Rethinking the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Radicals, Repression, and the Black Freedom Struggle

By

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Introduction

This dissertation examines the evolving relationship between the black freedom struggle, the labor movement, and the socialist movement in the United States during the middle decades of the twentieth century. I demonstrate that a mass movement for racial equality had begun to emerge by the mid-1940s, under the auspices of a loose alliance of industrial unions, leftist political groups, and African-American religious, civic, and fraternal organizations. However, the repression and stigmatization of radicals during the "red scare" of the late 1940s and early 1950s delayed the emergence of this nascent insurgency and weakened its ties to labor and the left. Nevertheless, many individual participants in the labor and leftist struggles of the 1930s and 1940s went on to play key roles in the civil rights movement of the mid-1950s and 1960s, as did a handful of organizations that managed to survive the McCarthy era with their radical leadership intact. These findings challenge canonical sociological analyses of the civil rights movement, and contribute to ongoing debates among historians about the role of labor and the left in anti-racist struggles in the United States.

Chapter 1 presents quantitative data on African-American protest during the years 1946-1956, derived from coding the *New York Times*. Previous quantitative studies utilizing this source found very little protest prior to the bus boycotts of 1955-1956. However, this research suffers from serious methodological shortcomings, such as reliance on the highly-condensed *New York Times Annual Index* rather than the newspaper itself, and the arbitrary exclusion of anti-racist protests sponsored by labor and leftist groups. Correcting for these deficiencies, I show that the frequency of direct-action protest rose from 1946 to 1948, declined sharply in 1949 and 1950, and remained at a low level until the mid-1950s. In addition, I find that the percentage of protests sponsored by labor and leftist groups decreased markedly during the period in

question. These findings are broadly consistent with the hypothesis that the red scare delayed the emergence of a nascent mass movement for racial equality, and sidelined labor and the left.

Chapter 2 traces the rise and fall of the American Veterans Committee, an interracial organization of World War II veterans that established approximately 1,000 local chapters in its first three years of existence. Drawing on the archives of the organization's national office, more than one hundred newspapers and chapter newsletters, and other primary sources, I demonstrate that AVC fought racial discrimination in every region of the country, including the Deep South, and employed a range of tactics, from litigation to direct-action protest, in myriad campaigns against segregated public accommodations, racist hiring practices, and voter disenfranchisement. Despite its auspicious beginning, however, AVC soon became bogged down in debates over whether to expel Communists from its ranks and suffered a hemorrhage of members. By the early 1950s, the organization was reduced to rump.

Chapter 3 recounts the response of the United Packinghouse Workers of America to the lynching of Emmett Till in 1955. As the only left-led union allowed to remain within the Congress of Industrial Organizations without purging its radical leadership, the UPWA was largely immune from the government repression and jurisdictional raiding that crippled other "red" unions. The UPWA therefore constitutes an exceptional case that provides a glimpse of what the broader civil rights movement might have looked like if the red scare had not been so severe. Drawing on the union's records, local newspapers, interviews, and other primary sources, I show that the UPWA played a central role in the wave of protest that erupted in both the North and South following the Till murder. Packinghouse workers petitioned, marched, and rallied to demand justice; the UPWA organized the first mass meeting at which Emmett's mother spoke;

and an interracial group of union activists traveled to Mississippi to observe the trial of Till's killers, defying segregation inside and outside the courtroom.

Chapter 4 is a case study of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from its formation through the height of its influence in the 1960s. Drawing on a wide range of archival sources, black newspapers, leftist periodicals, and surveillance records, I demonstrate that a group of talented activists with Old Left backgrounds helped found, lead, staff, advise, and raise funds for SCLC. SCLC also formed alliances with various organizational remnants of the Old Left, including a handful of left-led unions that provided critical infusions of cash. Many of the connections I establish have been overlooked in previous scholarship, including Martin Luther King, Jr.'s personal relationships with an array of Old Left activists during his undergraduate, seminary, and graduate school years.

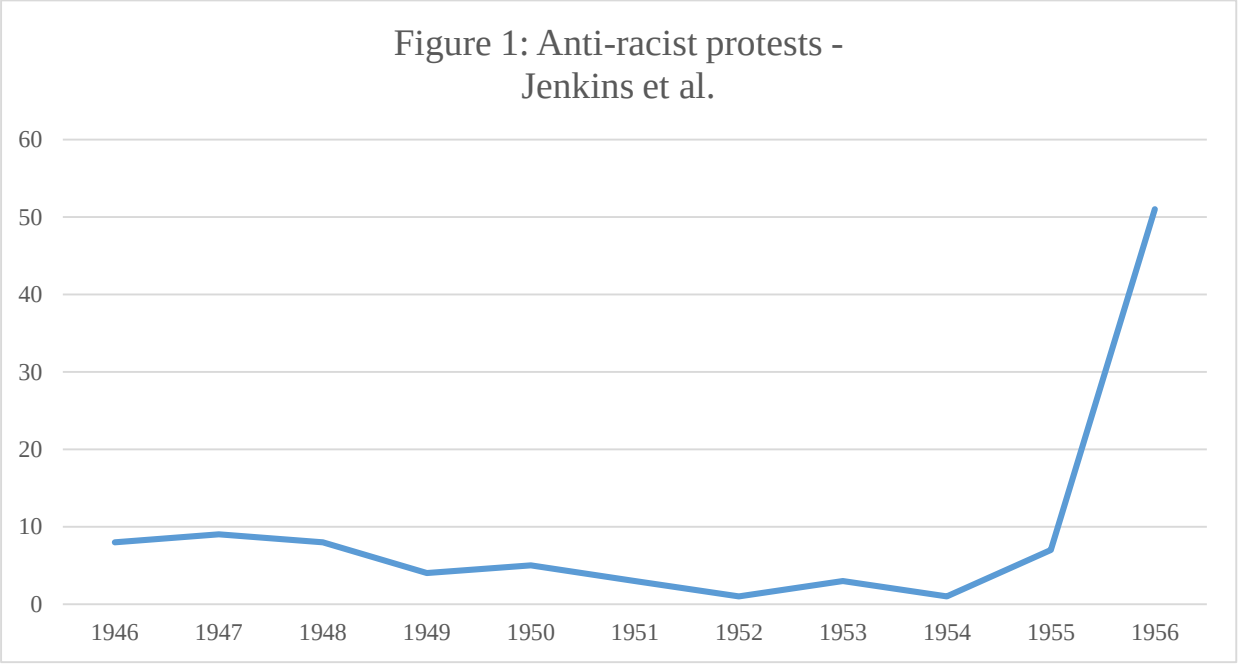
The concluding chapter briefly assesses the sociological and historiographical implications of these findings.

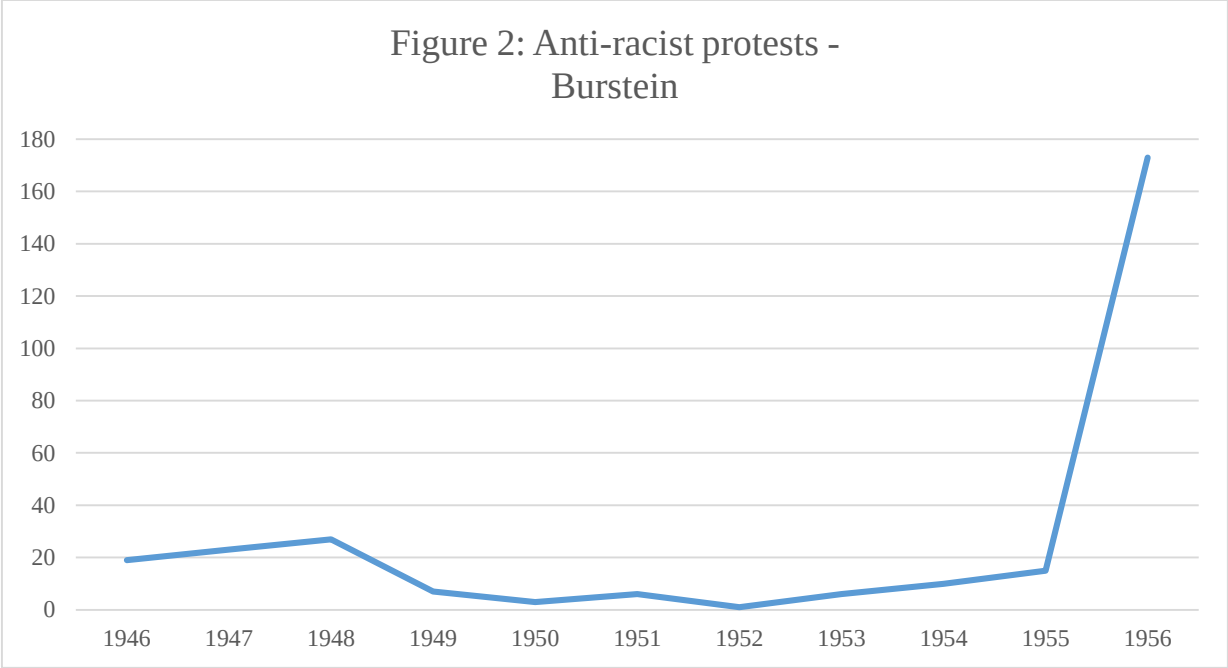
Chapter 1

Political Repression and the Pace of Insurgency: Anti-Racist Protest Events in the *New York Times*, 1946-1956

Introduction

The "lost opportunity thesis" asserts that anti-Communist repression and factionalism during the late 1940s and early 1950s halted an emerging mass movement for racial equality and recast the anti-racist organizational field, marginalizing labor and the left (Marable 1984; Korstad and Lichtenstein 1988; Hall 2005). The thesis is contentious among historians (Arnesen 2009, 2012; Lawson 2011). Although sociologists have not engaged this debate explicitly, the quantitative data on racial conflict that they have compiled would seem to support the skeptics. These quantitative studies find relatively little anti-racist protest prior to the bus boycotts of the mid-1950s, which marked the beginning of the civil rights movement proper (Jenkins et al. 2003; Burstein 1985).





In what follows, I argue that these quantitative studies suffer from serious methodological shortcomings. I outline an alternative methodology designed to remedy these shortcomings, and demonstrate that quantitative data generated using this alternative methodology is broadly consistent with the lost opportunity thesis.

Methodological critique of previous studies

Reliance on the New York Times Index

Several of the most influential quantitative studies rely on the annual *New York Times Index* as their primary source of protest data (Burstein 1979, 1985; McAdam 1982; Jenkins and Eckert 1986; Rosenberg 1991:134-5; Minkoff 1995, 1997; Jenkins et al. 2003; Meyer and Minkoff 2004). However, a growing chorus of scholars have criticized reliance on the *Index*, for several reasons. Because the *Index* attempts to summarize the contents of news articles in a short phrase or two, an event that interests the researcher may not be mentioned in the summary if that

event is not the main subject of the original article (Earl et al. 2004:68; Olzak 1992; Soule and Earl 2005:349). This would seem to be especially likely at the beginning and end stages of a movement's development, when its activities are not considered newsworthy enough to warrant stand-alone articles.

Additional difficulties stem from the way the *Index* sorts article summaries under subject headings. Each volume of the *Index* contains tens of thousands of article summaries. Rather than attempt to read all of them, coders are typically instructed to read only those summaries that appear under relevant subject headings.[1] However, researchers generally do not explain the procedure used to identify relevant headings, which raises concerns about bias. Headings that include the bulk of articles about the movement in one time period may not do so in others. In addition, *Index* classification practices may change over time. For example, a protest against segregated sports that occurred during the 1940s might be classified under the heading "Sports," while an otherwise identical protest that occurred during the 1950s might be classified under the heading "Negroes—U.S." To complicate matters further, the *Index* editors occasionally add, delete, and merge headings without warning or explanation (Woolley 2000:162-3).

Coder fatigue

Hoping to avoid these problems, the Dynamics of Collective Action (DCA) project instructed coders to read the full text of the *New York Times* on microfilm, bypassing the *Index* altogether (Earl et al. 2003:587-9; Soule and Earl 2005:348-9). The DCA dataset does not

[1] McAdam (1982) and Jenkins et al. (2003) instructed coders to read article summaries that appeared under two subject headings: "Negroes—U.S." and "Education—U.S.—Racial Integration." Burstein (1985:203) apparently instructed coders to consult a wider range of subject headings, but his book does not specify exactly which ones.

include the time period that interests us here, but I should explain why I chose not to adopt its methodology. Firstly, it is extremely time-consuming and expensive. As importantly, because it requires coders to read massive quantities of irrelevant material, coder fatigue is likely to be a serious problem, with the result that relevant events will be overlooked (Maney and Oliver 2001:136-7). This is especially true when a protest event is mentioned in an article about another topic, which we expect to be more common during the early and late stages of a movement's development, as noted above.

If this seems uncharitable, consider the following example:

28 L+ SPORTS THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 1946. SPORTS

SENATORS' B TEAM DOWNS TIGERS, 4-3

Early's 2-Run Triple Decides Lakeland Contest in Fifth —Evers Has 4 Singles

PIRATES TRIP BROWNS, 8-7

Red Sox, With 13-Hit Attack, Halt Indians, 11-8—Other Big League Camp News

LAKELAND, Fla., March 16 (AP)—The Tigers lost their fifth straight exhibition game today, 4 to 3, to the Senators' B team—the third time the world champions have been whipped by Clark Griffith's seconds.

The Tigers filled the bases in four different innings but their only runs were realized when Gil Coan, right fielder, dropped a fly ball to permit two scores in the first frame and John Niggeling passed Ned Harris with the sacks loaded in the third.

The Bengals garnered nine hits, received five walks and had the help of five Washington errors, three by Cr-an on fly balls. Detroit had twelve runners stranded.

Virgil Trucks worked the first five innings for Detroit and gave all the Washington runs. He was beaten in the fifth when Jake Early tripled home a pair and scored himself on Glenn Myatt's fly. Stub Overmire didn't allow the Senators a hit in the last four innings.

Hoot Evers slapped four singles for the Tigers and Murray Franklin and Hank Greenberg two apiece.

The score by innings:

	R	H	E
Washington (A.)	3	6	0
Detroit (A.)	4	12	1

Batteries—Niggeling, Scarborough (6), Curtis, Penny (8) and Early; Trucks, Overmire (5) and Richards, Tabacheck (8).

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., March 16 (AP)—The Pirates clouted fourteen hits, including a home run by Ralph Kiner, to win an 8-7 victory over the Browns today.

The Browns had eleven hits, one of them a circuit blow by Chesfer Lasha that hit the top of the left-field wall and bounced outside the park.

The score by innings:

	R	H	E
St. Louis (A.)	7	11	1
Pittsburgh (N.)	8	14	0

Batteries—Hollingsworth, Galehouse (4), Person (7) and Hoff; Howard, Bahr (4), Hallet (7) and Connelly.

Red Sox Down Indians, 11—8

CLEARWATER, Fla., March 16 (AP)—Driving out thirteen hits off three Cleveland hurlers, the Red Sox handed the Indians an 11-to-8 defeat today to even their spring series at one—all.

Manager Joe Cronin of the Red Sox left his heavy sluggers behind, but his aggregation had little trouble with the pitching of Mel Harder, Ed Klieman and Hal Kleine. Micky Harris and Joe Dobson yielded eleven hits.

Ben Steiner of the Red Sox took hitting honors for the day with three singles.

The score by innings:

	R	H	E
Boston (A.)	0	11	2

Sports of the Times

By ARTHUR DALEY

He Likes to Hit

SARASOTA, Fla., March 16—An amendment is hereby offered. It was said in this space the other day that the most engaging and delightful character in baseball was Dick Wakefield of the Detroit Tigers. However, it must be confessed that I forgot. But then they bear enough resemblance to each other to be twins anyway, so the amended statement should read: The two most engaging and delightful characters in baseball are Dick Wakefield and Ted Williams.

The Red Sox slugger is an inch shorter than Dick's six-feet-four. But he's some ten pounds heavier at 200. Both are good-looking youngsters with ready laughs, appealing personalities and silken-smooth batting swings. It was interesting to compare them after seeing them almost on consecutive days.

Williams is the smoother of the two and he generates more power. As a matter of fact, he is the better hitter, an item that he is quick to admit. The cock-sureness of these two fast friends practically bowls you over. "So Dick isn't hittin' yet, huh?" asked Ted with a grin. "You know what? He isn't as good a hitter as he's gonna be or as he thinks he is," Ted laughed uproariously. "A great guy, Dick. I hope he hits .500 everywhere else but only .333 against us."

All the while he was talking he was hefting a bat. He does that almost every waking moment. Charlie Wagner, his room-mate, swears that Williams bounces out of bed in the morning, grabs a bat and "shadow-boxes" with it in front of the mirror. If Charlie gazes out the window and remarks that the wind is blowing, Ted will retort bitterly: "And I bet it's blowing against the hitters, too."

Eddie Collins, who was no lightweight with the willow himself, once delivered a very pungent description of the gangling youngster who hits like the whiplash of an alligator's tail. "All that fellow lives for," he said, admiringly, "is his next t'rn at bat."

Was He Misquoted?

The only .400 slugger now active in baseball was asked whether he had been correctly quoted when he supposedly said that he was the best hitter he had ever seen. Ted pounded the ground with his war club, looked up and chuckled: "You newspaper fellows. No, I never said that." He grinned broadly and began to laugh, "but there's an awful lot of truth in it," he added by way of confirmation.

It was quite obvious that he believes it, whether or not he actually said it. As a matter of fact, he once told one of the Boston scribes: "I don't care what you fellows write about me. All I want is that when I walk down the street folks will turn and remark: 'There goes the greatest hitter who ever lived.'"

In one respect Williams and Wakefield differ. Dick is naturally nonchalant and casual about everything. Ted more inclined to pop off, a fault that his three years in the Navy apparently corrected. He has appeared much too stubborn and hot-headed in the past, but only explodes occasionally now.

The only way to play caroms off the short left-field fence in Boston is to jog over slowly and pick off the rebounds. It does no good to run there full tilt. The fielder still has to wait for the ball to bounce off the fence. But the paying customers, mistaking Ted's awkward job for an exhibition of downright loafing, rode him unmercifully. Once he sulked and refused to chase Billy Hitchcock's carom. So Joe Cronin yanked him from the game.

The next day Ted was still sulking. He determined to teach Cronin a lesson. He'd just stand there and take three strikes without moving his bat. The ball whisked in. Strike one. He looked triumphantly over at Cronin. The next pitch cut the heart of the plate. Strike two. He gloated. The next one was as large as a balloon. Ted couldn't resist. He instinctively took a lazy swing and lashed out a double. So you can see the position he's in. He gets hits even when he doesn't want to.

Fireman, Save My Child

Jimmy Dykes, a needle artist without a peer, didn't help Ted's disposition one day when he greeted him with fire sirens, fire hats and forty feet of hose. This was all the result of a statement Williams had made. He visited his uncle, a Mount Vernon fireman, and found him contentedly basking in the sun in front of the fire house. Ted had been hitless that day and therefore was down in the dumps. He wanted to be a fireman because firemen to him "looked so blame contented." He's probably outlived that one by now, but it irked him for a long time.

Wakefield, on the other hand, gets annoyed at nothing. When he was ribbed by team-mates he passed it all off with a flip remark or two. But Williams, one of the freshest bushers ever to reach the big time, must have been well nigh impossible when he first came up briefly in 1938. He had the temerity to bark at the regular outfielder trio of Joe Vosmik, Ben Chapman and Doc Cramer. "I'll come back, you so-and-sos, and make more money than the three of you combined."

No, Ted Williams wouldn't have won any popularity contests with the Red Sox in those days, but he would today. Then he was a kid who hadn't grown up. Now he's a man, who still has an appealing streak of boyishness in him. Hugh Duffy, who holds the all-time batting record of .438, never bothered to change the lad's hitting style. That was perfect from the start. Instead he changed his disposition, which was slightly less than perfect. The youth is tops right now and the life of the party.

Perhaps the one thing that won him more respect and admiration than anything else was the decision he made at the tail-end of the 1941 season. The day before the campaign ended, Ted had a batting average of .3996, the technical translation of which was an even .400. He could have rested on his laurels and not risked playing in the double-header the next day.

He didn't, though. He played the full double-header, cracked out six hits in eight times at bat and wound up with an average of .406, thus doing it the hard way, the sporting way and the manly way. He's quite a fellow.

POSEDEL OF BRAVES DEFEATS GIANTS, 6-4

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filled the bases and an infield out by Johnny McCarthy drove in the run.

In the third a hit batsman and a pass provided the setting for Wentzel's smash over the left-field barrier and that blow eventually settled the ball game.

Against Posedel, who pitched five innings, the Giants collected

The Box Score

NEW YORK (N.)	AB	R	H	PO	A
Rainer, rf	4	1	1	1	0
Ward, lf	4	1	1	2	0
Mancuso, cf	3	1	1	3	0
Holmes, cf	1	0	0	0	0
Lombardi, c	4	0	1	5	0
McCarthy, rf	3	1	1	2	0
Kerr, 2b	4	0	0	2	3
Schmitz, ss	4	0	0	1	3
Voiselle, p	2	0	0	0	1
Mott, c	1	0	0	1	0
Gumbert, p	1	0	0	0	0
Kennedy, p	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	31	4	5	27	7

Batted for Voiselle in fifth.
Batted for Gumbert in sixth.
Batted for Kennedy in ninth.

BOSTON (N.)	AB	R	H	PO	A
Hopp, 2b	4	0	0	2	3
Berger, cf	4	0	1	2	0
Holmes, rf	4	1	1	1	0
Nicholson, lf	4	1	1	2	0
McCarthy, 1b	4	1	2	9	0
Culberson, ss	4	0	0	1	3
Peacock, c	4	0	1	4	0
Hall, c	0	0	0	0	0
Posedel, p	3	0	0	0	2
Wallace, p	0	0	0	0	0
Dyer, p	0	0	0	0	0
Wentzel, p	1	1	1	0	0
Totals	32	4	7	21	8

Batted for Posedel in fifth.
Batted for Wallace in sixth.
Batted for Dyer in ninth.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
New York	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	5	0
Boston	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	7	0

DIMAGGIO'S HOMER CHECKS CARDINALS

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bleachers as the ball started to come down. He was standing there waiting for the ball, and he leaped to spear it as it fell over the wire fence. But his reach was short, the ball clumped into the temporary bleachers, and the Yanks had three runs, along with the lead.

