urban unrest in the 1960s are often bounded by Watts and Detroit, despite the fact that 1968 saw substantially more violence than 1967, and that uprisings continued through the early 1970s. One city which did not see significant unrest in April of 1968 was Oakland—home to the original chapter of the Black Panther Party. Historian Robyn C. Spencer argues that the calm in Oakland was due in part to efforts by the Panthers to focus the anger of Oakland’s Black community in more productive ways. Robyn C. Spencer, The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016), 62

“Two centuries ago,” Frantz Fanon had written at the conclusion of The Wretched of the Earth, “a former European colony took into its head to catch up with Europe.” In seeking not to transcend, but to fulfill what it took to be the best of European civilization, Fanon continued, “the United States has become a monster where the flaws, sickness, and inhumanity of Europe have reached frightening proportions.” Armed with this understanding, Third World revolutionaries determined not to fulfill the promise of the American experiment, but rather, as Fanon had written, to “start over a new history of man.”

How they would attempt to achieve this new beginning is the subject of the next chapter.

402 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 236-8. Though Martin Luther King Jr. was no Fanonian, echoes of this sentiment can be found in King’s Speech at Riverside Church. Understanding communism as “a judgment against our failure to make democracy real,” King implored the Americans to “recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.” Martin Luther King Jr., “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break the Silence,” delivered on April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City (https://www.commondreams.org/views04/0115-13.htm), accessed 2/5/2019
Chapter 4: “We Will Not Wait”: Strategies of Confrontation


Also travelling to Montreal in October of 1968 was James Forman: SNCC’s executive secretary from 1961 to 1966 and an eventual adversary of Carmichael’s within
the organization. Never achieving the public prominence of his charismatic rival, Forman played a major role in the development of Black internationalist politics during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though both drew inspiration from Third World revolutionary movements, Carmichael and Forman were following very different political paths. By the early 1970s, Forman set down roots in Detroit, where he joined with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) in emphasizing the role of the Black working class, while Carmichael—who would soon take the name Kwame Ture in homage to the two African leaders who had most inspired his changing politics—had begun to distance himself from Marxism and from coalition with white radicals in favor of a politics of revolutionary pan-Africanism. In the fall of 1968 however, Forman and Carmichael still occupied similar political terrain, and their talks at the Congress of Black Writers


The speakers who gathered in Montreal in the fall of 1968 believed themselves to be living through an age of great historical consequence, a period of revolutionary disjuncture like that of 1848-1849 or 1917-1919. They saw the rebellions of the mid-1960s as signaling the awakening of America’s Black population, and university protests—from the Ivy League to historically black colleges to commuter schools—and the demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago as evidence that this new spirit of militancy had expanded beyond the nation’s urban centers.\footnote{On university protests in 1968 see, Martha Biondi, The Black Revolution on Campus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Gary Y. Okihiro, Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Paul Cronin, A Time to Stir: Columbia ’68 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); among others: and Stefan M. Bradley, Upending The Ivory Tower; Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Ivy League (New York: NYU Press, 2018); (See also Chapter 6).} At the same time, the viciousness of the police response to these mobilization appeared to vindicate Frantz Fanon’s revolutionary dialectic: wherein the brutal exercising of state power exposes the fundamental weakness of the regime. The even more dramatic unrest in France, where eleven million striking workers brought the government to its knees; Czechoslovakia, where the states of the Warsaw Pact met reform efforts with 200,000 troops; and Mexico City, where police massacred hundreds of protesting students in Tlatelolco Square; made clear that whatever it was that was happening in 1968 transcended both national boundaries and global power blocs.\footnote{Julian Bourg, From Revolution to Ethics: may 1968 and Contemporary French Thought, 2nd edition (Quebec: McGil-Queen’s University Press, 2017 c. 2007); Paulina Bren, The Greengrocer and his TV: The} To those dedicated to
bringing about the birth of a new age of socialist internationalism, it looked as though throughout the world, the wretched of the earth were ready to answer Che Guevara’s call: to forge themselves into ‘new men and women’ through the fiery trials of people’s war.\textsuperscript{411}

These shifting political winds were reflected in the talks given at the Black Writers Congress.\textsuperscript{412} In their speeches, both Forman and Carmichael made plain that the ending of “racism, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism,” would not come about without—in Forman’s words—“protracted, bloody, brutal, and violent wars with our oppressors.”\textsuperscript{413} Carmichael argued much the same, warning the Montreal audience that “self-defense never changes the situation,” and thus “aggressive violence is what is needed to change the status quo.”\textsuperscript{414} Forman and Carmichael were similarly aligned in their belief that revolution would require an alliance between Third World people, inside and outside of the United States.

\textsuperscript{411} Observing the rise of these liberation movements, much of the white Left determined that they had an obligation to defer to the leadership of Black and Third World people—both in and out of the United States. Exemplifying this position was Paul Sweezy, who wrote in 1968 that, “the problem cannot yet be tackled, let alone solved, by white revolutionaries for the simple reasons that a mass movement with a revolutionary will or potential simply does not exist among whites, nor can one be created as long as the white working class…takes the present capitalist system for granted.” Sweezy concluded that, “as long as this situation exists, the work of white revolutionaries is of necessity essentially propagandistic and educational rather than political (in the sense of being concerned with the problem of power). (Paul Sweezy, “Review of the Month,” \textit{Monthly Review} Vol. 20, No. 4 (September: 1968), pp. 1-10; 2)
\textsuperscript{413} James Forman, “Frantz Fanon and the Third World,” 205
\textsuperscript{414} Carmichael and Thelwell, \textit{Ready for Revolution}, 220-1
A few weeks before the Congress of Black Writers, a merger had been proposed between SNCC and the Black Panther Party, with both Forman and Carmichael receiving official positions in Panther Party leadership.\footnote{On the merger between SNCC and the BPP see Forman, \textit{The Making of Black Revolutionaries}, pp. 522-543; Carson, \textit{In Struggle}, pp. 278-286; Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr., and \textit{Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. 111-114, 122-124, 149-150.} If the Freedom Now Party (FNP) had represented the first effort at forming a sustainable coalition of the various political and cultural tendencies operating under the umbrella of Third World Leftism (see chapter 2), then the merger between SNCC and the Black Panther Party in 1969 might have represented the last such attempt.\footnote{As historian Clayborne Carson notes, a SNCC-BPP merger suggested a possible joining together or the urban and rural iterations of the Black movement, something which the Freedom Now Party—based in New York, Detroit, and San Francisco—did not. (Carson, \textit{In Struggle}, 278). Though there were attempted coalitions of self-described Third World organizations into the mid-1970s, none could plausibly claim to represent a broad existing range of tendencies the way that the SNCC and the Panthers did at the end of the 1960s.} Mobilizing at the acme of Great Society liberalism, the FNP failed in its attempt to bring together the proletarianism, nationalism, and socialist internationalism which competed for dominance among the inchoate movements of the nascent Third World Left. Half-a-decade later, and within a more fractious political moment than that of 1964-5, the relatively broad appeal of the Black Panther Party—as well as the Party’s outreach to both SNCC and the New Left- aligned Peace and Freedom Party (PFP)—suggested the possibility of a political formation in which these tendencies could cohere.\footnote{In 1964, James Boggs had stood for proletarianism, Cruse Black Nationalism, and Sweezy socialist internationalism.} Instead, intended to be the first step toward the creation of a mass party, the aborted fusion exacerbated tensions between Forman and Carmichael and between Carmichael and the Panthers, as well as stoking conflicts within the BPP—all of which
were illustrative of widening schisms in the Third World Left between 1968 and the early 1970s.

“In retrospect,” Carmichael recalled in his autobiography, “the Panther/SNCC ‘alliance’—*flirtation* might be a better word—was a comedy of errors.”\(^{418}\) Over before it really began, the failed merger exposed the degree to which the fault lines which had divided the Third World Left at the outset of the Freedom Now Movement had only deepened in the intervening years. Ultimately, as with the FNP, these competing tendencies and personalities proved irreconcilable.\(^{419}\) Further complicating efforts at forming a mass party were the continued questions of coalition with white radicals—particularly Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)—and of political violence. Though few activists on the Third World Left maintained a commitment to non-violence as a moral philosophy, the movement remained divided over whether urban guerilla war and domestic terrorism would be more likely to hasten the revolution, or to weaken the Left by drawing targeted repression from the state.

In addition to debates over multi-racial coalition building and political violence, many of the sources of friction between factions of the Third World Left during this period were familiar ones: including whether organizing efforts should focus on Black and Third World people as workers (or as discarded non-workers in the case of the BPP’s emphasis on the *lumpenproletariat*) or as members of a shared culture with a shared national history. Often submerged beneath these clashes was a trend which, though present since at least the 1940s, had been—with scant exception—marginalized and

\(^{418}\) Carmichael and Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution*, 659

\(^{419}\) None of this is intended to suggest that a successful coalition would have become a mass party, but rather that a political formation in which these competing tendencies could cohere might have continued to function as an influential force in American political life.
ignored by the men who occupied leadership positions in the organizations of the New Left: Black internationalist and Third World feminism.  

Engagement with revolutionary projects abroad sparked a cohort of SNCC women—led by Frances Beal—to form a Black Women’s Liberation Committee (BWLC) within the organization in 1968. Later renamed the Black Women’s Alliance (BWA) and finally the Third World Women’s Alliance (TWWA), the BWLC represented both a critique of second-wave feminism and of the masculinist rhetoric and internal dynamics of the Third World Left in the United States. Beyond reacting to tendencies on the Left, Third World feminists drew on the politics of revolutionary anti-colonialism to develop an analysis of their exploitation as women, as women of color, and as (often unwaged) workers, responsible for both reproduction and childcare under capitalism.

420 Neither Forman nor Carmichael made any mention of Third World women in their talks in Montreal, and no women were featured speakers at the Congress. See Barbara Jones, “A Black Woman Speaks Out,” in David Austin, ed. Moving Against the System: The 1968 Congress of Black Writers and the Making of Global Black Consciousness (London: Pluto Press, 2018); pp. 231-335. More marginalized than Third World feminism was the movement for Gay and Lesbian Rights—many of whose leading activists similarly analyzed their condition through the lens of Third World revolution. See Emily K. Hobson, Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

421 Springer, Living for the Revolution

Third World feminism would not fully emerge until the mid-1970s: years in which the broader Third World left which it had developed both alongside, and in opposition to, was in a period of stagnation, fracture, and decline.

Though earlier Third World Leftists like Baran and Sweezy, and Cruse and Boggs had looked to anti-colonial liberation movements for inspiration, they maintained the need to develop a revolutionary politics indigenous to the United States. Recognizing that a relatively upwardly mobile white working-class was materially disincentivized from engaging in radical politics—these and other thinkers looked to Black Americans (and eventually other marginalized communities) as a potential source of political transformation. However, they also understood that the ‘colonized’ condition of Black Americans was fundamentally distinct form that of people living in the Third World. Their project then, was to theorize—and in some cases organize—a distinctly American radicalism which drew on the reality of Black Americans as a population whose condition was a product of class and racial dynamics unique to the historical development of the United States. Though they developed from different beginnings and came to different conclusions, this was also self-consciously the political project of James Forman and Stokely Carmichael, as well as the leadership of the Black Panther Party, and the organizers of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement.

Crucially, all of these groups developed their political strategies during a period of long-run affluence, and much of the leadership of those organizations which most influenced the Third World Left between 1965-1973 failed to adequately respond to the dislocations of the post-New Deal political era. What had once been understood more

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flexibly as the relationship between base and superstructure led to hardening positions wherein influential theorists came to emphasize one at the exclusion of the other. Activists who insisted on the primacy of national culture tended toward essentialism and a political separatism that made multi-racial coalition challenging, and too-often derived their politics from a series of tenuous and ahistorical assumptions about a shared cultural heritage. In addition, with insufficient attention paid to material conditions, cultural nationalism was too-easily detached from the struggle for economic and political power as the prospects for revolutionary victory dimmed during the last quarter of the 20th century.

Any path toward the building of a revolutionary force of Black and Third World workers was foreclosed by the structural transformation of the American economy. Building power at the point of production seemed a sound strategy when organized labor was at its apex, but as financialization, de-industrialization, and outsourcing took their toll, workers found themselves—in spite of an upswing in labor militancy during the decade—on the losing end of struggles over industrial democracy. As corporations rolled back labor’s mid-century advances, radical Black and Third World workers were often the first to have their jobs replaced or automated out of existence—devastating whatever prospects existed for building power by radicalizing the rank-and-file of the industrial labor force.

Made to confront the contradictions of both revolutionary anti-colonialism and liberal feminism, it was Third World feminism which emerged as the most theoretically dynamic force on the Third World Left following the disappointments of the mid-1970s.

In illustrating that a radical politics must take on hierarchies of gender if it is to meaningfully address hierarchies of race and class (and vice versa), Third World feminism—representing a range of perspectives from cultural nationalism to Black and Third World proletarianism—advanced beyond the political thought of the Third World Left of 1967-1973.

Following the careers of Forman, Carmichael and Beal in particular—all of whom played prominent roles in SNCC in the early-mid 1960s and all of whom found themselves drawn to Third Worldism as the decade progressed—as well as the organizations they moved in and out of, helps to both chart the ascent of the Third World Left and the fault lines which divided the movement, while embedding the Third World turn within the longer history of critiques of American liberalism to which it belongs. The political thought of these and other figures further illustrate that the Third World Left was not monolithic, and that those who studied anti-colonial revolutions came to very different conclusions about how to transform the United States.

That by the time they arrived in Montreal in the Summer of 1968, both James Forman and Stokely Carmichael had come to see revolutionary violence as the only path toward victory over colonialism and capitalism illustrates the degree to which violence—or at least a rejection of *non*-violence—had become hegemonic on the Third World Left by late 1968. Yet, as discussed above, Third Worldism cannot be reduced to its embrace of violence, and treating this moment as an inevitable conclusion obscures the evolving positions of Forman, Carmichael, and other Third World radicals. Understanding the
progression of Forman and Carmichael’s politics requires going back to their early involvement with SNCC—at the time an organization more aligned with King’s movement than with the militancy of the late 1960s—and following them through 1968 as they revised their platforms and philosophies in response to the changing politics of the early 1970s and beyond.

Born in Chicago in 1928, James Forman later recalled being politicized before the age of ten by reading issues of the Chicago Defender, which he bought and resold to friends of his parents. After a period in the army, Forman enrolled in Chicago’s Roosevelt University, where he studied with the Black sociologist St. Clair Drake—who would later play a major role in the creation of Black Studies programs in the United States. Elected student government president at Roosevelt, Forman used his position to raise funds in support of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and other campaigns of non-violent consciousness-raising and resistance. In April of 1960, Forman travelled south to the Nashville headquarters of the Freedom Riders to join up with the just-formed Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Seeing no conflict between the strategic use of non-violent direct action and the legitimacy of responding to violence with violence, Forman expressed sympathy for armed self-defense as early as 1961. In 1962 he read Che Guevara, and found his emphasis on establishing units throughout the countryside relevant to SNCC’s mission. However, through the mid-60s, Forman maintained that regardless of the legitimacy of

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424 James Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 29
425 Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 83
426 Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 84-5. Less than King or Gandhi, Forman credits the writing of Kwame Nkrumah with convincing him of the feasibility of collective, non-violent, direct action (Forman, 105)
427 Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 158-9
428 Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 338
violence as a tactic, the Movement was not prepared to chart such a course. Though Forman had long had an interest—developed in part through his studies with Drake—on the connections between Black people in the U.S. and those abroad, it was only after travelling to Guinea in 1964 that he began to emphasize the need for SNCC and other American organizations to cultivate these relationships.429

In the mid-60s, two events crystallized both James Forman’s growing antipathy toward non-violence as a political strategy and his understanding of Black liberation in the United States as inseparable from liberation movements in the Third World: the police assault on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in March of 1965, and the murder of SNCC activist and Tuskegee University student Sammy Younge Jr. in January of 1966. It was “Sammy’s murder,” Forman later recalled, that “marked the final end of any patience with nonviolence—even as a tactic.”430 The day after Younge’s death, SNCC released a statement of opposition to the Vietnam War—the first major Civil Rights group to do so—which read in part that “the murder of Samuel Younge in Tuskegee, Ala., is no


different than the murder of peasants in Vietnam... In each case, the [U.S.] government bears a great part of the responsibility for their deaths.**431

In 1967, Forman began to study Mao and Frantz Fanon. Inspired by these readings and by the urban rebellions of that summer, Forman determined that Black “liberation will come only when there is final destruction of this mad octopus—the capitalistic system of the United States,” a nation whose “life-sucking tentacles of exploitation and racism...choke the people of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.”**432

Arguing that the history of Black people in America must be understood as a history of resistance—from “the moment they were wrenched from the shores of Africa” to the present day, Forman’s essays from this period emphasize the continuities between the ‘colonization’ of Blacks within the United States and colonization in the Third World.**433

“It is paramount,” Forman told an audience at Columbia University in 1968, “to get rid of the concept that we are Negroes, Afro-Americans, or even African-Americans: we are Africans living inside the United States...”**434

Born in Trinidad in 1941, Carmichael moved to New York just before his eleventh birthday, and enrolled at Howard University in the fall of 1960.**435 While in Washington, his membership in Howard’s Nonviolent Action Group (NAG) led to

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431 SNCC statement, quoted in Forman, 446. Like Forman, Stokely Carmichael was strongly affected by the Younge’s death. (Joseph, Stokely: A Life, 94).
435 Peniel E. Joseph, Stokely: A Life, 20
participating in 1961’s Freedom Rides and eventually to involvement with SNCC.

Biographer Peniel Joseph notes that as early as 1963—when he participated as a “local speaker” in a conference on “Youth, Nonviolence, and Social Change,” featuring Martin Luther King Jr., James Baldwin, John Lewis, and James Farmer—Carmichael was publicly pushing against the idea that nonviolence was a moral imperative for Black Americans, rather than a matter of political expediency.\footnote{Joseph, Stokely: A Life, 64}

After spending much of 1965-66 organizing with the Lowndes County Black Panther Party, Carmichael defeated John Lewis to become SNCC’s chairman. His election to chairman raised Carmichael’s public profile considerably, as did his role in the ‘Meredith March’ in the summer of 1966. On June 6th, James Meredith—the first Black student admitted to the University of Mississippi—was shot on the second day of what was intended to be a 220-mile walk from Memphis to Jackson in protest of Mississippi’s intransigence in the face of federal Civil Rights legislation. Carmichael, King, and thousands of other Civil Rights activists set out to complete his march. It was in this tense moment that SNCC’s new chairman took the stage at Greenwood Mississippi’s Broad Street Park, where his call for “Black Power” made clear that the wing of the movement that he represented would no longer abide the plodding pace of reform.\footnote{The term Black power had been in circulation at least since the publishing of Richard Wright’s Black Power in 1954}

Carmichael emphasized both the colonial nature of Black America and the need for solidarity between the movement at home and movements for anti-colonial liberation abroad. Stokely expounded upon the former in \textit{Black Power: The Politics of Liberation} (1967)—co-written with the political-scientist Charles V. Hamilton—and the latter at
both the *Dialectics of Liberation*, and the OLAS conference.438 Seeing integration as a trap which drains the movement of its radical potential, Carmichael and Hamilton argued that “Black communities,” must “recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their history, their culture; to create their own sense of community and togetherness.”439

Though Carmichael and Hamilton do not ignore the role of economic exploitation in African-American life, their focus was on the need to develop a base of independent political power before entering any sort of multiracial coalition. “The concept of Black Power,” they argue “rests on a fundamental premise: Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.”440 This insistence on the primacy of race concerned Forman, who cautioned against what he referred to as “skin analysis.” To Forman, ‘skin analysis’ failed by reducing all the evils of American capitalism to the problem of race hatred; and led to reactionary forms of nationalism offering no path to liberation.441 Forman later wrote that Carmichael’s public statements were “creating a polarization of the struggle around the single issue of race rather than class and race.” If he was insistent on using the term ‘honky,’ Forman chided, “I felt Stokely could at least talk about the honky banker, the honky landlord, [and] the honky capitalist.”442

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439 Carmichael and Hamilton, 37

440 Carmichael and Hamilton, 44

441 James Forman, “Liberation Will Come from a Black Thing”

442 Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 520
Another source of tension was Stokely’s ascendant celebrity. Carmichael’s association with SNCC led to the assumption that his public pronouncements were the SNCC line, and after Carmichael’s talk in Cuba in 1967 and subsequent visits to Algeria, Guinea, Tanzania, Syria and Vietnam—none of which were authorized by SNCC leadership—a number of members considered expelling him from the organization. Though frustrated with elements of Carmichael’s speeches—including his dismissal of the history of Black resistance prior to the 1960s—Forman appreciated Stokely’s efforts at connecting liberation struggles at home with those abroad, and feared that expelling him might create a similar dynamic to that of Malcolm X’s break with the Nation of Islam, and he argued against the move.

At the time of the proposed merger with the Black Panther Party, Panther Minister of Defense Huey Newton was in prison, awaiting trial for the alleged murder of Oakland Police officer John Frey. Newton had sought ties with SNCC prior to his incarceration, asking Carmichael to serve as the Panther’s ‘field marshal.’ However, with Newton in jail, it was Eldridge Cleaver—the Party’s Minister of Information—who

443 Forman recalled that while “much of what Stokely said while abroad was good…his general attitude represented the zenith of an individualism that has hurt the black struggle I many quarters. His actions indicated that he was more interested in building a cult of personality rather than a strong organization.” (Forman, 521)


445 Carmichael was ultimately expelled from SNCC in 1969. Forman writes that the expulsion took place at “a meeting which I did not attend,” adding that “If I had been there, I might well have again argued against expulsion for the same reasons as before.” Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 520.


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pushed for the merger. Though both organizations stood to benefit from working in coalition, the fast-diverging politics of Forman, Carmichael, and the Panthers led to immediate tension. Speaking at a ‘Free Huey’ rally in Oakland in February of 1968, Carmichael alienated both Forman and Panther Party leadership when he told the crowd that socialism had nothing to offer Black People, who needed to concern themselves with racism, rather than with “exploitation.” Their objections to Carmichael’s critique notwithstanding, the BPP sought to move forward with the merger, only to be stymied when SNCC refused to fully endorse the move in the summer of 1968. Though increasingly at odds with the Party, Carmichael continued in his official capacity as Prime Minister for another year; resigning on July 3, 1969.

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447 Carson, In Struggle, 278. Both Forman and Carmichael were surprised by Cleaver’s announcement of the merger. (Carmichael and Thelwell, Ready for Revolution, 641 and Forman, The Making of Black Revolutionaries, 531). Cleaver recalled that “Depending upon whom he was talking to, Forman would sometimes say that he supported the merger and at other times he would state that he didn’t.” Eldridge Cleaver, “Bunchy,” in Eldridge Cleaver, Target Zero: A Life in Writing (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015); pp. 113-134; 131

448 In an open letter to Carmichael, Cleaver wrote that Stokely sounded “as though you are scared of white people, as though you are still running away from slave catchers who lay hands on your body and dump you in a bag.” (Eldridge Cleaver, “Three Notes from Exile,” Ramparts Magazine, (September 1969, pp. 29-35; 31). Carmichael removed these lines from an edited volume of his speeches and articles. The volume’s editor writes that “when he said this, Stokely was referring to the sterile, stale brand of European Marxism-Leninism which so many ‘white radicals’ in this country were and still are trying to push among black activists—an ideology which does not deal with the twentieth-century realities of racism and world racial polarization.” Ethel N. Minor, “Editor’s Preface,” in Stokely Carmichael, Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2007 c.1971), xxii. This was not the interpretation made by many of Carmichael’s contemporaries who saw these lines as a direct attack. Peniel Joseph interprets this speech in a charitable light, writing that “it was a brave, audacious, at times exasperating speech, preemptively combating what he considered the Panthers’ awkward efforts at spreading class struggle in the black community.” (Joseph, Stokely: A Life, 243)

449 Carson, In Struggle, 284. Forman did not see this as a rejection, but rather as a positive show of support which was taken out of context by members of the radical press and perhaps by law enforcement eager to make trouble.

450 Peniel Joseph, Stokely: A Life, 280
Anger at Carmichael’s dismissal of socialism as irrelevant to Black struggle took hold far beyond Carmichael’s East Bay audience. To Detroit activist John Watson, Carmichael’s comments were simply “bullshit.” A member of SNCC until the Detroit chapter was expelled for insisting on direct action in the North, at the time of Carmichael’s speech, Watson was the editor of both the radical *Inner-City Voice* and Wayne State University’s *The South End*, as well as one of the leaders of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement.\(^{451}\) “The question of black people in the United States,” elaborated Watson, “is a caste and class problem…and we are no more for integrated capitalism than segregated capitalism.” “Neither,” he added, “are we in favor of a separate state, based on the same class lines as in this society.” Watson made clear that while the workers of DRUM could “coexist with cultural nationalists…we are black Marxist-Leninists and therefore when Stokely is attacking socialism he is attacking us.”\(^{452}\)

DRUM’s leadership explicitly identified as a part of a rising Third World, with the preamble to the group’s constitution declaring that “the super-exploited Black workers” of Detroit were a part of a larger “struggle for the liberation of Black people in racist U.S.A. and people of color around the world from the yoke of oppression that holds all of us in the chains of slavery…”\(^{453}\) DRUM’s leadership was rooted in a Third World politics specific to Detroit: they had attended study sessions at the home of the Boggoses, knocked on doors for the FNP, and taken to the streets during the ‘Great Rebellion.’ Even

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\(^{451}\) Mike Hamlin, *A Black Revolutionary’s Life in Labor*, 17 and Georgakas and Surkin, *Detroit I do Mind Dying*, 16


\(^{453}\) Detroit Revolutionary Union Movements, Records, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan
as the auto industry boomed, Detroit’s Black (and Arab) workers faced higher unemployment than whites, along with relatively stagnant wages; made more intolerable by forced speed-ups pushed on them by white foremen and white superintendents. In the words of one DRUM newsletter, “while the black workers have aided in ending the discrimination in their social lives, they have yet to unite to end discrimination at work.” This was in spite of the fact that, “black workers comprise 60% and upwards of the entire work force at Hamtramck Assembly Plant, and therefore hold exclusive power.”

On May 2, 1968, thousands of workers at Chrysler’s Dodge main plant in Hamtramck, Michigan exercised their power, and held a wildcat strike to protest unsafe conditions and increased demands in production: the first successful wildcat auto strike in fourteen years. Formed in part as a response to the company’s racially targeted firing of Black strikers, DRUM organized another strike—this time of just Black workers—at

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455 D.R.U.M. Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 6, Detroit Revolutionary Union Movements Records, Box 17, Folder 4, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan

456 D.R.U.M. Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 2, Detroit Revolutionary Union Movements Records, Box 17, Folder 4, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan
Hamtramck on July 8, which shut down production for one day. By the summer of 1969, Revolutionary Union Movements (RUMs) had formed in at least thirteen additional plants, and had begun to coordinate their efforts as a part of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers under the leadership of local activists General Baker, Kenneth Cockrel, Lupe Tripp, Mike Hamlin, John Williams, and Chuck Wooten, along with Watson.\footnote{Georgakas and Surkin, 70-1} Identifying their own struggle with the fight against imperialism everywhere, the members of the League saw themselves as positioned not only to improve the conditions of Black workers in Detroit, but to act as a vanguard force in the United States; one whose “historic mission” was—in the words of Hamlin—no less than “to cut off the heart and the head of the imperialist monster and to liberate the world.”\footnote{“An Interview with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers,” Leviathan Editorial Files, 1964-1971, Box 2, Folder 16, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin. At least some citizens of the Third World took note, with the Workers’ Central Union of Cuba writing “Comrade Ken Cockrel” in 1971 to express their “pleasure,” at “the existence of the [LRBW]; as well as the activities carried out by your organization for the benefit of the black workers and their struggles,” and asked to maintain a correspondence. Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers, Box 2, Folder 23, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan} League organizers understood the work done each day on the assembly line at Dodge Main as having reverberations throughout the world, most of which accrued to the benefit of wealthy imperialists. “Everything flows from production: international finance capital, the penetration and acquisition of markets. Everything flows from that,” argued Ken Cockrel in a memorable scene captured in the League-produced film \textit{Finally Got the News}.\footnote{Bird, Stewart, Gessner, Peter, Lichtman, René, Louis, John, and Morrison, Jim. \textit{Finally Got the News}... Brooklyn, New York: [Distributed by] Icarus Films, 2003 c.1970} “There’s a cat who would stand up and say to you he’s in mining, “Cockrel continued with inimitable flair, “And he sits in an office, man…in some motherfucking building on Wall Street. And he’s in mining…and his fingernails ain’t never been dirty in
his motherfucking life… And he’s in mining! And he got people fucking with shit in Bolivia. He’s fucking with shit in Chile. He’s Kennecott; he’s Anaconda; he’s United Fruit. He’s in mining!”