But the Cards were not yet finished. Maldovan, taking over in the eighth, was unsteady. He

PIN BOY SHORTAGE RETARDS BOWLERS

A. B. C. Tourney Falls Behind Schedule—Detroit Keglers Seize Lead in Doubles

BUFFALO, N. Y., March 16 (AP)—The American Bowling Congress tournament was faced with a manpower shortage today, with singles and doubles rolling far behind schedule because of a dearth of experienced pinboys.

Last night's fourth five-man shift, scheduled to go into action at 11 P. M., did not get under way until two hours later. The prospect was even more bleak today, with bowling already two hours later than originally scheduled.

Eli Whitney, A. B. C. publicist, explained that many of the experienced pin-stickers had gone into other fields of employment because of the wartime tourney lapse. "The new ones can't take it physically," he asserted, adding: "However, they're coming along."

Boardmen, who post the scores behind the pits, were pressed into service this morning. A few of the offices aides also stepped into the breach.

Harry Starbuck and Andy Lychalk of Detroit rolled into first place in the doubles early tonight, scoring 1,245. Starbuck, 35-year-old toolmaker at Hudson Motor, was over the 200 mark in each game to set the pace with 653. Lychalk, 43-year-old furniture salesman, rolled 592. They had a 455 second game, Starbuck knocking over 225 pins.

Al Arlington and Frank Vetter of Bayonne, N. J., rolling on the same shift, took second place behind the new leaders with 1,237. Vetter blasting the trail with 629. Glen Slagle and William Hull of Washingtonville, Ohio, who had registered 1,206 earlier in the day to take third place, thus were relegated to fifth.

Wickline Motors of Charleston, W. Va., continued to pace the five-man teams with 2,831. Meyer Larsen of Morgan, N. J., led the singles with 674, and Dick Hobbs of Lima, Ohio, remained in front in the all-events at 1,845.

MEAD CALLS FOR ACTION

Says ABC Rules on 'Male Whites' Only Should Be Amended

BUFFALO, N. Y., March 16 (AP)—Senator James M. Mead, Democrat, of New York, says he thinks action should be taken at once to amend American Bowling Congress rules limiting membership to "male whites."

Mead told reporters last night that although he was scheduled to speak at the opening of the ABC's bowling tournament in connection with the Seventy-fourth Armory Thursday night he turned back when he saw a picket line protesting the exclusion of Negroes from the tourney.

The pickets to whom Mead referred marched in front of the armory while Negro members of the Jesse Clipper Legion Post bowling team lodged a protest with ABC representatives against their exclusion from the tournament, a spokesman declaring:

"We have our regular schedule in the American Legion League, yet, because we happen to be Negroes, we are prohibited from participation in this national sports event. If we can bowl in the American Legion League throughout the year, I see no reason why we should be barred from the ABC."

WOOD, FIELD AND STREAM

By RAYMOND R. CAMP

With the opening of the trout season only a few weeks off and with a number of essential items of trout fishing equipment still on the scarce list, the time has arrived to begin putting old equipment in shape.

Unless you were fortunate enough to get the new rod, give your old one more than a cursory glance. Ferules and guides become loosened, and stream-side repairs are seldom adequate and never completely satisfactory. Check each guide, even on the spare tip, and joint up the rod to make sure the ferules are tight. If everything else is satisfactory, it would never hurt to give the rod a rubdown with a fine abrasive and fresh coat of rod varnish.

Waders Need Inspection

Waders or boots should come next on the inspection list, for the supply of new waders is definitely far behind the demand. A leaky boot or wader on opening day will insure a day of considerable cold and discomfort, for while we are getting a taste of mild spring weather now, opening day is almost certain to be cold. The day before the opening the weather man can push aside his complicated instruments and dive regard his maps, for he can predict dropping temperatures with sleet and snow with every assurance of being right.

If you use wading shoes, check the felt, for usually the cement dries out during the winter storage period, and you can do without the added handicap of a flapping sole. Yet mesh also is subject to rot, so give that some attention also.

Table for High Tide for Waters Adjacent to New York

March 17—Sun rises at 6:30 A. M.; sets at 6:04 P. M.

	Sandy Hook		Gov. Island		Battery	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Sunday, March 17	11:01	11:31	11:13	11:43	11:15	11:45
Monday, March 18	12:05	12:33	12:17	12:45	12:19	12:47
Tuesday, March 19	1:04	1:31	1:16	1:43	1:18	1:45
Wednesday, March 20	2:01	2:27	2:13	2:39	2:15	2:41
Thursday, March 21	2:56	3:21	3:08	3:33	3:10	3:35
Friday, March 22	3:49	4:14	4:01	4:26	4:03	4:28
Saturday, March 23	4:41	5:05	4:53	5:17	4:55	5:19

For high tide at Atlantic City, N. J., near bridge, add 1 hour and 15 minutes to Sandy Hook time.

(Supplied by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey)

DODGERS TO FACE NEGRO STAR TODAY

Continued From Page 1

ganized baseball, nor in this city have Negro teams ever been pitted against white teams.

Albert B. (Happy) Chandler, baseball's high commissioner, who arrived here yesterday, will be one of the spectators at the game, and doubtless one of the most keenly interested ones.

Whether Rickey will break his own self-imposed rule not to attend ball games on Sunday remains to be seen, but it is not likely he will be present. But he will be much concerned about the spectator reaction to seeing Robinson—and John Wright, the Negro pitcher, if he should work—playing in a game with white men.

From the reception given the Negro players here the Brooklyn head man well may gauge the reactions in whatever minor league city or cities to which both Robinson and Wright undoubtedly will be sent, since it is not believed either will make the Montreal club this year. Local opinion seemed to

SEGURA WINS TITLE IN INDOOR TENNIS

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on board courts under artificial illumination, shot through with flickering sunlight.

On Friday evening Segura had put out William Talbert, the second ranking player of the country. Because of the fact that Talbert has been troubled with an ailing back, Segura did not get full credit for that victory.

There could be no questioning of the authenticity of his triumph yesterday.

For the first set it seemed that the blond Oklahoman had too much power for his rival. From both his overspin backhand and forehand he was flailing the ball with so much length and pace that Segura was stopped in his tracks.

The opening set was a lot closer than 6—3, with three games going to McNeill after long, brilliant exchanges, but no one would have given much for Segura's chances at the end of the 6—1 score. His backhand, the object of McNeill's attention, appeared inadequate. His service was not in the same

U. S. GIRLS TO MEET CANADIAN SKIERS

Long Existing Rivalry to Be Settled at Mt. Gabriel Next Week-End

By FRANK ELKINS

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

SHERBURNE PASS, Vt., March 16—The keen ski rivalry existing between Eastern American and Canadian women will be renewed next week-end at Mont Gabriel, it was revealed today by Mrs. Janet Mead, team captain for the United States Team. Plans are nearing completion to make this climactic event of the 1945-46 North American season the best in the series that had its origin in 1940. Since then the international races have been held alternately and on a home and home basis with honors pretty well divided.

Unlike preceding competitions, however, the forthcoming one will have an innovation that will lend more quality to the annual games. Instead of one slalom and a downhill with the combined time being used unofficially in determining the team victor, next week-end will find the girls being rivals in two slaloms, one of a giant nature and a single downhill run.

Scotts' Slip, said to be the most outstanding course besides the flying mile of Mont Remblant in the Canadian Laurentians, will be the scene of the two slaloms which Skimeister Hans Flaxner, head of the Mont Gabriel Ski School, will set. The downhill has been set for the Red Bird run at St. Sauveur. But it wouldn't be surprising if the locale was shifted to the precipitous Mount Baldy speedway of St. Margarets.

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U. S. Team Seeks Revenge

The American array, which will seek to avenge the setback received at the hands of the Wurtele Twins, Rhona and Rhoda, and their colleagues at Lake Placid a month ago, will depend upon the Misses Becky Fraser, Mount Baldy record breaker two years ago; Paula Kann of North Conway, present national downhill title holder; 14-year-old Andrea Mead, daughter of Mrs. Mead, who was sixth in our championships at Franconia, N. H., a fortnight ago; Ann Dodge of Pinkham Notch; the Neidlinger twins of Hanover, N. H., Sally and Sue.

Barbara Dent, also Hanover; Polly Hodder of Middlebury College and Jinny Rogers of Cornell.

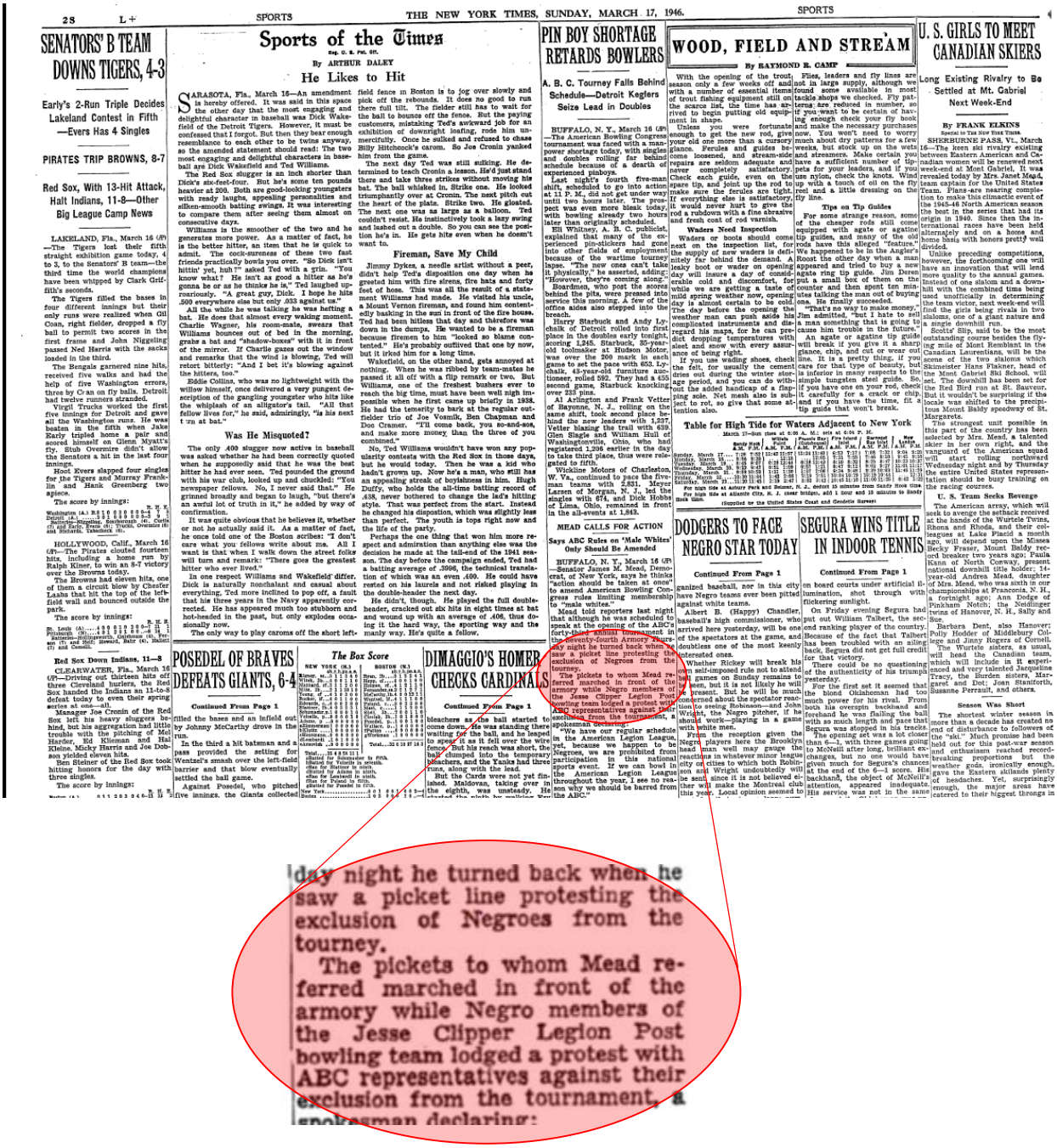
The Wurtele sisters, as usual, will head the Canadian team, which will include in it experienced and very talented Jacqueline Tracy, the Burden sisters, Margaret and Dot; Joan Staniforth, Susanne Perrault, and others.

Season Was Short

The shortest winter season in more than a decade has created no end of disturbance to followers of the "ski." Much promise had been held out for this post-war season and enthusiasm reached record-breaking proportions but the weather gods, ironically enough, gave the Eastern skilands plenty of headaches. Yet, surprisingly enough, the major areas have catered to their biggest throngs in

New York Times, March 17, 1946, Sports Section, page 2

I submit that even the most diligent human coders are liable to overlook the passing mention of an anti-racist protest near the end of an article in the sports section whose main topic is a shortage of pin setters at a bowling tournament.



28 L+ SPORTS THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 1946. SPORTS

SENATORS' B TEAM DOWNS TIGERS, 4-3

Early's 2-Run Triple Decides Lakeland Contest in Fifth —Evers Has 4 Singles

PIRATES TRIP BROWNS, 8-7

Red Sox, With 13-Hit Attack, Halt Indians, 11-8—Other Big League Camp News

LAKELAND, Fla., March 16 (AP)—The Tigers lost their fifth straight exhibition game today, 4 to 3, to the Senators' B team—the third time the world champions have been whipped by Clark Griffith's seconds.

The Tigers filled the bases in four different innings but their only runs were realized when Gil Coan, right fielder, dropped a fly ball to permit two scores in the first frame and John Niggeling passed Ned Harris with the sacks loaded in the third.

The Bengals garnered nine hits, received five walks and had the help of five Washington errors, three by Coan on fly balls. Detroit had twelve runners stranded.

Virgil Trucks worked the first five innings for Detroit and gave all the Washington runs. He was beaten in the fifth when Jake Early tripled home a pair and scored himself on Glenn Myatt's fly. Stub Overmire didn't allow the Senators a hit in the last four innings.

Hoot Evers slapped four singles for the Tigers and Murray Franklin and Hank Greenberg two apiece.

The score by innings:

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., March 16 (AP)—The Pirates clouted fourteen hits, including a home run by Ralph Kiner, to win an 8-7 victory over the Browns today.

The Browns had eleven hits, one of them a circuit blow by Chester Lasha that hit the top of the left-field wall and bounced outside the park.

The score by innings:

Red Sox Down Indians, 11—8

CLEARWATER, Fla., March 16 (AP)—Driving out thirteen hits off three Cleveland hurlers, the Red Sox handed the Indians an 11-to-8 defeat today to even their spring series at one—all.

Manager Joe Cronin of the Red Sox left his heavy sluggers behind, but his aggregation had little trouble with the pitching of Mel Harder, Ed Klieman and Hal Kleine. Micky Harris and Joe Dobson yielded eleven hits.

Ben Steiner of the Red Sox took hitting honors for the day with three singles.

The score by innings:

Sports of the Times

By ARTHUR DALEY

He Likes to Hit

SARASOTA, Fla., March 16—An amendment is hereby offered. It was said in this space the other day that the most engaging and delightful character in baseball was Dick Wakefield of the Detroit Tigers. However, it must be confessed that I forgot. But then they bear enough resemblance to each other to be twins anyway, so the amended statement should read: The two most engaging and delightful characters in baseball are Dick Wakefield and Ted Williams.

The Red Sox slugger is an inch shorter than Dick's six-feet-four. But he's some ten pounds heavier at 200. Both are good-looking youngsters with ready laughs, appealing personalities and silken-smooth batting swings. It was interesting to compare them after seeing them almost on consecutive days.

Williams is the smoother of the two and he generates more power. As a matter of fact, he is the better hitter, an item that he is quick to admit. The cock-sureness of these two fast friends practically bowls you over. "So Dick isn't hittin' yet, huh?" asked Ted with a grin. "You know what? He isn't as good a hitter as he's gonna be or as he thinks he is," Ted laughed uproariously. "A great guy, Dick. I hope he hits .500 everywhere else but only .033 against us."

All the while he was talking he was hefting a bat. He does that almost every waking moment. Charlie Wagner, his room-mate, swears that Williams bounces out of bed in the morning, grabs a bat and "shadow-boxes" with it in front of the mirror. If Charlie gazes out the window and remarks that the wind is blowing, Ted will retort bitterly: "And I bet it's blowing against the hitters, too."

Eddie Collins, who was no lightweight with the willow himself, once delivered a very pungent description of the gangling youngster who hits like the whiplash of an alligator's tail. "All that fellow lives for," he said, admiringly, "is his next t rn at bat."

Was He Misquoted?

The only .400 slugger now active in baseball was asked whether he had been correctly quoted when he supposedly said that he was the best hitter he had ever seen. Ted pounded the ground with his war club, looked up and chuckled. "You newspaper fellows. No, I never said that." He grinned broadly and began to laugh, "but there's an awful lot of truth in it," he added by way of confirmation.

It was quite obvious that he believes it, whether or not he actually said it. As a matter of fact, he once told one of the Boston scribes: "I don't care what you fellows write about me. All I want is that when I walk down the street folks will turn and remark: 'There goes the greatest hitter who ever lived.'"

In one respect Williams and Wakefield differ. Dick is naturally nonchalant and casual about everything. Ted more inclined to pop off, a fault that his three years in the Navy apparently corrected. He has appeared much too stubborn and hot-headed in the past, but only explodes occasionally now.

The only way to play caroms off the short left-field fence in Boston is to jog over slowly and pick off the rebounds. It does no good to run there full tilt. The fielder still has to wait for the ball to bounce off the fence. But the paying customers, mistaking Ted's awkward job for an exhibition of downright loafing, rode him unmercifully. Once he sulked and refused to chase Billy Hitchcock's carom. So Joe Cronin yanked him from the game.

The next day Ted was still sulking. He determined to teach Cronin a lesson. He'd just stand there and take three strikes without moving his bat. The ball whisked in. Strike one. He looked triumphantly over at Cronin. The next pitch cut the heart of the plate. Strike two. He gloated. The next one was as large as a balloon. Ted couldn't resist. He instinctively took a lazy swing and lashed out a double. So you can see the position he's in. He gets hits even when he doesn't want to.

Fireman, Save My Child

Jimmy Dykes, a needle artist without a peer, didn't help Ted's disposition one day when he greeted him with fire sirens, fire hats and forty feet of hose. This was all the result of a statement Williams had made. He visited his uncle, a Mount Vernon fireman, and found him contentedly basking in the sun in front of the fire house. Ted had been hitless that day and therefore was down in the dumps. He wanted to be a fireman because firemen to him "looked so blame contented." He's probably outlived that one by now, but it irked him for a long time.

Wakefield, on the other hand, gets annoyed at nothing. When he was ribbed by team-mates he passed it all off with a flip remark or two. But Williams, one of the freshest bushers ever to reach the big time, must have been well nigh impossible when he first came up briefly in 1938. He had the temerity to bark at the regular outfielder trio of Joe Vosmik, Ben Chapman and Doc Cramer. "I'll come back, you so-and-sos, and make more money than the three of you combined."

No, Ted Williams wouldn't have won any popularity contests with the Red Sox in those days, but he would today. Then he was a kid who hadn't grown up. Now he's a man, who still has an appealing streak of boyishness in him. Hugh Duffy, who holds the all-time batting record of .438, never bothered to change the lad's batting style. That was perfect from the start. Instead he changed his disposition, which was slightly less than perfect. The youth is tops right now and the life of the party.

Perhaps the one thing that won him more respect and admiration than anything else was the decision he made at the tail-end of the 1941 season. The day before the campaign ended, Ted had a batting average of .3996, the technical translation of which was an even .400. He could have rested on his laurels and not risked playing in the double-header the next day.

He didn't, though. He played the full double-header, socked out six hits in eight times at bat and wound up with an average of .406, thus doing it the hard way, the sporting way and the manly way. He's quite a fellow.

POSEDEL OF BRAVES DEFEATS GIANTS, 6-4

Continued From Page 1

filled the bases and an infield out by Johnny McCarthy drove in the run.

In the third a hit batsman and a pass provided the setting for Wentzel's smash over the left-field barrier and that blow eventually settled the ball game.

Against Posedel, who pitched five innings, the Giants collected

The Box Score

NEW YORK (N.)

	ab	r	h	po	a	e
Kiner, rf	4	0	1	1	0	0
Work, 2b	4	0	1	2	3	0
Mallard, cf	3	1	1	2	0	0
Witek, lf	4	1	1	2	0	0
Lindell, lf	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosar, c	4	0	0	5	0	0
Schmitz, 1b	4	0	0	7	0	0
Stewart, 3b	4	0	0	0	1	0
Wentzel, ss	4	1	1	1	3	0
Voiselle, p	2	0	0	0	1	0
Adams, p	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gumbert, p	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hiller	1	0	0	0	0	0
Barrett, p	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lombardi	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ainsmith	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	35	4	5	20	11	1

Batted for Schmitz in fifth.
Batted for Voiselle in seventh.
Batted for Stainer in ninth.
Batted for Barrett in ninth.
Batted for Lombardi in ninth.

BOSTON (N.)

	ab	r	h	po	a	e
Bran, 2b	4	1	1	2	4	0
Herr, cf	4	1	1	3	0	0
Holmes, rf	4	1	1	1	0	0
Fernandez, ss	4	0	1	1	3	0
McCarthy, rf	4	0	1	1	0	0
Sullivan, 3b	4	0	0	1	2	0
Masi, c	4	0	0	5	0	0
Wilks, c	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voiselle, p	2	0	0	0	1	0
Pendel, h	1	0	0	0	0	0
Klein, lb	4	0	0	7	0	0
Phelps	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wyrostek	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	32	3	5	21	10	0

Batted for Fernandez in fifth.
Batted for Pendel in ninth.
Batted for Klein in ninth.
Ran for Pytlak in fifth.
Batted for Voiselle in fifth.

New York	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Boston	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3

DIMAGGIO'S HOMER CHECKS CARDINALS

Continued From Page 1

bleachers as the ball started to come down, the ace standing there waiting for the ball, and he leaped to spear it as it fell over the wire fence. But his reach was short, the ball clumped into the temporary bleachers, and the Yanks had three runs, along with the lead.

But the Cards were not yet finished. Maldovan, taking over in the eighth, was unsteady. He

PIN BOY SHORTAGE RETARDS BOWLERS

A. B. C. Tourney Falls Behind Schedule—Detroit Keglers Seize Lead in Doubles

BUFFALO, N. Y., March 16 (AP)—The American Bowling Congress tournament was faced with a manpower shortage today, with singles and doubles rolling far behind schedule because of a dearth of experienced pinboys.

Last night's fourth five-man shift, scheduled to go into action at 11 P. M., did not get under way until two hours later. The prospect was even more bleak today, with bowling already two hours later than originally scheduled.

Eli Whitney, A. B. C. publicist, explained that many of the experienced pin-tickers had gone into other fields of employment because of the wartime tourney lapse. "The new ones can't take it physically," he asserted, adding: "However, they're coming along."

Boardmen, who post the scores behind the pits, were pressed into service this morning. A few of the office aides also stepped into the breach.

Harry Starbuck and Andy Lychalk of Detroit rolled into first place in the doubles early tonight, scoring 1,245. Starbuck, 35-year-old toolmaker at Hudson Motor, was over the 200 mark in each game to set the pace with 653. Lychalk, 48-year-old furniture auctioneer, rolled 592. They had a 455 second game, Starbuck knocking over 232 pins.

Al Arlington and Frank Vetter of Bayonne, N. J., rolling on the same shift, took second place behind the new leaders with 1,237. Vetter blasted the trail with 639. Glen Slagle and William Hull of Washingtonville, Ohio, who had registered 1,206 earlier in the day to take third place, thus were relegated to fifth.

Wickline Motors of Charleston, W. Va., continued to pace the five-man teams with 2,831. Meyer Larsen of Morgan, N. J., led the singles with 674, and Dick Hobbs of Lima, Ohio, remained in front in the all-events at 1,845.

MEAD CALLS FOR ACTION

Says ABC Rules on 'Male Whites' Only Should Be Amended

BUFFALO, N. Y., March 16 (AP)—Senator James M. Mead, Democrat, of New York, says he thinks action should be taken at once to amend American Bowling Congress rules limiting membership to "male whites."

Mead told reporters last night that although he was scheduled to speak at the opening of the ABC's forty-third annual tournament the seventy-fourth Armory Pageant day night he turned back when he saw a picket line protesting the exclusion of Negroes from the tourney.

The pickets to whom Mead referred marched in front of the armory while Negro members of the Jesse Clipper Legion Post bowling team lodged a protest with ABC representatives against their exclusion from the tournament, a spokesman declaring:

"We have our regular schedule in the American Legion League, yet, because we happen to be Negroes, we are prohibited from participation in this national sports event. If we can bowl in the American Legion League throughout the year, I see no reason why we should be barred from the ABC."

WOOD, FIELD AND STREAM

By RAYMOND R. CAMP

With the opening of the trout season only a few weeks off and with a number of essential items of trout fishing equipment still on the scarce list, the time has arrived to begin putting old equipment in shape.

Unless you were fortunate enough to get the new rod, give your old one more than a cursory glance. Ferules and guides become loosened, and stream-side repairs are seldom adequate and never completely satisfactory. Check each guide, even on the spare tip, and joint up the rod to make sure the ferules are tight. If everything else is satisfactory, it would never hurt to give the rod a rubdown with a fine abrasive and fresh coat of rod varnish.

Waders Need Inspection

Waders or boots should come next on the inspection list, for the supply of new waders is definitely far behind the demand. A leaky boot or wader on opening day will insure a day of considerable cold and discomfort, for while we are getting a taste of mild spring weather now, opening day is almost certain to be cold. The day before the opening the weather man can push aside his complicated instruments and disregard his maps, for he can predict dropping temperatures with sleet and snow with every assurance of being right.

If you use wading shoes, check the felt, for usually the cement dries out during the winter storage period, and you can do without the added handicap of a flapping sole. Net mesh also is subject to rot, so give that some attention also.

Table for High Tide for Waters Adjacent to New York

March 17—Sun rises at 6:30 A. M.; sets at 6:04 P. M.

	Sandy Hook	Fire Island Inlet	Montauk Point	New London
	A.M. P.M.	A.M. P.M.	A.M. P.M.	A.M. P.M.
Sunday, March 17	6:49 7:21	7:04 7:36	8:04 8:36	9:25 9:57
Monday, March 18	8:06 8:39	8:23 8:55	9:23 9:55	10:44 11:16
Tuesday, March 19	9:19 9:51	9:36 10:08	10:36 11:08	11:57 12:29
Wednesday, March 20	10:29 11:01	10:46 11:18	11:46 12:18	1:07 1:39
Thursday, March 21	11:38 12:10	11:55 12:27	12:55 1:27	2:16 2:48
Friday, March 22	12:46 1:18	1:03 1:35	1:03 1:35	3:24 3:56
Saturday, March 23	1:51 2:23	2:08 2:40	2:08 2:40	4:29 5:01

For high tide at Atlantic City, N. J., ocean bridge, add 1 hour and 15 minutes to Sandy Hook time.

Compiled by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey

DODGERS TO FACE NEGRO STAR TODAY

Continued From Page 1

ganized baseball, nor in this city have Negro teams ever been pitted against white teams.

Albert B. (Happy) Chandler, baseball's high commissioner, who arrived here yesterday, will be one of the spectators at the game, and doubtless one of the most keenly interested ones.

Whether Rickey will break his own self-imposed rule not to attend baseball on Sunday remains to be seen, but it is not likely he will be present. But he will be much concerned about the spectator reaction to seeing Robinson, and Wade Wade, if he should work—playing in a game with white men.

From the reception given the Negro players here the Brooklyn head man will may gauge the reactions in whatever minor league city or cities to which both Robinson and Wright undoubtedly will be sent since it is not believed either will make the Montreal club this year. Local opinion seemed to

SEGURA WINS TITLE IN INDOOR TENNIS

Continued From Page 1

on board courts under artificial illumination, shot through with flickering sunlight.

On Friday evening Segura had put out William Talbert, the second ranking player of the country. Because of the fact that Talbert has been troubled with an ailing back, Segura did not get full credit for that victory.

There could be no questioning of the authenticity of his triumph yesterday.

For the first set it seemed that the blond Oklahoman had too much power for his rival. From both his overspin backhand and forehand he was flailing the ball with so much length and pace that Segura was dropped in his tracks.

The opening set was a lot closer than 6—3, with three games going to McNeill after long, brilliant exchanges, but no one would have given much for Segura's chances at the end of the 6—1 score. His backhand, the object of McNeill's attention, appeared inadequate. His service was not in the same

U. S. GIRLS TO MEET CANADIAN SKIERS

Long Existing Rivalry to Be Settled at Mt. Gabriel Next Week-End

By FRANK ELKINS

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

SHERBURNE PASS, Vt., March 16—The keen ski rivalry existing between Eastern American and Canadian women will be renewed next week-end at Mont Gabriel. It was revealed today by Mrs. Janet Mead, team captain for the United States Team. Plans are nearing completion to make this climactic event of the 1945-46 North American season the best in the series that had its origin in 1940. Since then the international races have been held alternately and on a home and home basis with honors pretty well divided.

Unlike preceding competitions, however, the forthcoming one will have an innovation that will lend more quality to the annual games. Instead of one slalom and a downhill with the combined time being used unofficially in determining the team victor, next week-end will find the girls being rivals in two slaloms, one of a giant nature and a single downhill run.

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Excluding labor and the left

Jenkins et al. (2003) chose to exclude events sponsored by labor and leftist groups from their data series on anti-racist protest.[2] Their unpublished codebook (Jenkins 2010) states: "[W]e exclude political groups whose goals are broader or more complex (e.g. the American Civil Liberties Union, organized labor)." Notice that the rationale for excluding the events in question was *not* that the *demands* were too complex or ambiguous to classify. Rather, Jenkins et al. excluded events whose sponsoring *organizations* were deemed to have "broad or complex" goals. Accordingly, a protest demanding the admission of blacks to a lily-white school would not be coded if the sole sponsor was a labor union, but an otherwise identical event sponsored by the NAACP would be coded. Obviously, this constitutes a potential source of bias, rendering the data series problematic for the purpose of assessing hypotheses about the participation of labor and the left in anti-racist struggles.

Amenta et al. (2009) searched an electronic database for articles mentioning various social movement organizations, including labor and leftist groups. Unlike the other studies discussed above, Amenta et al. did not attempt to ascertain the demands raised by the organizations during each individual event. Instead, they classified each organization based on its moniker, using a set of mutually-excusive categories that included "civil rights," "labor," "communist," and "veterans." This classification scheme is problematic, since it ignores the possibility that "labor," "communist," and "veterans" groups might engage in "civil rights" activity.

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[2] Minkoff (1995, 1997) and Meyer and Minkoff (2004) relied on protest data compiled by Jenkins and his collaborators, but did not include the earliest years of the data series in their analyses.

The table below summarizes some key methodological differences between previous studies and my own.

Quantitative studies of *New York Times* coverage of anti-racist protest

	includes the relevant years?	protest distinguished from other action types?	includes actions by labor and the left?	main source is full text of newspaper?	computer-assisted search?
Nichter	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Burstein (1985)	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Jenkins et al. (2003)	yes[a]	yes	no	no	no
Amenta et al. (2009)	yes	no	no	yes	yes
McAdam (1982)	no[b]	no[b]	yes	no	no
Gillion (2013)[c]	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Olzak (1992)	no	yes	yes	yes[d]	no

[a] The data published in Jenkins et al. (2003) begins with the year 1948. The authors also gathered data for the years 1946 and 1947, which Jenkins kindly shared with me.

[b] McAdam's data series begins with the year 1948. He distinguished protest from other action types, but in publications he reported only aggregate data for the early years in the series, and the disaggregated data is no longer available.

[c] Gillion's data was drawn from the Dynamics of Collective Action project.

[d] Olzak used the *Index* to identify potentially relevant events and time periods, and then consulted the *Times* itself.

An alternative method

To remedy the methodological weaknesses described above, I took advantage of a commercially-available digital database, Proquest Historical Newspapers, which enables the user to search the full text of the *New York Times* for occurrences of any word or phrase.[3] My overarching goal was to retrieve as many relevant articles from the database as possible. But in order to avoid coder fatigue and restrict the duration of the project, I also wanted to avoid retrieving large numbers of irrelevant articles. With these two competing desiderata in mind, I adopted a strategy developed by Strawn (2005, 2010).[4] First, I compiled lists of potentially useful search terms. Next, I systematically tested the effectiveness of these terms. Then, after the search vocabulary had been tested and refined, a team of undergraduates helped me code the resulting articles. In the sections that follow, I describe each of these steps in greater detail.

Search term candidates

I began by compiling two lists of potentially useful search terms. One list consisted of "race" terms, the other of "action" terms.[5] The candidate terms were derived from several

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[3] The Proquest search interface recognizes Boolean operators and treats parentheses as order-of-operations indicators. It also recognizes the standard wildcard symbols (*) and (?).

[4] Strawn's aim was to identify protest events in a digital database of articles produced by a Mexican news agency.

[5] I considered compiling a list of organization names instead of action terms. However, preliminary analysis revealed that articles about protest often fail to mention any organizational sponsors. Furthermore, there are no ready-made lists of organization names that would have suited my purposes. Minkoff acknowledges that the published directories she relied upon tend to ignore radical groups. Amenta et al. scoured the historiography for additional organization names, but I am skeptical of this strategy because in the course of my primary research I came across a host of organizations that are not mentioned in the secondary literature.

sources: the sociological and historical literature on the civil rights movement and other U.S. social movements of the mid-20th century; codebooks used by other scholars for their newspaper coding projects; and thesauruses published during the period under study. I also read several hundred *New York Times* articles published during the period of interest that were retrieved using the term (negr*), with an eye toward augmenting both the "race" and "action" lists. The resulting lists contained a total of over 50 candidate search terms, the vast majority of which were "action" terms.

My list of candidate "action" terms was not intended to capture all types of movement activity. For example, my list did not include the terms "petition," "speech," or "letter." The lost opportunity thesis claims that a rising wave of confrontational protest was stymied during the McCarthy era; the thesis does *not* claim that *all* forms of movement activity were stymied. Restricting the scope of my list in this way does not preclude comparisons with previous scholarship, since even researchers who are interested in a wider range of movement activity often distinguish between confrontational protest and other types of movement activity when gathering and presenting their data.

Efficiency testing

The next step was to test how effectively various combinations of search terms met my twin goals of retrieving as many relevant articles as possible whilst avoiding irrelevant ones. The

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Alternatively, I could have compiled a list that included organization names *as well as* action terms. I decided against this for two reasons. Firstly, the additional searches required to execute this strategy would have made data management tasks much more time consuming. Furthermore, preliminary searches using the names of well-known organizations (e.g. NAACP) returned a large volume of irrelevant articles. Excluding these organizations from the list while including labor and leftist organizations might have biased the results in favor of the lost opportunity thesis.

"race" list presented few difficulties, as most of the candidate search terms were found to retrieve only relevant articles (i.e. articles mentioning African-Americans, racial inequality, racial discrimination, and/or segregation).[6] The refined list included the following terms:

negr*

fair employment

lynching

poll tax

racia*

racis*

(rac* AND discriminat*)

To test the effectiveness of the "action" terms, 175 dates were chosen from the period of interest.[7] I performed searches that combined each action term with each race term, yielding a

[6] The terms "colored," "black," and "African-American" were almost never used by the *New York Times* to refer to African-Americans during the period under study. The term "civil rights" was both inefficient and redundant: a large percentage of the articles it retrieved were irrelevant, and the relevant ones almost always contained additional "race" terms. The terms "Jim Crow" and "segregation" were both highly redundant. The noun form "lynching" was chosen because "lynch" is a common surname, while "lynched" was highly redundant. It was desirable to avoid redundancy because the time required for data management increased considerably with each additional search.

[7] Certain forms of protest are, by their nature, more likely to occur on certain days of the week. For example, strikes and student protests usually occur on weekdays (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Protest-in-general may also be more likely to occur on certain days of the week. Therefore, one-seventh of the dates I sampled were Sundays chosen at random, one-seventh were Mondays chosen at random, etc. This is known as "constructed week" sampling (Riffe et al. 1993).

sample of approximately 600 articles.[8] The articles were coded using the following simple scheme[9]: articles that mentioned confrontational protest were coded "high relevance"; articles that mentioned only non-confrontational movement activity (e.g. speeches, petitions) were coded "medium relevance"; articles that mentioned only government action were coded "low

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[8] The searches took the following form:

action AND race

When I performed the searches in 2008, 2009, and 2010, the Proquest lexicon was still in flux. At that time, I used the operator W/DOC rather than AND because the latter operator only searched for occurrences of its operands within a few hundred words of each other. As I write this in 2014, the operator AND searches for its operands anywhere in the document; W/DOC is no longer recognized; and the operator NEAR/n searches for occurrences of its operands within n words of each other.

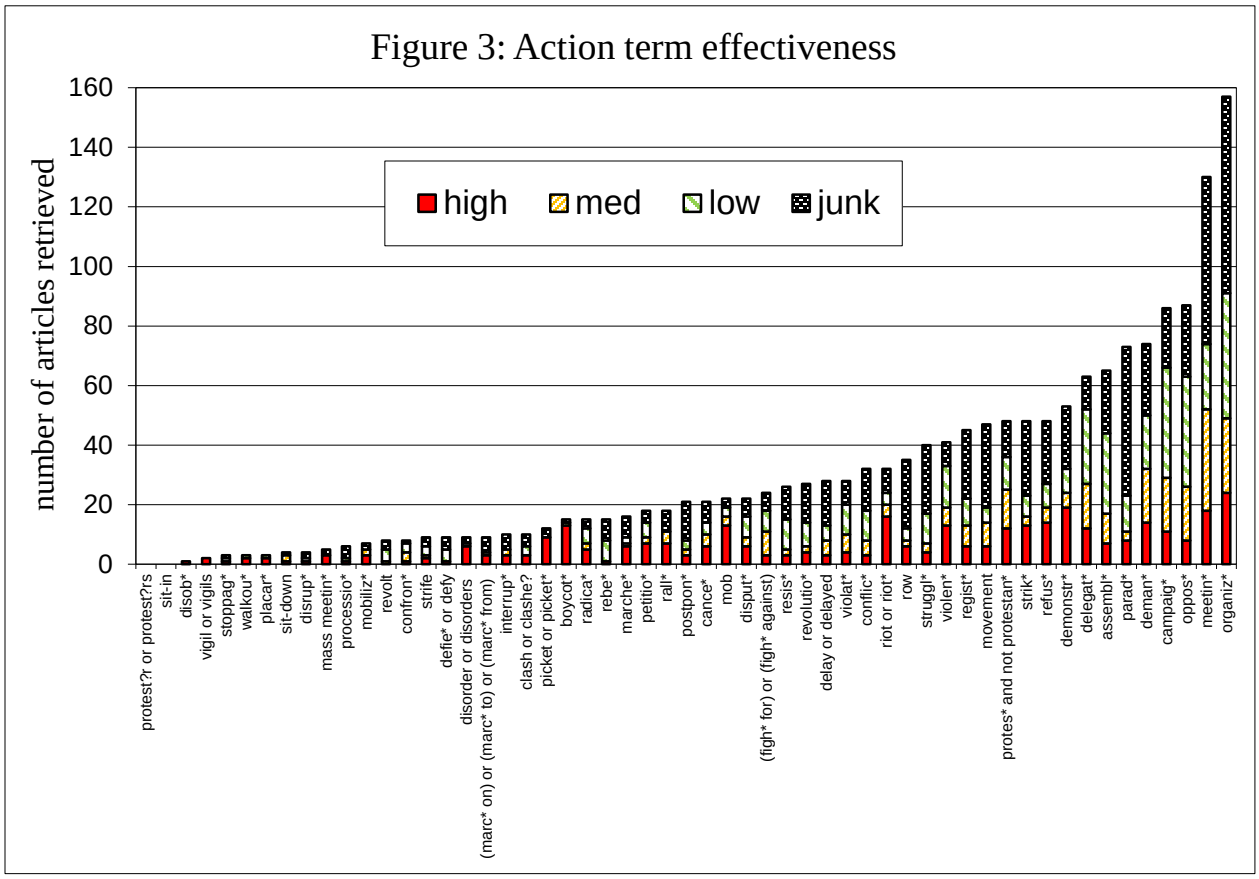
The Proquest search interface allows users to restrict the types of articles retrieved (e.g. to ignore classified ads), but at the time I performed my searches the lexicon was quite confusing. The article type "article" did not include articles appearing on the front page of the newspaper, and so to avoid retrieving classified ads and other irrelevant article types, it was necessary to use the article type (article AND frontpage). As I write this, the article type "article" now includes the front page of the newspaper.

The moral of these stories is that search interfaces change, so researchers should specify the dates when their searches were conducted, and thoroughly explain the syntax and semantics of their searches.

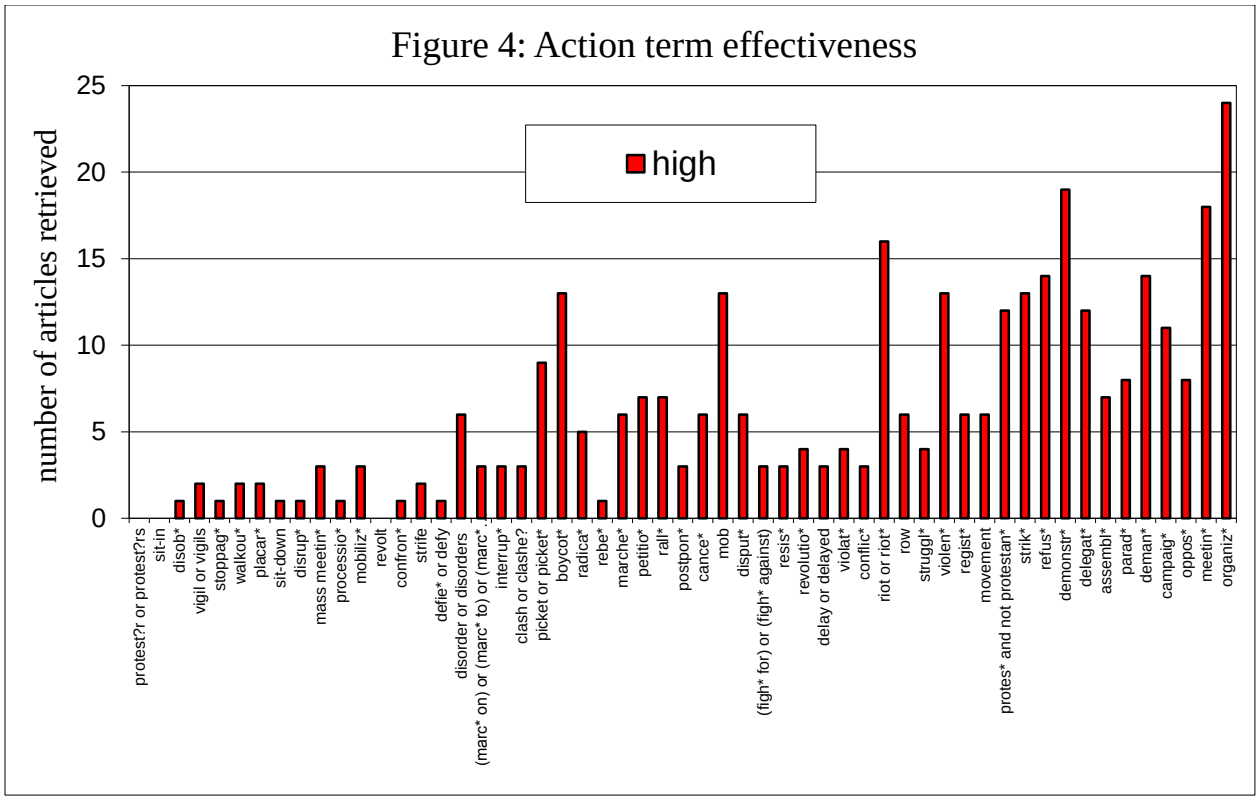
Also troubling is the possibility that new content might be added to a database, making it difficult to compare the results of searches conducted at different points in time. This seems unlikely with the *New York Times*, but working with more obscure newspapers in the Proquest suite, one sometimes encounters illegible articles and other missing content that might warrant updates to those databases in the future.

[9] A single-page coding guide is available from the author upon request.

relevance"; and all other articles were coded "junk."[10] The results are summarized in Figures 3 and 4.



[10] It quickly became apparent that several terms commonly used to describe protest in everyday discourse required creative modification to avoid retrieving massive quantities of "junk." For example, the term (marc*) retrieves every article mentioning the month of March, and the term (protes*) returns every article mentioning the Protestant faith. For such terms, the charts show only the modified forms.