Though not monolithic in either their politics or in how they related to Third World movements—with Baker and Wooten placing more emphasis on black nationalism than did Watson, Cockrel, and Hamlin—leadership maintained that the League differed from other organizations in that their analysis was based on the concrete material conditions in which they worked and lived. “The theoretical conception of black people being in the vanguard of revolutionary struggle is not just…meant to be laid in the clouds somewhere above everyone’s head,” explained Watson, “our analysis tells us that the basic power of black people lies at the point of production…therefore, we feel that the best way to organize black people into a powerful unit is to organize them in the factories in which they are working.”

The League was critiquing not just the ownership and management of the ‘Big 3’ auto companies, but their own union leadership, who they saw as complicit both in the continued exploitation of Black workers, and in their support for America’s war in Vietnam. DRUM had developed within the United Auto Workers (UAW), an organization which, under the leadership of Walter Reuther and his successor Leonard Woodcock, had been active in the struggle for industrial democracy and Civil Rights.

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Yet, though supportive of King’s movement and a sponsor for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the UAW fought hard against the RUMs, characterizing them as a “group of extremists and racial separatists,” seeking “to spread terror in the plants among both black and white workers and to undermine the unity and solidarity among all workers.”462 Responding to the inadequacies of union leadership, the League’s ‘general program’ (1969) declared that the LRBW had “emerged specifically out of the failure of the white labor movement to address itself to the racist work conditions and to the general inhumane conditions of black people.”463 In an open letter to Reuther, the Central Staff of the LRBW accused the UAW president of failing to understand that “the problems of working at Ford or G.M. are hard realities, not abstractions discussed in your ‘union leadership’ classes.” The only difference between the assembly line and the chain gang, read the letter, was that “on the plantation we moved down the line, and at Chrysler the line moves past us.”464

462 “DRUM UAW Policy Statement 1969,” Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement Records, Box 4, Folder 25, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. A significant point of tension, as well as an opportunity to note the hypocrisy of the racial liberals of the UAW, was that their commitment to Civil Rights in the United States did not extent to Vietnam, or to apartheid South Africa, where General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler were happy to set up factories. See James Forman, “Control, Conflict, and Change: The Underlying Concepts of the Black Manifesto,” https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/forman-ccc.htm, accessed 7/9/2019
464 The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, “Open Letter to Walter Reuther From the Central Staff of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers,” D.R.U.M. Vol. 3, No. 6, Box 17, Folder 6 Detroit Revolutionary Movements Records, 1968-1976, Walter Reuther Library, Detroit Michigan. Hyperbole or no, the comparison between production at Chrysler and southern agricultural work resonated with many Detroit autoworkers, a number of whom were either born in the American South or were the first generation of their family born in the North.
The League maintained that power could be won only through black workers taking control of white-led unions to organize and strike against racism at home and imperialism abroad. To this end, leadership sought to build a revolutionary consciousness not just through the study of Mao and Fanon but by demanding concrete, realizable improvements in the conditions of Black autoworkers, including: a minimum wage of 6,600 dollars annually, a thirty-five-hour work week with paid lunch hours, and retirement with full pay at thirty years.\textsuperscript{465} “We don’t engage with bullshit arguments about ‘that’s reformist,’ or ‘that’s not reformist,” wrote Cockrel, and the League believed strongly that higher wages and safer conditions won through organizing were worthy both as ends in themselves, and as a means toward the development of revolutionary solidarity among the working class.\textsuperscript{466} This strategy differed—though perhaps only in emphasis—from the view promoted by the Black Panther Party: that organizing should focus on the so-called ‘lumpenproletariat.’\textsuperscript{467}

The ‘Lumpen-proletarianism’ of the BPP is most clearly laid out in a pamphlet written by Cleaver in 1970: “On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party.”\textsuperscript{468} While classical Marxists had tended to dismiss the revolutionary potential of those outside of industrial production, Cleaver followed more recent theorists in finding revolutionary potential among those who, in his words, “have no secure relationship or vested interest

\textsuperscript{466} Kenneth Cockrel, “From Repression to Revolution,” speech delivered January 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1970 collected in Radical America, Vol. 5, No. 2 (March-April, 1971), pp. 81-110; 88
\textsuperscript{467} Geschwender, 141-143
in the means of production and the institutions of capitalist society.” Though not explicitly drawing on the work of James Boggs, in looking to “that part of the ‘Industrial Reserve Army’ held perpetually in reserve,” Cleaver’s analysis—like DRUM’s—was consistent with Boggs’s *American Revolution.* Echoing Boggs’s prediction that automation would replace the jobs of low-skilled and under-educated workers who were disproportionately people of color, Cleaver anticipated a growing population of permanently un- and under-employed Black and Third World workers. Students and autoworkers, noted Cleaver, aired grievances against specific institutions, and often did so through officially sanctioned (or at least officially-tolerated) mediating bodies. The lumpen however, had neither university nor factory against which to protest, and therefore their anger could only manifest as rebellion against capitalist society in its totality.

Defending Cleaver’s analysis, Huey Newton wrote that, though the lumpen remained smaller in number than the traditional working class, the exigencies of capital accumulation would continue to shrink the numbers of the securely employed. “Every worker is in jeopardy,” writes Newton, “which is why we say that the lumpen proletarians have the potential for revolution, will probably carry out the revolution, and in the near future will be the popular majority.” While the BPP and the League focused their attention on organizing different sectors of the Third World population, Newton did

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469 Ibid, 7
471 Though this chapter has largely focused on the Black movement, during the late 1960s a number of organizations—most explicitly modelled after the Panthers—were formed to represent other national groups. These include the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party (1968) and the Chinese-American I Wor Kuen (1969) and Red Guard Party (1969)
not see his position as against organizing within industries; arguing that industrial-organizing could create bonds of solidarity which would sustain workers once technology rendered them unemployable. “We will not wait,” Newton writes, “until the proletarian becomes the lumpen proletarian to educate him.”

A clearer point of departure between the League and the BPP were the League’s efforts to avoid encounters with police which might lead to arrest and incarceration. From the moment they burst into the national consciousness by marching into California’s State Capital armed with shotguns, the Black Panther Party had been associated with armed self-defense. While the Panthers’ carefully cultivated revolutionary aesthetic—and incidents like the death of John Frey—helped cement this association, through 1968 the Party embraced violence in rhetoric more than in strategy. Indeed, during this early period, incidences of violence involving the Panthers were overwhelmingly likely to have been precipitated by the police. This reticence to employ violence as a strategy began to shift shortly after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., when—with Huey Newton still on trial for his life—Eldridge Cleaver began to push the party to move from rhetorical violence to direct confrontation.

Against the counsel of Newton ally David Hilliard, Cleaver convinced a group of Panthers to attack members of the Oakland Police Department on April 7, 1968. These plans ended with Cleaver and 17-year-old Panther Bobby Hutton caught in an East Bay

473 Ibid, 168
474 Sean L. Malloy, Out of Oakland, 133-136
475 Malloy, Out of Oakland, 135
home pinned down by armed police. Forced out by gunfire and tear gas, the standoff ended with the (unarmed) Hutton dead, and the injured Cleaver arrested. Originally given parole, Cleaver fled to Cuba in November of 1968 after the California Supreme Court ordered him returned to custody. He would remain in exile for nearly a decade. In advance of the 1969 Pan-African Cultural Festival, Cleaver left Cuba for Algeria, where he and his wife Kathleen founded the International Section of the BPP. Based in Algiers from 1969-1971, Cleaver travelled to North Korea, Vietnam, and China, where he made direct connections between revolutionary governments and the BPP, and continued to push the Panthers toward guerilla war.

This turn toward guerillism was welcomed by elements on the white student Left. Like many on the Black Left, members of SDS saw the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., as another in a long train of crimes that showed that even the noblest efforts at non-violent reform would be met with violence. Having voiced support for the urban rebellions during the summer of 1967, by the middle of 1968, SDS’s National Office (NO) had determined that white radicals had a responsibility to join the people of the Third World in waging war against the state. A proposal passed during that summer’s convention in East Lansing Michigan described SDS as “part of an international force fighting an international capitalist system,” one facing “a growing responsibility to establish working relations with the insurgent elements in other countries,” and to “develop better ties with the revolutionary movements in third world nations exploited by

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476 Malloy, Out of Oakland, 136
477 On Cleaver in Algeria and the International Section of the BPP see Malloy, Out of Oakland, 143-160; Bloom and Martin Jr., Black Against Empire, 311-210, and Elaine Mokhtefi, Algiers, Third World Capital: Freedom Fighters, Revolutionaries, Black Panthers (London: Verso, 2018)
American imperialism.” Once a multi-tendency organization whose members had been committed to a decentralized politics of “participatory democracy,” SDS had changed a great deal in the eight years since its founding. Into the middle of the 1960s, the National Office had resisted efforts to label Students for Democratic Society a ‘socialist’ organization. By the summer of 1968, newly elected chair Bernardine Dohrn was referring to herself as a “revolutionary communist.”

In the Summer of 1969, representatives of the NO set out their political philosophy in “You Don’t Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows.” Published in New Left Notes, the statement began by declaring that “the contradiction between the revolutionary peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the imperialists headed by the United States is the principal contradiction in the contemporary world,” and that the resolution of this contradiction could come about only through a “revolutionary struggle” to wrest the wealth produced by the peoples of the Third World from the hands of American imperialists. Accepting the leadership of the black liberation struggle within the United States, Weatherman urged young white leftists to join in “revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Maoist collective formations” in order to create

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480 Kirkpatrick Sale, 305. As Sale records in his history of SDS, confrontations with university-administrations increased during the last two years of the decade (see chapter 5), as did direct actions intended to destroy university property. Sale counts “at least eighty-four bombings, attempted bombings, and arson incidents on college campuses in the first six months of 1969…and another twenty-seven bombings and attempts in the nation’s high schools.” (Kirkpatrick Sale, 352.)
481 https://archive.org/stream/YouDontNeedAWeathermanToKnowWhichWayTheWindBlows_925/weather_djvu.txt
a “revolutionary mass movement.” Shortly thereafter, the organization went underground.

Complicating Weatherman’s elevation of the Black Liberation Movement in general, and the Panthers in particular, was that the Party was not monolithic in either its political philosophy, or its tactics. Following his release from prison in August of 1970, Newton offered public support for Cleaver’s efforts. Privately however, he was increasingly concerned with Cleaver’s adventurism. Though maintaining that “the emphasis on weapons” had been “a necessary phase in our evolution,” Newton had come to believe that, “weapons and uniforms set us apart from the community.” Speaking at the Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention (RPCC) in Philadelphia in September of 1970, Newton unveiled his new theory of intercommunalism, which broke with the internal colony thesis that had guided much of the thinking of the early BPP, and which continued to guide Cleaver’s International Section.

Drawing explicitly on Paul Baran’s *The Political Economy of Growth*, Intercommunalism held that the very concept of the ‘nation’ was outmoded; replaced by a new sort of U.S.-led empire wherein the wealthy relied on technology to extract wealth from the majority of the world’s people. Newton argued that in undermining the

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482 https://archive.org/stream/YouDontNeedAWeathermanToKnowWhichWayTheWindBlows_925/weather_djvu.txt

483 Though Weather had been trending in this direction for months, the precipitating incident was the townhouse explosion of March 6, 1970 in which three members of Weather were killed while building bombs.

484 Malloy, *Out of Oakland*, 173-175


traditional nation-state, American empire had laid the groundwork for global communism, and that in a post-national age, projects of de-colonization or self-determination guided by revolutionary nationalism represented a doomed strategy. Newton now saw the role of the BPP as educating the Black community while sustaining that community through local organizing and “survival programs.” The most well-known of these initiatives were the Party’s free breakfast programs, but the BPP’s survival programs included: free dental care, a medical clinic, legal aid, pest control, free ambulance rides, and the creation of a foundation intended to research sickle cell anemia.

Ultimately, the positions of the Oakland BPP and Cleaver’s International Section (renamed the Intercommunal Section in deference to Newton) proved irreconcilable, and after a heated exchange between Newton and Cleaver on San Francisco anchor Jim Dunbar’s morning show on February 26, 1971, Newton expelled Cleaver and the rest of the International Section from the Party. Following the split, the Panthers fractured into three formations: an Oakland chapter headed by Newton and Elaine Brown which focused on community organizing and education; Cleaver’s international section which remained committed to coordinating global efforts at national liberation; and—somewhat

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487 Bloom and Martin Jr. note that “From 1967-1969, 45 percent of political editorial articles in the Black Panther [which remained under the editorial control of the Oakland Branch of the Party] advocated ‘revolution now. In 1970, that share jumped to 65 percent. But in 1971, it fell to 16%, and in 1972-3, it dropped below 1 percent.” (Bloom and Martin Jr., Black Against Empire, 369)


489 Malloy, Out of Oakland, 181-186 and Bloom and Martin Jr., Black Against Empire, 359-371
later—the Black Liberation Army (BLA), whose members went underground in mid-
1971 to operate as guerillas within the United States. 490

As before, SDSers who identified with Third Worldism tended to align
themselves with those Black radicals who advocated violence against the state. In May of
1970, the Weather Underground (WU) released a statement authored primarily by Dohrn,
titled “A Declaration of a State of War.” Declaring that WU was now “adapting the
classic guerrilla strategy of the Viet Cong and the urban guerrilla strategy of the
Tupamaros,” Dohrn vowed to “attack a symbol or institution of Amerikan injustice”
within the next two weeks. 491 In January, 1971 members of the New York chapter of the
Black Panther Party—then awaiting trial for the coordination of attempting bombings in
the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens—recognized the Weather Underground as a part of
the ‘vanguard’ in an open letter in which they also excoriated what they saw as political
cowardice on the part Newton and Brown. 492 Following their acquittal that July, and
driven by the conviction that revolutionary violence is “a necessary ingredient in creating

490 While distinct, these three formations had significant overlap—and the New York Panthers who formed
the Black Liberation Army recognized Eldridge Cleaver as one of the leaders of their movement. Malloy,
Out of Oakland, 186. During this period, the Oakland Party offered qualified support for electoral politics,
writing editorials in favor of the Congressional Black Caucus (“A Survival Program in Congress? Black
Congressional Caucus Calls for Re-Distribution of U.S. Wealth,” The Black Panther, April 15, 1972) and
endorsing candidates for Congress (Ron Dellums) and President (Shirly Chisholm). In 1973, Bobby Seale
ran for Mayor of Oakland and Elaine Brown ran for City Council. Both lost, with Brown running again
(again unsuccessfully) in 1975. Cleaver returned to the United States in 1977, by which point he had left
revolutionary politics behind for born-again Christianity. He later ran for office in California
(unsuccessfully) as a Republican. On the Black Liberation Army see: Black Liberation Army, Message to
the Black Movement: A Political Statement from the Black Underground,
Omowale Umoja, “Repression Breeds Resistance: The Black Liberation Army and the Radical Legacy of
the Black Panther Party,” in Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiafas eds. Liberation, Imagination, and the
Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy (London and New York: Routledge,
491 Dan Berger, Outlaws in America: The Weather Underground and the Rise of the Politics of Solidarity
(Chico, CA: AK Press, 2005), 150. WU bombed the NYPD headquarters on June 10, 1970
492 Umoja, “Repression Breeds Resistance,” 140-141
a psychological frame of mind amongst the ruling classes that our liberation must be granted,” New York Party members began to operate as the armed vanguard of the Black Liberation struggle. Through the 1970s, the BLA, the Weather Underground, and the Puerto Rican *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional* (FALN), were responsible for dozens of attacks: mostly bombings and attempted bombings directed at symbols of American militarism, policing, and financial power.\(^{493}\)

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Though the revolutionary violence of the underground has received significant attention—both from historians and in the popular memory of the politics of the era—the decision to pursue political change through violence was by no means ubiquitous on the Third World Left. Though their printed material employed the rhetorical violence of the early Panthers; from the outset the leaders of the LRBW always rejected the idea that a revolution could be won in the near term through guerilla war. The League maintained that if Black and Third World workers were to organize at the point of production…they had to be at the point of production. League activists believed that the Panthers committed self-sabotage through pointless confrontations which ended with the group’s most valuable leaders incarcerated, in exile, or dead. “We point proudly not to the

\(^{493}\) Black Liberation Army “Message to the Black Left: A Political Statement from the Black Liberation Army,” (1976), [https://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/AmRad/messageblackmovement.pdf](https://archive.lib.msu.edu/DMC/AmRad/messageblackmovement.pdf), accessed 12/7/2019.” While the WU seems to have undertaken efforts to avoid loss of life, The BLA took responsibility for a handful of fatal attacks on members of the police in the early 1970s—attacks which they viewed as a response to the slaying of Black Americans at the hands of the police. Historian Dan Berger records that between 1974-1981, FALN “claimed responsibility for 120 bombings or incendiary attacks.” (Berger, 245). Though a handful of radicals have remained underground, this period is largely considered as coming to a close with the Brinks robbery in 1981, when four veterans of the Weather Underground and six members of the Black Liberation army stole 1.6 million dollars from an armored car in New York.
number of persons we have in jail, nor to the number we have under indictment,” Cockrel told an audience, “but to the fact that we’ve functioned as a serious revolutionary organization for years, and we have not one man in jail.” Ernie Allen, who joined the League as director of political education, later reflected that though the league organized against police oppression, “rather than [viewing] the local police as the principle enemy of the black community, the practical implications of which would lead other, less sophisticated black organizations into fruitless and bloody encounters, the League…continued to view that phenomenon as only one important aspect of class rule.”

That the exploitation of Black people was a problem of both ‘caste and class,’ remained a constant for James Forman, and in 1968, when Mike Hamlin reached out to Forman to invite him to Detroit to help organize Black workers, Forman took him up on the invitation. Beyond his interest in the long-term organizing commitments of the League, Forman went to Detroit intending to play a part in the Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC) planned for April, 1969 at Wayne State.

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495 Ernie Allen, “Dying From the Inside,” 75

496 The BEDC was coordinated by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations (IFCO). (See Georgakas and Surkin, 78-83; Keith Dye, “The Black Manifesto for Reparations in Detroit: Challenge and Response,” *Michigan Historical Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Fall 2009), pp.55-83 and Elaine Allen
Determined that the BEDC would endorse a plan which would benefit the entire Black community, and not just provide opportunities for the Black middle class, Forman—with the support of Mike Hamlin and John Watson—presented the “Black Manifesto.” Based on the premise that Black Americans were a colonized people, and that their colonization and exploitation was made possible in part by the complicity of organized religion, The Black Manifesto demanded a sum of five-hundred million dollars from “the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues which are part and parcel of the system of capitalism.”

The Manifesto received greater publicity when Forman presented it during a service at Harlem's Riverside Church on May 4, 1969.

Lechtreck, “‘We Are Demanding $500 Million for Reparations’: The Black Manifesto, Mainline Religious Denominations, and Black Economic Development,” *the Journal of African American History*, Vol. 97, No. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 2012), pp. 39-71) As an organization, the IFCO was committed to solving the problem of poverty in the United States, and the goal of the BEDC was to explores paths toward economic self-sufficiency for Black Americans. In furtherance of this goal, the BEDC provided a platform to voices across the left-liberal spectrum, including long-time Congressman John Conyers, to Civil Rights icon (and future Congressman and State Representative) Julian Bond, and James Boggs, who gave a speech on “the myth and irrationality of Black capitalism.”


In demanding funding for a National Black Labor Defense Fund, independent Black-owned publishing houses and television networks, and the establishment of a Southern Land Bank, the Manifesto sought to appeal to constituencies which emphasized Black labor (a la Boggs) and revolutionary Black-national cultural production (a la Harold Cruse), as well as organizations like the recently founded Republic of New Africa (RNA), who believed the movement should focus on the creation of an independent Black Nation in the American South. In his own speech, Boggs called self-sufficiency through ‘Black Capitalism “a dream and a delusion,” writing that as “Blacks have no one underneath them to exploit…black capitalism would have to exploit a Black labor force.” Though the Boggs' saw the demand to expropriate wealth from the Churches as ill-advised, they felt that the debates surrounding the conferences as the first time that “the black movement…began to face the question of capitalism seriously.” James and Grace Lee Boggs, April 30, 1969 in John Henrik Clarke Papers, Box 5, Folder 13, Schomburg Library, New York, New York. On the Republic of New Africa, see Christian Davenport, *How Social Movements Die: Repression and Demobilization of the Republic of New Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). With no enforcement mechanism beyond social pressure and public shaming, the Manifesto failed to raise significant funds: Forman later estimated that the BEDC received around 300,000 dollars, much of which went to funding the Detroit Press Black Star Publications. (Even SNCC refused to adopt the Manifesto (Forman, *Black Revolutionaries*, 550) However, it did serve to prompt debate within National Council of Churches (NCC) on their role in the exploitation of Black Americans, while keeping alive discussions about reparations.
Following the issuing of the Manifesto, Forman officially joined League leadership, where he pushed for the creation of a Black Workers Congress (BWC). More explicit in its connection to Third World people and anti-colonial revolution than the LRBW had been, the BWC’s Manifesto called for Palestinian rights, the ending of American investment in South Africa, and the entry of the People’s Republic of China into the United Nations, in addition to its demands for a twenty-hour work week and thirty days of paid vacation each year.499 Hoping to expand beyond Detroit, and endorsing the forming of a united front made up of “all third world revolutionary forces,” including “Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Black People, Indians and Asians,” the Manifesto further advocated “the systematic study of revolutionary theory and the experiences of revolutionary movements and socialist nations,” while insisting that “we must apply all theory to the concrete realities of the United States.”500

The BWC’s emphasis on centrally-coordinated revolutionary education was a departure from the more organic self-organization and education which had flowed from the Great Rebellion into the auto plants between 1967-1969.501 Detached from its base in Detroit’s industrial working class, the BWC did have some success recruiting members in other cities. Ultimately however, internal ideological conflict led to a schism between ‘Black Marxist-Leninist’ and Black Nationalist factions, culminating in the resignation of Forman, Cockrel, Hamlin, and Watson (who represented the Marxist-Leninist faction) from the League on June 12, 1971. Accused of the political heresies of

501 Illustrative of this is the Black Manifesto’s call for a strike of all Third World Labor on August 18, 1972, the implementation of which would begin with educating “workers about the Indo-China war, the Palestinian armed struggle and the role of the United States investment in South Africa.” (https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/bwc-manifesto.pdf), accessed 7/15/2019
“opportunism…elitism, and bourgeois individualism,” Forman himself was expelled from the BWC in April, 1973. By this point, the organization had left its earlier eclecticism behind for a commitment to the idea that only “Marxism-Leninism and the Thought of Mao Tse-Tung” could serve as “the ideology of the working class.” Ideological fissures aside, relying on a base of industrial black workers was an increasingly tenuous strategy during the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, as rising oil prices and a consociate demand for more fuel efficient vehicles boosted the foreign auto market and accelerated the drive toward automation and deindustrialization. Between 1978 and 1982, Ford’s sales dropped nearly 50 percent: with Black workers suffering disproportionately from the resulting decline in employment.

Even at the end of the BWC’s life, Stokely Carmichael remained a central villain for the organizers, who mocked him as both a “buffoon,” and a “bourgeois nationalist.” Carmichael’s developing Pan-Africanism was held in particular disdain by the leadership of the Black Workers Congress, who argued that he was asking “the Black masses…to play ‘first aid’ for the liberation struggles in Africa,” while ignoring their own oppression.

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503 In this final iteration, the BWC was a part of the so-called New Communist Movement (NCM), and was involved in efforts to bring together Marxist-Leninist organizations including: Revolutionary Union (RU), the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), the Sojourner Truth Organization, and the October League. Though explicitly working to develop a new mass party, and committed to organizing along both nationalist and proletarian lines, these organizations where characterized by ideological rigidity and sectarianism than their predecessors, and their efforts at unity appeared as the New Deal political coalition was unravelling. (Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air*, and Paul Costello, “A Critical History of the New Communist Movement, 1969-1979,” *Theoretical Review* No. 13 (Nov-Dec 1979), [https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/ncm-critical.htm](https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1/ncm-critical.htm), accessed 6/5/2019.) [https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-2/bwc-1/section4.htm](https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-2/bwc-1/section4.htm), accessed 7/15/2019. This shift occurred against the backdrop of secular transformations in American industrial production—as these organizers became more committed than ever to a politics of ideologically rigid Black Marxism, their potential base was being decimated by deindustrialization, outsourcing, and automation, as well as successful anti-labor campaigns.

and the relationship between imperialism at home and imperialism abroad.\textsuperscript{505} That Carmichael, who had once been the most visible figure associated with Black Power politics and Black internationalism in the United States had become such a bogeyman for Black Marxists—though not entirely surprising given the response to Carmichael’s Oakland speech in support of Huey Newton—speaks to how far elements of the Third World Left had diverged between 1968 and the mid-1970s.\textsuperscript{506}

Shortly after the collapse of the merger between SNCC and the BPP, Carmichael and his wife Miriam Makeba relocated to Guinea, where President Ahmed Sekou Touré and honorary co-President Kwame Nkrumah were developing the socialist Pan-Africanist political philosophy which Carmichael would come to both define, and be defined by, over the next decade.\textsuperscript{507} Because African states were delimited by boundaries drawn by imperial powers with no attention paid to the actual histories of African people, argued Touré and Nkrumah, African anti-colonial movements could not be defined by ‘national’ self-determination. Instead, wrote Nkrumah, “the new African nation must develop within a continental framework.”\textsuperscript{508} In furtherance of this end, Nkrumah called for “the formation of the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) to co-ordinate policies and to direct action”—a call which Carmichael was determined to answer.\textsuperscript{509}

\textsuperscript{505} \url{https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-2/bwc-1/section4.htm}, accessed 7/15/2019
\textsuperscript{506} Likely the most well-known conflict between cultural nationalists and revolutionary nationalists was that between the Black Panther Party and Maulana Karenga’s US Organization—which led to the shooting deaths of Panthers John Huggins and Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter at UCLA in 1969. On US and the thought of Karenga see Scot Brown, \textit{Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism} (New York: NYU Press, 2003).
\textsuperscript{508} Nkrumah, \textit{Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare}, 27
\textsuperscript{509} Nkrumah, \textit{Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare}, 56
Published seven months after he moved to Guinea, Carmichael’s “Pan-Africanism—Land and Power,” applied what he had learned from Nkrumah and Touré to Black revolutionary politics in the United States. Convinced that no revolutionary project was feasible without a “land base,” Carmichael argued that Black people throughout the world should focus on establishing a new revolutionary state in Ghana (under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah), and that this new Ghana would serve both as an incubator for the development of an all-Black socialist state, and a base of operations for the war to unite the African continent.510 Beyond asking Black Americans to shift their revolutionary aspirations to a part of the world which most of them had never visited, “Pan-Africanism” encouraged “Africans who live in America” to “begin to alienate our people completely from the culture and values of Western society.”511 During this later period, Carmichael became increasingly disconnected from and irrelevant to Black politics on the ground in the United States.