Next, I devised an algorithm to compare how effectively various *combinations* of action terms performed.[11] I found that a relatively small set of terms could retrieve virtually all (nearly 99%) of the high-relevance articles that were retrieved by all of the candidates combined, whilst avoiding the majority (nearly two-thirds) of all junk articles.[12] The refined list included the following terms:

[11] Because articles sometimes contain more than one action term, the tables above do not enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of combinations of action terms.

[12] As the table shows, approximately half of the articles that were not coded "high relevance" were coded "junk." Partly for this reason, and partly to err on the side of caution, my algorithm simply tried to maximize the volume of "high relevance" articles whilst avoiding "junk."

boycot*

disob*

disrup*

demonstrat*

(picket or picket*)

placar*

marche*

(mass meetin*)

rall*

rebe*

refus*

strik*

(vigil or vigils)

walkou*

Coding

In order to complete the project within a manageable time frame, I sampled every fifth day in the years 1946 through 1956 (i.e. 72 days per year), which returned a total of approximately 1,450 articles.[13] These were read by a team of undergraduate coders, using the double-pass method described by Jenkins et al. (2003). At least two coders read and coded each article on their own, and then coding discrepancies were resolved through collective discussion. After initial trial-runs and revisions to the coding scheme, a high level of inter-coder reliability

[13] See note 7 above on the sampling method.

was achieved: for almost 95% of the articles in the sample, the coders identified the same number of protest events (zero, one, two, etc.) on their own, without the need for collective discussion.[14] Interested readers can find the detailed codebook in the Appendix.[15]

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[14] For other variables – such as the estimated number of participants and the type of protest – intercoder reliability was slightly lower. One variable for which intercoder reliability was found to be consistently low during the training stage – target type – was dropped from the coding scheme.

[15] Several features of the coding scheme are worth noting briefly:

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS. Some researchers exclude protests involving just one or a few participants. I coded all protests regardless of size, and recorded information about the number of participants, so that protests of various sizes can be analyzed at the researcher's discretion.

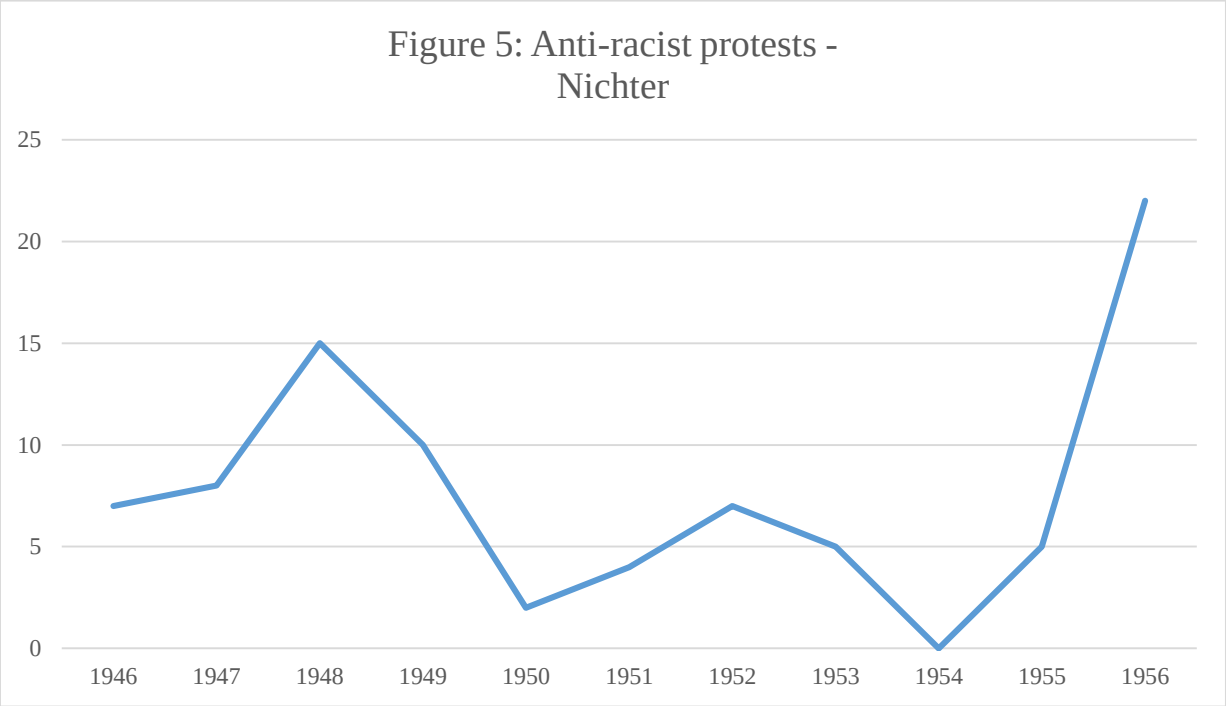
EVENT COUNTS. Not all coding projects individuate events in the same way, and some researchers adopt criteria that are quite counter-intuitive. For protests lasting longer than one day, Burstein (1985:219n1) counted each day the protest received news coverage as a distinct event. This results in double-counting of long protests, which tend to generate more articles than short protests, all else equal. (Elsewhere in his book, Burstein states (1985:204) that he treated each day of protest as a distinct event. My inspection of his data suggests that he abandoned this criterion, presumably because the *New York Times Index* often omits information about protest duration.) The Dynamics of Collective Action Project also tends to double-count long protests, but for a different reason: it treats the raising of a new demand by the same group of protesters as a distinct event. Following this logic, the Montgomery bus boycott would count as several distinct boycotts, rather than one long boycott with evolving demands. My coding scheme conforms to common-sense intuitions about how to individuate events, but also includes information about protest length and demand evolution that can be analyzed at the researcher's discretion.

BLACK PROTESTERS WITH RACE-NEUTRAL DEMANDS. Finally, in addition to protests demanding racial justice, I coded protests with "race-neutral" demands that included African-American participants (e.g. black workers on strike for higher wages). These protests were clearly distinguished in the project database to facilitate analysis at the researcher's discretion. In all of the graphs presented in this chapter, I exclude the very small number of protests with race-neutral demands.

Results

Protest Frequency

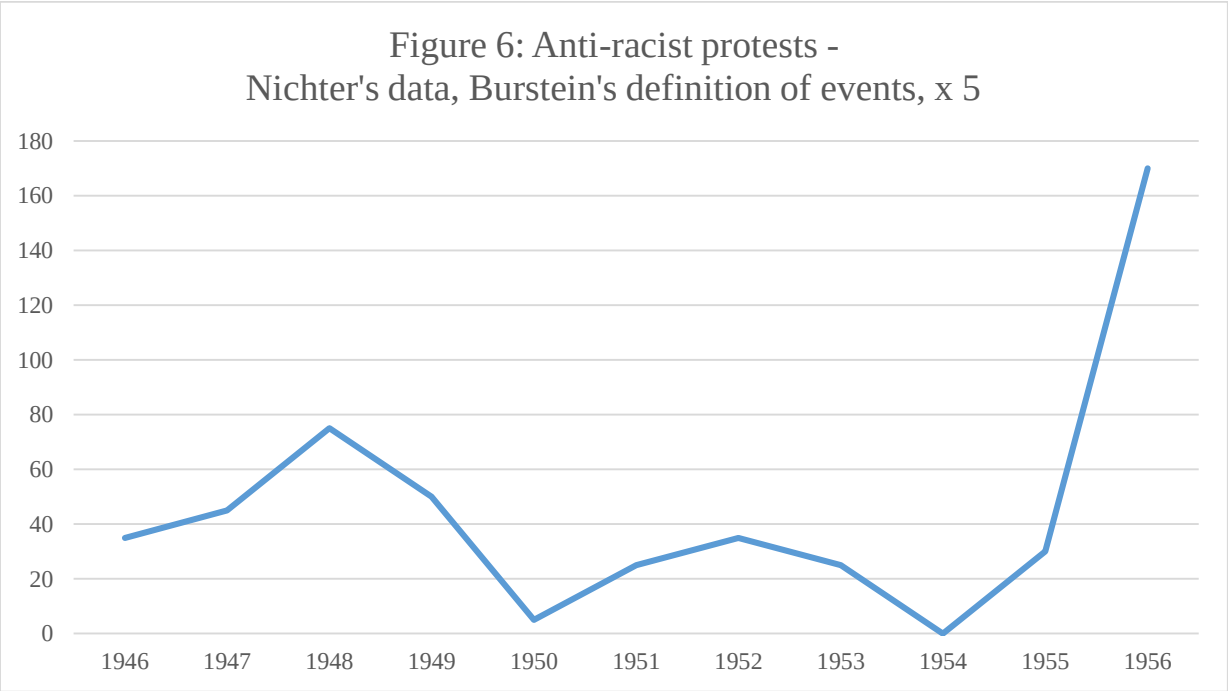
The graph below shows the frequency of protests over time. Recall that I sampled one-fifth of the days in each year; the graph displays the number of protests in the sampled days only, and does not attempt to extrapolate from the sampled days to the full year.[16]



The reader is encouraged to compare the graph above with the graph from Jenkins et al. presented at beginning of this chapter (Figure 1). To facilitate comparison with Burstein's data

[16] Multiplying by five to estimate the annual totals would result in double-counting long protests, which are more likely to appear in the sample, all else equal.

(Figure 2), I include Figure 6 below, which adopts his idiosyncratic method of counting events,[17] and multiplies the resulting counts by five to generate estimates for the entire year.



In both Figure 5 and Figure 6, the frequency of protest rises in the years immediately following World War II, peaks in 1948, and then rapidly declines, remaining at a low level until 1956, the year of the great bus boycotts. Furthermore, what looked like a molehill in previous studies – namely, the rise in protest in the years immediately following World War II – now looks more like a mountain. These findings are broadly consistent with the lost opportunity thesis, which asserts that the red scare stymied a rising protest movement.[18]

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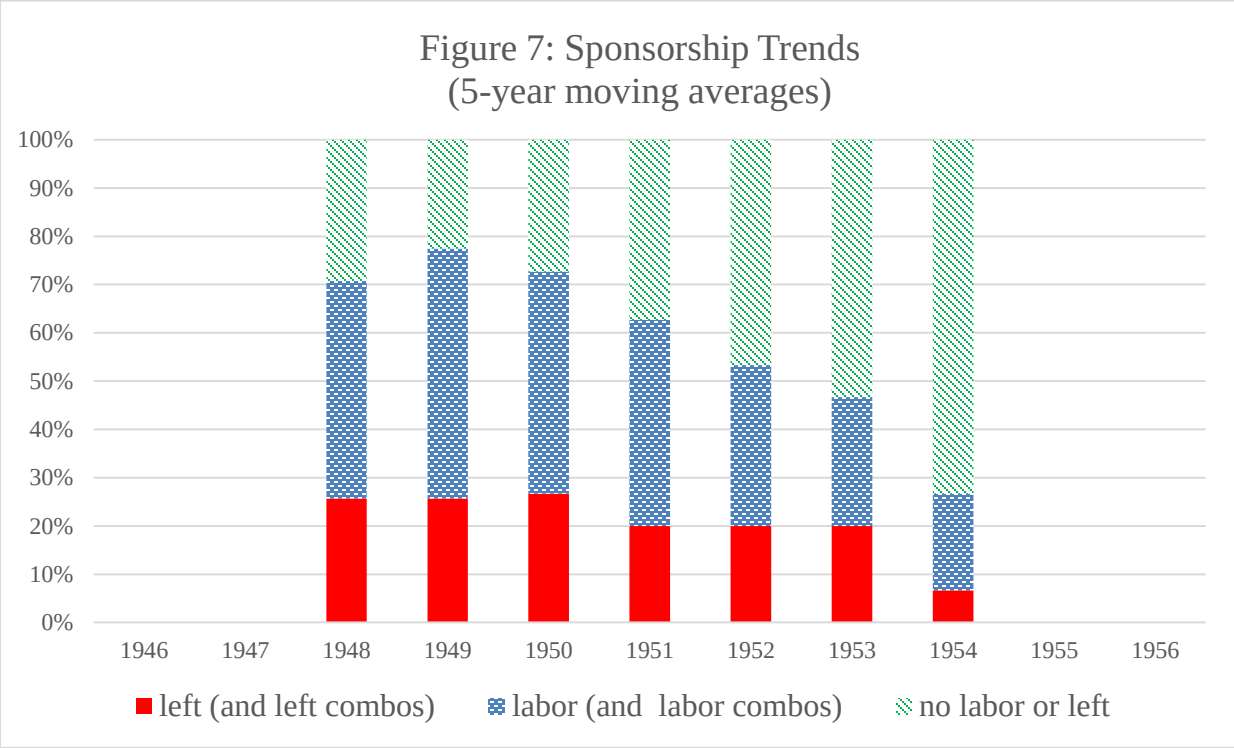
[17] See footnote 15 above.

[18] An examination of the impact of each of my methodological tweaks is beyond the scope of this chapter, but clearly one or more of those tweaks made a difference.

Sponsorship

Figure 7 below shows changes in protest sponsorship during the same period. Because of the small numbers in each category, I present moving averages, in order to smooth year-to-year fluctuations.[19]



[19] In addition, because no protests were found in the sample of articles from 1954, I averaged data from 1953 and 1955 to impute values for 1954, and calculated the moving averages using these imputed values.

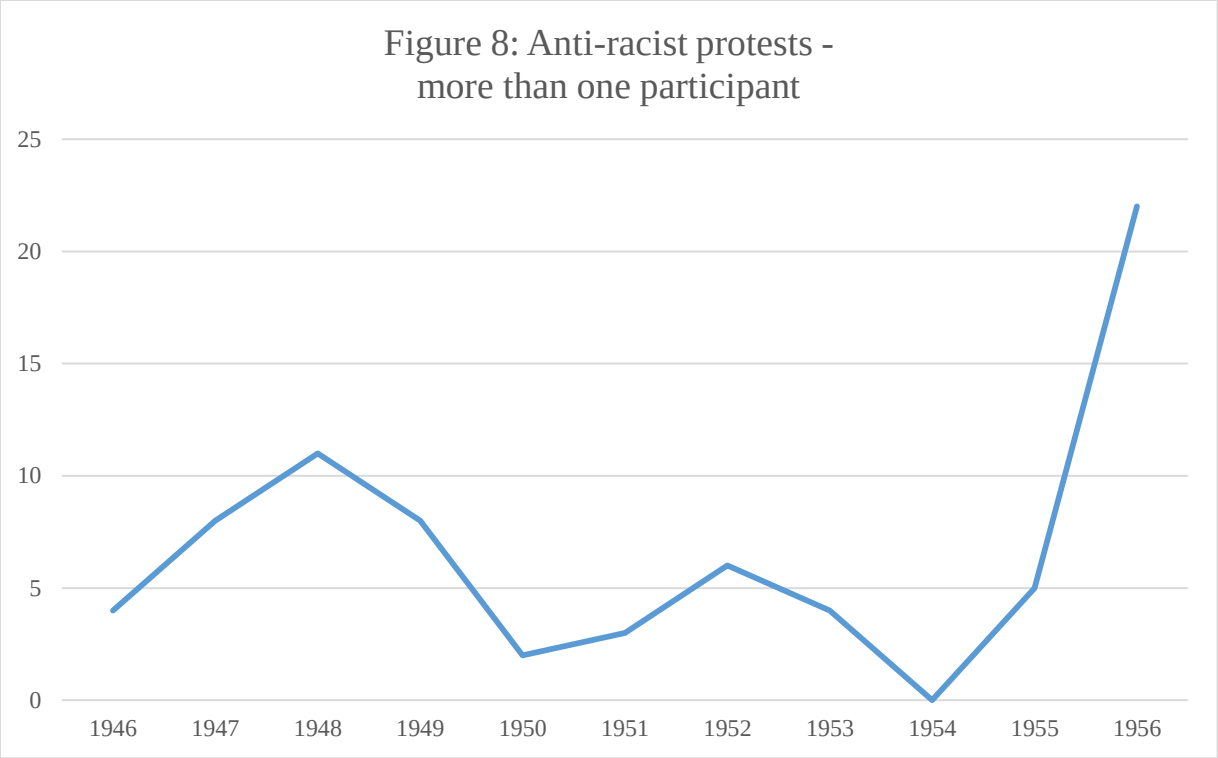
The categories "left (and left combos)" and "labor (and labor combos)" are not mutually exclusive, but because there were exactly zero protests in the sample that were co-sponsored by labor and leftist groups, the totals add up to 100% in each year.

Once again, the results are broadly consistent with the lost opportunity thesis. The percentage of all protests that were sponsored by leftist groups declines over time, becoming negligible by the mid-1950s. The percentage of all protests sponsored by labor organizations declines as well, but remains a substantial minority. Finally, the percentage of all protests sponsored by neither leftist groups nor labor organizations increases from a substantial minority during the mid-to-late 1940s to an overwhelming majority by the mid-1950s. In short, the data reveal a dramatic transformation of the civil rights movement organizational field, in which labor and the left were marginalized.

Objections and alternative explanations

Protest size

The data presented in the previous section include protests of any size, including protests with just one participant. This is consistent with the coding practices of Jenkins et al. and Burstein. However, it might be objected that including protests with just one participant somehow biases the results in favor of the lost opportunity thesis. To address this concern, Figure 8 below excludes protests with just one participant. The amplitude of the postwar rise is reduced somewhat, both absolutely and relative to the spike in 1956, but the general pattern remains the same.



Similarly, it might be objected that large protests should "count" more than small ones, lest we erroneously mistake a mess of molehills for a mountain. To address this concern, Figure 9 below include protests of all sizes, but it weights protests involving one hundred or more participants by a factor of two, while Figure 10 weights them by a factor of eight. Again, the general pattern remains the same.[20]

[20] Experimentation with more complicated weighting schemes – such as assigning progressively heavier weights to small, medium, and large protests – did not alter the general pattern either.

The spike in 1953 is due to a single article mentioning four rallies against police brutality in Harlem involving a total of 4,000 people. Brustein and the Dynamics of Collective Action Project would treat all four rallies as a single event. Had I done the same, the spike would disappear.

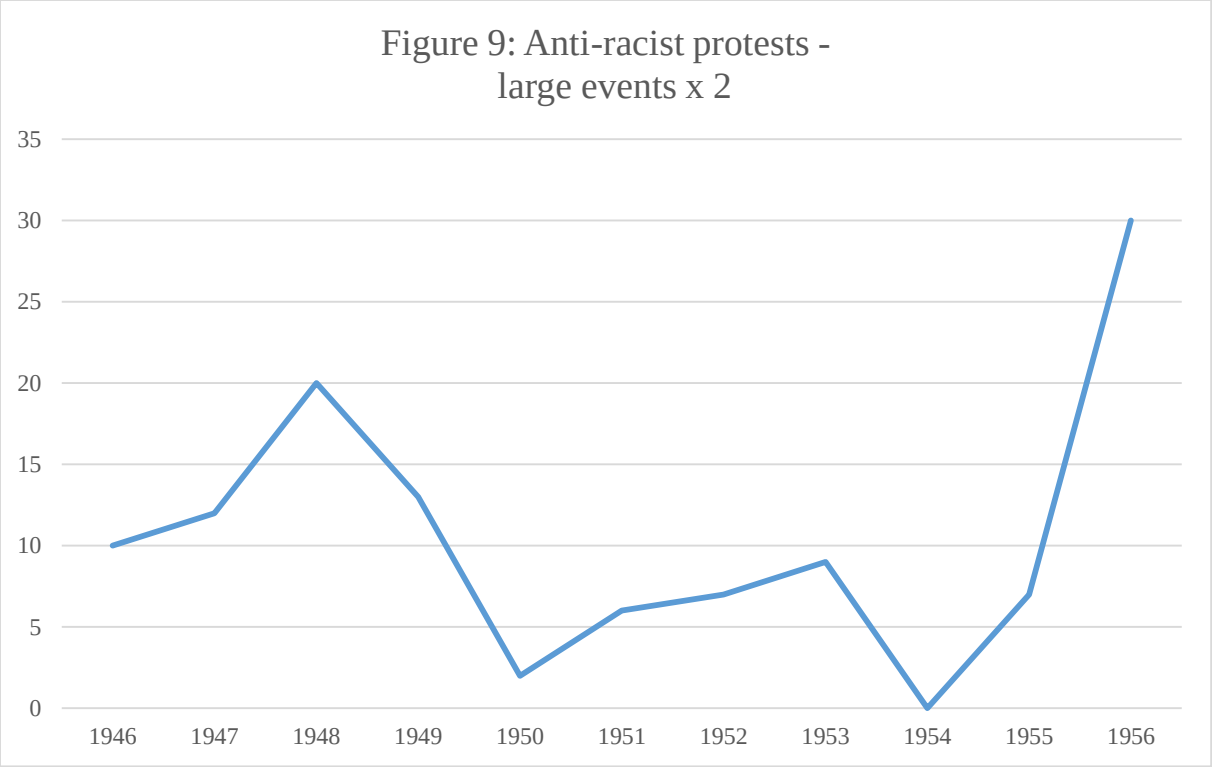


Figure 9: Anti-racist protests - large events x 2
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