The question of how to develop a political analysis sensitive to the interplay between class and nation was a problem facing all of the revolutionary nationalist organizations which defined themselves as a part of the Third World Left. An exhaustive accounting of these groups is beyond the limits of this chapter, but a partial list includes: El Centro de Acción Social y Autonomo (CASA) and Venceremos on the Chicana/o Left, the Young Lords, El Comité, and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party on the Puerto Rican Left; and the Red Guard Party, I Wor Kuen, Wei Min She, and East-Wind on the Asian Left.

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511 Ture, “Pan-Africanism—Land and Power.”
American Left, as well as organizations like the October League (OL) and the Revolutionary Union (RU), which had developed out of the foment of the student movement and in some cases out of relationships with communist parties that preexisted the New Left, and which identified with the Third World Left but whose membership was not predicated on an identification as a citizen of the Third World as such.

During this period, the revolutionary Chicana/o Left and Asian-American Lefts, diverged from the revolutionary Black Left—and from one another—both in how they related to the broader national communities of which they were a part and in their regional strength; with the Asian movement primarily active on the West Coast and the Chicana/o movement strongest in Texas, California, and the South-West. As with the Black Left, the radical wing of the Chicana/o movement developed along with, and against a more mainline civil rights movement. Lacking ties to existing organizations, the Asian American movement was less beholden to liberal opinion, and Asian-American activists were more likely to connect their politics to Black Power at home, or to anti-colonial revolution in South-East Asia than to American reformers. These distinctions notwithstanding, these groups—like the major organizations of the revolutionary Black Left—failed to grow in numbers beyond the mid-1970s, and most broke apart by the end of the decade.512

In his efforts at building the All African People’s Revolutionary Party, Stokely Carmichael went on frequent lecture tours in and out of the United States through the 1970s and 1980s. On these tours, Carmichael was often confronted with a joke—made in 1965 as a response to a memo written by Casey Hayden and Mary King on the role of women in SNCC—that the appropriate position of women in SNCC was ‘prone.’ Whether or not it stands as a fair representation of Carmichael’s gender-politics, this line damaged his credibility with the women’s movement, and came to encapsulate Black Power’s fraught relationship with women’s liberation. James Forman’s reputation on issues of gender equity was better than Carmichael’s, with Mary King having stated that “substantial credit belongs to Jim for SNCC’s inclusion of women as full agents in a historic struggle.” However, while Forman may have been personally egalitarian in his relationships with movement-women, neither his writing or his more public-facing

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514 Many SNCC women, including King, insisted that Carmichael had responded positively to the memo, and that this line—in poor taste though it may have been—should not define Carmichael on women’s liberation. (Joseph, Stokely, 79-80)  
515 Holsaert et al, Hands on the Freedom Plow, 340-1. Judy Richardson pushes back against this somewhat, offering that Forman could be dismissive of women, but was ultimately pushed by women in SNCC to be more egalitarian
activism from the late 1960s and early 1970s centered feminism as an issue worth fighting for.

The political thought of Third World Feminists cannot be understood solely as a critique of the liberal, white second wave, or of the misogyny of Black and Third World men. Like the male leadership of organizations like the Panthers, SNCC, and the LRBW, Third World feminist-organizations split over whether to emphasize cultural nationalism or economic precarity, and over whether or not the necessary changes could be secured through nonviolent protest. This notwithstanding, at root, the impetus to establish independent organizations led by women was a direct reaction against both marginalization within the existing formations of the Black and Third World Left, and the sense that the second-wave had little to offer to poor and working-class women of color. Once their own organizations had been established however, Third World Feminists did not just argue for their inclusion, or that attention needed to be paid to the unique problems which they faced. Third World Feminists argued that their experiences as victims of racism, sexism, capitalism, imperialism, and (at times) homophobia, positioned them to develop analyses of the ways that these evils structured the lives of all people—including those who remained blissfully unaware—and thus allowed them to theorize a politics capable of unraveling all of these interlocking systems of oppression and exploitation. That misogyny, racism, and capitalism worked to reinforce one another had been an insight of pre-figurative Third World feminists like Claudia Jones and Esther Cooper in the 1930s and 1940s, and re-entered Left discourses beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s through the work of a younger generation of Black leftist women: including Frances Beal.
Born in 1940 in Binghamton, NY to a first-generation Jewish mother and a father who claimed Black and Native American ancestry, Beal’s family moved from upstate New York to Queens following her father’s death. After studying at the University of Wisconsin (where she was a member of the Socialist Club) Beal relocated to Paris, where Algerian students exposed her to anti-colonial activism, the writing of Frantz Fanon, and the journal *Présence Africaine*. Beal was also exposed to the viciousness of the reaction to anti-colonialism, when a French policeman assumed Beal was North African and struck her across the face without provocation. Each summer, Beal travelled to the U.S., where she spent time with members of SNCC. After returning for good in 1966, Beal began to work out of SNCC’s New York office as a part of the newly created International Affairs Commission—an initiative pushed by Forman.

In 1968, Beal and other women in SNCC formed the BWLC “to investigate some of the conditions under which black women function.” The BWLC gained momentum as SNCC was falling apart, and in a conscious distancing from the organization, the BWLC renamed itself the Black Women’s Alliance in mid-1969. That same year, Beal’s “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female,” was published under the heading “Black

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516 Frances Beal, interview by Loretta Ross, transcript of video recording, March 18, 2005, Voices of Feminism Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, 19
518 Beal, interview by Loretta Ross, 25
519 Beal, interview by Loretta Ross, 23
521 Beal, interviewed by Loretta Ross, 37. On other women, including Gwendolyn Patton, who played leading roles in the creation of the TWWA, see Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*, 159-192
Women’s Manifesto.”Later included in the 1970 anthology *The Black Woman*, Beal’s piece analyzed both the exploitation of women under racial-capitalism and the failure of the male leadership of the Black movement to consider this exploitation in their otherwise systemic critiques.523 “The Black male,” writes Beal, “sees the system for what it really is for the most part. But where he rejects its values and mores on many issues, when it comes to women, he seems to take his guidelines from the pages of the *Ladies Home Journal.*”524 Beal argued that, by ignoring the exploitation of women—and in particular non-white women—revolutionary black men were acting in a ‘counter-revolutionary’ fashion. “To relegate women to purely supportive roles or to simply cultural considerations,” Beal writes, “is dangerous doctrine…Unless black men…understand that the society which we are trying to create is one in which the oppression of ALL MEMBERS of that society is eliminated, then the revolution will have failed in its avowed purpose.”525

After being approached by a group of women on the Puerto Rican Left, BWA-members came to feel that “we could not express support for Asia, Africa, and Latin America and at the same time ignore non-Black Third World sisters in this country.” By the end of 1969, the BWA determined that “we would be much more effective and unified by becoming a Third World Women’s organization,” and the organization

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524 Ibid

525 Ibid. Beal’s also critiqued white feminism, wage discrepancies, forced sterilization in Puerto Rico, and limited access to abortion.
changed its name to the Third World Women’s Alliance. In 1971 the TWWA began to publish its own newspaper: *Triple Jeopardy*. An editorial in the first issue of the paper set out the TWWA position: that in their modern forms, both racism and male chauvinism were products of capitalism’s imperialist stage. For this reason, an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist politics must be both anti-racist and anti-chauvinist. “The emancipation of women,” reads the editorial, “is a necessity for the successful functioning of a socialist country; the oppression of women in both the home and society is a necessity for the successful functioning of a capitalist country. The choice is clear.” Members of the Third World Women’s Alliance saw themselves as the tip of an international spear, aimed at the soft underbelly of American imperialism. “China has cut off a tentacle; Cuba has cut off a tentacle; Vietnam has cut off a tentacle; Guinea-Bissau and the Palestinian guerilla struggles are in the process of cutting off yet another tentacle,” reads an internal TWWA document from 1972, “But these very important events have only weakened this octopus. It is up to the Third World peoples living in the belly of the beast to destroy his ability to reproduce; we must kill it.”

The shift from an identification as Black women to an identification as Third World Woman was representative of both an efflorescence of Third World organizations between 1969-1973, and a growing focus on varieties of feminism beyond the mostly

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528 *Triple Jeopardy*, Vol. 1 Issue 1, Third World Women’s Alliance Records, Box 3, Folder 9, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.
529 “What is the Third World,” Third World Women’s Alliance Records, Box 3, Folder 9, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College
white and professional second wave. Though often working in coalition with one another, Asian-American, Chicana, and Black radical feminists developed their political analyses in distinct ways. What they shared however, and what distinguished them from second-wave feminists, is that they emerged out of and/or alongside nationalist movements, and for this reason were made to balance their claims as women with their claims as members of their respective national groups—a challenge which white feminists did not face. As historian of Third World feminism Benita Roth has written, “Black and Chicana feminists did not seem to ever conceptualize their activist community as different from (or better than) their communities in general.” They saw their mission, adds Roth, as “reforming a community,” rather than “forming one.” ‘Community’ was understood to refer to both the local, and the global, and Third World women rejected both any feminism that did not include national liberation in its political


531 Roth, 70. Roth adds that “early Chicana feminist organizing was characterized by the express desire to stay linked to men and to existing Chicano organizations while promoting a greater role for women in service to the Chicano cause.” (139)

532 Roth, 73. This connection to a larger community was particularly salient for Black feminists; especially following the issuance of Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (The Moynihan Report), in which the then-Assistant Secretary of Labor and future Senator decried a “tangle of pathology” in the Black community which he saw as the principle barrier to Black progress. (Roth, 86). Roth writes that while “Many white feminists wanted to take the nuclear family apart; Black women and Black feminists saw a Black family under attack via the Moynihan report.” (102)
vision, and any ‘revolutionary’ nationalism that refused to challenge patriarchy within the national community.

Women played an active role in the Puerto Rican Young Lords Organization (YLO) from the outset, but as with the Black Panther Party, they were largely kept out of leadership.\textsuperscript{533} Both in spite of, and because of this, women in the YLO worked in and out of the organization to push the Young Lords to denounce patriarchy along with capitalism and racism.\textsuperscript{534} In a “Position Paper on Women” published in the YLO’s newspaper in September 1970, the Central Committee demanded access to day care and an end to both prostitution and the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women. “Puerto Rican and Black women,” the paper reads, “make up over half of the revolutionary army, and in the struggle for national liberation they must press for the equality of women; the woman’s struggle is the revolution within the revolution. Puerto Rican women will be neither behind nor in front of their brothers but always alongside them in mutual respect and love.”\textsuperscript{535}

Women in the Chicano movement also asserted the need for an explicitly Chicana feminism due, at least in part, to poor treatment by men in the movement who expected women to perform secretarial roles and to stay out of leadership.\textsuperscript{536} Though loose groups

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\item[533] Young Lord member Iris Morales recalls that women were particularly active in organizing around issues facing children. She writes that after “several radical doctors informed the Young Lords about brain damage cases they were treating in young children living in East Harlem… working in pairs, the men and women collected urine samples from children in order to test it for lead content.” And adds that “The women in the Young Lords were especially effective in this outreach.” Morales, \textit{Rebel Women}, 19
\item[534] Women in the Young Lords placed a particular emphasis on the long history of forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women.
\item[536] Years of marginalization came to a head, writes Maylei Blackwell, when Chicano activists rejected the leadership of Chicana activist Anna NietoGomez following her election as President of el Movimiento
\end{footnotes}
of Chicana women like las Chicanas de Aztlán had organized on college campuses in Southern California beginning in the late 1960s, it was not until 1971 that Chicana activists began to formally organize independent of existing Chicano groups. That year, las Chicanas de Aztlán began to publish their own newspaper, and to refer to themselves as the Hijas de Cuauhtémoc (the name of the group’s newspaper). In May of 1971, over 600 activists came together in Houston for the first national Chicana conference: the 1971 Conferencia De Mujeres Por La Raza. In demanding access to abortion and in challenging “machismo, discrimination in education, the double standard, the role of the Catholic Church, and all the backward ideology designed to keep women subjugated,” wrote conference-participant Mirta Vidal, Chicanas were telling the men of the movement that “the sooner that Chicanos understand the need for women to struggle around their own special demands, through their own organizations, the further La Raza as a whole will be on the road to liberation.”

As with the Asian-American Movement more broadly, radical Asian-American feminism was distinct in that, unlike the Chicano movement and in particular the Black movement, it did not develop out of a significant tradition of Asian activism in the United States. “We are the first generation of Asian-Americans,” wrote Grace Lee Boggs,

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537 Blackwell, Chicana Power, 5-8
538 the daughters of Cuauhtémoc—the last Aztec emperor prior to the Spanish invasion.
540 There were distinctions within the Asian American movement. Karen L. Ishizuka—a movement veteran and the Chief Curator of the Japanese American National Museum, writes that Filipino-Americans “did not racially identify themselves as Asian.” She expands on this by arguing that “While Chinese and Japanese felt the internal colonization of people of color in this country, Filipinos had been materially colonized in their own country, shaping a frame of mind they brought with them to the United States.” Karen L. Ishizuka, Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties (London: Verso, 2016), location 1137.
“who are resisting assimilation into the American way of life.”
Boggs—along with other prominent women in the movement like Yuri Kochiyama—had been active in the struggle for Black Freedom before turning to the Asian American Left. As with other Third World feminism(s), Asian American feminists began to gather informally in the late 1960s, and started to form independent organizations—and join groups like the TWWA—in the early-mid 1970s.

Radical feminists of color belonged to communities whose arrival in the United States was frequently characterized by conditions of unfreedom or of partial citizenship—as seasonal migrants, as residents of land taken by force, or as slaves. Informed by this history, they saw their condition as consonant with decades, or even centuries of treatment as a cheap and replaceable labor force: their presence in the heart

of American empire was a reminder of the ways that monopoly capitalism extended beyond the boundaries of the United States, siphoning wealth from the underdeveloped world. “I am not a good American,” the poet Pat Parker told an Oakland audience. “I do not wish to have the world colonized, bombarded, and plundered in order to eat steak.” A lesbian feminist who had worked with the BPP, Parker expressed contempt for the aspirations of professional-class women, asserting that, “If the passage of the ERA means that I am going to become an equal participant in the exploitation of the world; that I am going to bear arms against other Third World people who are fighting to reclaim what is rightfully theirs—then I say Fuck the ERA.”

Further distinguishing Third World feminism from the second wave was a greater focus on the economic condition of poor and working-class people. “It is difficult for Third World women to address themselves to the petty problems of who is going to take out the garbage,” wrote Chicana activist and TWWA member Elizabeth Martinez, “when there isn’t enough food in the house for anything to be thrown away.” Indeed, though inspired by anti-colonial revolution abroad, Black and Third World women were not as sanguine as their male counterparts about the post-capitalist paradise to come. “I’m not thoroughly convinced,” wrote one woman active in the movement, “that Black Liberation…will really and truly mean my liberation. I’m not so sure that when it comes time ‘to put down my gun,’ that I won’t have a broom shoved in my hands, as so many of my Cuban sisters have.”

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544 Pat Parker, “Revolution: It’s Not Neat or Pretty or quick,”
546 Quoted in Raya Dunayevskaya, Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and From Marx to Mao (New York: Delacorte Press, 1973), 111. This concern was even more pressing for the increasingly visible Gay and Lesbian Left. As Emily K. Hobson has written, radical gay men drew on Third World and anti-colonial discourses in theorizing their own politics as defined by “a break with existing homophile
Third World Feminism was not the only mode of feminist critique that connected economic exploitation with male supremacy. In 1972, the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union (CWLU) published a pamphlet titled “Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women’s Movement,” which gave a coherent political identity to feminists who prioritized the conditions of poor and working-class women. In this document, the CWLU articulated the need for a continued confrontation of reality with reason: describing a process by which a socialist-feminist political strategy would be built through the interplay between consciousness and objective conditions. Held at Ohio’s Antioch College over July 4th weekend, 1975, the National Conference on Socialist Feminism was attended by over 1500 activists, including representatives of the TWWA, members of anti-revisionist organizations associated with the New Communist Movements, and coalitions like the New American Movement (NAM) which had developed at least partially in opposition to the miscalculations of the Third World Left. It was almost certainly the largest gathering of socialist feminists to that point in American history.

Speaking at the Conference, the writer Barbara Ehrenreich—whose own analysis had been influenced by Cuba, China, and Vietnam and who had been a frequent contributor to *Monthly Review* since the late 1960s—maintained that a key lesson of
these revolutions was “the importance of subjective factors in revolutionary change.”

“We don’t have to wait until ‘after the revolution,’ Ehrenreich added, “to transform ourselves.” Further, Ehrenreich distinguished socialist feminists from bourgeois feminists in that socialist feminists “do not seek individual solutions for individual women.” Rather, “We seek collective solutions and forms of struggle which heighten collective confidence.” In a later essay, Ehrenreich described a socialist feminist approach to radical politics as one which aligned with the Western-Marxian method of Baran and Sweezy. “As Marxists,” wrote Ehrenreich, “we come to feminism from a completely different place than the mechanical Marxists. Because we see monopoly capitalism as a political/ economic/ cultural totality, we have room within our framework for feminist issues which have nothing ostensibly to do with production or ‘politics,’ issues that have to do with the family, health care, ‘private’ life.”

Though insufficient, the 1975 conference represented an effort at the bringing together of representatives of a mostly white socialist feminist tradition with Third World feminist activists and organizations, an effort symbolized by the forming of a Third World Women’s Caucus. Though criticizing the inattention that white feminists had paid to the issues facing Third World women—and to Third World women themselves—the caucus called for a “real unity,” based on a “clear theoretical understanding and agreement on the role of women and in particular Third World women,” that could “link up with the working-class struggle to do away with the capitalist system, establish

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548 Since this period, Ehrenreich’s politics have moved away from revolutionary anti-colonialism toward the sort of democratic socialism associated with Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).
socialism, and [fight for] the complete emancipation of women and all oppressed people.”\(^{551}\) The caucus asked the broader socialist feminist movement to look to “examples of struggle like China, Vietnam, and Mozambique,” and to draw on the anti-colonial movements of the Third World to develop an understanding of how “struggles were built, the importance of a clear ideological perspective, and connections of women to the most advanced organization of the working-class in a given country.”\(^{552}\)

These efforts at unity notwithstanding, this conference—representing the peak of Third World and socialist feminism’s numbers—arrived just as the New Left itself was collapsing: an irony perhaps not lost on activists who had been told for years that their turn would come after the revolution had been won. Aware of the ease with which gender and sexual equity could be ignored (when not actively denied) by men on the Left, as well as the ease with which poverty could be ignored by the second wave, Third World Feminist organizations did not allow their revolutionary aims to distract from or to dilute efforts to address the material needs of Black and Third World women in the United States: either during the peak of the New Left’s influence, or during the fallow years of the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers circa 1969, Third World feminists understood their own day-to-day exploitation as essential to the functioning of capitalism and imperialism globally: the machine could not run without the work of hundreds of thousands of low-waged women, or without millions of women giving birth and raising children without pay.\(^{553}\) The archives of *Triple Jeopardy*

\(^{551}\) Statement by the Third World Women’s Caucus, Socialist-Feminist Conference—July 4-6, 1975, Wini Breines Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

\(^{552}\) ibid

\(^{553}\) A TWWA education committee document reads that “through our study it became clear how the ‘material basis’ or the ‘cause’ for women’s oppression is rooted in our most basic relationships within a capitalist society…In order for capitalism to function, profits must be maintained and thus a source of
for example, make plain the degree to which the TWWA focused on the material needs of working women—with articles on the conditions of Black secretaries, the necessity of full employment, and on efforts to unionize domestic workers appearing next to essays on transnational anti-colonial militants and images of Third World women carrying rifles.\textsuperscript{554} This focus on the ‘triple jeopardy’ facing Black and Third World women recalls the work of Esther Cooper and Claudia Jones on the exploitation of low-waged Black women in the 1940s (see chapter 2).

Though not exclusively an organization of women who identified as being of the Third World—and indeed not always considered as a part of the Third World Left—the coalition of activists and intellectuals involved with Wages for Housework may be the best illustration of an organization that applied a study of anti-colonial politics to the economic condition of women in the First World.\textsuperscript{555} Wages for Housework developed out of the International Feminist Collective (IFC)—a cohort of Marxist-feminists, including: the Italian Mariarosa Dalla Costa, the American Selma James (then married to C.L.R. James and a veteran of the Johnson-Forrest debates which included James and Grace Lee cheap labor must exist.” (Third World Women’s Alliance Records, Box 1, Folder 16, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College)

\textsuperscript{554} This focus on the working lives of women within the United States made the organizers of the TWWA hostile to Carmichael’s back-to-Africa position. An internal document from 1972 notes that struggles for third world unity “must be interlocked with one another in order to obtain the most effective results…therefore…mass migration back to our respective homelands is not necessary for Black and other Third World peoples to achieve freedom.” (Third World Women’s Alliance Records, Box 3, Folder 10, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College)

Boggs), and the Italian-American Silvia Federici. In the tradition of Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, and the Boggses, Dalla Costa, James, and Federici were students of Marx whose application of Marxian methodology informed their evolving critique of capitalism, and in particular of the role of unwaged labor in capitalist reproduction. Drawing on the work of anti-colonialist theorists including “Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank [both of whom were directly influenced by Baran and Sweezy] and Frantz Fanon,” as well as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, writes Federici, Wages for Housework, “[expands] the Marxian analysis of unwaged labor beyond the confines of the factory…to see the home and housework as the foundations of the factory system.”

In her essay “Counterplanning in the Kitchen,” Federici rails against the absurdity of dismissing the unwaged work performed by “half of the world’s population” as somehow exterior to the reproduction of capital. Federici further illustrates the connection between unwaged domestic work in the West and the subjugation of the Third World, noting that “whenever capital could not run to the ‘Third World,’ it opened the gates of the factories to women, blacks, and youth in the metropolis.” Thus, far from being distinct from the questions of automation and deindustrialization facing Detroit’s autoworkers, “wagelessness and underdevelopment are essential elements of capitalist planning, national and internationally…powerful means to make workers compete on the national and international labor market, and [to] make us believe that our interests are different and contradictory.”

To Selma James, that the organizers of Wages for Housework lived in the nations of the First World positioned them to bear the principle

556 Federici, Revolution at Point Zero, 6-7; Federici, Wages for Housework, 18
558 Ibid, 36
financial burden of a global struggle for the end of un-waged work. “Our great advantage in the metropolis,” writes James, “is that the wealth stolen from all of us is where we are, on the spot, to demand back.” James concludes that “though the dilemma of the Third World is that the wealth of our combined labor is in the metropolis, the Third World can draw on the wealth of our combined struggle to get it back.”

Wages for Housework continued to evolve to meet the challenges facing unwaged and low-waged women in the United States into the late 1970s—organizing in defense of Welfare and against cuts to social services. Standing in opposition to welfare-cuts was something that Wages for Housework shared with the Third World Women’s Alliance. The TWWA’s increasing focus on welfare rights post-1973 was part of a broader effort to coordinate with reform-coalitions outside of their own organization—including working to organize actions around International Women’s Day beginning in 1974. Though unsuccessful in stemming the tide of anti-government

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560 Roth, Wages for Housework, location 2813

561 Third World Women’s Alliance Records, Box 1, Folder 9, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College. On the Welfare Rights Movement more broadly, including on overlaps between welfare-rights activists and Third World Feminism, see Premilla Nadasen, Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States (New York: Routledge, 2005); Annelise Orleck, Storming Caesar’s Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Felicia Kornbluh, The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Mary E. Triece, Tell it Like it is: Women in the National Welfare Rights Movement (Colombia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2013). Grace Chang has written persuasively on the ways that Welfare policy has been structured to maximize the extraction of value from immigrants from the Third World while minimizing the costs of supporting these immigrants (in part through campaigns to demonize and marginalize them). Chang writes that “First World countries routinely make deliberate economic interventions to facilitate their continued extraction of Third World resources, including and especially people,” while simultaneously depicting “immigrant women, and particularly Latinas, as the major threat to American public resources.” (Grace Change, Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016 c.2000), locations 585 and 602).
legislation—let alone at winning a social wage—the socialist-feminists involved with Wages for Housework and the TWWA serve as examples of theorists who integrated their understanding of Third World liberation movements into their critique of U.S. liberalism without dead-ending in a sort of static anti-revisionist orthodoxy detached from the changing reality of American politics.

Third World Feminist organizations never captured the public imagination in the way that SDS or the Panthers had, and certainly did not come close to forming a mass movement. However, Black and Third World feminists succeeded in applying a revolutionary politics to specific campaigns targeting immediate improvements in the material condition of working-class women. Ironically, the rise of a distinctly Third World feminist consciousness came as the Third World Left—and the New Left more broadly—declined during the 1970s. Arguably it was not until the 1980s—at which time Third World Leftism was relegated principally to academia and to local organizing—that Third World feminism really emerged as a cohesive project. In spite of this, the recovery of the history of Third World feminist activists illustrates the development of multiple feminism(s), driven by a dialectic process of self-creation which continued beyond the mid-1970s into the present day, and whose influences can still be seen in activism at the local, national, and transnational levels, and in both academic—and increasingly in popular—discourses around gender, race, and capitalism.

Key to the Third World vision had been a rejection of ‘stage-ism’: that idea that revolutionaries could—indeed must—wait for the course of history to provide the proper
conditions for a revolution. Inspired by the examples set by Lenin, by Mao, and by Castro, many Third World Leftists believed that a revolutionary situation could be created—or at least hastened—through the actions of committed radicals who drew on the unique history of each nation to develop a politics capable of winning power. Theorists drawing on the Third World were not, as James and Grace Lee Boggs later wrote, “faced…with the task of applying the ideas of Marx or Mao to the U.S.,” but rather “with that of developing a new concept of human identity as the basis of the revolution in America, a concept which must extend the dialectical development of humanity itself.”562 In a series of essays written in 1973-4, the Boggses diagnosed the failures of both the Black-and-Third-World-workerism and the Cultural Nationalism which had developed in the decade since the collapse of the Freedom Now Movement, and whose evolutions were typified by the political careers of James Forman and Stokely Carmichael. Both the Marxists and the nationalists, argued the Boggses, had failed to think dialectically about the United States, and about the possibility of developing a revolutionary politics in a moment that was dramatically different from that of the mid-late 1960s.

Just as the history of the United States cannot be understood apart from the history of Black Americans, argued the Boggses “the history of Black Americans cannot be separated from their history in the development of this country.”563 For this reason, the Pan-Africanism associated with Carmichael was “a confession of revolutionary

562 James and Grace Lee Boggs, Revolution and Evolution, 196
frustration” on the part of people who “are now evading the awesome responsibility for
leading a revolution in the United States.”564 Insisting on “stop[ping] all influence of
Western culture on our people,” Carmichael was engaging in a sort of vulgarized version
of Harold Cruse’s analysis from the Freedom Now Period (see chapter 2)—an outcome
predicted by James Boggs. Though he had argued for the development of a separatist
black nationalist culture, Cruse had always disdained those ‘African nationalists’ who
saw no future for Blacks in the United States, and in The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual,
Cruse had written that “the Negro movement in America sorely needs a social theory
based on the living ingredients of Afro-American history.”565 Eliding any difference
between the cultural traditions of Black Americans and those of Black people in Africa,
Carmichael was demanding that reality conform to theory, rather than working toward a
theory of political change based on real conditions. 566

564 Boggs, “Beyond Nationalism,” 41
565 Cruse, TAM, box 6, “Subject: The Afro-American Youth Cultural Conference, April 1965,” by Harold
Cruse and Cruse, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, 557
were many artists and activists during the early 1970s who embraced a distinctly Black American cultural
project without subsuming their own work under the umbrella of revolutionary projects abroad, as well as
Black intellectuals and activists in and out of the U.S. who continued to draw inspiration from, and seek
political ties with, Africa without insisting on a literal return to the continent. Often described as the
aesthetic arm of Black Power, the Black Arts Movement (BAM) was a product of trends in literature,
music, and visual arts with roots in the Harlem renaissance and in the bohemian counter-cultures of the
1950s-1960s, as well as the strain of cultural nationalism associated with Ron Karenga’s US
Organization—which had clashed with the revolutionary nationalism of the Black Panther Party during the
Books, 1984); Komoni Woodard, A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) & Black Power
Politics (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Fred Moten, In the Break: The Aesthetics
of the Black Radical Tradition (Minneapolis: Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2003); James
Smethurst, The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Lisa Gail Collins and Margo Natalie Crawford, eds. New
Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers, 2006); Margo Natalie Crawford,
Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First-Century Aesthetics (Urbana,
Champaign, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2017); and Jonathan Fenderson, Building the
Black Arts Movement: Hoyt Fuller and the Cultural Politics of the 1960s (Champaign, Il: Board of Trustees
of the University of Illinois, 2019).
Reflecting on the focus on Black auto workers, Boggs admonished the tendency to “try to find new social forces who will, we hope, lead us to ‘the revolution’ because they are militant in their reactions to their oppression by capitalist society,” without acknowledging that “what starts out as a struggle for equal justice, equal representation or equal rights can, precisely because it gains momentum, become just another factor in the development of the system.”

The Boggses condemned the Third World Left for failing to recognize that capitalists too could learn from history and adapt. “Unless we struggle to understand this dialectical development,” they write, “we will be constantly expecting capitalism to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions and/or the rebellions of militant masses, when, in fact, militant rebellions that do not advance to revolutions only increase the number of those incorporated into the…values of capitalism.”

Writing twenty-five years after the Chinese Revolution, the Boggses implored their readers to recognize that the lesson of China, Cuba, and Vietnam was “to start grappling with the question of how to make an American revolution and stop talking so much about the revolutions taking place elsewhere in the world.” Failure to do so, “only reinforces the already powerful tendency of the radical intellectual…to turn living ideas into dogmas and abstractions.”

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569 James and Grace Lee Boggs, “Looking Backward and Forward: Essay 3,” 30. In a letter to a friend drafted in January, 1976, Sweezy offered a somewhat pithier version of this critique, writing “In a sense we [at Monthly Review] are Maoists of course, but not at all like or sympathetic to the little Maoist sects which have proliferated in the West.” (“Letter to Frederic Schuman,” Box 4, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University). One leading-Third World leftist who did continue to subject his earlier theories to rigorous critique was Huey Newton, whose efforts at rethinking his analysis of the world situation had led him to reject the internal colony thesis in favor of intercommunism. However, Newton’s struggles with addiction, his personal tendencies toward authoritarianism and the use of violence as a means of conflict resolution, and the continued targeting of the Panthers by law enforcement, made it difficult for him to effectively lead even the Oakland Panthers. (Newton fled to Cuba to avoid murder and assault charges in 1974, leaving Elaine Brown in charge as chair).
The hopes of the Left notwithstanding, the unravelling of the New Deal coalition did not lead to a new birth of proletarian consciousness. Midwifed by decades of top-down organizing and propaganda initiatives—which succeeded in convincing white ethnic voters that government profligacy targeted at improving the lives of people of color came at their expense—a resurgent conservative movement successfully dragged both the Republican and the Democratic Parties to the Right. Coincident with this transition in domestic politics was a shift in the politics of the nations of Third World—much of which were hard to reconcile with the romantic vision held by so many on the post-War America Left. By 1974, the differences of political emphasis which had divided the Freedom Now Party had diverged beyond the point of reconciliation. In the ten years since the collapse of the FNP the Third World Left had failed to produce a durable politics which brought together socialist internationalism, proletarianism, and cultural nationalism. Divorced from one another, they lacked the potency to mobilize a significant political constituency, and while some on the Third World Left maintained a commitment to guerilla actions against the state, most came to recognize that American capitalism could not be brought down from the inside in the near- or medium-term.

570 See the conclusion of this dissertation
571 This was true of a number of veterans of the LRBW and the BWC also (including, eventually, James Forman), though not of the organizations themselves, which fell apart in the mid-1970s. After leaving the BWC, Forman founded the Unemployment and Poverty Action Committee, where he served as President until shortly before his death in 2005. After earning a PhD in 1982, he ran for local office in Washington D.C., including several attempts at becoming D.C.’s ‘shadow senator.’ (James Forman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.). Mike Hamlin earned a Masters in Social Work and taught classes at Wayne State until his death in 2017. Ken Cockrel was elected to City Council in Detroit in 1977. General Baker remained active in the labor movement—becoming chair of his local in the 1980s.
In much of the literature, this period represents the end—or at least the beginning of the end—of the story of the Third World Left.572 A movement tearing itself apart (with assistance from the FBI) due to a combination of intransigence, hubris, and self-destructive violence.573 There is, of course, truth in this account. The idea that revolution was imminent was hopelessly optimistic. So too was the assumption that liberalism—the chief target of the Left’s critique—would continue to be the dominant force in American political life. Indeed, in the context of the half-century of reaction which followed the 1960s, the degree to which fissures on the Left seem characteristic of ‘the narcissism of small differences,’ is striking. Nevertheless, a narrative focus which begins with the death of the New Left and works backwards in search of explanation risks missing both the roots of the Third World turn in substantive critiques of racial liberalism, Cold War foreign policy, and Keynesian economic governance, and the lasting impact and continued relevance of those critiques.

Further, the ideological stagnation of Carmichael and the organizations of the New Communist Movement was by no means the inevitable outcome of a politics guided by Third Worldism.574 Rather, the failures of these and other thinkers in the mid-late 1970s should be seen as a failure to continue to apply the analysis demanded by early Third World Leftists like Baran, Sweezy, the Boggeses, and Cruse: to derive from experiments in anti-

572 The most notable exception to this is Elbaum’s Revolution in the Air, which traces Third World Marxist organizations through the 1970s and into the mid 1980s, when veterans of Third World Left organizations organized around Jesse Jackson’s first presidential campaign.
573 In the early literature on the New Left—largely written by veterans of the student Left interrogating the failures of their own organizations—it was almost always the 1969 convention of Students for A Democratic Society which served as the inflection point. For representative examples see Todd Gitlin, The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage (New York: Bantam Books, 1987) and James Miller, Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994)
574 That the organizations of the New Communist Movement failed to build a revolutionary front does not mean that their on-the-ground organizing was unproductive.
colonial politics some insight into how a distinctly *American* revolutionary movement might be theorized and built. Indeed, the contributions of Third World feminists make clear that the methodological insights of early Third World Leftists could—and did—continue to guide substantive advances in our understanding of the functioning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century capitalism. In the decades following the end of the Third World Left as even as aspirationally cohesive political force, Third Worldism has continued to exert an influence over the political thought of the Left in the United States and beyond. The final two chapters examine the ‘afterlives’ of Third World Leftism, in particular in the realm of heterodox economic thought and in academia.
Chapter 5: In Search of the Socialist Subject: Radical Political Economy and the Study of Moral Incentives in China and Cuba

In 1960, the editors of the journal *Studies on the Left* proclaimed “the Cuban revolution to be the most important and least understood social development in the recent history of the Western hemisphere.” For a young Left opposed to both American capitalism and Soviet communism, Cuba represented an exciting alternative—a non-Communist, anti-imperialist revolution just 90 miles from American shores. Indeed, no sooner had Castro’s guerillas taken Havana than radicals from the United States began to travel to the island to learn about the revolution firsthand. In part due to politics and in part due to distances both cultural and geographic, China’s appeal to American Leftists developed more gradually, but by the latter half of the 1960s Mao’s China had joined Castro’s Cuba at the center of the New Left’s political imagination.

Scholars of the Third World Turn have written a great deal about American leftists who travelled to Cuba, China, and other nations of the Third World between the 1950s and 1970s: Pan-Africanists like W.E.B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois and Vicki Garvin developed networks of solidarity with political leaders in post-colonial states; Progressive journalists and critics like Herbert Matthews and C. Wright Mills embedded themselves with Castro; Black Power activists from Robert F. Williams, to Eldridge

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Cleaver, to Assata Shakur, fled to Cuba, China, or Algeria to escape punishment by an American state whose power they viewed as fundamentally illegitimate; women with leadership roles in SNCC drew inspiration through travel to Guinea; a wave of mostly anonymous airplane hijackers demanded to be taken to Havana, where they hoped to be received with open arms by the Cuban government; and student leftists of the Venceremos Brigades defied U.S. law to cut sugar cane, in hopes that through their service to Castro’s million tons program they might imbibe something of the revolutionary passion which drove the Cuban people.577

Within this broader history of travel to the Third World, the narrower story of radical political economists who went to Cuba and China in search of alternative modes of production and distribution has been largely obscured. For Leftists engaged in the study of political economy, Cuba and China held a particular promise as post-revolutionary states working to construct systems which were predicated on something other than the exploited and alienated labor upon which American capitalism depended, and which might yet avoid the political and cultural stagnation of Soviet bureaucracy.

From the Marxists at *Monthly Review* to the young academics who founded the Union of Radical Political Economics (URPE), to a handful of older Left-Keynesians like Joan Robinson, radical political economists undertook both to push back against America’s unilateral foreign policy by offering alternatives for the underdeveloped world, and to study how a society of socialist subjects might function—not just in the so-called ‘Third World’, but in the First World as well. Applying the lessons of Third World development to the transformation of American capitalism was often an explicit commitment, with URPE members Richard C. Edwards and Arthur MacEwan writing that examining “how incentives, the control of the work process, [and] the process of distribution are organized in other societies,” could inform “how they might be organized in a socialist society in the United States;” and that, “to raise these issues is of course to raise the question, ‘How can radical social change take place.”

Through studying the

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organization of production and consumption in the Third World—in particular in China and Cuba—leftist economists sought to determine whether or not a new, post-capitalist subject was truly possible.\textsuperscript{579}

That mainstream American economists failed to take seriously investigations into moral incentives is representative of a larger failure which shaped the discipline in the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century: the insistence that people are fundamentally and unalterably motivated by self-interest, and that efforts to deny or subvert this principle end in tragedy. Radical economists sought out alternative models in the revolutionary governments of the Third World. However, constrained by underdevelopment, starved of aid, and fearing well-funded military challenges from the Right, most revolutionary governments came to see coercion as an essential precondition to the building of a socialist state, and those governments which did maintain their commitment to both socialist economics and to political democracy—such as Allende’s Chile—were unable to survive.\textsuperscript{580} In this way, the economic theory which helped to undergird Cold War foreign policy helped to produce outcomes which validated both, and efforts to push the limits of the American economics profession by drawing on Third World revolutions served to reinforce those limits.

\textsuperscript{579} Like Stalinism, the Cultural Revolution produced horrific political violence, and both communist Cuba and China were characterized by severe political repression. For a variety of reasons, this violence is rarely mentioned in the literature surveyed in this chapter. Radicals travelling to revolutionary countries were given curated tours, and were eager (at times correctly) to place at least some of the blame for authoritarian elements on the role of global capitalism and imperialism, or to compare the violence and repression endemic to these societies, with the violence and repression endemic to their own. A lack of attention to these issues here is not intended to ignore them or absolve radicals of their responsibility to critique them, but rather to move beyond a historiographic paradigm which interrogates whether Leftists were right or wrong to look to China, Cuba, and other Third World nations for political inspiration, in favor of asking what they saw, how they understood it, and how they incorporated it into a larger body of cultural, social, and political thought.

\textsuperscript{580} Of course, many Communist governments had little interest in building a socialist utopia, and were merely availing themselves of certain keywords in their effort to win power and build alliances with the Soviet, Chinese, or Cuban governments.
With the increasing professionalization of the economics discipline during the early-mid twentieth century, inquiries into alternative incentives were often set aside, relegated to the realm of the non-economic. This had not always been the case. Between the First and Second World Wars, the discipline faced a sustained methodological challenge in the form of institutionalism. Institutionalists were economists who, skeptical about the practical utility of abstract economic ‘laws,’ emphasized quantitative analyses of economic development and of political economic phenomena as they actually existed. Like the radicals of the 1960s and 1970s, institutionalists argued that an overreliance on static mechanical models had limited the scope of neoclassical inquiry, and that an emphasis on “economic man as a human calculator” had obscured activities whose causes were non-selfish or irrational and had led to courses of study which sought to mold the behavior of men and women to the dictates of the market, rather than working to ensure that the market served the practical needs of people in society. In the post-war period, the medium-run success of managerial Keynesianism in creating the conditions for (relatively) broadly distributed prosperity, dulled institutionalism’s critical edge. Further, as historian Malcolm Rutherford argues, institutionalism relied on currents in behavioral psychology that were “vague and underdeveloped,” leading to theories which “tended to have an ad hoc rather than a

582 Yuval P. Yonay, The Struggle Over the Soul of Economics: Institutionalist and Neoclassical Economists in America Between the Wars. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Yonay argues while the boundaries between institutional and neoclassical economics were often fluid, there is historiographic utility in dividing them into two camps.
583 Yonay, 101-3
systematic character,” and which seemed unscientific as compared to neoclassical economics.\textsuperscript{584} Though elements of institutionalism survived in the work of John Kenneth Galbraith and other—often quite influential—individual economists, as a cohesive school, institutionalism had largely receded to the margins of the discipline by the 1950s.

Similar to their institutionalist forbears, New Left economists insisted on the impossibility of serious engagement with issues of pure economics without considering culture, politics, and a host of other non-quantifiable phenomenon, and one of the principle goals of Radical Political Economy (RPE) in the 1960s and 1970s was to collapse artificial boundaries between the economic and non-economic. The desire to tear down the barriers which had been erected between economics and other disciplines was seen by those operating both inside and outside of the radical milieu as essential to the RPE project, with the skeptical but sympathetic Left-Keynesian Martin Bronfenbrenner, writing that RPE was defined in part by its commitment to “an inter-disciplinary revolt…not exclusively Marxist, against artificial lines between the several social studies and indeed between academic disciplines generally.”\textsuperscript{585}

Defined as much by heterogeneity as by anything else, RPE was home to a range of political and methodological tendencies, with some radicals going so far as to entirely reject the discipline’s pretensions to objectivity.\textsuperscript{586} This disdain for the aspiration toward


\textsuperscript{585} [Heterodox Topics]: Radical Political Economy, 1969, n.d. Martin Bronfenbrenner Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

\textsuperscript{586} In an article published in the third edition of the URPE newsletter Dan Leibsohn writes that “Using the methodologies and quantifiable variables of economics in hope of finding objective answers leads to sterile, worthless conclusions because the nonquantifiable variables are more important,” concluding that “The profession of economics, whether ‘bourgeois’ or ‘radical’ is a farce. Unified knowledge, with man at the center, should be the only discipline.” Dan Leibsohn, “Economics and the Inner World,” URPE Newsletter, Fall 1969, Vol. 1, No. 3, 24. [Heterodox Topics]: Radical Political Economy, 1969, n.d.
social-scientific ‘truth’ represented a critique of both the dominant strains within the American economics academy, and of so-called ‘vulgar’ Marxism. Though not all radicals would go so far as to completely deny the validity of the quest for objective knowledge, a shared skepticism set Radical Political Economy squarely within a New Left that rejected the ideological and disciplinary limits of both American capitalism and Soviet communism. For leftist economists—especially those associated with the Union for Radical Political Economics—an expansive approach to the study of developing economies in the Third World was integral to the construction of political economy that could serve as an alternative to a discipline whose assertions of value-neutral fact provided cover for the worst elements of Cold War Liberalism. “Another type of economist is needed,” URPE’s founding statement read, “an economist concerned with the important problems of the world in which he lives and works; an economist willing to jettison the irrelevant and incorrect portions of the received doctrine, while at the same time willing to embark upon the arduous task of constructing a new economics.”

Beyond waging an ideological war against the staid scientism of their own discipline, radical economists were challenging the logic of modernization theory: the social-science paradigm that undergirded much of America’s Cold War foreign policy in the Third World. During the Cold War, the expositors of modernization theory—

588 Among many others, see Irene L. Gendzier, Development Against Democracy: Manipulating Political Change in the Third World 3rd edition (London: Pluto Press, 2017); Nils Gilman, Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2003); Michael E. Latham, Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). Complicating the narrative presented in these works, Howard Brick has argued that “recent histories of modernization theory, while often quite critical, tend to describe it as having a near total monopoly on social thought after World War II.” Development theory, which rose and fell along with, and was in some ways dependent upon, modernization theory is a partial exception. Brick offers ‘neo-evolutionist anthropology’ as a counter-narrative. Howard Brick, “Neo-
primarily political scientists and anthropologists, rather than economists—worked toward a universalizable, non-Marxist model of development which, properly applied, would allow the United States to drag the nations of the underdeveloped world into ‘modern’ liberal-capitalism. Crucially, as the historian Nils Gilman has written, “For modernization theorists…modernity was not just about a way of organizing economic production, but also about society and polity, cultural norms and forms.”

In a more Marxian vein, modernization and other theories of development were necessarily both structural, and super-structural, and the molding of liberal capitalist economies required the molding of liberal-capitalist subjects. Thus, leftists needed to counter the modernization model not just through the study of alternative modes of development, but through the study of alternative modes of subjectivity as well.

Writing in 1958, Paul Sweezy argued that the most critical problem which societies attempting to transition to socialism faced was “that of generating a whole new moral and ethical climate in which the traditional aims and ideals of socialism can be brought to fruition.” Lamenting that both the Soviets and Yugoslavs had failed in this evolutionist anthropology, the cold war, and the beginnings of the world turn in u.s. scholarship,” in mark solovey and hamilton cravens eds., cold war social science: knowledge production, liberal democracy, and human nature (new york: palgrave macmillan, 2012) p.156. the principle ‘counter-narratives’ to modernization theory during the 1960s and 1970s were dependency theory and world-systems theory. see paul baran, the political economy of growth (new york: monthly review press, 1957); andre gunder frank, capitalism and underdevelopment in latin america; historical studies of chile and brazil (new york: monthly review press, 1967); samir amin, accumulation on a world scale: a critique of the theory of underdevelopment (new york: monthly review press, 1974); samir amin, unequal development: an essay on the social formations of peripheral capitalism translated by brian pierce (new york: monthly review press, 1976); walter rodney how europe underdeveloped africa (washington, d.c.: howard university press, 1982 c.1981); and immanuel wallerstein world-systems analysis: an introduction (durham: duke university press, 2004). for an overview of the development of this literature and the relationships between the key theorists of dependency theory, underdevelopment, and world-systems, see christopher cody stephens, “defining the monster: the social science and rhetoric of neo-marxist theories of imperialism in the united states and latin america, 1945-1973,” phd dissertation, university of california, santa barbara, 2017.

589 Gilman, Mandarins of the Future, 6-7.
590 Gilman references the assertion of the sociologist Robert Bellah that “modernity had to be understood as a spiritual phenomenon or a kind of mentality.” (Gilman, 94-5)
regard, Sweezy remained convinced that it would “be in this area, and not in the sphere of technology or economics, that socialism will be judged a success or a failure.”591 By the late 1960s, it seemed to many American leftists—Sweezy included—that though Cuban and Chinese socialism differed in significant ways, both nations were working toward the generation of just such a climate.592

In 1966, following a period of political and economic uncertainty and fearing “revisionist” elements with ties to the USSR. Mao Tse-Tung launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: fomenting a purging of the Party bureaucracy from the bottom-up, encouraging radical students and workers to struggle—often violently—against technocratic elites, before using the army to reassert his own command and that of the Party in 1967-1968. As the political climate cooled, writes historian Mark Selden, revolutionary committees, which were intended to serve as “popular vehicle[s] through which a reconstituted party leadership could exercise power,” were established at “every

591 Paul Sweezy, “The Yugoslav Experiment,” Monthly Review, Vol. 9, No. 11, March 1958, 362-374. Yugoslavia received relatively scant attention from American radicals. One prominent exception to American disinterest in Yugoslavia was the work of radical economist and URPE member Howard Wachtel. Convinced that “the principal contradiction faced by socialist societies is between the social character of ownership and production and the private individual character of rewards based on material incentives,” Wachtel viewed moral incentives as “a ‘utopian’ mechanism non-democratic authoritarians used to manipulate and control.” [Howard Wachtel Workers’ Management and Workers’ Wages in Yugoslavia: The Theory and Practice of Participatory Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); 187 and Howard Wachtel, e-mail to author, Jan 31, 2018].

592 Though never quite capturing the imagination of American radicals in the way that the Cuban and Chinese revolutions did, Algeria’s efforts to foment a ‘new consciousness’ through workers’ management received some attention. See Thomas L. Blair The Land to Those Who Work It: Algeria’s Experiment in Worker’s Management (New York: Anchor Books, 1970). Blair writes that as “minute as its beginnings were, [Algerian] autogestion helped revive a beleaguered people and gave them a raison d’être…and a new conscience, without which ex-colonial man is like the ass that treads in circles round his master’s water hole.” (Blair, 156) Eastern European socialism failed to excite American radicals, but were home to other experiments in alternative incentivization. On Hungary’s experiment in “calorie money” see Martha Lampland, “From Each According to Their Ability, to Each According to Their Need: Calorie Money and Technical Norms in Mid-Twentieth Century Hungary,” in Till Düppe and Ivan Boldyrev eds, Economic Knowledge in Socialism, 1945-1989 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019), pp. 7-29.
level throughout the country.” Though ultimately responsible to diktats from the state, rural and urban revolutionary committees emerged from the Cultural Revolution with increased autonomy in scheduling production as well as in the investment and distribution of income. In 1964, following their own economic crisis, the Cuban government committed to a period of increased investment at the expense of short-term growth—a course to which they hewed through the late 1960s. In an effort to dull anti-austerity sentiment during this period (1965-1970), the Cuban state condemned material incentives while placing significant emphasis on the need for shared sacrifice.

Against the claim that the desire for individual material gain was irreducibly a part of the human experience, China and Cuba offered the possibility of—in the parlance of the time—a ‘new man’: a political subject whose motivations were in alignment with a socialist economy rather than a capitalist one. In a presentation given at the first Socialist Scholars Conference in 1966, one-time assistant national secretary of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Donald McKelvey elaborated on the relationship between Chinese Communism and the creation of this new, socialist subject. What set the Chinese apart, argued McKelvey was their attempt at extending “Marxist concepts of class war from the macro-institutional level to the individual psychological level.” Third World Leftists in the United States saw in Chinese experiments with moral incentives an effort to address the alienation of man under capitalism which Marx had written about in his

594 Terry Karl, “Work Incentives in Cuba,” *Latin American Perspectives* vol. 2, no. 4 (December 1975); pp. 21-41
‘young Hegelian period’ during the 1840s.\textsuperscript{596} “With the increasing value of the world of things,” Marx writes in his “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” “proceeds in direct proportion the devaluation of the world of men.”\textsuperscript{597} For a New Left inspired by the young Marx’s writing on alienation, China’s efforts at constructing an economy built on an ethic of solidarity rather than profit-seeking could be understood as an attempt at ending man’s estrangement from himself.

The Chinese and Cubans were, of course, not the first socialists to attempt such a transformation, and the young Leftists of the period were not the first generation of American radicals to be captivated by radical projects around the world. What distinguished New Left economists from their predecessors who had been drawn to the Soviet Union—and indeed from many of their radical contemporaries—was that that they did not believe China or Cuba to have solved the problem of socialist subjectivity. Nor did they hope—for the most part—to stage a revolution in the United States along Maoist or Castroist lines.\textsuperscript{598} Rather, they wished to draw from each of these experiments in order to create a new politics adaptable to the particular conditions of the United States. “The hope,” wrote Brofenbrenner, “was that cultural revolution and the ‘mass line’ of the


\textsuperscript{598} This is not to suggest that there were not many New Leftists who desired such an outcome, but by and large, radicals within the American economics profession agreed that, at the very least, a potentially revolutionary project in the United States or other nations of the capitalist ‘center’ would need to look quite different from those that had succeeded in largely agricultural nations of the underdeveloped ‘periphery.’
Chinese, plus Cuban ‘Marxist humanism,’ could be somehow compounded in a dialectic synthesis, with the merits of both [the workers’ self management of] Yugoslavia and the [centralized economic planning of] Gosplan but with the faults of neither.”

In particular, radical economists were drawn to the study of moral incentives in the Third World: the question of how socialist subjects might be motivated to work for the benefit of the community without either the dream of opulence or the nightmare of poverty to drive them:

Among the first American radical-economists to visit revolutionary Cuba were Paul Sweezy and Paul Baran. While Baran and Sweezy had once been reluctant ‘Stalinists’—arguing that a degree of authoritarianism was a regrettable necessity when transitioning from capitalism to socialism—the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution and Khrushchev’s speech at the 20th Party Congress, both in 1956, had convinced them that while a nation might industrialize through terror and coercion, the capitalist subject could not be transformed into a socialist one through force. “Stalinism (even if purged of all its lousy elements),” Baran wrote Sweezy, “does not work; and enthusiasm and revolutionary spirit may emerge spontaneously but cannot be manufactured to order.”

Baran and Sweezy’s rejection of Stalinism informed their search for new sources of socialist subjectivity: a leitmotif in their jointly written *Monopoly Capital* (See chapter 1).

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599 [Heterodox Topics]: Radical Political Economy, 1969, n.d. Martin Bronfenbrenner Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

600 [Paul M. Sweezy to Paul A. Baran, April 13, 1951]. Paul Alexander Baran Papers SC1234. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif. (Note: while these documents are housed at Stanford, these quotes are found in copies of the letters provided to the author by Baran’s son Nicholas).

601 Baran to Sweezy, August 28, 1963
In addition to *Monopoly Capital*, two major works associated with the *Monthly Review* School guided future inquiries into Third World development: Baran’s *Political Economy of Growth* (1957), and Sweezy and Huberman’s *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution* (1960), which the two had written after their first visit to Cuba in March of 1960.\(^{602}\) In *Political Economy of Growth*, Baran had argued that contra modernization, underdeveloped countries were underdeveloped *due to their relationship with developed nations*. Rather than guiding the nations of the Third World into modernity, the capitalist West had stunted the growth of these nations by siphoning off any economic surplus that might otherwise have been rationally and productively invested.\(^{603}\) *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution* was the first of a wave of influential analyses written during the early years of the Revolution.\(^{604}\) Illustrative of their role in defining the revolution for the American readership is that it was Sweezy and Huberman who first asserted that Cuba was on an inevitable path toward socialism: a pronouncement which they made earlier than the

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\(^{603}\) Baran went on to confront modernization theory directly in a review of W.W. Rostow’s *The Stages of Economic Growth*, written with the historian Eric Hobsbawm in 1961. (W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, a Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1960); Review by PAB and E.J. Hobsbawm of Rostow’s “Stages of Economic Growth,” manuscript and notes, Paul Alexander Baran Papers (SC1234), Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.) Baran and Hobsbawm dismiss Rostow—at that time modernization’s leading light—as a mediocrity who suffered not only from “an incapacity to answer relevant questions,” but “an astonishing lack of ability [to recognize] their existence or their import.” As against Rostow’s decontextualized view of individuals who move “hither and thither…striving for power, engaged in maximization of who knows what,” Baran and Hobsbawm argued for a Marxian evaluation of human agency, one which recognized the “dialectical interaction of biotic and social processes,” with “the latter continually propelled by the dynamism of the forces and relations of production as well as by the ideological evolutions deriving from them and influencing them in turn.” (Baran and Hobsbawm, 242)

Cubans themselves. In Anatomy, Sweezy and Huberman argued that bourgeois observers were fundamentally incapable of understanding that “revolution is a process, not an event.” Equipped with outdated methodological tools, liberal economists saw in still images what could only be grasped in motion. Rejecting essentialized descriptions of humanity, Baran, Sweezy, and Huberman defined the research agenda which drove subsequent political-economic investigations into the Chinese and Cuban systems: one which understood human ‘nature’ as mutable and contingent, and examined ways in which the restructuring of economies along socialist lines might transform relations between individuals and between individuals and the state.