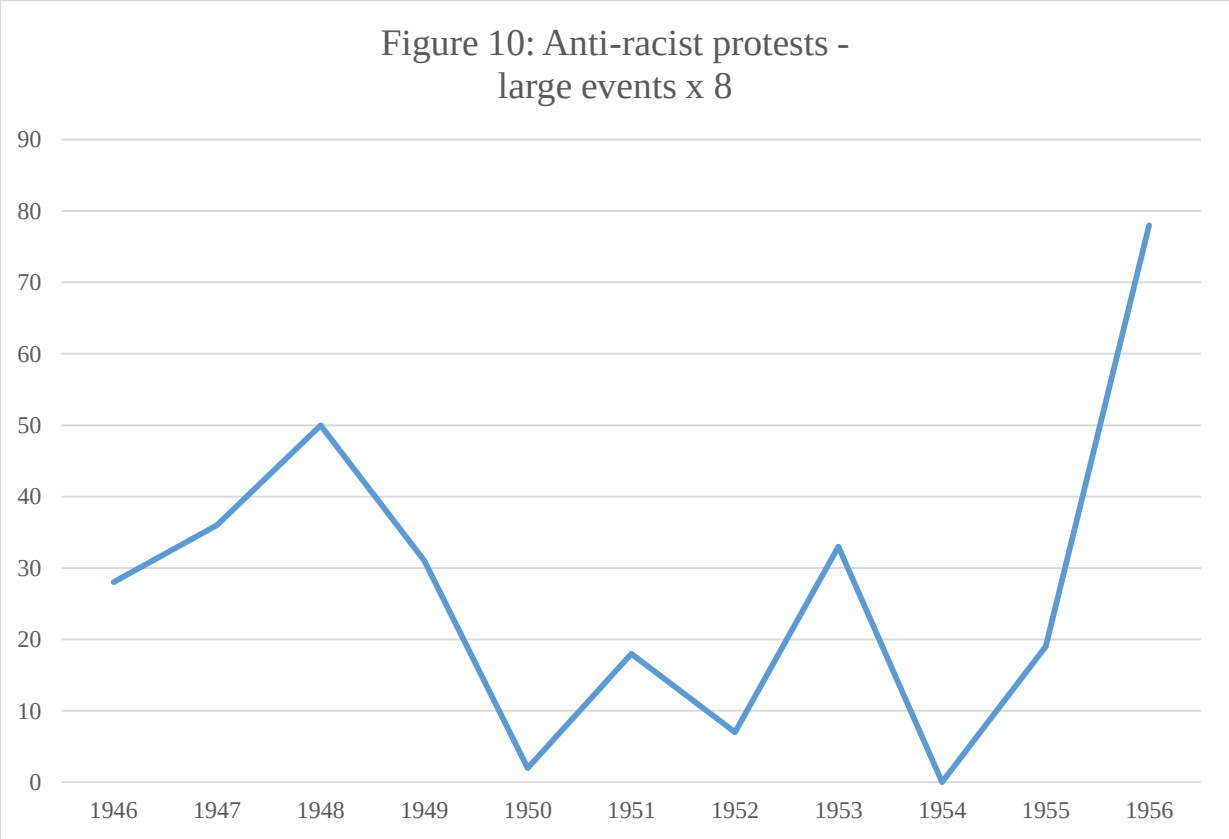


Figure 10: Anti-racist protests - large events x 8
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

Violence

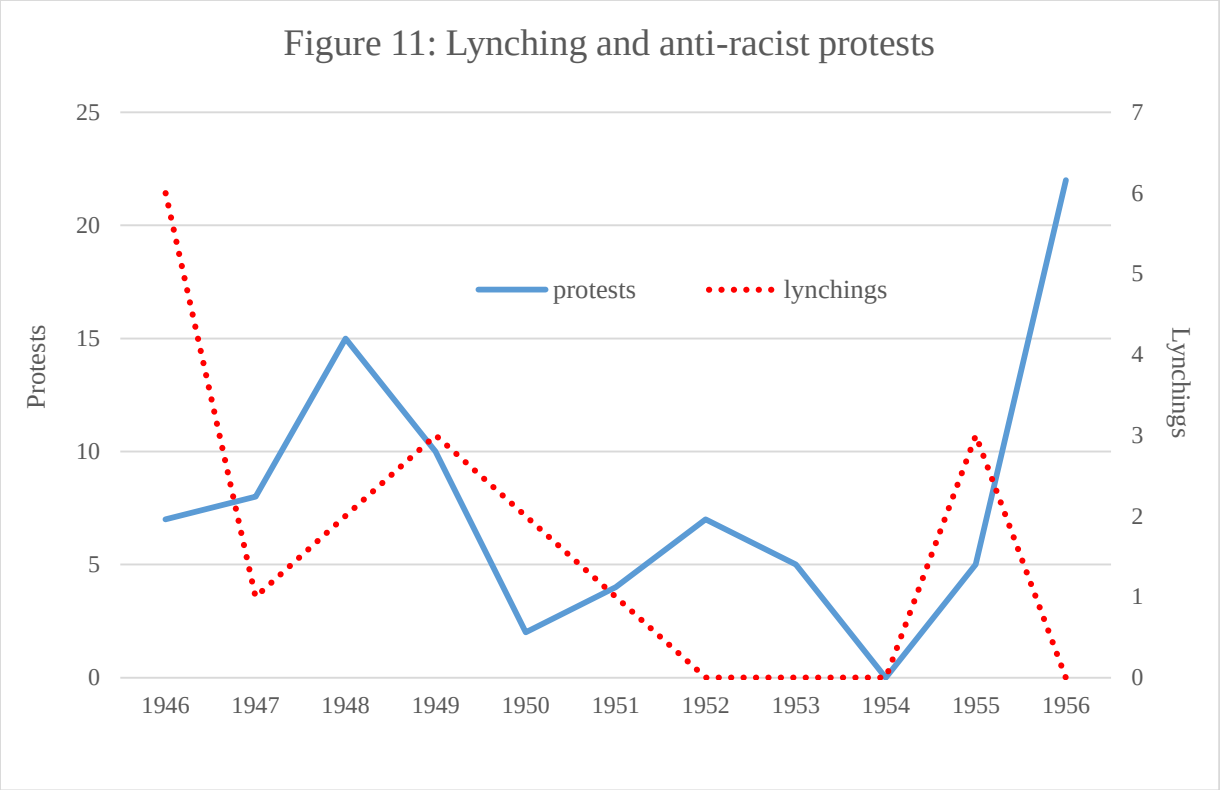
Until recently, there was broad consensus among historians that World War II fanned the flames of black protest (Dalfiume 1968; Sitkoff 1971). However, a revisionist current (Sitkoff 1997; Kruse and Tuck 2012) contends that the war encouraged black militancy in some ways, but also discouraged it in others, with an ambiguous net result. To bolster their case, some revisionists point to the spate of racist violence that erupted in both the North and South during the 1940s. Race riots and lynchings sent a clear message: displays of black assertiveness would be met with unbridled white hostility. According to this argument, racist violence was a more significant barrier to the emergence of sustained black protest than the red scare.[21]

Let us first consider the relationship between lynching and protest, displayed in Figure 11 below. During the postwar years, the number of lynchings peaked in 1946 and then trended sharply downward (Williams 1968). As we have already seen, the frequency of anti-racist protest rose from 1946 through 1948, and then trended sharply downward over the next two years. The simple correlation between lynching and protest is a negligible -.05, and lagging protest by a year reverses the sign of the correlation, which does not comport well with the revisionist hypothesis.[22]

---

[21] A comprehensive review of revisionist arguments obviously lies beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it should be noted that supporters of the traditional view usually acknowledge ambiguity in the wartime experience. Both sides in the debate agree that there were forces pulling in opposite directions; the disagreement is about the net result.

[22] If we consider only the years 1946 through 1950, the simple correlation is -.10, and increases to -.31 when protest is lagged by a year.



There is presently no reliable quantitative data on riots against blacks during the period in question.[23] But as a first stab at evaluating the relationship between riots and protest, I performed a title-only search using the following string[24]:

negr* AND (riot OR riot* OR mob OR violen*)

[23] Burstein's (1985) data on riots includes only riots by blacks. The data on riots analyzed by Turchin (2012) includes both anti-black riots and riots by blacks, and my inspection of his raw data revealed that many of the largest anti-black riots of the postwar decade were missing.

[24] All of the action terms in this string were included in my list of candidate action terms, and they were found to be an extremely effective combination for retrieving articles mentioning race riots. In order to keep the project within manageable limits, I did not include these terms on the refined list of action terms. However, we did code riots and other racially-motivated violent acts when they were encountered in our sample.

All 365 days of the year were included in the search, which returned articles mentioning a total of twenty-two riots against blacks, including almost all of the major incidents discussed in the historiography, and some additional ones as well.[25] The results are displayed in Figure 12 below. Again the revisionist hypothesis fares poorly, as the simple correlation between riots and protests is .52, decreasing to .06 when protest is lagged by a year.[26] The positive correlation suggests that protest (or a third variable associated with protest, such as black militancy in general) may have increased the likelihood of riots, but the data does not support the claim that riots decreased the likelihood of protest.

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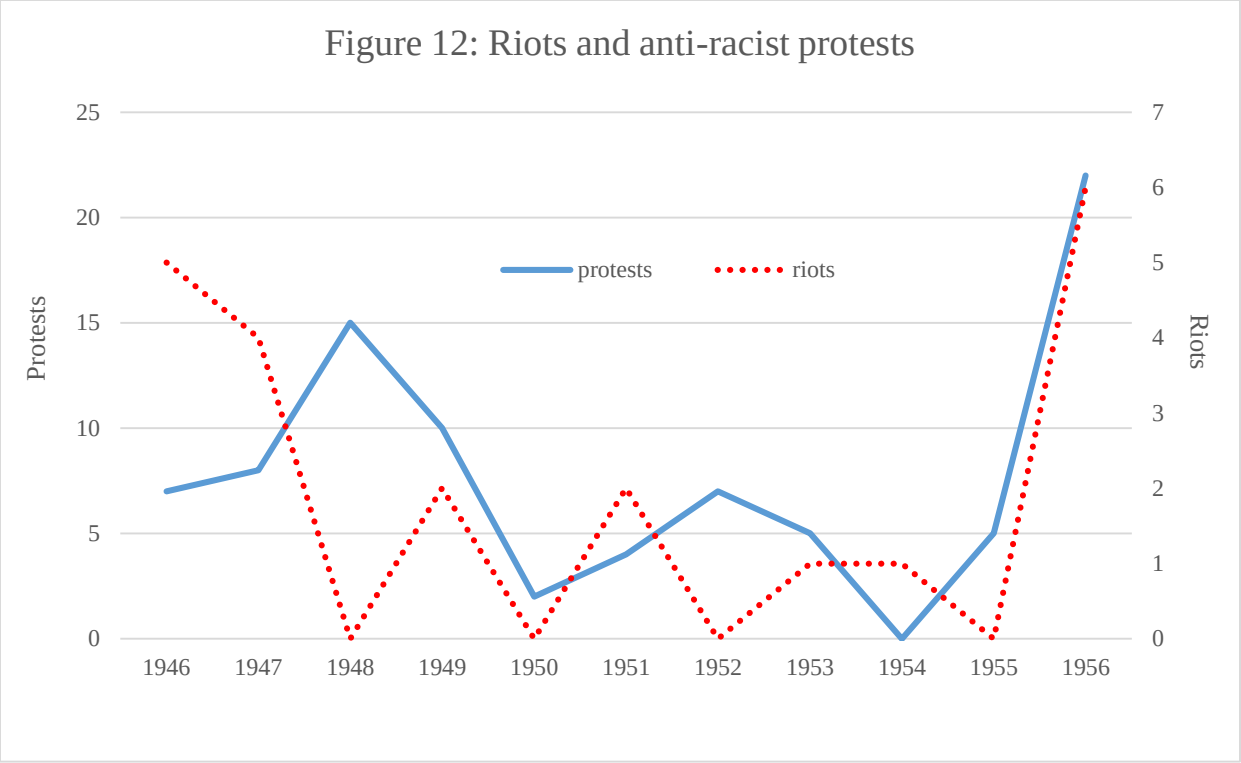
[25] The following riots were mentioned in the articles: Columbia, TN (1946), Athens, AL (1946), Monroe, GA (1946), Airport Homes, Chicago, IL (1946), Philadelphia, PA (1946), Greenville, SC (1947), Jackson, NC (1947), Fernwood Park, Chicago, IL (1947), Columbia, NC (1947), Groveland, FL (1949), Nashville, GA (1949), Brooklyn, NY (1951), Cicero, IL (1951), Trumbull Park, Chicago, IL (1953 and 1954), Tuscaloosa, AL (1956), Birmingham, AL (1956), Buffalo, NY (1956), Sturgis, KY (1956), Oliver Springs, TN (1956), and Clinton Springs, TN (1956). I ignored several borderline cases, such as the racist murders in Minden, LA (1947) and the terrorist acts in Cairo, IL (1952), in which the violence targeted a small number of blacks and/or was perpetrated by a small number of whites. I also ignored prison riots. Among the major riots not mentioned in the articles were Chicago's Peoria Street riot (1949), the Peekskill riots in upstate New York (1949), and the St. Louis public swimming pool riot (1949). Articles about these events would have been retrieved by a full-text search using the same string.

[26] The correlation remains positive when protest is lagged by one year. If we consider only the years 1946 through 1950, the simple correlation is -.13, and becomes positive when protest is lagged by one year.



Regional variation

Critics of the lost opportunity thesis are especially skeptical about the prospects for a mass anti-racist movement involving labor and/or leftist groups in the South during the postwar decade. According to these scholars, the tenacity of white racism in the region and the intensity of employer hostility towards unions were overwhelming obstacles to the emergence of such a movement (Draper 1994; Minchin 2005).

Figures 13, 14, 15, and 16 below show the frequency of protest in the South, including and excluding border states, with and without added weight for large events. In each graph, the pattern remains consistent with the lost opportunity thesis.

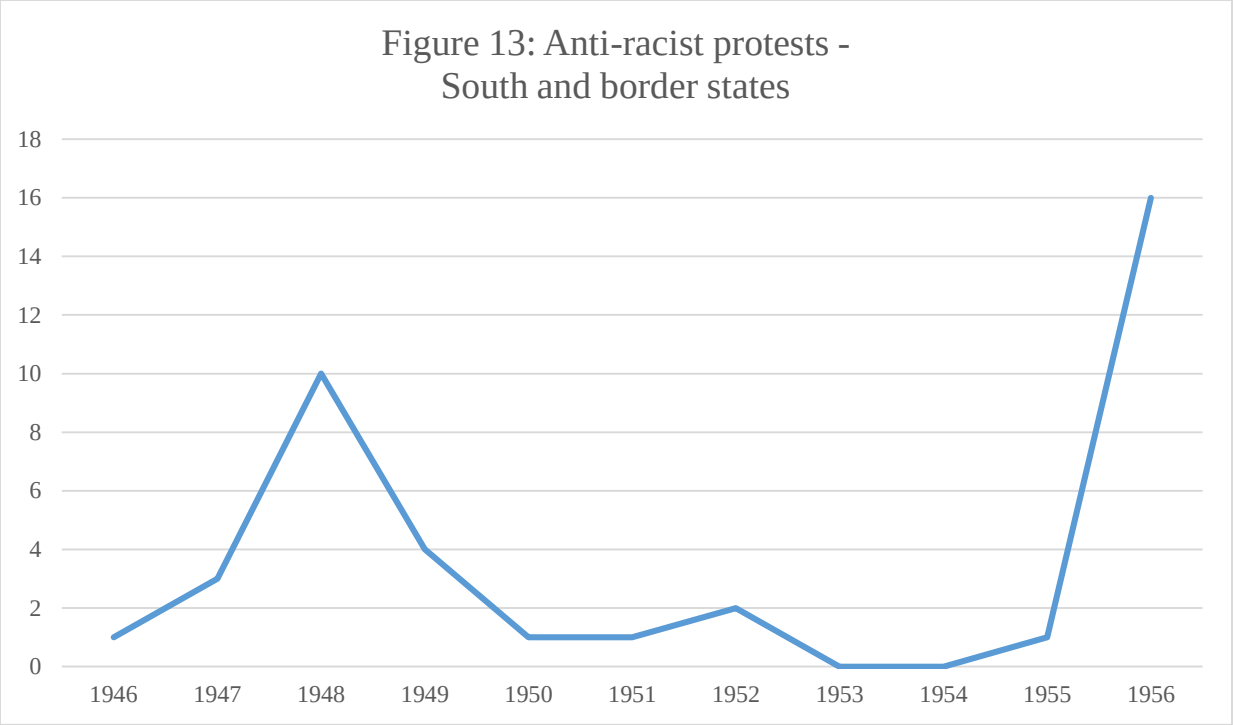


Figure 13: Anti-racist protests - South and border states
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

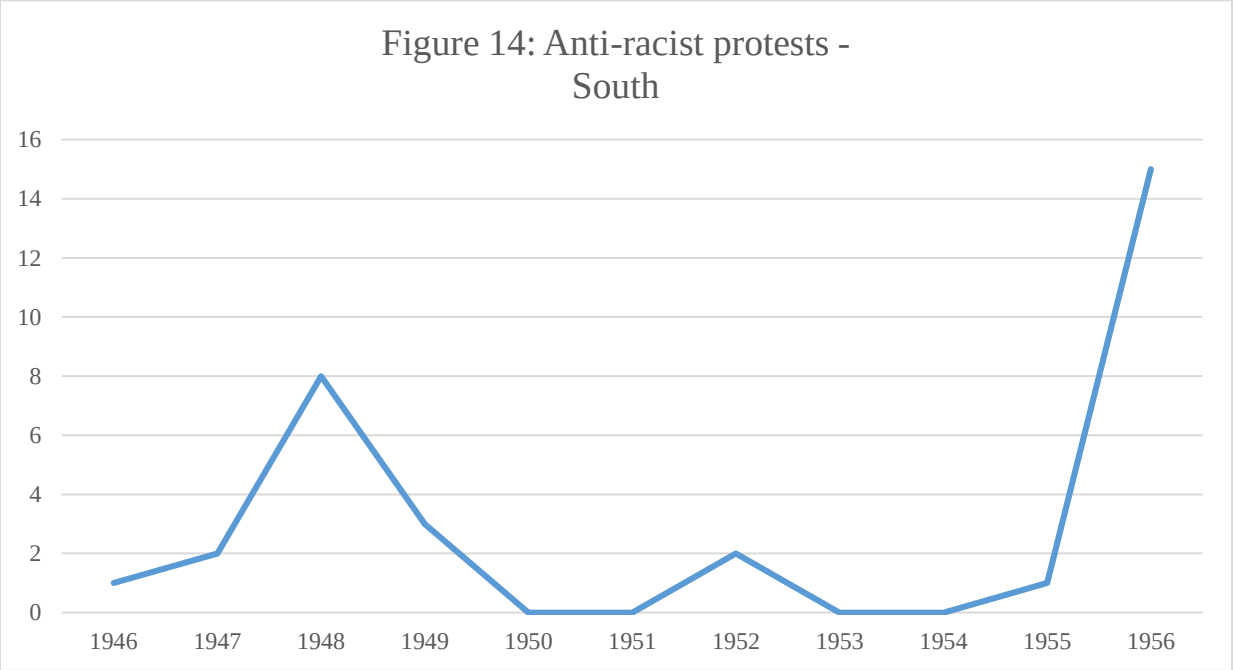


Figure 14: Anti-racist protests - South
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

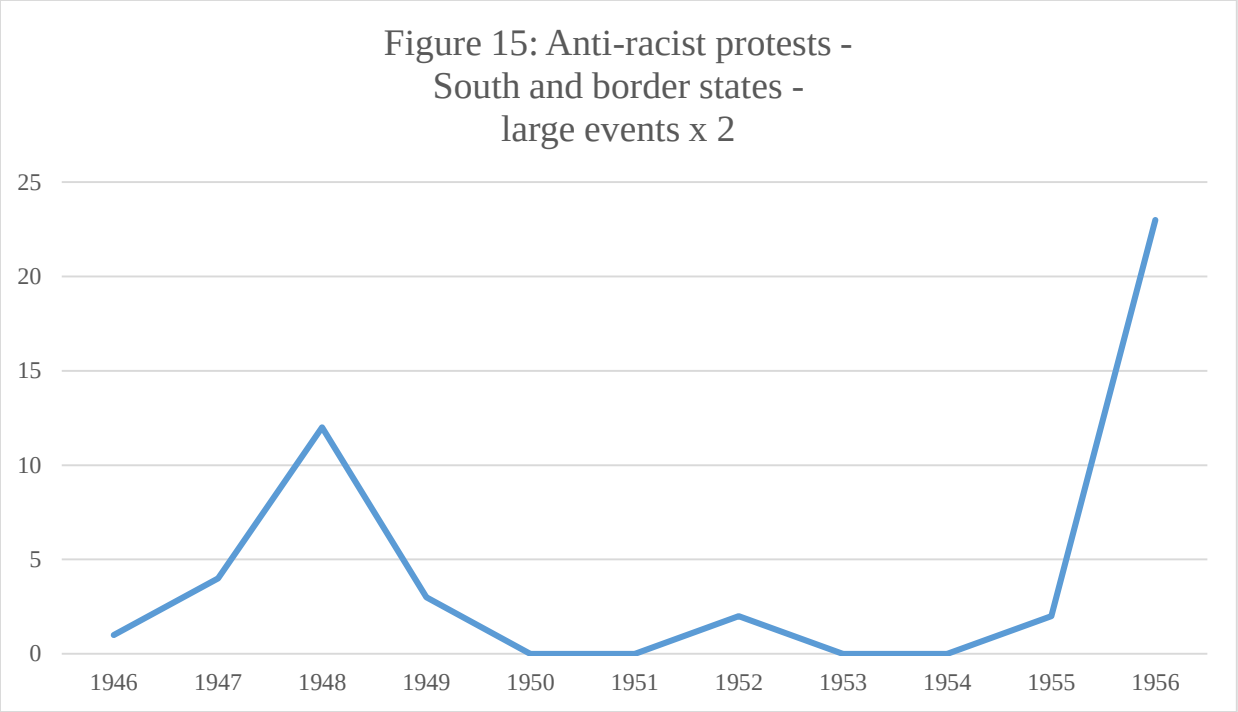


Figure 15: Anti-racist protests -
South and border states -
large events x 2
25
20
15
10
5
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