Disdaining the idea that academic work could be dis-embedded from the context in which it was produced, the young radicals who studied Monthly Review argued that to produce work that did not acknowledge the realities of racism, imperialism, and capitalism—and which could be employed to combat these ills—was to be complicit. Following the development of a network of economists studying at a handful of elite graduate programs in economics, the first meeting of the Union for Radical Political Economics took place in September of 1968 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The following year, URPE organized ten sessions at the annual meeting of the American Economics Association (AEA) and began to publish the journal Review of Radical Political Economics (RRPE).

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605 “The new Cuba,” they write, “is a socialist Cuba.” Sweezy and Huberman, 146. They based this pronouncement on “forces at work in Cuba…which are tending rapidly to reduce the relative importance of the private sector.” (147)

606 Sweezy, Huberman, Anatomy, 77

Though the radicals who formed URPE in 1968 railed against the narrowness of the discursive universe in which professional economists operated, and against the uses to which economic labor was put, into the late 1960s URPE members largely employed the same neoclassical methodological tools and categories as their ‘bourgeois’ peers. As the historian of economic thought Tiago Mata has noted, the core of early URPE’s negative appraisal of their discipline was less “the inadequacies of economic theory, [than] the irrelevancy of the subjects addressed by economists.”

Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, radical economists increasingly began to question the methods, as well as the goals, of ‘bourgeois’ economics. While elements of URPEs leftward shift were concomitant with a broader radicalization among young radicals, RPE was also responding to objective economic trends. While American gross domestic product (GDP) had increased by at least 2.6% in each year of the 1960s, in 1970, this growth had slowed to a trickle. After briefly rebounding in 1971-3, U.S. GDP fell by 0.5% in 1974 and 0.2% in 1975. During this same period (1969-1976), the Cuban economy—which had struggled during the 1960s—began to rapidly grow, as did the Chinese economy, which was back on track after a period of chaos and uncertainty during the height of the Cultural Revolution. With the caveat that these nations had begun at dramatically lower degrees of industrial development, and that even during this period they did not come close to matching American wealth, the ability of the Cuban and Chinese economies to (relatively) thrive during the ‘global’ crisis of the early-mid 1970s, suggested that their strategies for development might have something significant to offer

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Increasingly convinced that the tools of mainstream economics were incapable of solving either the macro-problems of development and growth or the micro-problems of exploitation, motivation, and alienation, radicals studying China and Cuba increasingly began to focus their work on the problem of moral-incentives.\footnote{For a catalogue of China’s successes during this period, see John G. Gurley, “Capitalist and Maoist Economic Development,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 2, No. 3: April-July, 1970, pp. 34-50, 44. For the same on Cuba, see Arthur MacEwan, *Revolution and Economic Development In Cuba* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981)

In 1974, the editorial board of the *Review of Radical Political Economics* (RRPE) declared the need for radicals to reject other left-heterodoxies in favor of Marxism (see Tiago Mata, 122). As Mata notes, this left-turn by the editorial board did not continue to define the analysis of the journal, but is more evidence of a harder left-turn which had begun at the very end of the 1960s.


development since the Cultural Revolution. In this later book, and in her introduction to E.L Wheelwright and Bruce McFarlane’s *The Chinese Road to Socialism: Economics of the Cultural Revolution* (1970), Robinson writes admiringly of China’s attempts “to make use of all the technical achievements of modern industry without the dreary boredom and dehumanization of personal relationships that accompany it everywhere else.”

Anticipating objections from skeptical readers, Robinson continues that “there is no point in arguing *a priori* about whether it is possible,” as the Chinese “have got some way already and they do not mean to turn back.”

Bemoaning the inability of bourgeois economics to properly evaluate non-capitalist societies, Robinson praises Wheelwright and McFarlane for recognizing that “political economy cannot be understood without considering ideology and morality.”

Wheelwright and McFarlane travelled to China twice, in the fall of 1966 and in the spring of 1968. On both occasions, they aimed “to assess the impact of the Cultural Revolution on economic policy, planning, technology, and production.” Their research was driven by two questions in particular: “the moral and material incentives in the economy, and…the promotion of the human factor in economic development,” which they understood as “the breaking down of the great gulf between a senior elite group of technocrats, managers, and Party administrators…and the mass of peasants and workers.” They concluded that moral incentives required political education, and that, if properly indoctrinated, workers might apply their conditioned selfishness to

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615 Wainwright and MacFarlane, 13-14
616 Wainwright and MacFarlane, 15
competition for status or other non-material rewards. Maoists, wrote McFarlane and Wheelwright, contested that by cultivating socialist subjectivity they could “leap across whole historical epochs,” and in so doing could “break the hegemony of Soviet ideology over underdeveloped countries;” providing a path to Communism that did not require a period of coerced industrial production.617

While Wheelwright and MacFarlane were writing on new forms of work-incentives in China, Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman were doing the same in Cuba. Travelling to the island nearly ten years after their first visit, Sweezy and Huberman (who died of a heart attack just prior to the book’s publication) admitted that “the remaking of human habits and attitudes is at best a slow process about which there is very little that could be called scientific knowledge,” but maintained that to conduct the experiment at all was impossible without the precondition of socialist revolution.618 They further maintained that the results of Cuba’s inquiries into non-material motivation held crucial implications for the United States. Though the post-war U.S. was blessed with a surfeit of material goods, Sweezy’s conviction that American capitalism would inevitably lurch from crisis to crisis made work-structures in a post-abundance economy an essential topic of study. “The absurd and ultimately disastrous bourgeois notion of insatiable wants must be decisively repudiated,” wrote Sweezy, if civilization was to survive in the wake of capitalism’s collapse.619 Following the Cultural Revolution, Sweezy began to look more

617 Wheelwright and Macfarlane, 153
618 Sweezy was somewhat more critical in private correspondence than in his published work, writing to the historian Peter Clecak that Cuba was still experiencing “political disenchantment, alienation from work, [and] low productivity,” and that “there are unfortunately ominous signs of a kind of Stalinism,” which could perhaps only be avoided “if there is a real economic improvement in the next two or three years.” (Paul Sweezy to Peter Cleck, March 22, 1968, Box 5, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library).
to China than to Cuba as a laboratory for the development of a socialist subjectivity; writing to Baran’s son Nicholas that “the real question is whether mankind can make it through the crisis of the second half of the 20th century to something better…China is now the decisive testing ground with awesome implications for the whole Third World, and of course, ultimately for us too.”

Published in 1971, America’s Asia was the first volume written primarily by members of the New Left to explore the global ramifications of Maoist development. Featuring essays from social scientists representing a variety of disciplines, America’s Asia directly engaged with how the Chinese experiment might be applied to life in the United States. “If we could change our relation to Asia,” reads the anthology’s preface, “we would be open to learning much from Asian peoples that could help us create a more decent and just society in the United States.” In particular, the contributors were interested in what might be gleaned by a study of the decentralized structure of the Chinese economy post-Cultural Revolution, and how a similar decentralizing of the American economy might help to address the issue of “urban blight…[and the] environmental and social problems which threaten the very existence of the American city.”

The contributors to America’s Asia were not so naïve as to believe that Maoist structures could be applied directly to the United States. “Maoist China,” writes the historian of Asian Studies Fabio Lanza, “did not function as the end point of a developmental trajectory to be followed, but rather as the precondition for thinking

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620 Paul M. Sweezy to Nick Baran, June 8, 1972, (Box 22, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library).
622 Friedman and Selden, America’s Asia, xv
alternative political praxis."

Indeed, the volume’s editors make clear at the outset that their goal is not the importation of the Chinese model, but to illustrate that by “focusing on the humanity of their subject,” activists and intellectuals can, “find inspiration and application to general human problems, to problems Americans as well as citizens of Third World nations face.”

Representative of this approach is the contribution of radical economist John G. Gurley, who suggests that through comparing China to the West, we might discover whether ‘man’ is “Lockean in nature, reactive to outside forces…or, “as Gurley believed, “essentially Liebnitzian, the source of acts, active, capable of growth, and having an inner being that is self propelled.”

Shortly after the release of *America’s Asia*, Gurley joined and 17 others—roughly a dozen of whom were radicals—on a trip to China: one that was sponsored by Paul Sweezy (with help from Robert Heilbroner).

Like the editors of *America’s Asia*, the members of the First Friendship Delegation of American Radical Political Economists to the People’s Republic of China (FFDARPE) were “united in [the] belief that political economists have much to learn from the people of China, who are solving

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624 Friedman and Selden, *America’s Asia*, xvi


626 Though more sympathetic to the radical Left than most liberal Keynesians, and a friend of, and a former student of Sweezy’s, Heilbroner does not seem to have sympathized with the Maoist project. It is unclear from the material I have seen in Sweezy’s papers, URPE’s papers and other archives why Heilbroner was involved or what role he played. See Paul M. Sweezy to ‘Pat and Shlom’, July 19, 1972, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Box 22, Houghton Library

Sweezy writes of the group that while he doesn’t know all of the participants, his “estimation is that it is about as good a group as could be culled from the U.S. economists, and I’m very much hoping that their trip will set some useful currents in motion.”
their society’s problems in historically unique ways.” Delegates expressed a particular interest in studying “how individuals influence decisions, and the incentives mechanisms that operate in the economy.” Over the course of two-and-a-half weeks, the Friendship Delegation visited department stores, factories, universities, communes, transit systems, mines, child-care centers, docks, and hospitals. There and elsewhere, they conducted interviews with workers, administrators, intellectuals, and party officials in an attempt to determine for themselves how the Cultural Revolution had changed the Party, China’s political economy, and the inner-lives of the peoples themselves.

Many of the descriptions of life in the Cultural Revolution offered by interviewed Chinese citizens strain credulity, like the department store clerk who said that “if caught red handed, a pickpocket is detained [and] told that stealing is against socialist morality…If he recognizes he is wrong, he is let go.” Or the farm machinery factory employee who, taking a break from work in a dimly lit shed, insisted that “we don’t have any accidents,” and that the factory’s walls were covered with broken glass in order to ward off “revisionists.” Other concerns included the fact that pedagogy seemed to begin and end with the collected works of Mao, and the lack of female representation in

627 “Collective Notes of the First Friendship Delegation of American Radical Political Economists to the People’s Republic of China,” (1972), 1. (Note: these papers were compiled by, and provided to the author by, Thomas Weisskopf. Notes were taken by all Delegates and given to Weisskopf. Subsequent references will include the name of the economist responsible for recording the particular interview or visit, the title of the interview or visit, and the location of that recording in the Collective Notes.


629 Tom Weisskopf, “Discussion At People’s Department Store in Canton,” in “Collective Notes,” 2. Of course, the inaccessibility of a person’s inner-life is almost necessarily an insoluble problem for either the historian or the contemporary observer, making any study of subjectivity (as opposed to a study of those who studied subjectivity) problematic at best. See Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone, “Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective,” Slavic Review, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Winter, 2008), pp. 967-986bm

positions of power (though interviewees insisted that there had been a positive change in this regard since the Cultural Revolution).

The question of gender equity—in particular whether or not women had achieved full economic citizenship—appears only infrequently in the FFDARPE reports, and is raised primarily by the women in the group. Though women had made significant political gains under the policies of the Chinese Communist Party, the vast majority of leadership positions in the party were filled by men. Similarly, despite a stated commitment to equal pay for equal work, in practice, women in rural China were, as Mark Selden documents, “often limited to a maximum of eight points while men could receive up to ten—and in some areas women were automatically lowered in the pay scale after marriage.”

While these sorts of persistent inequities did not entirely escape the notice of FFDARPE delegates, they were generally dismissed as speedbumps on the road to full equality. In general, the FFDARPE notes refrains from editorializing or from offering

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633 Selden, The People’s Republic of China, 633
634 For an example see Dawn Day Wachtel’s note which follows the claim that women in post-Cultural Revolution China are now ‘equal politically and economically, with an aside that “there still exist some feudal cases where men look down on women. (Dawn Day Wachtel, “Collective Notes). Though the literature of the Third World left makes frequent mention of Mao’s proclamation that “women hold up half the sky,” contemporary accounts by Third World feminists often read as though the author is straining to explain away the continuing exploitation of women in the People’s Republic. See for example the article “Woman Visits China,” by Genoveva Clemente in Triple Jeopardy—the journal of the Third World Women’s Alliance (see chapter 4)—where Clemente writes that men continue to be paid more than women “because men still have more years of experience,” and that “The Chinese people believe that women are for the most part equal to men,” and that “whatever inequalities are left…will be overcome gradually by education, persuasion and practice.” (Genoveva Clemente,” Woman Visits China,” Triple Jeopardy, Vol. 2, No. 3, Mar-Apr. 1973), 1-3. In Cuba, women played a leading role in the anti-Batista movement during the 1950s and in the early years of the revolution. As historian Michelle Chase illustrates, though women forced the revolutionary government to embrace a more expansive rhetoric of women’s liberation, during the 1960s “the revolutionary government…appealed to women more often as consumers [rather than] as potential laborers…thereby [re-inscribing] traditional gendered divisions of labor that assigned men to roles
substantive critiques—though occasionally a certain frustration with stock-phrases and clichés shows through, as when David Gordon notes that his query of economists at Peking University as to “whether money would be progressively eliminated,” was met with the “usual non-answer.” Despite the difficulty they faced in ascertaining the real conditions—not to mention the real feelings—of the men and women with whom they interacted, many RPE delegates found elements of their visit encouraging: including the efforts of urban intellectuals to understand the experiences of peasant workers, the democratization of access to education, and a sense that the motivating role of political ideology had obviated the need to have “supervisors or foreman ‘pushing’ workers, as one finds in many American manufacturing plants.”

A number of key works on moral incentives in China were published in the years following the FFDARPE trip, including Carl Riskin’s “Maoism and Motivation: Work Incentives in China,” (1973) and Steve Andors’s “Hobbes and Weber vs. Marx and Mao: The Political Economy of Decentralization in China,” (1974)—both of which appeared in the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (BCAS)—and John Gurley’s China’s Economy and the Maoist Strategy (1976). Despite the authors’ political commitments, these


635 David Gordon, “Small Group Discussion,” in “Collective Notes,” August 12. An inability to get honest answers was a problem anticipated by the organizers, with Sweezy writing to one participant that “the really interesting problem…is whether anyone in China (except Mao if he chooses) will discuss these matters in more than a purely formal and propagandistic way.” Paul M. Sweezy to Larry Lifshultz, Box 22, Folder: K, L, M, 1971-1972, Paul Marlor Sweezy Papers, Houghton Library.

636 Harry Kelber, “Visit to Canton sewing machine factory,” in “Collective Notes,”122

works are mercifully free of the affected rhetoric that plagues the cruder Maoist
apologetics of the era. Indeed, rather than uncritically propagandizing in favor of China,
Riskin, Andors, and Gurley castigate American economists for allowing their reflexive
anti-Communism to distort their studies of Chinese development. Through each of these
sources runs the idea that the study of moral incentives has been unfairly maligned due to
an association with post-market utopias. Shorn of this association, the notion that people
are responsive to motivations that cannot be quantified becomes almost anodyne.
Radicals decried the willful blindness that kept their colleagues from recognizing the
significant role already played by non-material incentives: something that would be
obvious if not for what Gurley derides as the “narrow empiricism” of the field. In
choosing to neglect the role of non-material incentives, argues Riskin, “economics has
been guilty, by its own standards, of a cardinal sin: misallocation of professional
resources.”

A key failure, notes Riskin, is that by creating models which solely “regard
work as an unpleasant trespass on leisure,” economists begin from the presumption that
no personal good can be accrued through work other than that of increased purchasing
power. Thus, American economists fail to consider the myriad ways in which workers
may be motivated by a sense of ownership, pride, and control over what they produce.
Along with Arthur MacEwan’s Revolution and Economic Development in Cuba,
Riskin and Andors’ articles help to place the concept of non-material motivation in a less
romantic frame, in part by looking at collective incentives, and other ways in which
people might be induced to engage in socially beneficial behavior without coercion or

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Riskin, “Maoism and Motivation,” 12. Riskin’s key point is not that economists are so obtuse as not not
recognize that people are motivated by things which are not easily quantified, but that in constructing
models without non-material rewards as inputs, the field effectively propagandizes against the notion that
people might ever be incentivized by things other than more leisure or more money.
selflessness. Drawing on his study of decentralization in Chinese factory-management, Andors suggests that though the Chinese had failed to conquer poverty or inequality, they had achieved considerable success through the emphasizing of “small-group cohesiveness and relative autonomy, and participation and cooperation as substitutes for simple monetary incentives.”

Riskin offers the example of the “Taichai System,” a sort of intermediary form of motivation that employed monetary incentives as rewards for merit and effort, rather than production. Focusing on collective incentives, MacEwan offers a reframing of the question from one of selfishness vs. selflessness, to one of individual vs. collective material rewards. The process of shifting motivation, writes MacEwan, “was not simply, or even primarily, one of political exhortation and appeals to sacrifice and moral principles,” but rather of “collective pay-offs,” including “the development of social services and the establishment of relative equality.” MacEwan argues that in re-constituting social institutions along democratic lines, Cuba had managed to put politics, rather than the market, in command and had begun to chart a path to building a new incentive structure from the ground up, “rather than imposing it by fiat.”

These and similar pieces share the methodological approach which Baran and Sweezy had articulated in the late 1950s. Radicals understood that by surveying China

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639 Andors, 30
640 Riskin, 17-18
642 MacEwan, 182. Many of these analyses are framed as ways of increasing production/ maximizing worker efficiency. This was often by necessity: economists focused on underdeveloped nations where production and industrialization were essential preconditions to further development. Nevertheless, this work has implications for the developed society as well, where the principle goals would be to work toward a resolution of alienation and exploitation, not to find new ways to maximize productive efficiency.
and Cuba using purely quantitative tools, economists failed to recognize that development was a holistic process, one in which material structures and social relations acted upon and transformed one another in ways difficult to measure. Yet, even as these explorations were achieving greater degrees of sophistication, they were losing whatever small purchase they had once had within both the discipline, and within American political culture. By 1981, when MacEwan’s *Revolution and Economic Development in Cuba* was published, the New Left had collapsed, the Chinese and Cuban regimes had ceased to hold any appeal for all but their most fervent defenders, the assumption that Third World revolution was necessarily a force for progressive change had been undermined by the brutality of self-described Maoist projects in Cambodia and Peru and by the culturally reactionary anti-imperialism of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, and what little room there had been within the economics profession for heterodoxy had begun to disappear.\(^ {643}\)

Though New Left political economists did not succeed in transforming the discipline, and though they too-frequently viewed China and Cuba through rose-tinted lenses, their explorations into moral incentives are worthy of a contemporary re-engagement. While indeed Maoist and Castroite models may no longer seem like desirable alternatives, such narratives elide the nuance that American radicals often

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brought to their study of these systems. What have often been dismissed as pseudo-religious ‘pilgrimages’ to Cuba and China were, in reality, voyages of discovery, where radical political-economists searched for the keys to develop a sustainable, rational, and moral political economy responsive to the unique conditions of the United States. These investigations helped, if only for a time, and only at the margins, to expand the discipline’s understanding of how the individual is motivated to act in a society.

By the end of the 1970s, most observers—including those on the Left—had come to believe that Cuban and Chinese experiments had failed. Their experiments in non-material incentives had either been reversed or had been otherwise unable to transcend the authoritarian measures that made them unpalatable or undesirable. With the decline of the New Left, and in the face of a politically stagnant Cuba and a post-Mao China which was Communist in name only, economic systems predicated on alternative incentive structures were increasingly rejected as experiments in social engineering which were naïve-utopianism at best and stepping stones to totalitarianism at worst. Further, the slowing of American economic growth had lead not to a renewed interest in long-run heterodox theories, but in the resurgence of pro-market philosophies which doubled down on the notion that people were essentially selfish profit-maximizing machines, and that the creation of national and global wealth was a project that should begin from the top-down, rather than from the bottom-up.

The marginalization of radical economics since the 1970s notwithstanding, a number of economists and anthropologists have continued to push against the assumption

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that individuals are motivated entirely by material incentivized rational choice. However, this literature has tended to focus on the micro rather than the macro, on consumption rather than production, and has rarely rejected market solutions; instead seeking to use the logic of the market to change mental processes and optimize decision making.\footnote{Prominent examples of this literature include Daniel Kahneman, \textit{Thinking Fast and Slow} (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); and Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein \textit{Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Work by Sam Bowles—a heterodox economist and early URPE member—is closer in spirit to the inquiries led by radicals during the long 1960s. Bowles’s \textit{the Moral Economy} looks at the ways in which adding material rewards in order to incentivize some action on the part of an individual or individuals often has the opposite effect: attenuating existing socially productive behaviors. In one example, a day care in Haifa introduces a fee to incentivize parents to pick up their children on time, only to find that once ‘arriving late’ becomes a market good, incidences of lateness nearly triple: the intended disincentive of a fine instead corrodes the sense of responsibility which parents once felt to those caring for their children. In another, citizens of a town become less likely to accept a new factory or power plant when offered a sum of money: the offer of compensation engenders cynicism. See: Samuel Bowles, \textit{The Moral Economy: Why Good Incentives Are No Substitute for Good Citizens} (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2016). See also Samuel Bowles, “Endogenous Preferences: The Cultural Consequences of Markets and Other Economic Institutions,” \textit{Journal of Economic Literature} Vol. XXXVI (March 1998), 75-111; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, “Social Capital and Community Governance,” \textit{The Economic Journal}, 112 (November), F419-F436; Joseph Henrich et al., “‘Economic Man’ in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies,” \textit{Behavioral and Brain Sciences} (2005), 29, 795-855; Samuel Bowles and Sandra Polanía-Reyes, “Economic Incentives and Social Preferences: Substitutes or Complements?” \textit{Journal of Economic Literature} (2012), 50:2, 368-425.} For contemporary experiments in the construction of larger networks of production and consumption based on nonmaterial incentives, one must look to the grassroots attempts at organizing for economic justice that have developed in post-crisis nations of the semi-periphery, such as Argentina and Greece.

In 2001, Argentina was already three years into a severe depression when, having determined that the government’s increasingly severe austerity measures were insufficient, the International Monetary Fund refused to extend the country any further credit. In the immediate wake of this decision, Argentina defaulted on its debt, unemployment reached 25%, inflation rose to more than 40 percent, and banks froze assets to prevent runs. With businesses and factories shuttered, and with little or no
access to stable currency, many of Argentina’s citizens began constructing decentralized networks of production and distribution based on principles of solidarity and horizontal decision-making. In Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina (2011), the sociologist Marina A. Sitrin explores how Argentina’s cooperative, recuperated workplaces—like the garment factory Brukman, the print shop Chilavert and the ceramics factory FaSinPant—have served to transform social relationships and to birth new modes of subjectivity. “Decisions on production,” Sitrin writes, “are no longer made solely on what may sell [...] but rather are taken into consideration together with the need or desire to support others: therefore, solidary becomes a part of the equation.”

In 2015, Greek citizens—weary of nearly a decade of bailouts tied to dramatic cuts in public spending—voted to refuse any additional loans which were contingent on further domestic austerity. Even before the 2015 referendum, Greece’s “anti-middleman” movement began to distribute agricultural products directly to consumers in informal markets, cutting costs by eliminating markups. Since rejecting austerity, Greece like post-crisis Argentina, has seen an efflorescence of informal barter networks, occupied factories, community-run medical clinics, and cooperatives, all of which are premised on mutuality and solidarity, rather than the drive for profit.

These recent experiments differ in significant ways from those of Mao’s China and Castro’s Cuba. Growing almost entirely from the grassroots, and facing crises that

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are at least in part the product of their own governments’ efforts at maintaining a place in
the international capitalist community, solidarity networks in Greece and Argentina have
often positioned themselves against the interests of the state. While Cuban and Chinese
experiments led with politics—encouraging the development of nonmaterial incentives in
order to create new political subjectivities—those in Argentina and Greece have arisen
out of economic, rather than out of ideological, necessity. Spurred to create extra-market
networks out of material privation, Argentina and Greece have charted a more democratic
path to an alternative economics. Ultimately—in a sort of inversion of Daniel Bell’s
famous aphorism—participants in the grass-roots solidarity economy are of, but in many
ways are not in, the world of capitalist political economy. They have not had to
ideologically grapple with their role in a system that has marginalized them,
disenfranchised them, left them without jobs, and stripped them of their savings and
pensions: the choice was made for them.649

Indeed, a more useful historical comparison for these recent experiments in
solidarity economics is Salvador Allende’s short-lived social-democratic Chile, rather
than Castro’s Cuba or Mao’s China. In September, 1970 Allende—a socialist politician
who had run for the presidency three times before—won a slim plurality of the national
vote as the head of the Unidad Popular: a coalition party formed the year before and
which included Communists, Socialists, and Social Democrats. In office, Allende moved
to nationalize 91 industries including copper-mining (which was controlled primarily by

American firms), nationalized the healthcare system, redistributed 5.5 million acres of the country’s agricultural lands, and provided free milk to Chile’s children.\textsuperscript{650}

Even as these early measures met with success—GDP increased significantly during Allende’s first year in office while inflation and unemployment fell—Third World Leftists in the United States feared that Allende’s commitment to pluralism would fatally handicap his efforts at building Chilean socialism. “Here then,” wrote Paul Sweezy in 1971, “is the heart of the matter: the new government took office on a program which is a standing threat to the existing economic system…Either the government will have to act on the program in such a way as to try to gain effective control over the economy…Or the government will have to retreat from the program.” Sweezy feared that given these two alternatives, Allende would try to chart a middle course; shying away from full nationalization and expropriation, inviting the wrath of private capital without neutralizing it. While Sweezy doubted that the Chilean bourgeois could drum up sufficient popular support to vote Allende out, he noted that “nowhere in Latin America has the United States been more successful than in Chile in integrating the local armed forces into what may be called the imperial military establishment.” Nearly three years before the eventual coup that would oust Allende’s government, Sweezy grimly concluded that the “the most relevant question may well be not whether [military intervention] is likely to occur but rather why it hasn’t already occurred.\textsuperscript{651}

To many observers who shared Sweezy’s fears, the destruction of the regime by Augusto Pinochet (and his backers in the government of the United States) was

\textsuperscript{651} Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, “Peaceful Transition to Socialism?” \textit{Monthly Review}, Vol, 22m No.8: January 1971; pp. 1-18
definitive: there could be no path to socialism without violence. Three months after Pinochet’s coup, Sweezy wrote that “The Chilean tragedy confirms what should been, and to many was, obvious all along, that there is no such thing as a peaceful road to socialism. Those who are irrevocably committed to nonviolence,” warned Sweezy, “would do well to admit that they are not revolutionaries and to confine their activities to seeking reforms which are safely within the framework of the capitalist system,” because “the beneficiaries of the existing system, including many who only imagine themselves to be its beneficiaries, are not going to either give up without a struggle or to renounce any means available to them in waging the struggle.”

To Sweezy, Allende’s inability to withstand US-backed efforts at crippling the Chilean economy and elevating Pinochet suggested that his relative reformism and his continued commitment to democracy were fatal weaknesses. The only state of the period to—however briefly—vote its way to socialism, Chile represents a single case study whose lessons were too quickly universalized by the Left in the early 1970s. Overly reliant on the export of copper and thus on global financial markets controlled by the U.S.-based multinationals, it is likely true that democratic-socialism in Chile was destined to failure. Though the causes for this failure were exogenous as much as

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652 Three months after Pinochet’s coup, Paul Sweezy wrote that “The Chilean tragedy confirms what should have been, and to many was, obvious all along, that there is no such thing as a peaceful road to socialism.” Paul M. Sweezy, “Chile: The Question of Power,” in Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff (eds.) Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Chile (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 11. Looking at Iran between 1951-1953, Chile between 1970 and 1973, and Grenada between 1979-1983, the sociologist John Foran concludes that “revolutions have been reversed when they continue to be subject to the effects of dependent development (which is impossible to undo in a short period of time, if ever), when they have open, democratic institutions...when the revolutionary political cultures that brought them about are attenuated due to internal differences of opinion or the difficulties of continuing to effectively engage their broad coalitions...and when the world-systemic window that opened to permit their coming to power closes.” John Foran, Taking Power: On The Origins of Third World Revolutions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Foran adds that democratic regimes are more vulnerable than undemocratic regimes “because they can be destabilized by external interventions in ways that democratic regimes cannot.” (Foran, 204)
endogenous, the Chilean experiment serves as a reminder of the difficulty of establishing
a non-market economy within global capitalism. However, with four decades of
hindsight, and as the records of those Third World and peripheral nations who secured
and maintained socialism through violence appear less enticing as models for social
transformation, elements of Chilean socialism demand a reevaluation. In particular, Chile
offered examples of moral and otherwise non-material incentives succeeding—if only for
a time—without the elements of repression which so often characterized production in
China and (to a lesser extent) Cuba.

Following Allende’s ascension, major manufacturing and financial interests both
in and out of Chile moved to crush the Chilean economy in order to mobilize popular
support against the Allende government. A number of Chilean workers resisted these
efforts. When the Chilean Society for the Development of Manufacturing coordinated a
massive shut down of factories,” recounts Edward Boorstein, leading industrialists
offered to pay their employees to stay home. Instead, industrial workers occupied
factories and worked to produce and distribute goods without receiving pay.

Correspondents for *Monthly Review* observed communities commandeering commuter

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653 On the political history of Chilean socialism, the U.S.-backed coup of September 11, 1973, and the
Pinochet dictatorship which followed, see: Sweezy and Magdoff, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in
Chile*; Paul E. Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile* (Pittsburgh, the University of
Publisher’s Co. 1977); Peter Winn, *Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the
Harmer *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North

654 On labor activism at the grassroots and experiments in alternative incentives, prior to, and during the
Allende years see: Peter Winn, *Beyond the Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to Socialism*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Marian E. Schlotterbeck, *Beyond the Vanguard: Everyday
Revolutionaries in Allende’s Chile* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

655 Boorstein, *Allende’s Chile*, 192-3
busses in order to get to work. The historian Marian E. Schlotterbeck writes that when distribution networks were shut down, industrial laborers began to sell products to consumers directly from their factories.

Ultimately these efforts were insufficient—no match for the power of the Chilean military, the CIA, the Anaconda Copper Company, or the Kennecott Copper Corporation. However, the imbalance of power that doomed Allende obscures the degree to which a political commitment to socialism spurred working people to solidaristic action in furtherance of the long-run health of Chilean socialism in spite of immediate material incentives not to do so. Whether or not these sorts of experiments in extra-market production and consumption can be sustained over the long run, the vibrancy of these efforts demands a further re-interrogation—both internal to the economics discipline and among the discipline’s popularizers and interpreters—of the assumption that labor is necessarily motivated by the desire to increase either profit or leisure-time. The stubborn insistence that behaviors meant to benefit the community which come at a cost of time or energy to the individual are necessarily contrary to human nature, is a tremendous obstacle to the creation of an economy that provides security to all. In the 1960s and 1970s, the radical political economists of the Third World Left recognized this, and offered a prescient critique of their discipline. While the answers that radicals found in Cuba and China were ultimately unsatisfying, in rejecting those answers, economists have too often neglected the questions as well. Though contemporary political economists may find little to gain from a re-engagement with the specific research project of their New Left

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657 Schlotterbeck, *Beyond the Vanguard*, 123.
predecessors, the work produced by American radicals drawn to the study of moral incentives in the Third World is an important reminder that attempts to keep social science research free of political contamination serves to reify disciplinary norms which are themselves the product of the political culture in which they were formed.
Chapter 6: “On Strike! Shut it Down!”
The Third World Liberation Strike at San Francisco State College and the Rise and Fall of Third World Studies

On March 20th, 1969, the longest student strike in America history came to an end. For nearly five months, San Francisco State College had been shut down by the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)—a coalition of revolutionary nationalist student organizations including the Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE), the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Mexican-American Student Confederation (MAC), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA), and the Native American Student Organization (NASO). Supported by radical white students, sympathetic teachers, and local community leaders, the BSU and the TWLF had called “on all students to boycott their classes” until a list of fifteen demands were met.658

As was the case throughout the United States, the demand for what are now known as Ethnic Studies programs at San Francisco State began with radical Black students, and the historical literature on the development of Ethic Studies has focused on the Black Freedom Movement, and in particular on the relationship between Black Power activism and the Black campus movement.659 While African-American students at

Cornell, Howard, City College and hundreds of other campuses frequently expressed their demands in the language of anti-colonial liberation, it was at public colleges and universities in California—where there were often as many Chicano and Asian-American students as Black students—that the call for Ethnic Studies was most explicitly tied to the idea of the Third World.660

Inspired by national liberation movements abroad, students demanded the right to
determination through the creation of a Third World College which would serve the
interests of Black and Third World communities. “To allow the white majority to control
the Third World College,” wrote one student, “would result in its conformity to existing
organizational and academic standards which have proven ineffective in fulfilling the
pressing needs of our society.” Rather, the Third World College must exist “to counteract
the domination over Third World people.” 661 In furtherance of this goal, the BSU and the
TWLF demanded (among other things) that all non-white students who wished to attend
the college be admitted, that fifty new faculty be hired to teach Black and Ethnic Studies,
and that “each particular ethnic organization [have] the authority and control of the hiring
and retention of any faculty member, director and administrator,” as well as complete
control over the curriculum. 662 After defeating the administrations at San Francisco State
and Berkeley, strikers hoped to “incite other campuses,” to then move “from the campus
into the community…from the community to the city,” and from the city, to the state and
beyond. 663

These efforts were not in furtherance of a more inclusive, liberal university.
Rather — as the Proposal for a Department of Philippine Studies read — student strikers

661 Manuel Delgado, “The Strike and You.” SF State President S.I. Hayakawa—a conservative Republican
whose intransigence in the face of the strike elevated him to a sort of celebrity among opponents of the
New Left and eventually to a term as a U.S. Senator—had a different definition of self-determination,
which he understood as coming “from having enough money to be your own boss or from having the
intelligence and creativity so that others are willing to entrust great projects to you.” (Jason Michael
Ferreira, “All Power to the People: A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco,
1968-1974,” 137). Scholar of Asian Studies Daryl Maeda has written on how Hayakawa’s own racial self-
definition was at odds with the Third World solidarity asserted by Asian American students at S.F. State.
Maeda writes of Hayakawa that he “styled himself a racial middleman who was neither black nor white and
was therefore able to act as a neutral arbiter in racial conflicts.” Maeda, Chains of Babylon, 54
662 “List of 15 Demands,” SF State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
663 “Brothers and Sisters,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
saw themselves as a part of a “social revolution that will knock the foundations of higher learning,” one “that may herald the start or beginning of a new Renaissance.” Strikers saw the university as an arm of monopoly capitalism which existed largely to produce new generations of poorly paid, poorly educated, and easily exploited Black and Third World workers. “The men who run and finance San Francisco State,” read one strike document, “hire our brains and kill our spirits because they have an Empire to administer and we are the tools.”

Fundamental to the project of Third World Leftism was an effort to think through how those who were positionally hostile to American capitalism might work together to overcome the systems which oppressed them, rather than integrating into—and therefore reinforcing—those systems. Both liberals and their critics to the Left understood the role of the university in society as—at least in part—to produce liberal subjects. For this reason, (and because much of the activism of the New Left was connected to college campuses), universities presented a natural laboratory for experiments in the forging of radical subjectivity. Particularly for those drawn to the dialectics of Hegel, Marx, or Marcuse, the university system appeared as the one-dimensional society in miniature: an institution which reproduced capitalist cultural hegemony in part through alienating Black and Third World people from their own histories, but in so doing, spurred them to a process of self-identification through which their alienation might be overcome. Those who went on strike for Third World Studies dreamt that by building institutions within

664 Students: Student Organizations: Philippine American Collegiate Endeavor, S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
665 See Okihiro, Third World Studies, chapter 7
the university system which opposed the university’s role in reaffirming and reproducing liberal capitalism, they might—to quote Fanon—“start over a new history of man.”

In going to war with a university which alienated them from their culture, from their history, and from their connection to other marginalized and colonized people, the TWLF pursued a vision of self-determination which was incompatible with the university system as it had existed since the end of the Second World War. Yet, half-a-century after the conclusion of the Strike, the administration of San Francisco State University and the College of Ethic Studies—now including departments of Africana Studies, American Indian Studies, Asian American Studies, Latina/Latino Studies, and Race and Resistance—have found a way to coexist.

In October of 2019, San Francisco State held a week of events in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of their Ethnic Studies program. These events, which include panel discussions and poetry readings by strike-veterans (all of which were free to the public), concluded with a celebratory Gala co-hosted by the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost. Tickets for the Gala began at 75 dollars, and offered opportunities for sponsors to contribute at Bronze ($2,500), Silver ($5,000), Gold ($10,000), Platinum ($20,000), and Diamond ($50,000) levels—“partially tax-deductible” payments directed toward “social justice-centered higher education that empowers and advances equity for our diverse communities.” Clearly a détente has been reached—if perhaps an uneasy one—between ethnic studies and the university.

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666 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 238
667 http://digital-collections.library.sfsu.edu/digital/collection/p16737coll2/id/1281/rec/1
668 https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sfsu-college-of-ethnic-studies-50th-anniversary-gala-dinner-tickets-69508386455, accessed 10/2/2019. As of October, 2019 no sponsors have been found at the diamond level.
Indeed, with Ethnic Studies courses available at hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States and abroad, the Third World Liberation Front and its heirs may have had more of a direct impact on contemporary American cultural than any other organization or coalition which explicitly defined itself as a part of the Third World Left. In part of course, this is because Third World Studies has been successful integrated into the system that it critiqued in a way which—for example—the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement was not. The declared mission of many of the students and scholars involved in these programs notwithstanding, it is clear that university administrators no longer view Ethnic Studies departments as a serious threat to the financial health or cultural cachet of their institutions, and these programs have largely not succeeded in their efforts at transforming the relationship between student and institution, at democratizing access to education, or at redirecting higher education to serving the needs of communities of color.

That militant student strikers were successful in effecting lasting change—even if not in precisely the ways that the strikers had envisioned—challenges the idea that the turn toward the Third World necessarily represented a strategic error. In the case of San Francisco State, militant student actions created a space in which negotiations could take place, and made clear to administrators at other colleges and universities that any refusal

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669 The use of the label ‘ethnic studies’ rather than the originally proposed ‘Third World Studies,’ marks the shift from an approach premised on a sense of transnational anti-colonial solidarity to one closer to the ‘area studies’ programs which proliferated during the Cold War, and which did not represent a threat to liberal capitalism.

670 Indeed, affordable debt-free access to higher education for working people of color has declined sharply since the late 1960s (as it has for all groups), data collected by the Delta Cost Project shows that the average cost of four-year tuition at public universities increased over 200 percent between 1970 and 2010, during which time the median family income rose only 22 percent. [https://deltacostproject.org/sites/default/files/products/Delta-Cost-Not-Your-Moms-Crisis_0.pdf](https://deltacostproject.org/sites/default/files/products/Delta-Cost-Not-Your-Moms-Crisis_0.pdf), accessed 10/28/2019.
to engage with student demands for new departments would come with a cost. That the successes of Third World student actions were so constrained by the existing structures of the university system illustrates the limits of the Third World challenge in education, while the university’s ability to integrate these new programs on its own terms speaks to the degree to which the New Left’s victories in the realm of culture were not matched by their efforts at reshaping the basic dynamics of political, social, and economic power.671

Though the Negro Student Association (NSA) first asked the administration of San Francisco State for recognition in the Fall of 1963,672 it was not until 1966, with the arrival of Jimmy Garrett, that the NSA ceased to be more than what many at the university had considered “a social club.”673 A veteran of the Freedom Rides and a member of SNCC, Garrett directed the NSA—soon renamed the Black Students Union—away from a politics of liberal integrationism and toward a commitment to Black self-determination.674

A key resource for the nascent BSU was SF State’s Experimental College (EC). Created in 1963 as a space for student to teach their own courses outside of the mainstream curriculum, by the mid-1960s the Experimental College was providing

671 For the idea that the Left has largely won the cultural wars and largely lost battles for economic and political power see Michael Kazin, American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation (New York: Vintage Books, 2011)
673 Barlow and Shapiro, 84
674 Hekymara. Garrett seems to have emphasized masculinism in addition to Blackness. Historian Martha Biondi writes that Garrett’s “career at State” began with him “Walking into a meeting of the Negro Students Association in 1966” and “[blurting out] the first thing I Want to know is why a woman is up there’ referring to the group’s president Maryum Al-Wadi.” (Biondi, The Black Revolution on Campus, 46)
students with the opportunity to take and teach courses including “Perspectives on Revolution,” “Nonviolence in a violent world,” “Urban action,” and “Competition and violence.” In the fall of 1966, the EC was home to the first Black Studies course at San Francisco State: “Black Nationalism.” “Black Nationalism” differed from previous courses offered on African American history in that “it was uniquely designed to meet the then awakening appetites of black college students for more black oriented courses,” and “it was structured in such a way that the community could take part in it.” The following Spring, Garrett and the BSU proposed the creation of “an Institute of Black Studies.”

Between Garret’s proposal in the spring of 1967 and the end of the summer of 1968, a number of other national student communities at San Francisco State organized themselves along lines similar to those of the BSU, including: the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), the Mexican American Student Organization (MASC), the Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action (ICSA), the Philippine-American College Endeavor (PACE), and the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA).

Founded in early 1967 by Roger Alvarado—a friend of Jimmy Garrett and the organizer of a work-study program in San Francisco’s mostly Hispanic Mission District—LASO announced that “the Latin American students on this college campus have come together…because, for our survival, both as individuals and as a people, it is necessary for us to unite.” Leaders of MASC articulated the difference between classes in Mexican history—which the university did offer—and classes that a hypothetical

675 Ferreira, 61
676 “Black Studies Curriculum Pamphlet,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
677 SF State Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was founded in September of 1966 just before this wave of revolutionary nationalist student groups began to organize (Ferreira, 84).
678 Barlow and Shapiro, An End to Silence, 157; “Latin American Student Organization Demands,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
Mexican Studies program might offer, such as a course on “the problems of Mexican-Americans,” or a course on “property rights in New Mexico,” which “might be more relevant to the immediate needs and concerns of the Mexican-American community.”

Formerly recognized in November 1967, ICSA tied the experiences of Chinese-American students at SF State to the condition of working class Chinese-Americans in San Francisco’s Chinatown—where ICSA maintained an office—and condemned the university for offering “no adequate courses in any department…that even begin to deal with problems of the Chinese people in this exclusionary and racist environment.”

More than any other organization, PACE emphasized the possibility of higher education as a means to revolutionary ends, writing that “the Philippines may be the next nation in which an armed struggle, a revolutionary struggle takes place,” and that students interested in the region should be able to learn about “a nation that will be a decisive force in Asia for years to come,” rather than focusing on Japan and China.

SF State’s AAPA was modeled after an existing Asian American Political Alliance already operating at UC Berkeley. Forming “in hopes of making the university meaningful to our everyday existence and not merely a clearinghouse for the technological agencies of the American money-making machine,” Berkeley’s AAPA had announced itself with a

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681 “Proposal for a Department of Philippine Studies,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA.
demand for the creation of courses which could serve as “the vanguard in a continuing
program of studies for, with, and by the Asian being.”

The proliferation of Third World groups on campus between 1967-8
notwithstanding, during this period most of the radical energy at SF State was associated
with the BSU and the nascent Black Studies program. This was especially true following
the so-called ‘Gater incident,’ in November of 1967, when members of the Black
Students Union—including the soon-to-be Black Panther Minister of Education George
Mason Murray and future actor Danny Glover—confronted the editor of one of the
University’s two student newspapers over editorial statements deriding Black Power in
general and Black Power at SF State in particular. The confrontation led to violence in
the Gater offices, and after pictures of the melee were released, the university suspended
nine students: all of whom were Black.

These suspensions sparked a backlash on the part of student activists, with Garret
and other radicals organizing the Movement Against Political Suspensions (MAPS).
Though short-lived, MAPS had an outsized impact at SF State in helping to forge bonds
between the BSU and the mostly white student radicals of SDS (as well as some liberals
who were uncomfortable with the tactics of the radicals but who saw echoes of the police
tactics of the Jim Crow South in the crackdown on Black students), inspiring further
organizing on the part of Asian and Chicano students along revolutionary nationalist
lines, and building relationships between campus-radicals and off-campus community

683 Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) Newspaper, UC Berkeley, Volume 1, Number 1, Coll. 1805,
Steve Louie Asian American Movement Collection, Department of Special Collections, UCLA Library,
Los Angeles, CA
684 “Gater Incident,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
Perhaps most important was that after the administration shut down the campus following a MAPS rally, law-and-order conservatives lost confidence in liberal university president John Summerskill. His position weakened, Summerskill announced in February of 1968 that he would resign that September; paving the way for the eventual ascension of the more combative, and more conservative Samuel Ichiye Hayakawa.

On February 29, 1968, the various nationalist organizations on campus came together to declare the formation of the Third World Liberation Front. Now firmly under student control, the editorial page of the Daily Gater recorded that “the concept of the Third World, the unification of all non-whites in the world to resist the oppression laid on by whites,” was “being crystallized on campus.” In May, students called for a sit-in to demand the admission of 400 Third World students for the fall semester, as well as the hiring of 10 Third World instructors, and the removal of Air Force ROTC from S.F. State’s campus. In an announcement published in the Gater, the TWLF declared itself to be an organization “composed of peoples who are opposed to the present oppressive system in America as based on the Anglo-Saxon racist philosophy,” and whose purpose was “to initiate discussion and develop programs pertinent to the needs of the Third World students,” as well as “to aid in further developing politically, economically, and

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685 Ferreira, 92-93
687 The Gater, “Move Toward the Third World,” Friday March 1, 1968, Volume 98, Number 5, San Francisco State Strike College Collection. The first public statement by the newly formed TWLF was a resolution demanding the retention of two professors who had been terminated due to—according to the students—“racism and reaction” on the part of the University. (“Resolution: Third World Students Liberation Front,” SF State Strike Collection) The editors made specific mention of the influence of Stokely Carmichael—then serving as the Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party—who had articulated the shared interest of marginalized people in and out of the United States through drawing compelling “analogies between the fate of the American Indian and the Vietnamese.”
culturally, the revolutionary Third World consciousness of racist-pressed peoples both on and off campus.” Regretting that the “myth of the American Dream,” had led them to strive for assimilation and education in majority-white institutions, the members of the TWLF declared that they were “[fusing] themselves with the masses of Third World people…to create through struggles, a new humanity, a new humanism, a New World Consciousness,” and ultimately to “control our own destinies.”

Though clearly drawing on a global Third World political imaginary, through the summer and into the fall of 1968, TWLF actions continued to be directed in support of the demand for Black Studies. In September of 1968, San Francisco State announced that a Black Studies Department would be formed under the (acting) leadership of Nathan Hare. A Black sociologist who had come to SF State after losing his job at Howard due to his vocal support of Black Nationalism, Hare was the author of “A Conceptual Proposal for a Department of Black Studies,” in which he argued for the “pulling together” of existing courses in Black Studies—like those then on offer at San Francisco State and Yale University—into Black Studies departments. For Hare, Black Studies represented “a last-ditch, nonviolent, effort to solve a grave crisis”: the “alienation and resentment” of Black students whose education has “robbed them of a sense of collective

689 “A non-white struggle toward new humanism, new consciousness,” The Daily Gater, Vol. 98, No. 67, May 22, 1968* https://sfsu-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/188357/May_22_1968.pdf?sequence=1, accessed 10/13/2019. (*note: this issue of the Gater records the date as May 22, 1969, but the context of this and other articles/advertisements—including a reminder for graduation on July 5, 1968—makes clear that the original dating was in error.)

690 Later, other organizations would object to press coverage which ignored their efforts at self-determination at the exclusive focus of the Black Movement. “The reference to ‘BSU and TWLF’ by the press,” reads an editorial written in Berkeley’s AAPA newsletter, “is another indication of how the colorful aspects of the struggle have been played down. The BSU is a member organization of the TWLF having no greater privileges or exclusiveness than the other TWLF members (AAPA, ICSA, MASC, PACE, LASO).” Hsieh Yu-Hsien, editorial in Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) Newspaper, UC Berkeley vol. 1, no. 1, Steve Louie Asian American Movement Collection, UCLA

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destiny and involvement in the educational process.” Nathan Hare envisioned the creation of a series of Black Studies departments which—with enough support from the Black community—could bring forth a “black educational renaissance.”

The grassroots demand for Black Studies at SF State was followed by similar efforts at universities across the country, and in May, 1968 Yale’s Black Student Alliance (BSA) sponsored a two-day symposium on the implementation and future of Black Studies. Speakers at the conference included Hare, Harold Cruse, and McGeorge Bundy—the former National Security Advisor (to both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson) who had become the president of the Ford Foundation in 1966. Though no clear consensus emerged from the Yale symposium, many of the participants echoed the sentiments voiced by Black Students at SF State over the previous two years.

Cruse in particular had been a key intellectual source for the Black campus movement due to his emphasis on creating a self-sustaining revolutionary national culture. In his contribution to the symposium—one of several included in an edited volume published the following year—Cruse drew on his earlier writing, to argue that “the integrationist ethic” in American life “has subverted and blocked America’s underlying tendency toward…democratic ethnic pluralism.” In the emergent Black Studies movement, Cruse saw a possibility for the development of the sort of Black Studies and involvement in the educational process.” Nathan Hare envisioned the creation of a series of Black Studies departments which—with enough support from the Black community—could bring forth a “black educational renaissance.”

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692 Hare in Orrick, 160. Hare’s plan for Black Studies drew on a tradition of autonomous Black-led education with roots in The Freedom Schools led by SNCC volunteers in the early 1960s, as well as the more recent Black Campus Movement
cultural nationalism which he had long seen as necessary to combatting “the cultural nationalism of the dominant white group.” Well before the rise of Black Power, efforts at building Black spaces at majority white institutions had been met with accusations of separatism and reverse discrimination. Typical of this position was a 1963 Harvard University Council for Undergraduate Affairs decision against a proposed “Harvard Association of African and Afro-American Students.” In rejecting the proposal, the Council argued that a group that would not admit white students was in violation of the school’s “long standing tradition against discrimination.” To Cruse, these and similar arguments—when made in good faith—failed to grasp that Black Studies, represented “a kind of particularism [whose] function is not to replace one particularism with another particularism but to counterbalance the historical effects and exaggeration of particularism toward a more racially balanced society.”

Yale approved the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department in 1968, and began granting degrees in African-American Studies in 1969. Black Studies programs were initiated at dozens of schools in the last two years of the 1960s. At times, these programs were the end result of tense standoffs. The most famous such standoff was at Cornell, where a takeover of the student union building during Parents’ Weekend led to the creation of an African Studies research center. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, students clashed with armed police during a seven-day strike as part of their successful efforts at securing a Black Studies Department. At City College of New

692 Cruse, 9-10
696 Cruse, 9-10
697 Rogers, The Black Campus Movement, 127-130
698 https://news.wisc.edu/black-student-strike/timeline/, accessed 10/29/19
York (CCNY), a two-week occupation of campus led to the creation of an Urban and Ethnic Studies Department. Elsewhere, administrations created programs in Ethnic Studies without having their hands forced by student strikes and campus occupations, as was the case with Brown University’s Afro-American Studies program and Princeton’s program in Afro-American Studies.

With some exceptions (students at CCNY had set out to demand a school of Third World studies) demands for new departments in the Northeast, in the Midwest, and at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the South, continued to be closely associated with the movement for Black self-determination—rather than with other revolutionary nationalist movements. Key to the shift from Black Nationalism toward a broader Third World politics at SF State was that the foment for Black and Third World Studies in San Francisco was taking place during a period of incipient Third Worldism throughout California’s Bay Area. After pursuing a more traditionally Black Nationalist politics from 1966-7, the Oakland-based Black Panther Party had increasingly come to embrace the rhetoric of anti-colonial liberation, in large part due to the influence of Eldridge Cleaver. In an article on the Black campus movement published in The

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699 Biondi, 114-141
700 Whether administrators took action out of a sincere desire to address curricular inadequacies or as a cynical attempt to pacify Black students and forestall future organizing efforts is difficult to say. At both of these campuses there was Black activism, and Princeton in particular saw direct action in 1969 when Black Students occupied an administration building to demand divestment from apartheid South Africa. However, in neither case does the creation of a Black Studies program seem to have come about as a direct result from clashes between students and administrators. Martha Mitchell, “Afro-American Studies,” Encyclopedia Brunoniana (https://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/search.php?serial=A0090), accessed 10/30/2019 and Brandon D. Holt Collection of Oral History Interviews on Black Student Activism at Princeton; Princeton University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
701 The Panthers had always identified in the abstract with anti-colonial movements globally, but prior to 1967, their rhetoric was more Black Nationalist than Black Internationalist. Among other sources, see Sean L. Malloy, Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism During the Cold War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), on the Panthers shift toward an explicit politics of Third World liberation.
Black Scholar—a journal founded by Nathan Hare—Cleaver wrote “that those who control the mind can control the body,” and thus “know that it is necessary for them to control the learning process.”  

For this reason, exploited communities—including poor white people—must come together to take control over all institutions of education in the United States. Cleaver emphasized that this must not be a movement to reform the University, but rather to remake it. “We’re not in the movement,” Cleaver continued, “to reform the curriculum of a given university or a given college or to have a Black Students Union recognized at a given high school. We are revolutionaries, and as revolutionaries, our goal is the transformation of the American social order.”

Strikers at S.F. State shared Cleaver’s understanding of the exigencies of the moment, and radical students in San Francisco had frequent opportunities to develop personal and political ties with Panther leadership, including Cleaver, Newton, Stokely Carmichael, and Donald Cox—all of whom addressed members of the BSU and/or TWLF at key points between 1967 and 1970. During the height of the strike, the most important connection between the TWLF and the Black Panther Party was George Mason Murray—a Black Studies instructor at SF State and the BPP’s Minister of Education. Returning from the OSPAAAL meeting in Havana in August 1968, Murray made clear that he saw little distinction between Black Americans and other Third World revolutionaries: “Cuba,” Murray told a Fresno crowd in the fall of 1968, “is a black

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703 Cleaver, “Education and Revolution,” 51
704 The BSU held a protest action on the first anniversary of Huey Newton’s arrest—October 28th, 1968—to announce the student strike (Biondi, 56). Newton himself had spoken to the Black Students Union the afternoon preceding John Frey’s death (Ferreira, 91). Eldridge Cleaver taught a class on “Social Analysis” at Berkeley in the Fall of 1968, and Stokely Carmichael spoke to the BSU and the TWLF on November 5th, 1968—one day before the strike began. Beyond the Panthers, the Bay Area was home to a number of organizations on the Third World Left, all of which surely had an impact on the revolutionary nationalist milieu at San Francisco state.
country,” and Black and Third World students at SF State had a shared political destiny with those fighting to defend the revolution in Cuba.  