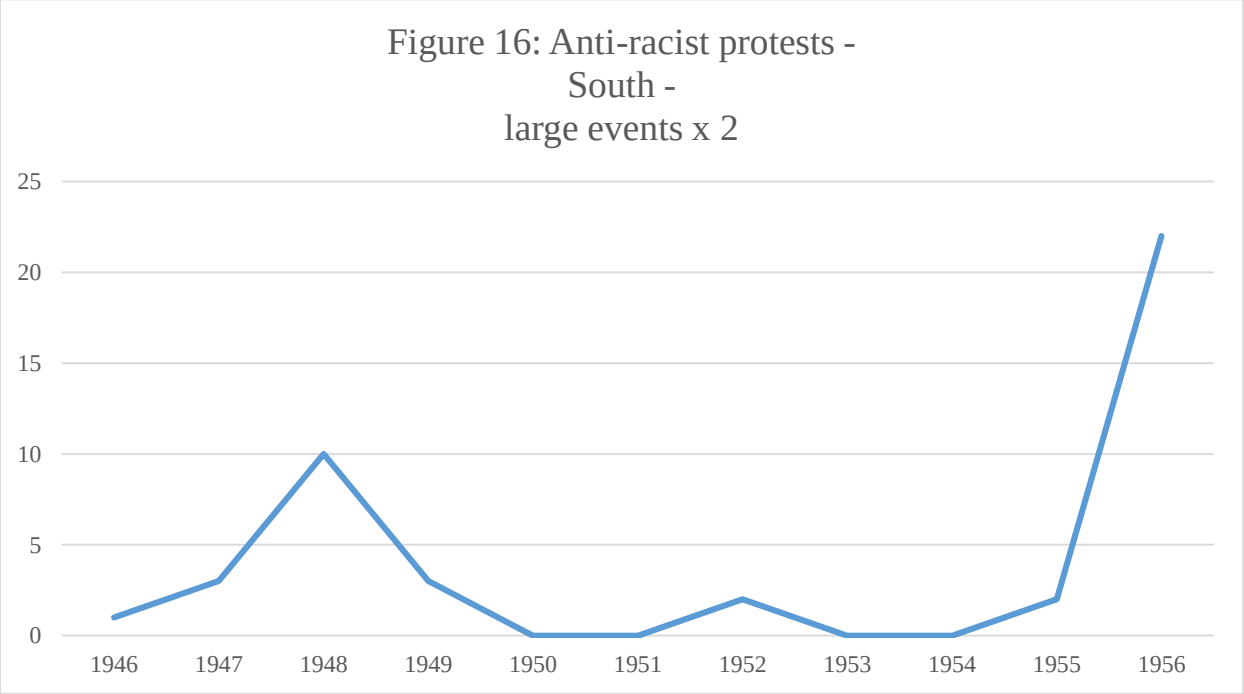
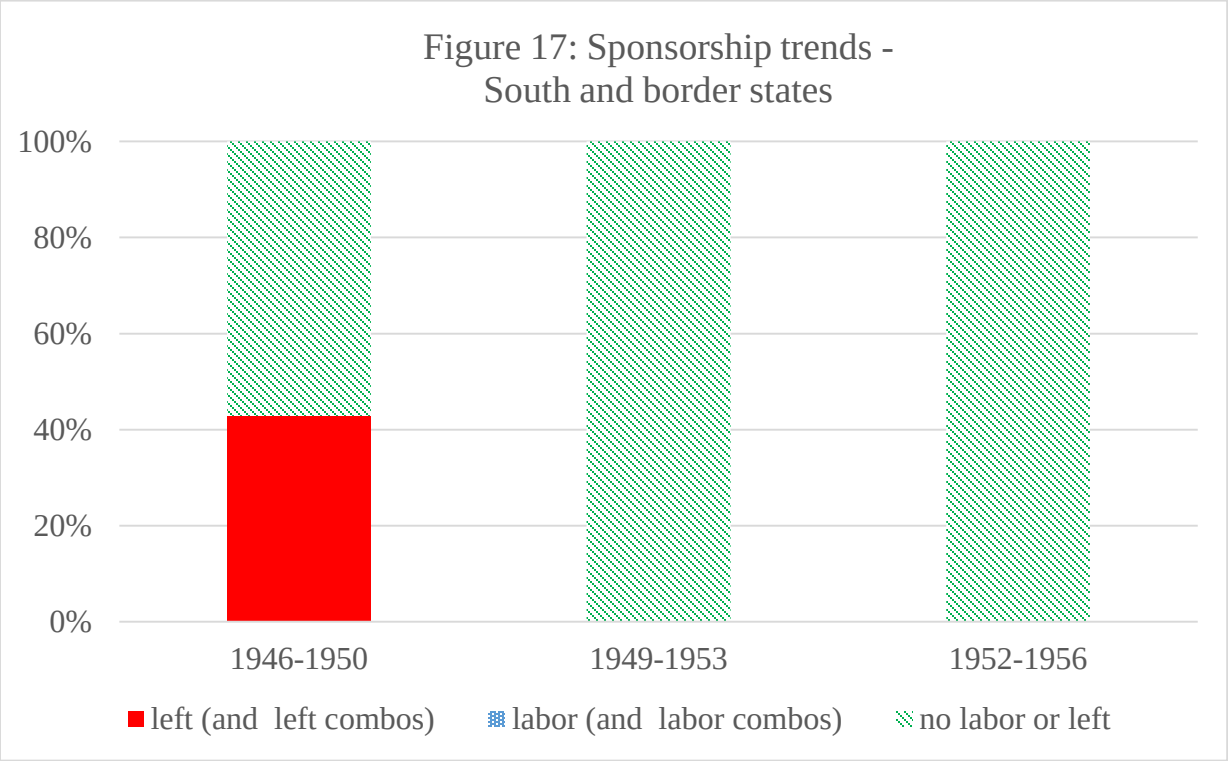
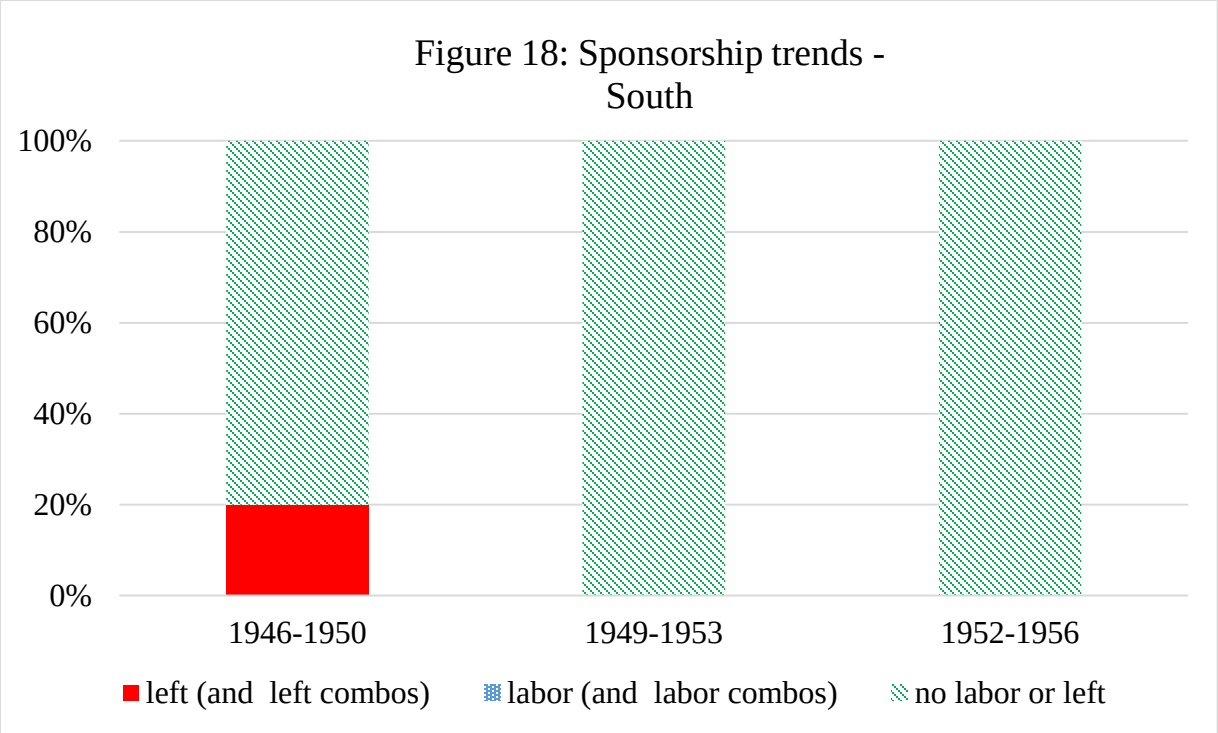


Figure 16: Anti-racist protests -
South -
large events x 2
25
20
15
10
5
0
1946
1947
1948
1949
1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956

Figures 17 and 18 below show sponsorship trends for the South, including and excluding border states. Because of the small numbers involved, I smoothed the data by comparing three five-year periods: the first period includes the years 1946 to 1950, the second includes the years 1949 to 1953, and the third includes the years 1952 to 1956. For each period, I pooled all of the protests that occurred during that period.





The data presented above is consistent with the skeptical view of labor's role in Southern anti-racist protest during the postwar decade. However, the data is also consistent with the claim that leftist organizations such as the Southern Negro Youth Congress and the Progressive Party were significant players in the Southern movement during the mid-to-late 1940s, despite their relatively small size compared to the NAACP and religious organizations. These conclusions should be considered tentative, given the limited number of days in my sample and the regional bias of the *New York Times*, a problem to which I return later in the chapter.

Election year bias

It might be objected that the observed spike in protest frequency in 1948 reflects the news media's greater attention to racial conflict during election years, rather than an actual spike in protest activity (Oliver and Maney 2000). But while the election cycle may explain why there are

spikes in all three presidential election years in our sample, it doesn't explain why the amplitudes of these three spikes are so different.

A more plausible objection is that the 1948 election was extraordinary, because racial justice was a major topic of debate among presidential candidates for the first time in the 20th century. Under these circumstances, anti-racist protest was especially likely to receive media attention. However, quantitative studies of press attention to civil rights do not support this objection. These studies find that the *New York Times* and other periodicals of record were not unusually attuned to the topic in 1948. In fact, the *Times* devoted a greater percentage of articles to civil rights in 1946 than it did in 1948 (Rosenberg 1981:112-116).

Protests sponsored by the Progressive Party and its youth wing in 1948 probably did receive extra press attention because Henry Wallace was running for president on the Progressive ticket that year.[27] However, even if we exclude all protests sponsored by the Progressives in 1948 from our event counts, the spike would remain, though its amplitude would be reduced somewhat.[28]

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[27] At the same time, the Progressives probably sponsored more protests than they otherwise would have because they expected the media to be paying more attention.

[28] All of the protest counts I have presented in this chapter exclude the action type "defiance of segregation without arrest," which proved somewhat difficult to code. If this action type is included, the 1948 spike becomes even more pronounced. This is partly due to articles about Henry Wallace, who insisted on speaking before integrated audiences in localities where rigid segregation was the norm. However, most of the events coded "defiance of segregation without arrest" in 1948 were not sponsored by the Progressives. Most of them involved a traveling display of historic documents called the Freedom Train. At the insistence of the American Heritage Foundation, all of the displays were integrated, and in several instances scheduled tour stops were cancelled because local authorities insisted on enforcing segregation.

Limitations of the New York Times

It is important to recognize the limitations of the *New York Times* as a source of data on anti-racist protest.[29] Prior research has established that the *Times* is biased toward coverage of events that occur in New York City and the Northeast more generally (McCarthy et al. 1996; Myers and Caniglia 2004). This was especially true during the period under study: the *Times* opened its first Southern bureau office in 1947 and hired just one full-time journalist to cover the entire region. While John Popham was sympathetic to black demands, he was also a "go slow" liberal whose refusal to fly in airplanes compromised his reportage (Roberts and Klibanoff 2006). The editors and staff of the *New York Times* harbored political biases that presumably impacted the paper's coverage of Northern protest as well (Davenport 2010).

To compensate for these limitations, future quantitative research should examine data from a wider range of sources, such as the black press (Davenport 2010; O'Kelly 1980; Sampson et al. 2005; Weiner 2009, 2011), leftist press (Davenport 2010; Rohlinger et al. 2012; Swank 2000), labor press (Martin 2005), and campus press (Van Dyke 2003), as well as mainstream sources based in different cities and geographic regions (Davenport 2010; Hagen et al. 2013; Myers and Caniglia 2004; McCarthy et al. 1996; Swank 2000). Several black newspapers are

[29] If the researcher is primarily interested in the impact of protest on national politics, the *New York Times* may be a perfectly legitimate choice, since the *Times* was widely read and discussed by Washington elites. But my primary interest here is the development of the movement itself, not its impact on federal policy.

already available in the Proquest suite, so application of my research strategy to those periodicals is a logical next step for scholars interested in pursuing these issues.[30]

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[30] Of course, the terms that proved most effective for searching the *New York Times* may not be equally effective for searching other sources. For example, unlike the *Times*, black and leftist newspapers in the 1940s routinely used the expressions "Jim Crow," "jimcrow," and "jimcro" to describe discrimination. Nor should it be assumed that the same search terms are applicable to different time periods.

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Chapter 2

Race and the Red Scare in the American Veterans Committee

Introduction

It was nearly midnight on Saturday, June 15, 1946, when a delegate to the first national convention of the American Veterans Committee burst into a crowded meeting room to announce that a restaurant across the street was "pulling a Jim Crow act on two of our members." Jasper Brown of Trenton, New Jersey, and Carolyn Moore of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, both black, had been denied service on the pretext that the crowded tavern was "closed." After voting to suspend the session, scores of delegates marched from the Fort Des Moines Hotel to the Rose Bowl Café, where they quickly formed an impromptu picket line around the establishment, chanting "Jim Crow Must Go!" When police arrived on the scene, AVC leaders Franklin Williams and Oren Root, Jr. insisted that the officers arrest the restaurant's management. At 2 a.m. on Sunday morning, proprietor R. R. Brown was charged with violating Iowa's anti-discrimination statute, and a warrant was issued for the arrest of manager Rufe Abbott. Despite the late hour, the convention delegates felt invigorated. The previous afternoon, they had adopted a constitution that pledged the organization would "strongly and actively oppose…discrimination due to race, religion, color, or sex." As the *Chicago Defender* observed, "Less than six hours after these words were said, the committee had the opportunity to show the nation if they meant them. They did."[31]

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[31] George Eckel, "Moderates Win in AVC Election," *New York Times*, 6/17/46, p. 15; "To the Citizens of Des Moines," *Des Moines Register*, 6/19/46, p. 7; William R. Simms, "AVC Proves During Meet that it Opposes Jim Crow," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Peninsula edition], 6/22/46, p. 6; "AVC Supports Non-Bias Stand," *Chicago Defender*, 6/29/46, p. 2; "Halt Convention Session to Act in Jim Crow Case," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, pp. 11, 16.

The new veteran

Journalists covering the convention were uniformly impressed by the organization's seriousness. Unlike annual gatherings of the American Legion, where drunken brawls and debauchery were the norm, the delegates who assembled in Des Moines drafted resolutions and debated policy late into the night. There was no saluting, flag-waving, or singing of military anthems. AVC members had risked their lives fighting fascism on the battlefield during World War II, and now they pledged to fight for democracy and peace as civilians.

AVC began in early 1943 as little more than a correspondence circle among liberal servicemen, centered around former University of California at Los Angeles student newspaper editor Gilbert Harrison.[32] The group's discussions about the nature of the war and their hopes for the postwar period quickly led to the conclusion that a new organization was needed to represent the views of young, progressive veterans. Hundreds of soldiers expressed interest in joining the

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Moore was the former executive secretary of the Philadelphia NAACP. "They Too Seek an FEPC Ordinance," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 5/28/46, p. 2; "AVC's 'Score' Intolerance at Opening Confab," ibid., 6/18/46, pp. 1, 15. Brown co-chaired the Trenton chapter of the March on Washington Movement. David Lucander, *Winning the War for Democracy: The March on Washington Movement, 1941-1946* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 193.

[32] Harrison was raised in Los Angeles by Jewish parents of modest means. As an undergraduate at UCLA, he campaigned to reverse the suspension of fellow students accused of subversion by the provost. His work with the interfaith University Religious Conference brought him into contact with media executives and prominent liberals, including Eleanor Roosevelt. During his military service, URC staffer Adaline Guenther helped coordinate the correspondence circle that gave birth to AVC. In the early 1950s, Harrison became the editor of the *New Republic*, a position he held for two decades. Gilbert Harrison, *Parts of a Past* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2009).

fledgling outfit, which officially became known as the American Veterans Committee in the summer of 1944.[33]

As their stateside spokesman, AVC recruited Charles Bolte, a Dartmouth graduate who had lost a leg fighting the Germans at El Alamein. Described by one journalist as "Ahab in seersucker," Bolte helped popularize AVC through his book *The New Veteran,* which combined a compelling autobiographical sketch with the broad outlines of a program for achieving "a more democratic and prosperous America and a more stable world."[34]

Among the celebrities and notables who joined AVC in its early years were actors Burt Lancaster, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Kenneth MacKenna, Tyrone Power, Burgess Meredith, and Ronald Reagan; filmmakers William Wyler, John Huston, and Pare Lorentz; writers Merle Miller, John Hersey, E. J. Kahn, Richard Tregaskis, Herbert Agar, and Thornton Wilder; cartoonist Bill Mauldin; war heroes Audie Murphy, Francis X. Burke, Gen. "Hap" Arnold, and Col. Evans Carlson; boxers Buddy Baer and Barney Ross; businessman and philanthropist John Hay Whitney; politicians Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Jacob Javits, Harold Stassen, Leverett Saltonstall, Warren Magnusson, G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams, Paul Dever, and William O'Dwyer; U.S. Secretary of the Interior Julius Klug; and economists Robert Nathan and Paul Douglas.[35]

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[33] "Time Table of AVC," in *American Veterans Committee Constitutional Convention* program, 6/14-16/46, box 167, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University.

[34] Croswell Bowen, "Ahab in Seersucker," *PM*, 9/8/46, pp. 13-17; Charles Bolte, *The New Veteran* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945), p. 94; see also Naomi Jolles, "World War II Veterans' Spokesman," *New York Post*, 7/27/45, Magazine and Comic Section, p. 1; Charles Bolte, "The New Veteran," *Life*, 12/10/45, pp. 57-8, 60, 63-4, 66.

[35] American Veterans Committee, *He Has Something To Brag About*, undated [circa 1946], carton 2, folder 16, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records,

Overview of chapter

This chapter consists of two main parts. In the first, I demonstrate that the American Veterans Committee made significant contributions to the black freedom struggle in both the North and South during the mid-to-late 1940s. In the second, I recount how AVC was crippled by factionalism during the postwar red scare. In addition to rectifying a lacuna in the historical literature on African-American politics,[36] this case study provides new evidence in support of the "lost opportunity thesis."

Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; American Veterans Committee, *10 Questions and Answers on AVC*, undated [circa 1946], ibid.; American Veterans Committee, *And Then the Flame Will Spread*, undated [circa 1946], carton 2, folder 17, ibid.; Ronald Schiller, "Seeing Things: 1956," *Mademoiselle*, 10/46, pp. 188-9, 297-300; Milton Luban, untitled column, *AVC News* [Los Angeles Area Council], 5/9/47, p. 3; American Veterans Committee, *Nothing New Under the Sun?*, undated [circa 1949], box 1, folder 36, Julius Bernstein papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

[36] Few historians have examined AVC's anti-racist activism during the 1940s in any detail. On the Atlanta chapter, see Jennifer E. Brooks, *Defining the Peace: Race, World War Two Veterans, and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 37-57. On the Jackson, Mississippi chapter, see Kenneth H. Williams, "Mississippi and the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1954" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1985), Ch. 4. Though his evidence is largely impressionistic, John Egerton rightly places AVC in the thick of Southern postwar ferment in *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). On AVC and race in the 1950s, see Peter Darr Hoefer, "A David Against Goliath: The American Veterans Committee's Challenge to the American Legion in the 1950s" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Univesity of Maryland at College Park, 2010), Ch. 4 and *passim*; and the Epilogue below.

Overviews of AVC history that address race in passing include Robert Francis Saxe, *Settling Down: World War II Veterans' Challenge to the Postwar Consensus* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), Ch. 4; Anastasia Mann, "All For One, But Most For Some: Veteran Politics And The Shaping Of The Welfare State During The World War II Era" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 2003), Ch. 6; Robert L. Tyler, "The American Veterans Committee: Out of a Hot War and into the Cold," *American Quarterly* 18(3)(1966), pp. 419-436; John P. Roche, "A Study in Infiltration: The Communists in the American Veterans Committee, 1945-49," undated typescript [circa 1959], copy in author's possession. A shorter, earlier draft of the

AVC tackled a wide range of issues, many of which receive only passing mention in what follows. I give short shrift to the organization's efforts to redress housing shortages and skyrocketing consumer prices; support for labor unions; and positions on international affairs. I have little to say about the group's gender policies and practices.[37] And my discussion of race focuses primarily on African-Americans, largely ignoring AVC's anti-discrimination campaigns on behalf of Asian-Americans, Latinos, and Jews.[38]

Roche typescript can be found in the Adam Yarmolinsky papers, box 15, folder "American Veterans Committee," John F. Kennedy Library, Boston.

[37] Female veterans were eligible to join AVC, and non-veteran wives of male members were encouraged to form auxiliaries. Though women were severely under-represented on national leadership bodies, they frequently served as local officers, and in a handful of cases they were elected chapter chairpersons. *AVC Bulletin*, 9/47, p. 12 photo; "Roz Gutman Heads Chapt.," *AVC Focus* [Chicago Area Council], 7/21/48, p. 2. The AVC national newsletter frequently featured photos of swimsuit models, which prompted occasional criticism from members. An Interested Member, "Nix on Cheesecake," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/1/46, p. 5. The group also sponsored local and national beauty contests, on which more below. On AVC and gender, see also Saxe (2007), pp. 132-5.

[38] On Asian-Americans, see e.g. "Chapter Activities: San Francisco," *The Bulletin of the American Veterans Committee*, 11/1/45, p. 4; "AVC Action Secures Reversal of Navy Policy Barring Service by Nisei," *The Bulletin of the American Veterans Committee,* 12/1/45, pp. 1, 4; "Chapter Activities: San Diego," *The Bulletin of the American Veterans Committee*, 12/1/45, p. 3; "AVC Action Lifts Restriction on Orientals in Hawaii," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/15/46, p. 2; Samuel Unger, "Build AVC by Stress on Local Problems," *AVC Bulletin*, 9/15/46, p. 3; "Workers, Vets Fight Ban on Chinese Bowler," *Daily Worker*, 1/24/47, p. 10; "'Slap the Jap' Boomerangs," *AVC Focus* [Chicago Area Council] 11/19/47, p. 4; and the section on housing below.

On Jews, see e.g. "Veterans Picket News Advertisers," *People's Voice* [New York], 12/22/45, p. 9; "300 at City Hall Demand Ouster of Timone, Quinn," *Daily Worker*, 3/15/46, p. 12; "Glencoe Holds Mass Protest on Intolerance," *Chicago Tribune*, 7/18/46, p. 4; and the sections on popular culture and mob violence below.