Delivered in late October of 1968, Murray’s incendiary Fresno address—in which he told listeners that the politics of liberation could be reduced to the simple fact that “we are slaves, and the only way to become free is to kill all the slave masters”—was a key precipitant of the Third World Liberation Strike. Already under fire from the university for his relationship with the BPP and for several pro-Panther speeches he had delivered in Cuba, Murray was suspended on November 1st, 1968 on direct orders from the Chancellor. Angered by Murray’s termination, and frustrated after months of inaction on the part of the administration—which had agreed in theory to the creation of a Black Studies program months earlier—the BSU announced a student strike, set to begin on November 6th, 1968. The strike was quickly endorsed by SF State’s SDS chapter, and the other member organizations of the TWLF joined later in the week, with the students presenting the administration with 15 nonnegotiable demands: 10 from the BSU and 5 from the TWLF. On the night of November 5th, Stokely Carmichael addressed a closed...

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706 Delivered on October 22, Murray’s speech was printed in The Black Panther on November 16, 1968.

707 Murray told Cuban crowds that—in his own later paraphrase—“Every time an American mercenary [in Vietnam] is shot, that’s one less cat that’s going to be killing us in the United States.” Murray went on to reference the deployment of the 101st airborne and the 82nd airborne in Detroit and Newark during the summer of 1967 (quoted in Bloom and Martin Jr., 273).

708 The Demands were: “1. All Black Studies classes be put into a Black Studies department; 2. That Nathan Hare (academic and Black activist) be made chair; 3. Faculty hiring to be the sole purview of the BS department; 4. All available slots for Black students to be filled; 5. All Black students who apply to be admitted in 1969; 6. 20 full time teaching positions in the BS department; 7. A Black person be hired to run the Financial Aid Office; 8. No disciplinary action against any strikers; 9. The State trustees to be blocked from ever dissolving any Black programs at SF State or elsewhere; 10. The retention of English instructor and Black Panther Party Minister of Education George Murray; 11. The creation of a school of ethnic studies; 12. The hiring of 30 positions (in addition to the 20 for the BS Department); 13. Admitting all non-white students that apply in the Spring of 1968; 14. Admitting all non-white students in the Fall of 1969; 15. The retention of all non-white faculty chosen by non-white students (including George Murray).” (SF State College Strike Collection)
meeting of members of both student organizations. The following morning, SF State’s Black and Third World Students went on strike.

“If you think that you are entitled to some say over your own education and your own life,” read the first issue of SF State’s Strike Daily newsletter, “if you feel any sympathy at all for the attempt by Black people to liberate themselves from the rule of a racist power structure…then you support the strike.” The strikers called on all students to support them in their demands for self-determination, and to refuse to return to class until the demands of the BSU and the TWLF had been met. The student paper Open Processes urged its readers to understand that were the strike to fail, “the Trustees will drive the final nail into the coffin of decent, meaningful, human-oriented education in the California State Colleges.” A bulletin passed out by the strikers was more to the point: “The Black students have [sic] been treated like animals, so they’re fighting back. Don’t scab on them.” For five months, a critical mass of students did refuse to scab on the strikers, and by the time the longest strike in the history of American higher education came to an end, the movement for Third World Studies had spread from San Francisco, to the rest of California and beyond.

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709 Ferreira, 120
712 Issued by the strikers, “No One is Free Unless Everyone is Free,” Thursday November 7th, 1968, S.F. State Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
On November 13th, the strike was joined by members of the American Federation of Teachers Local 1352, which represented instructors at S.F. State.\(^{713}\) In addition to their own demands, which included a reduced workload, written contracts, and an end to layoffs, the striking teachers demanded the “resolution of the grievances” of the BSU and TWLF.\(^{714}\) Local 1352 was one of a number of labor organizations which came to declare their support for the striking students, including: three Teamsters locals, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Painters Union Local 4, the San Francisco Typographical Union, International Longshoreman and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Locals 10 and 6, and Hospital Workers Local 250.\(^{715}\) In a letter received toward the end of the strike, members of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union Local I-561 in Richmond, California expressed their gratitude to Third World students for “manning our picket lines against the Standard Oil Co.” The union’s treasurer informed the TWLF that the Local’s executive board had unanimously approved a “pledge to organize as large a contingent of oil workers and other trade unionists as is physically possible to join your picket lines.”\(^{716}\) The relationship between the strikers and local labor organizations, and in particular the eagerness with which many local unions answered the strikers’ calls for solidarity, belies the frequent—then and now—accusation that Black and Third World

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713 Ferreira, 125
715 “Community Conference to Support the State Strike,” S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA. Jason Ferreira notes that Black police officers—who made up 4.5% of the force—formed a group called Officers for Justice, and spoke in public in support of the strike. The San Francisco Police Department banned Black officers from appearing on campus out of uniform. (Ferreira, 146)
Leftists represented the narrow particularism of vulgar ‘identity politics’ in a way that was corrosive to efforts to build coalitions across boundaries of non-class identity.

By the end of November, the strike had shifted from a focus on Black Studies above all else toward the demand for the creation of an umbrella department of Third World/ Ethnic Studies which could house the various ethnic studies departments. On December 2nd, after Hayakawa opened campus under a “state of emergency,” an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 of the roughly 10,000 students enrolled at S.F. State marched in support of the strike, and were greeted by 650 armed police officers. Surveying the aftermath of a police assault on two-thirds of his students, Hayakawa told reporters that what had just transpired had been the most exciting day of his life.\footnote{Estimates of student totals from the chronology of the Strike maintained by the J. Paul Leonard Library, \url{http://libguides.sfsu.edu/c.php?g=331157}, accessed 10/18/2019}

After what came to be known as “ Bloody Tuesday,” the pace of the strike increased. In attendance on the day of the march were several prominent members of the local Black community, including future congressman and Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums and Willie Brown—the 41st mayor of San Francisco and long-time boss of the San Francisco political machine.\footnote{“San Francisco State College Fists,” S.F. State College Strike Collection (digital) \url{https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/timelineproject/bundles/235846}, accessed 10/22/2019} Two days later, Dellums returned with other representatives of the city’s Black political leadership, who joined him in condemning Hayakawa and announcing their support of the BSU/TWLF demands. On December 5th, the College’s office workers released a memorandum declaring their support for the strikers.\footnote{“Memorandum to: Staff of San Francisco State College (December 5, 1968),” S.F. State Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, S.F. State} On the 9th, an “interdepartmental strike committee” (ISC) was formed, made up of representatives of at least 20 departments as well as the Experimental College, who
announced that they were “Fully supporting the specific demands of the BSU and the TWLF as well as those principles of self-determination and autonomous control that are basic to [their] demands.” The ISC sent out a “friendly letter to uneasy students” who were sympathetic to the TWLF but afraid of retribution from the College listing a suite of actions which they could take without risking arrest or expulsion.720 One week later, strikers announced that solidarity rallies had “been held at Berkeley, Chico State, Sonoma State, San Diego State…[and] San Jose State,” with the latter two drawing between 1500 and 2000 protestors.721 With local political opinion seeming to move rapidly toward the strikers, and aware that the TWLF had schedule December 16\textsuperscript{th} as “Third World Community Day,” Hayakawa decided to close the College for winter break one week early. In response, the students announced that January 6-13, 1969 would be “Third World Community Week.”\textsuperscript{722}

Hayakawa re-opened the College on January 5\textsuperscript{th}, but the extra vacation time had done little to mollify the strikers. In her history of the Black Campus Movement, Martha Biondi notes that on January 14\textsuperscript{th}—the day after the conclusion of ‘Third World Community Week’—only 43 of a schedule 115 classes at San Francisco State were held, and of those 43, none reported attendance figures of more than 50 percent.723 In late January, strikers estimated that while 15-20% of the students at S.F. State “were hardcore scabs and beyond education”—a portion of the student body that they mocked as “the

\begin{enumerate}
\item “S.F. State is Not Alone,” handed out 12 Dec. 1968, S.F. State Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
\item Strike Committee 30:249, S.F. State College Strike Collection, J. Paul Leonard Library, San Francisco, CA
\item Biondi, 67
\end{enumerate}
Hayakawa youth”— 4 out of 5 people on campus were sympathetic to the strikers’ demands. On January 17th, solidarity strikes were announced at San Jose State College in the South Bay, and on January 22nd, the TWLF was given a boost by the announcement of the Third World strike across the Bay at the University of California, Berkeley. The next day, students and supporters marched on campus to show their continued commitment to the 15 demands. Within minutes, the marchers were set upon by the police, who arrested nearly 450 protestors, including Nathan Hare.

The arrests of January 23rd represented something of a turning point for the strike. At the end of that week, the university closed for a break between semesters. When campus re-opened on February 14th, Hayakawa, the city of San Francisco, and the state of California shifted tactics away from direct physical confrontation, and began using their financial and legal leverage to drain the resources of the protestors. From mid-February through March, the administration relied on its disciplinary powers, power to hire and fire, and control over student funds to try to break the strike, while the local courts sought charges against as many as possible of the students arrested on January 23—forcing those strikers who had not been arrested to spend their time and energy

724 http://digital-collections.library.sfsu.edu/digital/collection/p16737coll2/id/1294/rec/1
While most of the students who opposed the strike were either apolitical or on the political right, there was one major (eventual) exception: The Progressive Labor Party (PLP). PLP had been supportive of the strike until dramatically shifting their position following demands from central party leadership made. Jim Dann and Hari Dillon, “The Five Retreats: A History of the Failure of the Progressive Labor Party,” https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/1960-1970/5retreats/chapter3.htm#bk25, accessed 10/30/2019. In a pamphlet distributed by PL in October of 1969, the group derided the TWLF’s demands for Third World administrators as “a liberal nationalist demand which does not help alleviate the racists oppression of Third World working people but merely changes the color of the oppressor.” Progressive Labor Party, “On Trial for Fighting Racism,” https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/strike/bundles/187945, SF State College Strike Collection (digital)
725 Ferreira writes that this arrest represented “the single largest mass bust in the history of San Francisco.” (Ferreira, 165)
raising funds for lawyers and bail money. After threatening striking teachers with termination—a threat backed up by San Francisco’s Labor Council under pressure from Mayor Joseph Alioto—the teachers voted 112-104 to return to work. At the end of February, it was made clear that neither Nathan Hare or George Murray—whose retention had been one of the demands of the striking students—would be rehired for the next academic year. In mid-March, with the momentum shifting away from the strikers, Hayakawa felt confident enough to travel to Washington, D.C., and empowered a select committee to come to terms with the TWLF in his absence. The select committee and the strikers agreed to a settlement on March 20.

In a joint agreement signed by representatives of the Third World Liberation Front, the Black Students Union, and the Select Committee, the administration promised the establishment of a School of Ethnic Studies—including departments of Black Studies, Asian American Studies (housing Chinese American, Japanese American, and Philippine American Studies), and Native American Studies (housing Native American Studies and La Raza Studies)—set to “begin operation in the Fall Semester of 1969.” The university was unable by law to agree to the admission of all Black and Third World students who applied, but agreed in principle that admissions should be expanded, and

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726 On Hayakawa’s “Spring Offensive,” see Ferreira 167-169. Ferreira notes that during this period George Murray was arrested with a concealed weapon after a traffic stop and sentenced to six months in jail.
727 Ferreira, 170. Ferreira notes that even when the SF Labor Council granted strike authorization, they did so “reluctantly,” and they refused to regard the student strikers as a part of the labor movement. (Ferreira, 148)
728 ibid
729 These last few weeks of the strike were not without drama. On March 5th, a freshman named Timothy Peebles was injured after a bomb he was setting off on campus exploded
730 “Joint Agreement of Representatives of the Third World Liberation Front and the Black Students Union and the Members of the Select Committee Concerning Resolution of the Fifteen Demands and Other Issues Arising From the Student Strike at San Francisco State College, November 6, 1968—March 18, 1969,” https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/strike/bundles/187925, accessed 10/22/19
committed to increasing admissions of non-white students through recruitment. The university allocated 12 positions of the 20 demanded by the BSU, but made clear that they anticipated hiring more over time. The Select Committee was not empowered to promise an end to disciplinary hearings, and offered only a promise to recommend relatively light sentences to students. Also disappointing the strikers was that the Committee refused to give control over hiring and firing to the Third World Communities themselves. The strikers had secured the creation of an Ethnic Studies Department—though not in a way that would guarantee their control.

Though not all of the original demands were met, the establishment of the nation’s first Ethnic Studies program represented a clear victory for the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State University, and for the concept of Third World Studies more broadly. However, even as student strikes spread around the Bay Area and the rest of the state, and even as Ethnic Studies programs were established across the nation, the limits of what could be accomplished by integrating a discipline which was fundamentally hostile to the existing university into the university became clear.

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Even before its own strike had come to a close, the influence of SF State’s TWLF had begun to reverberate through the state of California. On January 22nd, Berkeley’s Chancellor informed the community that Berkeley’s own Third World Liberation Front had promised “to shut down the campus unless a specified number of demands are met within stated periods of time.”731 Included in these demands were that “funds be allocated

for the implementation of [a] Third World College,” under which departments of Asian Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, and Native American Studies would be organized. As with SF State, Berkeley’s TWLF demanded that these departments be under the exclusive control of Third World communities, that the university extend admission and aid to Third World applicants, and that no disciplinary action of any kind be taken against striking students.\textsuperscript{732} The pronouncements of revolutionary nationalist groups at Berkeley echoed those of SF’s TWLF. “The point,” wrote representatives of the Asian-America Political Alliance (AAPA), “is that…in order to survive in this world we have had to defend ourselves from the belching stomachs and snapping teeth of western civilization or be consumed, leaving only left-over shreds of our identity.”\textsuperscript{733} The principle of self-determination, read another flyer produced by the Berkeley TWLF, “is as important to Berkeley as it is to the revolutionary struggles of the peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.”\textsuperscript{734}

As with San Francisco State, the Third World Studies movement at Berkeley had initially grown out of a demand for a Black Studies Department—one first made by Berkeley’s Afro American Student Union in April, 1968. However, Berkeley’s Third World Students coalesced much more rapidly behind the demands for a Third World College than had their counterparts across the Bay. As with S.F. State, student protestors who marched in support of these demands were met with violence on the part of local police, and by the end of February, Berkeley’s TWLF announced that over 150 students


\textsuperscript{734} ibid
had been arrested for taking part in protests.\footnote{ibid} Despite beginning later, Berkeley’s strike came to an end on March 4, 1969—three weeks before the end of the S.F. State strike—when the academic senate endorsed the formation of an interim Department of Ethnic Studies. On April 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1969, the university announced the creation of a permanent department to offer classes beginning that fall. \footnote{“College of Third World Studies—proposal (ethic studies department committee establishment),” UC Berkeley, Chicano Studies Program, 1961-1966, Chicano Studies, Collection, Ethnic Studies Library, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California}

At the University of California, San Diego, students in the Mexican American Youth Council (MAYA) and Black Student Council (BSC)—including then graduate student Angela Davis with support from her advisor Herbert Marcuse—came together as the Lumumba-Zapata Coalition (LZC) to demand a Third College “devoted to relevant education for minority youth and to the study of the contemporary social problems of all people” in the fall of 1968.\footnote{Pamphlet: Lumumba-Zapata College. B.S.C.-M.A.Y.A. Demands for the Third College, U.C.S.D.} “Having been admitted to the University,” read the Lumumba-Zapata coalition’s demands, “some of us thought we had crashed through the barriers of racism and economic oppression.” Imagining that their success was proof of progress toward multiracial meritocracy, Black and Third World students quickly came to find that “we were accidentally the chosen ones, the privileged few who, according to the powers that be, are the exception that challenges the rule—the existence of white racism.” LZC activists raged at what they referred to as a system of “mind-raping” by high schools and colleges which served to reproduce domestic and international imperialism by “devising more efficient techniques of mystifying the students with irrelevant inanities, then…consciously subjecting them to a cold-blooded and calculated
indoctrination into a dehumanized and unfree society.”738 The Lumumba-Zapata Coalition demanded the teaching of the history of revolutions and a serious analysis of economic systems, as well as fields in public health and urban development which engaged seriously with the struggles of Third World populations. They asked for the new College to enroll a minimum of 35% Black and 35% Mexican American students, and demanded that the architectural design of the Lumumba-Zapata College “Be of Mexican and African style and that its landscape be of the same nature.”739

Far less hostile to the demands of Third World students than administrators at SF State and Berkeley, San Diego Chancellor William J. McGill’s response to the demands of the LZC made for a stark contrast to that of the conservative Hayakawa. However, though relatively sympathetic to the strike, McGill was not willing to compromise on all of the radicals’ demands. McGill’s proactive response to the LZC at UC San Diego was a preview into the way liberal administrations would work to integrate Ethnic Studies programs into the university without acceding to student demands for genuine autonomy. On May 14, 1969—one week before the end of the strike at S.F. State, Chancellor McGill told the Third World students that he took their proposals seriously, and agreed that the university “has been too slow in coming to grips with its educational responsibilities to minority communities.” While he was excited by the students’ interest in departments “related to the Health Sciences, problems of the inner city, fine arts, languages and cultural heritage,” he made clear that “the faculty of UCSD and its Chancellor do not propose to engage in teaching revolution or in proselytizing for an ideology that links capitalism with slavery and genocide.” A few weeks later, he added that he while he had

738 ibid
739 Ibid
had no issue with the demand for an indigenous architecture, he opposed any enrollment quotas, as well as “the name Lumumba-Zapata College.” McGill offered that it would be best to select “a single American minority figure,” to honor. Though the college broke ground in 1974, the controversy over the name of the new school remained intractable, and it was not until 1993 that the Third College was finally given a name: Thurgood Marshall College.

Unrest had broken out at San Fernando Valley State College two days prior to the official start of the Third World Liberation Strike at SF State. At San Fernando—now California State University, Northridge—students successfully pressured the university into agreeing to the creation of Pan-African and Mexican American Studies departments beginning in the fall of 1969. The principle architect of the Mexican American Studies curriculum at San Fernando was a recent PhD in Latin American History named Rodolfo F. Acuña. At 35 years old, Acuña was one the oldest of a cohort of activists and academics in attendance at a conference at the University of California, Santa Barbara in April of 1969: the successor meeting of the first national Chicano Youth Conference, which had been held in Denver in March of 1969 and which had featured representatives from the Third World Liberation Front. The Santa Barbara Conference marked the establishment of the radical Chicano student organization Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), as well as the production of “El Plan De Santa Bárbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education”: a document which laid out plans for the building of

740 Ibid
741 Acuña, 50
742 Michael Soldatenko, Chicano Studies: The Genesis of a Discipline (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009), 28
Chicano Studies at universities throughout the United States. By the end of the year, programs had begun to take shape at California State University at Los Angeles, San Diego State College, and California State College at Long Beach.

In May of 1969, University of California, Davis’s la MEChA chapter—along with the Asian American Concern (AAC), and the Black Students Union—cited San Francisco State and Berkeley in their demand for a department of Third World Studies. Inheritors to a strong traditional of agricultural education, Third World students at Davis emphasized courses relevant to the lives of farm workers, and to questions of land justice and agricultural rights. Under the leadership of Jack D. Forbes, and originally a part of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences rather than the Humanities, Davis became home to the first program in Native American Studies in the University of California system.

By the end of the fall of 1969, Ethnic Studies programs had been built at colleges and universities throughout the state of California, including important centers for teaching and research at both the University of California, Santa Barbara and UCLA—

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744 Acuña, 80-87. Although it did not become an official department until 1971, the program in Chicano (now Chicana/o and Latina/o) Studies at CSU Los Angeles began to offer classes in the Fall of 1968—earlier than any other college or university in the state (http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/cls/history-1968-present, accessed 10/22/2019)
746 https://nas.ucdavis.edu/history, accessed 10/21/2019. Native American studies made for what was at times an awkward ideological fit among the various revolutionary nationalist movements agitating for Third World Studies programs. Ziza Joy Delgado writes that “Native Americans did not engage in ‘nationalist’ discourse because their struggle was more focused on sovereignty and tribal affiliation. For Native North Americans, it was less about the Third World and more about indigeneity and First Nations.” (Joy Delgado, 140). Nevertheless, the TWLF at SF State, Berkeley, and UC Davis played a generative role in the American Indian Movement (AIM), and it was at a conference at Davis including representatives from the Native American Studies programs at Davis, SF State, and Berkeley that Richard Oakes first proposed occupying Alcatraz. See Kent Blietz, A Journey to Freedom: Richard Oakes, Alcatraz, and the Red Power Movement (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 100.
where the university sought to get out ahead of disruptive protests by offering research centers in Native American, Chicano, Black, and Asian American Studies. During this period, Asian Studies programs remained—with some exceptions—mostly a West Coast phenomenon, and Chicano Studies programs could be found primarily in California, in Texas, and in the Southwest. Demands for Black Studies however, disrupted schools across the nation during the late 1960s. While protests at Cornell and City College in New York received the most media attention, the historian of Black Studies Ibram H. Rogers estimates that “about a hundred violent and an additional 200 non-violent disruptive protests were waged for Black issues during the 1968-1969 academic year—most of which occurred in the spring 1969.” Rogers records that by 1970, “nearly 1,000 colleges had organized Black Studies courses, programs, or departments.”

Though not approaching the ubiquity of African-American Studies programs, as of 2011, at least 169 schools in the U.S. offered programs in Chicano/a or Latinx Studies, and at least 70 schools offer at least one courses listed under Asian Studies.

Though the proliferation of Ethnic Studies programs did not represent a fulfillment of the revolutionary vision of the early Third World Studies movement, the model helped to create a space for other fields defined—at least in part—by their

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747 Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, 136
748 Rogers
749 Rogers
750 Acuña, [http://www.aaastudies.org/list/](http://www.aaastudies.org/list/) It’s difficult to determine precisely what this number is, as a number of schools with Asian-language programs offer courses which could be defined as representing an Asian Studies approach. This number does not necessarily represent a pattern of continued growth, as a number of programs were forced to close their doors between the late 1970s and the late 1990s. Asian Studies scholar Peter Nien-chu King notes that into the 1980s, Asian Studies on the East Coast was limited to one-off courses. Peter Nien-chu King, “The New Wave: Developing Asian American Studies on the East Coast” in Gary Y. Okihiro, Shirley Hune, Arthur A. Hansen, and John M. Liu eds., *Reflections on Shattered Windows: Promises and Prospects for Asian American Studies* (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1988), pp. 43-50; 43
connection to the politics of subaltern communities outside of the university, by their efforts at understanding and critiquing the ways that traditional disciplines serve to reproduce and reinforce existing structures of power and exploitation, and by their insistence on engaging with multiple traditions within the humanities and social-sciences. Like the first-wave of scholars of Third World Studies, socialist feminist and Third World feminist scholars have staked out a place—if a precarious one—in universities across the United States.

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Through the 1970s and 1980s, Angela Davis authored influential essays on prison abolition, Palestinian Liberation, anti-imperialism, and the relationship between gender, race, and class, while continuing to make connections with revolutionaries in the United States and revolutionary government in the Third World.751 As the example of Davis—who became a Professor of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State in 1980, and who is currently Distinguished Professor Emerita in the History of Consciousness Program at University of California, Santa Cruz—indicates, Third World feminists who produced academic work did not necessarily do so at the exclusion of political activism outside of the University. Published in 1981, Davis’s *Women, Race, & Class* is a foundational text for scholars and activists who study the ways that movements for women’s liberation have run aground due to a failure to sufficiently engage with the ways that racism and class exploitation are central to the marginalization of women. A pioneering scholar of

751 During this period, Davis remained a member of the CPUSA. She was the Vice-Presidential candidate for the Party (with Gus Hall as candidate for President) in 1980 and 1984. The tickets received 44,933 and 36,386 votes.
ethnic studies, Davis has consistently presented the struggle for self-determination in American higher education as a part of a global movement for justice. “Whether consciously or not,” Davis reminded a crowd at San Francisco State in April, 1984, “the struggles of racially and nationally oppressed people in the United States are tied to the efforts of people across the globe to hasten the end” of “the socioeconomic structures of capitalism.”

The socialist and lesbian-feminist activist-scholar Barbara Smith similarly carved out a space in the academy without abandoning her work as an organizer. After starting a Boston chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), Smith—along with her sister Beverly and feminist activist Demita Frazier—broke from the national organization and moved their chapter in a more radical direction. Naming themselves after the 1863 raid in which Harriet Tubman liberated hundreds of enslaved people, the Combahee River Collective’s formulation of “identity politics” and their development of what critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw later termed “intersectionality” have had a significant impact on the political thought of the contemporary left and on academic discourses around women’s studies and post-colonial feminism.

In “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1977), the group called for Black and Third World women to ground their politics in the “shared belief that Black women are inherently valuable [and] that our liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to

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somebody else’s but because of our need as human persons for autonomy.” Combahee argued that only by making their own oppression foundational (though without advocating total separatism from either white women or Black men), could Black and Third World women chart a course toward “the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy.” Contrary to the often-vulgarized use of ‘identity politics’ in contemporary political discourse, Combahee used the term to represent the process by which groups could come to understand their oppression, and thus through which they could develop the tools to dismantle the hierarchies which oppressed them. As with Frederick Douglass’s arriving at an understanding of freedom through a brutal confrontation with its opposite, the theorists of the Combahee River Collective argued that working-class Black lesbian women were uniquely situated to analyze the overlapping hierarchies of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Rather than barriers to cross-identity solidarity, identity politics was a method by which all oppressions could be confronted: “If Black women were free,” reads the Combahee statement, “it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”

In addition to organizing around issues like abortion rights and the ending of sterilization, Barbara Smith played an important role in the generation of Women of Color Studies: a discipline and method which she helped to establish between the early 1970s and the early 1980s. Through Smith’s teaching, her article “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism” (1977), co-editing the anthology All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave (1982), and republishing the 1981 volume

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754 The Combahee River Collective, quoted in Keenga-Yamahtta Taylor, How We Get Free, 18, 19.
755 The Combahee River Collective, quoted in Keenga-Yamahtta Taylor, How We Get Free, 23
This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color in 1983 with Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press—the feminist press that Smith started with the poet Audre Lord—she has sought to overcome what she has referred to as the “immoral and false dichotomy” between activism and academia. The rejection of this false dichotomy has been a driving force in the work of scholars like Patricia Hill Collins and Chandra Talpade Mohanty and in university departments throughout the United States.

In addition to Third World Feminism, the politics of the Third World Left and the Third World Studies Movement shaped important trends in sociology, anthropology, geography, the then-nascent field of Cultural Studies, and the teaching of pedagogy and educational theory during the 1970s-1990s, and has provided fertile ground for the development of more recent fields, including Queer and Sexuality Studies Programs and

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Disability Studies (found mostly as an interdisciplinary concentration rather than as autonomous departments). However, as with the transition from Third World to Ethnic Studies, the conferring of institutional legitimacy onto an institution’s radical critics carries with it a powerful de-radicalizing pressure. The work of individual scholars notwithstanding, the integration into the university of a diverse range of perspectives often comes to be seen as an end in itself, rather than as a means through which a new sort of university might be created.  