On Latinos, see e.g. *The Second National Convention of the American Veterans Committee at Milwaukee Auditorium, Schroeder Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 19-22, 1947, Volume 1, Workshop Session, Thursday, June 19th*, pp. 82-4, 229-232, box 97, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records; Luis Leobardo Arroyo, "Chicano Participation in Organized Labor: The CIO in Los Angeles, 1938-1950. An Extended Research Note," *Aztlán* 6(2)(1975), pp. 277-303; "UT Clubs Commend Action Against Race Discrimination," *Big Spring [Texas] Herald*, 8/24/47, p. 7; "Student Groups Tell Jester School Segregation Illegal," *Abilene [Texas] Reporter-News*,

"We Fight for What We Fought For":
The American Veterans Committee and the Black Freedom Struggle

Unlike the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which confined African-Americans to segregated posts in some states and barred them from membership in others, AVC welcomed blacks into its ranks. Indeed AVC was probably the first majority-white veterans' organization in the United States to explicitly ban discriminatory practices by its local units.[39] If a group of whites sought to form the first AVC chapter in a locality, they were required to meet in non-exclusionary spaces, actively recruit black members, and make regular reports on their progress to avoid revocation of their charter by the national office.[40]

In localities where segregation was rigidly enforced, black and white veterans sometimes formed separate chapters, in violation of national policy. However, these chapters often held joint meetings in black churches or neighborhood centers. In Deep South cities such as Jackson, Mississippi, where no white veterans were willing to join the organization, *de facto* all-black chapters were formed.[41] Integrated chapters were established in Atlanta, Austin, Greensboro,

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10/3/47, p. 3; "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 12/47, p. 6; Tom Green, "Dr. Sanchez Flays Latin Segregation," *Laredo [Texas] Times*, 12/1/47, pp. 1-2; Carl Allsup, *The American GI Forum* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 83.

[39] The largest organization of Civil War veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic, had many integrated units, but also tolerated posts that barred blacks. Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

[40] Gilbert Harrison to All Southern Chapters, 8/1/46, in American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records, carton 1, folder 27.

[41] National Planning Committee minutes, 11/9/46, pp. 158-60, box 101, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records; National Planning Committee minutes, 11/10/46, pp. 1-4, 55-60, box 101, folder 2, ibid.; Wesley R. Brazier to George S. Mitchell, 1/26/47, Southern Regional Council papers, VII-5, reel 188; Wesley R. Brazier to George S. Mitchell, 2/15/47, ibid.; "Calendar," *AVC Sea Breeze* [Southeastern Florida Area Council], 8/47, p. 1; Jack O'Dell interviews by author, 8/18/2009 and 8/25/2009, recordings in author's possession; James L. Hicks, "AVC Reaffirms Policy, No Jim Crow Chapters," *Louisiana Weekly*, 7/19/47, p. 3;

Louisville, Memphis, Raleigh, Richmond, San Antonio, and other Southern cities. When AVC members in Memphis voted unanimously to form an integrated chapter, the *Pittsburgh Courier* described their decision as "[o]ne of the most significant moves in the southland."[42]

In the summer of 1947, when AVC was near the height of its strength, over one hundred black delegates attended its second national convention, and two blacks were elected to serve on the National Planning Committee, the organization's highest leadership body.[43] Blacks were

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"Gordon Denies Dance Statement," *Miami [Fla.] Daily News*, 12/24/48, p. B1; Romona Lowe, "Miami," *Chicago Defender*, 1/22/49, p. 13.

[42] On Atlanta, see Brooks (2004), pp. 37-57. On Austin, see Jewel M. Tatum to George S. Mitchell, 8/2/46, Southern Regional Council papers, VII-13, reel 188; Jewel M. Tatum to Horace Bohannon, 8/2/46, ibid. On Greensboro, see A. A. Morisey, "Veterans Group Holds to Tenets of Democracy," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [North Carolina 4 Star edition], 7/27/46, p. 13; "Editor Raps Sovereignty at AVC Meet," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Peninsula edition], 10/12/46, p. 7. On Louisville, see "AMVET Exec. Resigns Over Jimcro Issue," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 6/29/46, p. 3. On Memphis, see Bob and Harriet Himmaugh, "Memphis Veterans Forms Negro-White Vets Group," *Daily Worker*, 8/9/46, p. 6; "AVC Votes to Admit Negroes," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8/17/46, p. 19; Barney Taylor, "Dixie AVC Chapters Dent Jim Crowism," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/1/47, p. 3. On Raleigh, see C. D. Halliburton, "Tarheel Week," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 8/31/46, p. 9. On Richmond, see Marvin Caplan, *Farther Along: A Civil Rights Memoir* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), pp. 51-2; Oliver W. Hill, Sr., *The Big Bang:* Brown vs. Board of Education, *and Beyond: The Autobiography of Oliver W. Hill, Sr.*, edited by Jonathan K. Stubbs (Winter Park, FL: FOUR-G Publishers, Inc., 2000), p. 224; Emory T. Judy, "Report to Dr. George Mitchell," 8/11/46, Southern Regional Council papers, VII-10, reel 188. On San Antonio, see "The American Veterans Committee," *San Antonio Register*, 4/26/46, p. 4.

[43] Pauline R. Coggs, "AVC Names 2 Negroes to Nat'l Planning Committee," *Louisiana Weekly*, 7/5/47, p. 9.

In the months leading up to the first AVC national convention in June 1946, one African-American served on the provisional National Planning Committee (Grant Reynolds). At the first convention, one of the twenty-four NPC members elected (4.2%) was African-American (Franklin Williams). At the second convention in June 1947, two of the twenty-four NPC members elected (8.3%) were African-American (Ted Coggs and Ulysses Grant Lee, Jr.). At the third convention in November 1948, one of the twenty-four NPC members elected (4.2%) was African-American (William Ming, Jr.). These figures exclude the non-voting representatives of the women's auxiliaries.

severely under-represented on AVC's small paid organizing staff, however.[44] In the South, the group benefited from the support of the Southern Regional Council, whose African-American field staff encouraged black veterans join AVC.[45]

AVC supported the creation of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission, immediate desegregation of the armed forces, and legislation banning racial discrimination in housing and education. "Needless to say, the Negro veteran has been seeking since World War I for an organization such as the AVC," wrote NAACP executive secretary Walter White in early 1946. "It is obvious from the failure of other veterans' organizations to take stands on these controversial issues that they do not offer to this large group of veterans the type of leadership that they are seeking."[46] Among the prominent African-Americans who joined AVC during this period were journalists Jimmie Hicks, William Gordon, and Garth Reeves; minister Grant Reynolds; politician and Olympic medalist Ralph Metcalfe; attorneys Franklin Williams, Robert L. Carter, Oliver W. Hill, and William Ming, Jr.; and scholar Ulysses G. Lee, Jr.[47]

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[44] The most prominent African-American on the AVC payroll during this period was attorney Robert L. Carter, who took a year's leave from his job at the NAACP in early October 1947 to serve as AVC Director of Veterans Affairs. "Carter Named Director of Vet Affairs," *AVC Bulletin*, 9/47, p. 1. As Carter later recalled, "The organization, unfortunately, was so torn by ideological strife that the hoped-for effective vehicle of national influence and power to meet the needs of the new veterans was never realized." Robert L. Carter, *A Matter of Law: A Memoir of Struggle in the Cause of Equal Rights* (New York: New Press, 2005), p. 73.

[45] Memorandum from George S. Mitchell to Field Agents, 4/12/46, Southern Regional Council papers, VII-4, reel 188; Marcus H. Gunter to George S. Mitchell, 4/21/46, ibid., VII-6, reel 188; Marcus H. Gunter to Dear Dr. [George S.] Mitchell, undated [circa 4/46], ibid.

[46] Walter White, "NAACP Applauds AVC Stand on Bills," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/1/46, p. 3; see also James L. Hicks, "Veteran's Whirl: Which Way Joe," *Jackson [Miss.] Advocate*, 10/12/46, p. 4.

[47] On Hicks, see "Hicks Gets Award," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 6/47, p. 1. On Gordon, see William Gordon, "Along the Avenue," *Atlanta World*, 1/3/47, p. 4. On Reeves, see Garth C. Reeves, Sr. interview by author, 1/6/2009, notes in author's possession. On Reynolds, see "Who's Who On NPC," *AVC Bulletin*, 2/1/46, pp. 3, 5; and note

As we shall see, individual chapters varied in their militancy on racial issues, and the majority of the organization's national leadership favored litigation and lobbying over direct action. In this respect, AVC resembled organizations such as the NAACP and Congress of Industrial Organizations, which nevertheless made major contributions to the anti-racist struggles of the period.

Public accommodations

AVC chapters engaged in spirited campaigns to desegregate local restaurants, parks, hotels, theaters, libraries, hospitals, and barber shops. Though concentrated mainly in the North, many of these campaigns succeeded in integrating public accommodations that had previously segregated African-Americans or excluded them altogether.

Restaurants

AVC members at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign picketed Steak 'n' Shake and other restaurants near campus in the summer of 1946, carrying signs that read "We Fought Together, Why Not Eat Together?" The protests were organized by the umbrella Student-Community Interracial Committee, co-chaired by campus AVC leader Linzey Jones.[48] The AVC

43 above. On Carter, see note 44 above. On Hill, see Hill (2000), p. 224. On Ming, see notes 43 above and 234 below. On Lee, see "Ulysses Lee," in *The National Independent Progressives Support the Winning Team!!*, box 5, folder "American Veterans Committee, 1944-1955," Gilbert A. Harrison papers, Library of Congress; and note 43 above. On Metcalfe, see Pauline R. Coggs, "AVC Names 2 Negroes to Nat'l Planning Committee," *Louisiana Weekly*, 7/5/47, p. 9; Business and Professional Men's Chapter to Charles G. Bolte, 5/21/47, box 2, folder 7, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records; Lloyd General, "Alderman Metcalfe Never Abandons Champion's Role," *Chicago Defender*, 2/19/63, pp. 9, 18. Boxer Ezzard Charles joined AVC in late 1950. "Champ Joins AVC," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/50, p. 1.

[48] "College Students Fight Jim Crow," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 6/22/46, p. 14.

chapter in Richmond, California pressured a local restaurant to remove a whites-only sign from its window.[49] In Bloomington, Indiana, AVC and the NAACP launched a successful campaign to integrate downtown restaurants. After interracial groups of testers were denied service, they filed lawsuits against the proprietors, which brought twelve restaurants to the bargaining table in the fall of 1947.[50] Interracial testers from AVC and several CIO unions dined in several Indianapolis restaurants that were reputed to turn blacks away.[51] At the University of Wisconsin at Madison, AVC launched a boycott of the Three Bells tavern after chapter leader Ted Coggs, a law student at the university, was refused service in the summer of 1947. Coggs also sued the bartender, who was fined for violating a state anti-discrimination law.[52] In the spring of 1948, the Greenwich Village AVC distributed 500 posters condemning discrimination to local restaurants and urged the public not to patronize eateries that failed to display them. The campaign was supported by the Civil Rights Congress, Tenants and Consumers Council, American Jewish Congress, and

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[49] "Richmond Wins Racial Fight," *AVC Newsletter* [California State Council], 11/46, p. 4.

[50] J. Arnold Feldman, "Near Campus Restaurants Opened for Negroes," American Veterans Committee Bloomington, Indiana chapter scrapbook, Office of University Archives and Records Management, Indiana University, Bloomington; Telegram from Marvin J. Tish to H. B. Wells, 11/21/46, box 414, folder "Negro, 1946-1947," Indiana University President's Office records, ibid.; Meeting minutes, 10/9/47, box 1, folder "Minutes, Agendas and Reports, 1946-1947," Indiana University Board of Aeons records, ibid.

[51] Charles S. Preston, "Eating Houses' Jimcrow Drive Continued Over City by CIO," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 7/27/46, First Section, pp. 1, 2.

[52] "Tavern Man Fined; Denied Beer to Negro," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 8/5/47, p. 5; "Campus AVC Asks Students to Boycott Three Bells Tavern," *Summer Cardinal* [University of Wisconsin at Madison], 8/6/47, p. 1; "Just a Little Thing…," undated flier [circa 8/6/47], University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives, series 19/2/6-5, box 1, folder "American Veterans Committee." Coggs had recently been elected to the AVC National Planning Committee (see note 43 above). He went on to serve as president of the Wisconsin NAACP and the National Bar Association. "Heart Attack Claims Noted Milwaukee Attorney," *Jet*, 6/27/68, p. 9.

other organizations.[53] Leaders of AVC and the NAACP in Washington, D.C. negotiated an end to segregation in the cafeteria at the city zoo after interracial groups of AVC members were repeatedly denied service.[54]

Theaters

In Washington, D.C., AVC joined forces with the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and Actors Equity in a campaign to integrate George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium, which refused to admit blacks. AVC members at Howard University repeatedly tried to purchase tickets, SCHW members picketed performances, and the AVC distributed 25,000 brochures attacking the theater's policy. Despite GWU administrators' threat to expel campus AVC leader Don Rothenberg, the campaign succeeded in overturning the university's official segregation policy in early 1947.[55]

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[53] "Anti-Bias Drive Opens," *New York Times*, 5/1/48, p. 6.

[54] Robert L. Taylor, "Zoo Cafe Lifts Color Barrier," *Pittsburgh Courier* [Washington edition], 1/15/49, p. 1.

[55] "Pickets Mar Bow of Bergman Play," *New York Times*, 10/30/46, p. 27; "30 War Veterans Barred at Lisner," *Washington Afro-American*, 10/26/46, pp. 1, 7; "Lisner Continues to Draw Color Bar," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 11/9/46, p. 15; "AVC Refuses GWU 'Jim Crow' Benefit," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 11/46, pp. 1, 2; James L. Hicks, "American Vets Declare War on Racial Supremacy Idea," *Atlanta World*, 11/14/46, p. 3; Greater Washington Area Council of the American Veterans Committee, *Held Over Discrimination!*, undated pamphlet [circa winter 1946-47], box 1, folder 23, Lisner Auditorium records, Series 4, Special Collections Research Center, The George Washington University; "Washington U. AVC Leaders Exonerated," *Atlanta World*, 11/26/46, p. 6; "Excerpt from Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 2/13/47," box 1, folder 26, Lisner Auditorium records, Series 4; *The Second National Convention of the American Veterans Committee at Milwaukee Auditorium, Workshop Session, Thursday, June 19th*, pp. 116-119, box 97, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records; Andrew Novak, "The Desegregation of George Washington University and the District of Columbia in Transition, 1946-1954," *Washington History* 24(1)(2012), pp. 31-4.

In Topeka, chapter chairman Philip Burton was prevented from entering a theater and filed a lawsuit claiming the owner had violated a Kansas law barring discrimination in city-licensed places of entertainment. Local proprietors lobbied the city commission for the right to self-license and thereby circumvent the state law. Working with the local NAACP, the Topeka AVC and its women's auxiliary launched a petition drive and publicity campaign that exposed and defeated the scheme.[56]

Hospitals

The University of Chicago AVC led a student strike in December 1947 to protest segregation at the university's hospitals and to demand the admission of blacks to the medical school. Approximately 1,200 students participated in the walkout, which was endorsed by two dozen student organizations. The university stonewalled for two years, until the students began meeting with donors and charitable foundations.[57] The AVC chapter in Montclair, New Jersey convinced Mountainside Hospital to place black doctors on its courtesy staff for the first time by circulating a report "in which the lack of hospital facilities afforded Negro physicians in

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[56] "Topeka AVC Wins Fight on 'Jim Crow,'" *AVC Bulletin*, 10/47, p. 2.

[57] Vernon Jarrett, "U. of C. Medical Bias Under Fire," *Chicago Defender*, 12/6/47, p. 9; "U. of C. Student Walkout Sparks Move to End Race Discrimination," *AVC Focus* [Chicago Area Council], 12/17/47, pp. 1, 4; *Chicago Defender*, 12/20/47, p. 18 photo; "Krueger Blasts Racism at 'Liberal' Chicago U.," *Socialist Call*, 12/26/47, pp. 1, 7; "2 Agencies Bare Chicago U. Racism," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 2/14/48, p. 12; H. Jack Geiger, "Contesting Racism and Innovating Community Health Centers: Approaches on Two Continents," in *Comrades in Health: U.S. Health Internationalists, Abroad and at Home*, edited by Anne-Emanuelle Birn and Theodore M. Brown (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), pp. 107-8; H. Jack Geiger, "The Unsteady March," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48(1)(2005), pp. 2-3.

Montclair was related, with telling effect, to the health statistics for Negroes."[58] In Washington, D.C., AVC and other organizations compiled a similar report, which they presented to the President's Committee on Civil Rights.[59] AVC chapters in the Los Angeles area helped raise funds to launch West View Hospital, the first integrated private hospital in the city.[60]

Hotels

In Miami, Florida, AVC "broke precedent" when it held an integrated dinner at the Alcazar Hotel in early 1947. "Hotel guests couldn't believe their eyes, but there were no complaints," according to one press account.[61] In Detroit, AVC held the first integrated dance at the Barlum Hotel after obtaining a court injunction against the hotel's management.[62] Hotels in Willimantic agreed to stop discriminating against blacks after the AVC chapter at the University of Connecticut filed a complaint with the state Inter-racial Commission.[63]

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[58] "Medicine in the News: Montclair, N.J., Hospital Admits Negro Physicians to Courtesy Staff," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 40(3)(May 1948), p. 133.

[59] "Charges Prejudice Rampant in Washington Hospitals," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7/5/47, p. 5.

[60] "Interracial Medical Institution," *California Eagle*, 3/6/47, p. 9; "Chapter Notes," *AVC News* [Los Angeles Area Council], 5/16/47, p. 4.

[61] "Miami Breaks Precedent, Negroes, Whites Dine Together," 3/4/47, folder "Negroes, 1947," Federated Press Records: American Labor Journalism in the Mid-Twentieth Century, Series 1, reel 96; "AVC to Meet at Cory Church Now," *Cleveland Call and Post*, 3/29/47, p. 14B.

[62] "Mich. Vets Fight Jimcrow at Convention Hall," *Daily Worker*, Sept. 4, 1946, p. 8; William Allan, "Michigan AVC Wins Ban on Hotel Jimcrow," *Daily Worker*, 9/10/46, p. 4.

[63] "ACV [sic] Investigates Racial Prejudice," *Connecticut Campus* [Storrs, Ct.], 2/14/47, p. 1.

Parks and beaches

In Los Angeles, the NAACP, AVC, CIO, Communist Party, and Jewish People's Fraternal Order picketed Bimini Baths in the spring of 1946, demanding equal access for beachgoers of all races.[64] That same year, AVC members in Cleveland helped picket Euclid Beach Park after police ejected racially-mixed groups from the privately-owned amusement park and dance hall. A wide range of organizations testified in favor of integration at packed public hearings, which persuaded the Cleveland city council to pass a non-discrimination ordinance in early 1947.[65] AVC cracked the color line at Tulsa's public parks in the summer of 1949 when officials finally acceded to the chapter's requests to hold interracial meetings at the Owen Park and Central Park field houses.[66]

Sociologist Lewis Killian recalled an unsuccessful attempt by his AVC chapter in Ames, Iowa "to get the operators of a privately owned swimming lake on the edge of town to admit black patrons. Our representatives approached the owners of the 'club' and got one of the standard excuses for discrimination: 'We don't have anything against them, but our white customers wouldn't stand for it.'" To prove the owners wrong, the chapter began "tramping the streets with a petition asking whites to state that they would have no objection to having blacks

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[64] "Mass Demonstration," *California Eagle*, 5/30/46, p. 1.

[65] "Interracial Picket Line Protests Discrimination at Euclid Beach," *Cleveland Call and Post*, 9/7/46, p. 3A; "Beach Policeman to Face Jury on September 30th," ibid., 9/14/46, pp. 1A, 12A; "Civil Rights: Cleveland, Ohio," *A Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations* 4(3)(Oct. 1946), pp. 70-1; Bob Williams, "Civic Leaders Support Park Licensing Ordinance," *Cleveland Call and Post*, 11/23/46, pp. 1A, 3A; Frank Hashmall, "A Pattern for Progress," *Youth* [American Youth for Democracy], 6/47, pp. 28, 30.

[66] LCP [Lou C. Pakiser], "AVC Decisions on Jim Crow Again," *AVC News* [Tulsa Chapter #1], 7/19/49, p. 3.

sharing the town's only swimming hole." The owners refused to change their policy, and the campaign fizzled. [67]

Libraries

The AVC chapter in Springfield, Missouri "decided they had had enough" of segregation in the city's public libraries, where blacks had to wait outside while librarians retrieved books for them. The chapter spearheaded a coalition of labor, civic, and religious groups that convinced town officials to let blacks browse the stacks in the same manner as white patrons.[68]

Clubhouses

AVC chapters and area councils established integrated clubhouses in a number of cities where interracial meeting spaces and recreational facilities were rare or non-existent, including Washington, D.C.; Topeka, Kansas; Miami Beach, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Tampa, Florida; and Berkeley, California.[69] The grand opening of the AVC clubhouse in the District of Columbia was front-page news in the *Washington Afro-American*, which described the facility as

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[67] Lewis M. Killian, *Black and White: Reflections of a White Southern Sociologist* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), p. 40.

[68] "Springfield, MO Chapter Wins Fight for Tolerance," *Plainsman* [AVC West Central Region], 10/15/46, pp. 1, 2.

[69] "Miami Beach Chapter," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/49, p. 15; James M. Crawford, "Report on AVC Organizational Drive in the Southeastern United States from October 1, 1947 to February 29, 1948," p. 3, carton 1, folder 31, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; Tim Leary, "AVC Clubhouse News," *American Veterans Chronicle* [East Bay Area Council], 11/47, p. 2. Berkeley AVC leader Timothy Leary would later become the infamous LSD guru. Timothy Leary, *Flashbacks: An Autobiography* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1983), p. 151.

the "first and only…of its kind in the nation's capital."[70] When the AVC chapter in Topeka, Kansas began renovating a downtown building for its clubhouse, the American Legion threatened to boycott a bar owned by the same landlord. The chapter attracted "capacity crowds" to its weekend parties at the new space. "These AVC affairs are the only ones of their kind in Topeka, where racial lines break down and Negroes, Mexicans, and whites mix socially," reported one member.[71]

Barber shops

The AVC chapter in Ann Arbor, Michigan endorsed a boycott of exclusionary barbershops called by the campus Inter-Racial Association in the spring 1948.[72] At Pennsylvania State University, AVC helped found the Council on Racial Equality, which set up the first barbershop serving students of all races in 1949. The chapter had been divided over whether to back a boycott of all-white shops called by the NAACP the previous year.[73] In Madison, Wisconsin, AVC helped publicize a case in which a white barber avoided cutting a black

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[70] "AVC's New Clubhouse Free from Segregation," *Washington Afro-American*, 6/12/48, p. 1. Before the clubhouse was opened, the Greater Washington Area Council held interracial social events such as their annual dance at venues in black neighborhoods. "More Than 300 at Area Dance," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 11/46, p. 7.