As striking students well-understood, the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies programs represented an essential first step—but only a first step—in a long-run process of building departments responsive to the needs of, and under the control of, national communities. Even before the pace of campus activism began to slow during the mid-1970s, it was apparent that Ethnic Studies departments would have to exist in a world defined by the existing university system. Making this especially challenging was that definitionally, these new programs could look to no existing models in the United States.

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759 Okihiro, Theorizing Liberation, Chapter 6
for building within the university; there was a paucity of relevant academic work, and few accredited academics shared the political goals of Third World students.

Though students at SF State held firm in their commitment to forging their hard-won department(s) into a base for a radically reimagined education, TWLF activists had to reckon not only with the aforementioned challenges, but with the continued presence of S.I. Hayakawa. Never wavering in his hostility to the students who had shut his university down for four and half months, by the Spring of 1970, Hayakawa had conducted a purge of radical faculty; including the first dean of the Ethnic Studies Department and every instructor of Black Studies on campus. 760 Though Ethnic Studies at SF State—currently the largest such program in the country—has continued to produce both students and scholarship, the early spring of 1970 was likely the last moment that the original vision of the Third World Liberation Front was within reach. 761

After winning their strike, Third World students at U.C. Berkeley embarked on years of false starts hindered by poor funding and by a lack of institutional support. Though a School of Ethnic Studies had been created shortly after the strike, a 1974 report concluded that the University had “failed completely” in its responsibility “toward Third World peoples.” It was not until the end of the 1970s that Berkeley instituted departments (rather than just courses or programs) of Afro-American Studies, Native American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Chicano Studies. 762 A recent history of Ethnic

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760 Ferreira, 174
761 It should be noted that there were often different points of political emphasis—both between various nationalist student groups who identified as Third Worldist, and within national coalitions. The most prominent example of the latter is the well-known conflict between the Black Panther Party and the cultural nationalist US organization in Los Angeles—a conflict which extended to the UCLA campus and which ended in the shooting deaths of BPP members Bunchy Carter and John Huggins in 1969
762 In 1974, the department of Afro-American Studies left the School of Ethnic Studies and moved into the College of Letters and Science
Studies at Berkeley, records that “the university paternalism that the TWLF had criticized during their protests remain[s]” into the present day, and that “the administration continue[s] to directly influence the structure and future of Ethnic and Afro-American Studies.”

As with the strikes themselves, patterns of institutionalization at SF State and Berkeley were repeated across the U.S. By the late-1970s, roughly 300 colleges offered programs in Black Studies. The hundreds of academics committed to these programs were supported by centers for research and scholarly production including the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta and the Black Economic Research Center, published in journals like *The Black Scholar* and the *Journal of Black Studies*, and developed cross-campus networks through the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS). Yet just ten years after Black Studies departments began to force themselves into the academy, St. Clair Drake—one of the intellectual forbears of the Black Campus movement—was lamenting that most students in Black Studies programs had long since let go of the “utopian dreams and revolutionary rhetoric” of the previous decade, and that Black Studies had become an opportunity for “upwardly mobile black students” to satisfy “their intellectual and aesthetic needs, but without forgetting ‘those left behind’…”

A major force in the mainstreaming of Ethnic Studies programs—both in terms of securing their place in the university and in terms of steering programs and research agendas away from totalizing critiques of Western liberalism—was money from the Ford Foundation. Indeed, in hindsight, the appearance of Ford President McGeorge Bundy at

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763 Delgado, 127
765 Drake, 274
Yale in 1968 is the ‘Chekhov’s gun’ in the story of the transition from Third World to Ethnic Studies, and from Black to African American Studies. Speaking at Yale, Bundy offered that while “there is nothing wrong with providing a sense of direction, identity, and purpose…it is a very dangerous thing to start pushing the subject around for that purpose.” Bundy’s line—the Ford line—was that Ethnic Studies programs could be made to serve a valuable purpose insofar as they helped mollify angry radicals while promoting a recognition of racial and culture difference as a means toward the end of an integrated multicultural liberalism.

By the end of the 1970s, Asian Studies too had been fully professionalized and institutionalized. Sustained in the field’s early years by UCLA’s Asian American Studies Center—which produced an important early textbook, *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (1971) as well as the *Amerasia Journal*—the expansion of Asia Studies slowed during the mid-to-late 1970s. During this period, the field, which was much smaller and less geographically diffuse than African American Studies, was divided among those who remained committed to the Third World perspective of the TWLF—most of whom identified as Maoists through the 1970s—and those who wanted to build for a future within the university system. This struggle played out most visibly at Berkeley, with the reformers winning out by the end of the decade, and in 1979, the first professional

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767 For much more detail on the relationship between the Ford Foundation and Black Studies in particular see Noliwe M. Rooks, *White Money/ Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006). In reflecting on the (more limited but not insignificant) role that Foundation money played in the mainstreaming of Chicano Studies, Rodolfo F. Acuña laments that the academy “compromised its vaunted search for the truth and allowed nonprofit foundations to often determine the research topics and the scholars of their choice.” (Acuña, 124)

768 Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, 136
organization in the discipline was established with the founding of the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS). Chicano Studies followed a similar trajectory. In 1970, UCLA’s Chicano Research Center began distribution of a professional journal: *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, and a National Association of Chicano Studies (NACS)—since renamed the National Association of Chicano and Chicano Studies (NACCS)—was established in 1976.

By the 1980s, despite suffering from the effects of federal and state privatization, from broad assaults on the humanities in general, and from more targeted attacks on the threat of Black, Asian, and Chicano Studies from the ascendant cultural right, Ethnic Studies—due to extraordinary efforts on the part of student and academic activists and buoyed by the at-times poison-pill of foundation money—had carved out a somewhat secure place in the university system. However, the necessities of academic mainstreaming had fundamentally shifted the politics of Ethnic Studies in the years following the strike-waves; a transformation summed up most succinctly by Berkeley

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769 On the fight between “militant reformers” and revolutionaries at U.C. Berkeley—including the expulsion of Wei Min She (WMS) in 1972 and a “purge” of I Wor Kuen (IWK) in 1977, see Wei, 144-149
771 This is not to suggest that these programs were secure at every individual college. Budget cuts often came first for Ethnic Studies programs, and these programs faced—and continue to face—the same crises that other programs do, particularly in the humanities. As referenced above, during the 1980s and 1990s, the existence of Ethnic Studies programs and women’s studies programs was a unifying force for theocratic right-wing cultural warriors like Pat Buchanan, aging New Dealers like Arthurs Schlesinger, and neo-conservative editorialists like Charles Krauthammer; all of whom saw Ethnic Studies as an intellectually unserious discipline whose critique of the Western canon and emphasis on multiculturalism and multi-perspectivalism presented a grave threat to the future of the American project. On these ‘culture wars’ over the role of the university, see Andrew Hartman War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015). A recent reader edited by the Critical Ethnic Studies Editorial Collective argues that “Just as the America Right had opposed Third Worldism and civil rights in the 1960s, it opposed multiculturalism and identity politics in the 1980s. What provoked the Right’s howls of execration in this period was not the indisputable fact of the dappled variety of the world’s cultures…but rather the larger decolonizing and critical race projects.” (Critical Ethnic Studies Editorial Collective, *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 417).
sociologist Michael Omi, who wrote (in the late 1980s) that “It just ain’t the sixties no more.” Focusing on Asian Studies, Omi argued that in securing a place in the university, the field had seen “an increasing disjuncture between academic and activist orientations.” The same was true for fields like Middle Eastern Studies which had developed since the end of the New Left, as well as for Asian Studies, Chicana/o Studies, and the many Black Studies programs—increasingly renamed Afro-American, African-American, African, or African Diaspora Studies programs—across the nation. By the end of the 20th century, participants could debate whether Ethnic Studies programs had sold out or grown up, but in either case, by the early 21st century, the relationship between academic theory and political practice which had been at the very core of the movement for Third World Studies between 1965-1972, had become an attenuated one.

In his conclusion to The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon argued that efforts to fulfill the rhetorical promise of societies dependent on colonization, imperialism, and white supremacy were destined to strengthen those very systems of oppression and exploitation. This expression of the dialectic—that a broken civilization could only be overcome through the realization of its opposite—was succinctly expressed by the Chicago Panther Fred Hampton, when he told a crowd “We not gonna fight capitalism with Black capitalism, but we gonna fight it with socialism. We not gonna fight reactionary pigs…with any reaction on our part. We gonna fight their reaction when all

of us get together and have an international proletarian revolution.”-quoting Audre Lorde—referring explicitly to the role of radical women of color in the American university—“the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”

The departments which emerged in the wake of the TWLS remain committed to many of the values which striking students articulated in November of 1968. The “Mission and Purpose” statement of the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State avers that the College is dedicated to the study and practice of “theories of resistance and liberation to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression,” and to their foundational principles of “community based research and teaching, student leadership and activism, and the self-determination of communities of color.” These departments have continued to nurture activists and produce critical scholarship, and the political, theoretical, and pedagogical challenges made by Third World students have helped transform and inspire developments in cultural studies, women’s studies, and the study of colonialism, post-colonialism, and global capitalism. However, their proliferation has not fundamentally disturbed the role of the university in society.

Indicative of this shift toward academic respectability between the late 1960s and the early 21st century was a proclamation issued in honor of the 40th anniversary of the S.F. State strike—the University’s first official commemoration of the TWLF—by then-San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. Looking back on the strike from the fall of 2008, Newsom celebrated a political action which inspired “students across the world to unite

773 Quoted in Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*, 230
775 http://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/home3, accessed 10/3/2019
in the struggle for social justice, liberation, and access to quality education that truly represents that vast experiences of all Americans regardless of their race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability.”776 In the four decades since the end of the strike, the public memory of a movement that had been understood by students and administrators alike as a revolutionary rejection of the failures of multicultural liberalism, had instead been transformed into its fullest realization. In his own reflections on the history of Ethnic Studies after 40 years, Nathan Hare—who had been so central to the original demand for Black self-determination in the academy—expressed his disappointment at the degree to which the College of Ethnic Studies had diverged from the original intent of the strikers, writing that courses now took “a ‘museum-approach’ that emphasizes history and culture but downplays the instrumental relevance of Black scholarship to our communities.”777

Another indication of the shift from the revolutionary politics of Third World Studies to the multi-cultural liberalism of Ethnic Studies has been the rise of programs in ‘white ethnic studies.’778 Irish Studies, Italian and Italian-American Studies, and Jewish Studies programs are by no means monolithic in their politics, and many departments and scholars working in these fields identify with the Left. However, though white-ethnic populations in America have experienced exclusion and at times violent discrimination,

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777 The Archive Committee of the 40th Commemoration, “The People, the Soul” [booklet], https://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/content/anniversary-archive, accessed 10/20/2020
778 Matthew Frye Jacobson has written on how the push for Third World and Ethnic Studies prompted the development of white ethnic identity—both from the perspective of those eager to understand their unique cultural inheritances and to celebrate the ‘American melting pot,’ and from those who wielded these white ethnic identity claims against claims of institutionalized white supremacy, and/or against the notion that as Italians, Eastern Europeans, Irish Americans, etc., they bore any responsibility for the problems facing people of color. Matthew Frye Jacobson, Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).
they cannot plausibly claim to have held a ‘colonized’ status with the 20th century United States. In general, these departments represent themselves as a part of the Ethnic Studies tradition, but understand that tradition as an effort to recognize and celebrate the unique contributions of immigrant communities in building a multicultural society, rather than on the ways that that society was built on wealth extracted—often by force—from the Asian, Chicana/o, and Black Communities who fought for Third World Studies in the late 1960s.

“The significance of the TWLF model,” reads the introduction to a recent anthology edited by the Critical Ethnic Studies Collective, is “its crystallization of an insurgent narrative structure that facilitates the adjoining of vastly disparate human oppressions and rebellions into an ostensible totality of shared, radical agency against empire, conquest, criminalization, and enslavement.”

A central irony of the history of Ethnic Studies programs is that their effort to construct a counter-hegemonic narrative has been both limited by and made possible by the processes of mainstreaming and institutionalization. The resources required for the production of critical scholarship which de-centers the ‘West’ by introducing a multiplicity of identities and perspectives

779 Critical Ethnic Studies, 2. Similarly, Gary Okihiro has written on the need for scholars to draw on developments in world-systems theory as well as scholarship on racial formation and subject formation to transcend emphases on “multiculturalism and postcolonialism,” which are still tied to the nation-state (Okihiro, 167) and to return to a Third World studies approach as it was envisioned in 1968-9. Not limited to the realm of high academic theory, a more organic resurgence of the animating spirit behind Third World Studies can be seen at the grassroots as well. In May of 2016, 4 students in the Ethnic Studies Department at S.F. State went without food for 10 days. Referring to themselves as Third World Liberation Front 2016, these students and their supporters successfully pressured college-president Leslie Wong into meeting 11 demands, including: increasing the department’s funding by roughly 500,000 dollars, increasing recruitment of under-represented minority groups, the potential creation of a department in Race & Resistance Studies, and providing funding for the development of a program in Pacific Islander Studies (“Joint Agreement between President and COES, 5/11/16,” http://president.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Joint%20Agreement%20between%20President%20and%20COES%205-11-16.pdf, accessed 11/2/19). Though this may prove to be an isolated action, it is clear that contemporary activists find relevance and resonance in the challenge set out by students on the Third World Left’s in 1968.
and which recognizes the interconnectedness of misogyny, capitalism, racism, and imperialism—what the Critical Ethnic Studies Collective refers to as ‘the Decolonizing Corpus’—were secured in part through jettisoning any hope that Third World Studies could exist as an insurgent agent within the university system: a vanguard force in the revolutionary war against American empire.\textsuperscript{780}

However, to note that reform within the system, rather than systemic reform, has been the long-run result of the Third World Studies movement, is not to suggest that the strikers would have been wise to propose moderate reforms at the outset. Indeed, it was only through an intransigence borne of their commitment to a revolutionary project that Third World students were able to begin their ‘long march through the institutions’ of higher learning. Like much of the Third World Left, striking students understood history through a Hegelian Marxist lens: as a process driven by contradictions whose resolution creates new contradictions.\textsuperscript{781} Inspired by anti-colonial liberation, Third World students failed to bring the war home, they failed to tear down and rebuild the university system, failed to bring the war home, they failed to tear down and rebuild the university system,


\textsuperscript{781} Marx describes history as “nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity.” Karl Marx, \textit{The German Ideology}, \url{https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm}, accessed 10/28/19. That the university was able to cannibalize Third World Studies might speak to the insight which Third World leftists had in their critique of ‘one-dimensional’ liberalism’s as a ‘totalizing system’ capable of absorbing assaults from within and turning those assaults into strengths—in this case weakening revolutionary nationalist challenges to their institutional legitimacy by integrating ethic studies programs.
and they failed to topple American empire from within. Through that failure however, they and their intellectual descendants have transformed the way that academics—and increasingly many on the left edge of mainstream politics—understand the world. Further, the radicalism of the Third World Studies movements provides a counter to critiques by reform-minded liberals and social democrats; illustrating that even if the utopian visions of the Far Left are not achieved, the left-wing of the possible can be redefined by demanding the impossible.
Conclusion: “People Don’t Live in a System Abstractly”: The Lessons and Legacy of the Third World Left

“It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness:

- Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, 1871

In 1974, three years after the People’s Republic of China was admitted to the United Nations, and two years after Richard Nixon’s visit to Beijing, Deng Xiaoping—the head of the Chinese delegation at the UN’s General Assembly—undermined the foundational concept of the Third World. Speaking for an aging Mao, Deng held that the “social imperialism” exhibited by the Soviet Union had led to the disintegration of the socialist bloc. China argued that the Soviet and American empires occupied a new First World, one which threatened the survival of the rest of the globe, and that for this reason, the principal goal of Third World (and therefore Chinese) foreign policy should be to oppose Great Power hegemony. Though Sino-Soviet tensions were nothing new, by insisting that the fight for self-determination superseded the fight for global communist revolution, Deng dealt a significant blow to the principle that anti-capitalism and anti-colonialism were necessarily aligned. Mao’s death in 1976 was followed by the arrest of the ‘Gang of Four’—Communist Party officials (including Mao’s wife Jiang Qing) who were held responsible for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution—and eventually the

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ascension of Deng Xiaoping to power. In 1978-9, Deng’s government began to encourage public criticism of the Cultural Revolution.783

During this period, the hottest spots of Cold War conflict shifted from South-East Asia to Southern Africa, and Portugal—the first of the European imperial powers—became the final European state to lose its African colonies. It was during the Civil War in Angola—the last of the Portuguese colonies to win its independence—that China’s claims to leadership of the Third World were fatally undermined, when the PRC found itself on the same side as apartheid South Africa, and opposed to Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.784 These shifts presented the American Left with the need for a more complex foreign policy analysis than had the revolutions in Cuba, Algeria, or Vietnam. Aside from apartheid states like Rhodesia and South Africa, the conflicts which emerged in the wake of de-colonization were generally not fought directly between indigenous populations and occupying, colonial powers.785 At the end of the 1970s, anti-imperialist revolutions which were waged from the cultural right—such as those in Iran and Afghanistan—further complicated the idea of anti-colonialism as necessarily a step on the road to liberation; as did the brutality of officially Maoist groups like Peru’s Shining Path and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.786 During the same period, the rapid economic growth of the ‘Four Tigers’ of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan through

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785 Of Course, Cold War powers continued to supply arms, training, money, and occasionally troops to their preferred victors. During the mid-1970s, Cuba in particular established itself as a major force in Africa during conflicts in Angola and elsewhere.
786 Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 288-330. While not taking place in the Third World, the Solidarity Movement in Poland might also be seen as an example of a grassroots movement which did not fit neatly into the Left-Right binaries of the Cold War.
economic cooperation with the major capitalist industrial powers complicated analyses of development and underdevelopment. While solidarity with socialist anti-colonial movements like the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua continued to animate the politics of internationalist Leftists (and many liberals) in the United States—particularly in the context of increasing instances of U.S.-backed counter-insurgency during the Reagan administration—by the 1980s, the anti-colonial analogy was no longer convincing as a way to understand the future of global politics.

Third World Leftists had looked to the formerly colonized world in order to develop alternatives to mid-century American liberalism. Ultimately however, the New Deal Order was not brought down primarily by its critics on the Left, but by its enemies to the Right. Faced with the twin threats of rising unemployment and inflation during the mid-late 1970s, Federal Reserve Chair Paul Volcker (under both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan) focused on the latter: constricting the supply of money and intentionally triggering a recession in order to depress wages. By Reagan’s second term, the federal government had succeeded in taming inflation by swelling the ranks of the un- and under-employed, slashing benefits to the poor and working class, and mounting direct assaults on organized labor.787 Tight money, weakened unions, and a growing—and bipartisan—fetish for deregulation helped to accelerate long-running trends in automation, de-industrialization, and outsourcing. As the wage and wealth compression of the New Deal

period reversed, politicians worked to prevent a return of the urban uprisings of the 1960s by criminalizing, policing, and incarcerating potentially rebellious Black and Third World citizens—often utilizing tactics developed to counter insurgent movements in the nations of the Third World.788

By the 1990s, the end of the Cold War had rendered the increasingly fraught concept of the Third World an anachronism, while domestic politics settled into a sort of surface-level stasis, characterized by inequitable growth, a weak labor movement, and a rightward drift in the politics of both major parties. Under the leadership of Bill Clinton and guided by the Democratic Leadership Council, Democrats sought to appeal to big business and recapture the white-ethnic vote by joining right-wing critiques of the Great Society: emphasizing debt and deficit reduction, evincing skepticism about the possibility of aiding marginalized communities through government largesse, and pushing for increasingly draconian policing policies which disproportionately targeted people of color.789 Leftists continued to theorize and organize during these years—in particular around single-issue campaigns like those in support of nuclear disarmament, or in


opposition to South African apartheid and US-backed massacres in South and Central America—and many of the activists of the Third World Left remained politically engaged. The commitment of perhaps a few thousand dedicated activists notwithstanding, in the early 21st century, the Left had little impact on mainstream American politics.790

In 2009—in the wake of a disastrous war in Iraq and a global economic collapse—liberal technocrats were swept back into power.791 However, the New Keynesians of the Obama administration offered a more timid and tepid liberalism than that of their mid-century predecessors. While left critics of the Obama years differ on how much of the blame for the inadequate response to the Great Recession should be laid at the feet of the administration and how much can be explained by conservative intransigence, what is clear is that the administration failed to sufficiently reign in financial interests, or to sufficiently invest in a robust and equitable recovery. Just as the Third World Left developed out of critiques of the limits of mid-20th century liberalism, it has been in large part a growing recognition of the failures of the liberalism of the early 21st century that gave rise to the ‘Next Left.’ The Obama administration’s inability to substantively address income inequality, and refusal to hold accountable the plutocrats who caused the Recession fueled a resurgence in anti-capitalist organizing—most notably in the Occupy Movement that began in New York in the Fall of 2011.

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790 Though the Left had won significant victories on issues of representation and culture inclusion, it had been less successful in the struggle for economic, political, and racial democracy. Indeed, cultural progress has often been weaponized against the Left’s struggle for economic and political democracy: banks tweet about the value of Black Lives as they repossess Black-owned homes, lean-in feminism privatizes and corporatizes the social gains of the women’s movement, and trillion-dollar multinational conglomerates employ the language of diversity and inclusion to distract from their exploitation of the people who labor in the factories they have relocated to what was once called the Third World. Massive protests during in opposition to globalization and the War in Iraq seem to have done little to sway public opinion or pressure policy makers.

791 Obama’s campaign aspired to something greater than a return to technocratic liberalism, but the promise of his rhetoric was belied by his political appointments
The election of America’s first Black president was both a vindication of multicultural meritocracy, and a lesson in the limits of the meritocratic vision. Rather than heralding the dawn of a post-racial age, the Obama years saw communities of color—who were disproportionately devastated by the Recession—fall further behind: losing income at nearly triple the rate of the median white family, while smart-phone cameras forced a public reckoning with the persistent harassment, abuse, and murder of African-Americans by the police.\textsuperscript{792} Black Lives Matter—the most prominent of a number of organizations drawing on the legacy of the Black radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s—formed in 2013, following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin.\textsuperscript{793}

Over the last decade, overlapping crises—some sudden and some long-brewing—have not only sparked a renewal of grassroots organizing and activism, but of the idea that concern with for-profit healthcare, white supremacy, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, neo-imperialism, environmental catastrophe, and income and wealth inequality are fundamentally connected, and that none can be sufficiently resolved within the existing political and economic framework. In increasingly obvious ways, horrors that the Third World Left theorized and organized against remain endemic to capitalism. However, as James and Grace Lee Boggs wrote in 1974, as they reflected on the inability of so many on the Third World Left to adapt theories developed during the

\textsuperscript{792} See Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, \textit{From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation} (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016). As Yamahtta-Taylor notes, these disparities are even more dramatic when looking at Black women vs. white women. Absurd and offensive in its willful naiveté, the idea that the election of a Black President signaled the end to racism as a defining characteristic of American Life was voiced frequently in 2008 and early 2009.

\textsuperscript{793} In addition to sharing the critique of the police power developed by the Panthers and other organizations of the Third World Left, BLM has drawn on the internationalism of the period, defining themselves “as part of the global Black family,” and understanding their oppression as fundamentally connected with that of the people of Palestine.
mid-1960s to the mid-1970s: “people don’t live in a system abstractly.” 2020 is not 1968, and writers whose texts precisely seek to map current crises onto earlier ones often find themselves trapped in cul-de-sacs of exculpation and condemnation that risk obscuring both the present and the past.

Regardless of the accuracy of its political-economic analysis, or the desirability of importing guerilla war, the political thought of the Third World Left does provide some lessons for our own political moment. In economics, Third World Leftists developed thoroughgoing critiques of liberal economics which remain applicable (and I would suggest intellectually devastating) to the political programs of left-Keynesians today. Guevarism and Maoism were the path through which they explored alternative incentives structures, but one need not return to the politics of radical anti-colonialism to envision a role for moral incentives, or to think through ways that an economy might be structured without the carrot of extraordinary wealth or the stick of desperate poverty.

As against those who insist that any left-program currently lacking in plurality support will necessarily be an impediment to progress, the Third World Studies Movement serves as an illustration that militance can force opportunities for reform. Third World Leftists transformed higher education, and their work therein has had a profound effect not only on contemporary humanities departments, but on the ways that leftists and increasingly mainstream liberals discuss the interconnectedness of race, gender, and class (though of course the easy cooption of the language of intersectionality by politicians without intersectional politics is not without its downside risks). Beyond the proliferation of programs in cultural studies, ethnic studies, gender studies, and post-

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colonial studies, the academic work of Third World theorists has helped to provide a foundation for marginalized communities—including many who were marginalized within the Left during the 1960s and 1970s—to articulate their own identities, and to draw on these articulations to develop new forms of liberatory politics.

The emphasis on policing as a defining trait of coloniality—and in particular the understanding of policing at home and imperial war abroad as fundamentally a part of the same project—may be the aspect of the Third Worldism of the 1960s and 1970s which remains most resonant, and most relevant to contemporary politics. “Because Black people desire to determine their own destiny,” wrote Huey P. Newton, “they are constantly inflicted with brutality from the occupying army, embodied in the police department.” Drawing parallels between the police power at home and “the occupying army in Southeast Asia,” Newton concluded that the function of the police—like that of the American military in Vietnam—was “not to protect the people…but to brutalize and oppress them for the interests of the selfish imperial power.” Though the international context has changed, it remains the case that people of color often experience the police as an occupying army which exists to maintain order, defend property, and to penalize dissent, rather than to protect.

There are important lessons too in the failures of the Third World Left. Following the Boggses admonition against those who insisted that reality conform to theory, the inability of so many on the Third World Left to adapt to the massive political, cultural,

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796 This remains the case even as the proportion of non-white police officers has grown dramatically since the 1960s.
and economic shifts of the 1970s is a reminder of the need to understand history as a process and to continue to subject one’s political theories to a rigorous critique—especially when it is politically inconvenient or uncomfortable.\footnote{797} However, it is important not to insist on interpretations which condemn the failure of the Third World Left by assuming that success—as they understood it—was ever within reach. Naïve as they may have been on the prospects for guerilla war in the United States, their critique of mid-century liberalism—and their warnings of the dangers of a politics devoid of class-solidarity—seem far more prescient than the optimism of so many mid-century liberals.\footnote{798}

The legacy of the Third World Left of the 1960s and 1970s serves as a reminder that anti-racist politics must include (but cannot be limited to) class-struggle. As with the Freedom Now Party’s efforts to weave together a politics of cultural radicalism, black workerism, and international socialism, a politics which seeks more than a return to January, 2017 requires an approach which is committed to a defense of self-definition \textit{and} to a left-economic populism, and which rejects the false choice between a class reductionist critique of ‘identity-politics’-as-corporate-strategy and an empty defense of meritocratic multiculturalism. Embracing the former does not ensure victory for the Left, but it gives the politics of solidarity a fighting chance.

\footnote{797}{Though it is important not to make a fetish out of self-criticism, or to fall into the trap of asserting that any idea which makes people uncomfortable must have merit. It is also important not to \textit{overlearn} from the failures of the Third World Left. Vulgar anti-imperialism led anti-colonial radicals to forge regrettable alliances, including with brutal authoritarians who had little use for the mutualism and solidarity which is at the core of the best of Left-politics…but it is still a safer bet than vulgar imperialism.}

\footnote{798}{Thus, any contemporary iteration of, say, Black and Third World proletarianism must look not (just) to a still-weak industrial labor force, but to healthcare and homecare workers, members of the gig economy, and perhaps even precarious and contingent academics as the basis for a new sort of labor coalition.}
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