[71] "More Success Stories," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/1/47, p. 2; *The Second National Convention of the American Veterans Committee at Milwaukee Auditorium, Workshop Session, Thursday, June 19th*, pp. 282-5, box 97, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records.

[72] Marvin Shaw, "Student Life," *New Foundations* [Labor Youth League] (Spring 1948), pp. 142-5.

[73] "CORE Holds Special Meeting to Discuss New Barber Shop" *Daily Collegian* [Pennsylvania State University], 3/17/48, p. 1; Leo Troy, "A Repudiation," ibid., 12/15/48, p. 2; "Still Fighting," ibid., 3/23/49, p. 2; "Non-Racial Barbershop Opens," ibid., 9/30/49, p. 1.

minister's hair by quoting him a massively inflated price. The minister filed a lawsuit, but a jury found the barber not guilty of racial discrimination.[74]

Department stores

In late 1947, the New Orleans NAACP received complaints that four downtown department stores were no longer allowing black women to try on hats and other garments. The branch quickly established a Consumers League to coordinate a boycott of the stores, which was endorsed by the local CIO council, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and Tulane University AVC chapter. Delegations from the Consumers League met with store managers, and customers were urged to close their accounts. City officials broke the boycott by threatening to arrest picketers.[75]

Transportation

On the way to the second national AVC convention in 1947, black and white delegates from Miami, Florida rode together in the black section of the train. To black members like Jack O'Dell, this display of solidarity by the white delegates "confirmed that we had made the right choice in joining the AVC rather than the American Legion or some of them other groups."[76]

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[74] Daniel T. Sullivan, "A $3.00 Haircut," *The Crisis* (Sept. 1946), p. 271; Beatrice Schwartz, "The Case of the $3 Haircut," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 7/19/46, p. 4; Norris E. Maloney, untitled letter, ibid., 7/19/46, p. 4; "Barber Wins $3 Haircut Case," ibid., 10/21/47, p. 1.

[75] Dillard Oakes, "Plan Huge Picketline Boycott of 4 Stores," 12/26/47, folder "Negroes, 1947," Federated Press Records, Series 1, reel 96; Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915–1972* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1995), p. 156.

[76] "A Burnside Chat," 6/21/47, box 1, folder 37, Julius Bernstein papers; Jack O'Dell interview by author, 8/18/2009, recording in author's possession.

When the Journey of Reconciliation – a freedom ride through the upper South organized by the Congress of Racial of Equality in 1947 – passed through Chapel Hill, North Carolina, racists threatened to burn down the home of Rev. Charles Jones after he bailed the CORE activists out of jail. Police advised Jones to leave town for a few days, so Chapel Hill AVC vice chairman and Communist Party member Junius Scales organized a group of veterans to guard the minister's property.[77]

As with other issues, AVC employed a mix of conventional and direct action tactics to attack segregated transportation. Members of the Richmond, Virginia AVC testified in favor of proposed legislation to ban segregation in public transportation and places of assembly in 1948. Chapter officer and NAACP attorney Oliver W. Hill served as vice-chairman of the Virginia Civil Rights Organization, a coalition of organizations that sponsored the doomed bills.[78] The following year, the AVC national office filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the case *Henderson v. United States*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that segregated dining cars were illegal on the nation's railways.[79]

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[77] Junius Scales and Richard Nickson, *Cause at Heart: A Former Communist Remembers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), pp. 276-7; Mickey Friedman, *A Red Family: Junius, Gladys, and Barbara Scales* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 47; "AVC Re-Elects Rouzie as Head," *Daily Tar Heel* [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill], 4/17/47, p. 1; Ben Sexton, "Race Incidents Arise After Bus Seating Arrests," ibid., 4/15/47, pp. 1, 3; Sigsbee Miller, "Race Case May Go to United States Supreme Court," ibid., 4/18/47, p. 1. Compare the account in Conrad J. Lynn, *There is a Fountain: The Autobiography of Conrad Lynn* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1979), p. 112.

[78] "Segregation Bills Killed," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Home edition], 3/6/48, pp. 1, 2.

[79] "Court Given AVC Line on Segregation," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/49, p.3. A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records.

General legislation

AVC lobbied successfully for the passage of legislation barring discrimination in public accommodations and public housing in the state of Connecticut in 1949.[80] AVC also pushed for legislation to crack down on discrimination by Connecticut's private colleges and universities, but met with stiff opposition from representatives of Yale, Wesleyan, and other schools.[81]

Voting rights

AVC chapters were not allowed to endorse candidates for public office, which would have jeopardized the organization's accreditation with the Veterans Administration. But chapters routinely participated in voter registration campaigns and get-out-the-vote drives. In the South, much of this activity was aimed at African-Americans.[82] In Georgia and Florida, AVC joined with other organizations to defeat legislation intended to circumvent the Supreme Court's ban on all-white primary elections.[83] In Bladen County, North Carolina, where blacks had been

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[80] "Bowles Signs Bill Barring Discrimination," *AVC Bulletin*, 8-9/49, p. 3.

[81] "Colleges Deny All Charges of Race Bias," *Hartford Courant*, 4/28/49, pp. 1, 2; John P. Chandler, "Let the Facts Speak," ibid., 5/7/49, p. 8.

[82] On Norfolk, see "Elks Asks to Boost Voting in Tidewater," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 4/12/47, p. 8; "Vote Registration Records Fall," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Peninsula edition], 5/10/47, pp. 1, 2. On New Orleans, see "War Vets to Conduct Registration Drive," *Louisiana Weekly*, 4/26/47, p. 1; ibid., 8/30/47, p. 1 photo; "AVC Organizes Mobile Registat'n Unit to Aid Voters," ibid., 11/22/47, p. 1. On Atlanta, see "Organizations Aid Registration Drive," *Atlanta World*, 2/29/48, p. 1.

[83] Charles F. Hesser, "AVC and CIO United Against Measure," *Miami Daily News*, 1/26/47, p. B9; "Floridians Form Battlelines to Defeat 'White Primary' Proposal," *Atlanta World*, 3/26/47, pp. 1, 6.

disenfranchised since the late 19th century, AVC and the NAACP registered hundreds of voters in 1948.[84]

The AVC chapter in Jackson, Mississippi, which claimed over 400 members – all of them black – made an especially significant contribution to the postwar struggle for voting rights. In the summer of 1946, Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo publicly urged whites to use "any means" to prevent blacks from participating in the state primary elections. Members of the Jackson AVC responded to this blatant intimidation by defiantly casting their ballots at a polling station located on the front porch of Bilbo's home.[85] Under pressure from a national "Oust Bilbo" campaign, the U.S. Senate called public hearings in Jackson that December to investigate allegations that "The Man" had violated the voting rights of Mississippi's black citizens.[86]

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[84] "North Carolina Delegates Attend Veterans Convention," *Norfolk Journal & Guide* [National edition], 12/11/48, p. 3; *The Third Annual National Convention, American Veterans Committee, November 25-28, 1948, Cleveland Auditorium, Cleveland, Ohio,* pp. 641-3, box 98, folder 5, American Veterans Committee records; Bill Radtke and Miriam McHugh, "Report from North Carolina," *AVC Fifth National Convention* program, 5/31/51 - 6/3/51, pp. 26, 43, box 167, folder 5, American Veterans Committee records. The chapter also conducted a drive to inform black veterans about their eligibility for terminal leave pay. James M. Crawford, "Report on AVC Organizational Drive in the Southeastern United States from October 1, 1947 to February 29, 1948," pp. 2-3, carton 1, folder 31, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records.

Bladenboro AVC chairman Rev. Jim Bellamy served on the executive board of the Bladen County NAACP during the late 1940s and was elected president of the branch in the mid-1950s. John B. Howell to Gloster B. Current, 11/30/49, box II:C134, folder 6, NAACP records, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Gloster B. Current to James C. Bellamy, 9/20/54, ibid. Bladen County also experienced intense labor strife during the mid-to-late 1940s, on which see William P. Jones, "'Simple Truths of Democracy': African Americans and Organized Labor in the Post-World War II South," in *The Black Worker: Race, Labor, and Civil Rights since Emancipation*, edited by Eric Arnesen (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), pp. 255-65.

[85] "Veterans Cast Ballots on Bilbo's Porch," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 7/13/46, p. 1, 2; John N. Popham, "Mississippi Negro Guided by Ex-GI's," *New York Times*, 2/8/47, p. 8.

[86] The Oust Bilbo campaign was supported by an array of organizations, including the Civil Rights Congress, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and AVC chapters in New York and

Working in collaboration with the NAACP and the Mississippi Progressive Voters League, the Jackson AVC helped recruit African-American veterans from across the state to testify against Bilbo.[87] On the first day of the hearings, more than 200 AVC members, wearing their military uniforms, marched double-file through the streets of Jackson to the courthouse.[88] Several AVC members testified against Bilbo, including star witness Etoy Fletcher, who recounted how whites had flogged him with a metal cable when he tried to register in Rankin County.[89] "This was no

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Washington, D.C. "Form Committee to Oust Bilbo," *Daily Worker*, 11/11/46, p. 5; "Vets Committee Seek Bilbo Ouster," *Jackson* [Mississippi] *Advocate*, 10/12/46, p. 8. The CRC assisted Mississippi activists in preparing the formal complaint that prompted the Bilbo hearings. *Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946. Hearings before the Special Committee to Investigate Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946, United States Senate, Seventy-Ninth Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to S. Res. 224, A Resolution to Appoint a Special Committee to Investigate Senatorial Campaign Contributions and Expenditures in the 1946 Election. Mississippi. December 2, 3, 4, and 5, 1946* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. 10-12, 23, 37-8. On the Bilbo hearings, see also Richard C. Ethridge, "The Fall of the Man: The United States Senate's Probe of Theodore G. Bilbo in December 1946, and its Aftermath," *Journal of Mississippi History* 38(3)(August 1976), pp. 241-62.

[87] Earl A. Brown interview by Alferdteen Harrison, 3/10/1987, transcript, Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University; Williams (1985), pp. 70-4.

[88] Louis A. Miles to Whom It May Concern, 2/6/47, Estemore A. Wolfe papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans; Henry C. Wolfe interviews by author, 1/23/2009 and 7/3/2009, recordings in author's possession. A photo of Estemore Wolfe and his AVC comrades appeared in an article about the hearings in *Life* magazine. "Bilbo Hearing," *Life*, 12/16/46, pp. 32-3.

[89] Harold B. Hinton, "20 Negroes Blame Vote Ban on Bilbo," *New York Times*, 12/3/46, p. 1; "Probe of Bilbo Gets Underway," *Atlanta World*, 12/3/46, p. 1. At least six Jackson AVC members testified at the hearings: Etoy Fletcher, Henry C. Wolfe, Elisha Reed, Jr., Ezell Singleton, Benjamin H. Taylor, and chapter chairman Louis A. Miles. Fletcher and Miles both mentioned AVC in their testimony. *Senatorial Campaign Expenditures, 1946*, pp. iii-iv, 48, 115; Chapter Application Blank, 4/4/46, box 189, folder 2, American Veterans Committee records; National Transmittal from Bennie J. Cole to American Veterans Committee, Inc., 6/11/46, ibid.; National Transmittal from Thaddeus C. Jones to American Veterans Committee, Inc., 9/46, ibid. Because Fletcher had already shared his story with the press, AVC members kept his whereabouts a secret until the hearings to protect him from being lynched. "More Than 300 Witnesses Here for Start of Hearing," *Jackson Advocate*, 12/7/46, p. 1, 8; Wolfe interview by author, 7/3/09.

academic discussion or parlor meeting," observed the *New York Amsterdam News*. "In pursuit of justice, men were endangering their lives, their homes, their future security and livelihood."[90] Bilbo died of cancer before the Senate could decide his fate, but the bravery displayed by Mississippi's black veterans in 1946 inspired activism across the state in the years that followed.[91]

Employment

When conservative senators filibustered to prevent the establishment of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission in early 1946, AVC members in Washington, D.C. picketed Capitol Hill.[92] Later that summer, AVC picketed the Ohio state capitol alongside contingents from the AFL, CIO, and United Negro & Allied Veterans, demanding a state FEPC and other reforms.[93] In California, AVC sponsored rallies to drum up support for a statewide FEPC referendum.[94] At a massive outdoor rally in Miami, Florida in the spring of 1947, speakers from AVC, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and various labor unions denounced the Taft-Hartley Act and called for the passage of FEPC legislation and increased spending on social

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[90] "History in the Making," *New York Amsterdam News*, 12/7/46, p. 10.

[91] Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 24-5; John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 1-9.

[92] "Police Break Up Rally against FEPC Filibuster," *AVC Bulletin*, 2/15/46, p. 2.

[93] "Veterans Picket Ohio Legislature; Want Bonus, FEPC," *Chicago Defender*, 7/13/46, p. 9

[94] "Youths Vote Fair Job Practices," *Los Angeles Times*, 2/25/46, p. 7; "Vets to Sponsor FEPC Program," *Daily Californian* [University of California at Berkeley], 10/15/46, p. 8.

programs.[95] AVC national vice chairman Gilbert Harrison testified in favor of fair employment legislation at a U.S. Senate committee hearing, and AVC members testified in favor of a statewide FEPC law in Illinois and municipal ordinances in Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis.[96] Five AVC members elected to the Oregon state legislature co-sponsored an FEPC bill in early 1949.[97]

In addition to supporting fair employment legislation, local AVC chapters also targeted individual employers with a track record of discrimination. In Pittsburgh, AVC joined with the NAACP, Urban League, Elks, labor unions, and religious groups in a successful campaign against Gimbel's and several other department stores that refused to hire African-American salespeople. The coalition distributed thousands of handbills, mailed postcards to company

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[95] "6,000 at Miami Labor Rally," *Daily Worker*, 5/6/47, p. 5.

[96] Joseph A. Loftus, "Wise Says Negroes Need Job Openings," *New York Times*, 6/13/47, p. 28; "Wide Support Given FEPC Bill," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 6/21/47, pp. 1, 2; "Congress Urged to Act on Fair Employment Measure," *Atlanta World*, 6/17/48, p. 1; "Red Gets Floor in Springfield, Won't Give it Up," *Chicago Tribune*, 3/19/47, p. 11; "Mill City Gets FEPC after Labor Wages Year Long Fight," *Chicago Defender*, 2/22/47, p. 13; "CEJO to Use $1000 in Fight for FEPC," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 5/21/46, p. 13; "Councilman Rue Ousts Women from Office; Opposed to FEPC Bill," ibid., 5/25/46, pp. 1, 9; "They Too Seek an FEPC Ordinance," ibid., 5/28/46, p. 2; "AVC Represented at FEPC Hearing," *Common Sense* [AVC Tom Paine Chapter #181, Philadelphia, Pa.], 2/21/48, p. 1; Frank S. Loescher, "How Philadelphia Got Its FEPC," *Journal of Negro Education* 21(1)(Winter 1952), pp. 116-119; Charles S. Preston, "City Fathers May Shelve FEPC Measure," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 7/6/46, First Section, pp. 1, 3; Charles S. Preston, "Jobs Law Depends on Signature of Mayor," ibid., 10/26/46, First Section, pp. 1, 7; "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 8-9/49, p. 3. On AVC support for FEPC legislation in Colorado, Rhode Island, and Washington state, see James J. Lorence, *Palomino: Clinton Jencks and Mexican-American Unionism in the American Southwest* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013), p. 38; "R. I. Chapter Acts to Get FEPC Passage," *AVC Bulletin*, 4/15/46, p. 1; "Locally Speaking," ibid., 5/49, p. 14.

[97] The state legislature passed a watered-down version of the bill, which became law that spring. Phil Dreyer, "What Did AVC Accomplish at Salem?" *New Veteran* [AVC Oregon State Council], 4/49, p. 1; "AVC Leads Way to End Bigotry," *New Veteran*, 4/49 [sic], p. 2. The latter article appeared in the May issue of the newsletter, which had a typographical error on its masthead.

executives, and picketed the shops until the stores agreed to change their policies.[98] In Chicago, AVC helped launch the Council for Job Equality on State Street, which picketed Goldblatt's department store.[99] In Santa Monica, California, AVC supported a boycott of Sears called by the NAACP and participated in weekly pickets demanding sales jobs for blacks at the store.[100]

Local AVC chapters also opposed segregation at the United States Employment Service, a government agency tasked with helping unemployed workers find jobs. In Washington, D.C., the Congress of Industrial Organizations began picketing local USES offices in the summer of 1946 to protest the agency's practice of separating black and white applications. The American Federation of Labor opposed the campaign, but the NAACP, AVC, National Negro Congress, and League of Women Shoppers supported it. To increase accountability at USES, AVC also demanded representation on the agency's advisory council. By order of the U.S. Secretary of Labor, segregation at USES in the District of Columbia was banned that fall.[101]

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[98] Holland F. Kelley, "Powerful Groups Back Department Store Fight," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12/7/46, p. 1; "Break Job Barriers in Pittsburgh Department Stores," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 2/8/47, p. 22.

[99] "Job Equality Group Opens War on State Street Stores Bias," *Atlanta World*, 2/14/48, p. 4; Jack Geiger, "The Campaign for Job Equality on State Street," *Student Partisan* [University of Chicago Politics Club], Spring 1948, pp. 7-9.

[100] "Plan Picketing of Sta. Monica Sears," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 10/16/47, p. 2; "NAACP Greets Sears Directors with Picket Line in Santa Monica," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2/12/48, p. 9. When Santa Monica NAACP president Frank Barnes was fired from his post office job in retaliation for his role in the Sears protests, AVC offered to provide legal assistance. "NAACP to Defend Leader in Job Fight," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 5/13/48, p. 1.

[101] "No. 4 Takes Stand on Jim Crowism," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 8/46, p. 3; "AFL Unit Threatens Bias End by USES," *Atlanta World*, 8/22/46, p. 1; "USES Segregation Protested by Washington," *Capital Veteran*, 9/46, p. 10; "Will Protest USES Jim Crow," *Daily Worker*, 9/11/46, p. 8; "Schwellenbach Ends Capital U.S.E.S. Jimcrow," 9/27/46, folder "Negroes, 1946," Federated Press Records, Series 1, reel 96; "Equality in USES Office," *New York Times*, 9/28/46, p. 2. Despite the opposition of their parent bodies, several AFL locals and American Legion posts supported the campaign.

Housing

World War II veterans returned home to an acute housing shortage, and AVC attempted to shape housing policy at both the national and local level. In addition to supporting race-neutral policies such as rent control and increased spending on public housing, AVC also fought against discriminatory practices that restricted housing options of racial minorities. This section focuses primarily on the latter.

Restrictive covenants – which forbade homeowners from selling or renting their property to racial minorities – were common throughout the United States during this period,[102] and civil rights organizations fought to outlaw them. To this end, AVC submitted an *amicus* brief in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the landmark case that led the Supreme Court to declare restrictive covenants unenforceable in 1948.[103] Prior to the *Shelley* decision, several local chapters campaigned around the issue. After a Japanese-American veteran in Minneapolis was turned away by a private real estate company because of a restrictive covenant, AVC picketed the firm, collected thousands of signatures, and sponsored a bill in the state legislature.[104] AVC chapters from across California converged on Sacramento in the spring of 1947 to demand increased

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[102] AVC members in Washington, D.C. raised funds for an interracial housing cooperative but decided to abandon the project after six months of searching in vain for a suitable property that was not bound by a restrictive covenant. "Jim Crow Halts Vet Homes Plan," *Chicago Defender*, 7/27/46, p. 4; "Covenants," *Capital Veteran* [Greater Washington Area Council AVC], 10/47, p. 2. At least one member suggested that AVC should bite the bullet and establish two separate cooperatives, but this idea was rejected. Saul Hoch, "Segregation," *Capital Veteran*, 8/46, p. 5.

[103] "AVC Backs Fight on Housing Writs," *Atlanta World*, 12/5/47, p. 1; "Supreme Court Gets AVC Covenant Brief," *AVC Bulletin*, 12/47, p. 5. A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records.

[104] "Minnesota Chapter Fights Discrimination Against Nisei," *AVC Bulletin*, 8/1/46, p. 2; "Minnesota Gets AVC Bill Against Race Covenants," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 4/17/47, p. 2.

government spending on housing, stricter enforcement of rent control laws, and a ban on restrictive covenants. Hundreds of veterans packed the galleries as a spokesman for the "Veterans' Housing Caravan" addressed the state legislature.[105] In the months following the *Shelley* decision, developer William Levitt persisted in attaching restrictive covenants to deeds and leases, prompting the NAACP, AVC, American Jewish Congress, American Labor Party, and other organizations to demand that the Federal Housing Administration stop insuring mortgages in Levittowns.[106]

Restrictive covenants were not the only method by which minorities were kept out of white neighborhoods, and AVC participated in protests against other forms of housing discrimination. In New York City, AVC helped picket the homes and offices of Metropolitan Life executives, who refused to let blacks move into the Stuyvesant Town apartment complex.[107]

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[105] "Immediate Housing Action Promised by Governor," *AVC News* [Los Angeles Area Council], 3/28/47, p. 1, 2. State leaders of the American Legion rescinded their initial endorsement of the protest and tried to quash it. "Old-Liners vs. Housing," *AVC News,* 4/4/47, pp. 1, 2; "Cavalcade of California Vets Demands State Build Homes," *Militant*, 4/5/47, p. 2; "AVC Responds to Housing Quitters," *AVC News,* 5/23/47, p. 1. The split is glossed over in Don Parson, *Making a Better World: Public Housing, the Red Scare, and the Direction of Modern Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 88.

[106] "Weigh D.C. Appeal to Lift Levitt Race Restrictions," *Newsday*, 3/22/49, p. 15; "Move to End FHA Bias," *New York Amsterdam News*, 4/2/49, Brooklyn Section, pp. 1, 24; "L.I. Vets Battle Jim Crow Leases," *Progressive Veteran,* 4/49, p. 3. On Levitt, see David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2009).

[107] "Picket Dinner for Met Head on JC Charge," *New York Amsterdam News*, 11/1/47, p. 25; Vets Picket Against Housing Bias," *Daily Worker*, 3/29/49, p. 1. AVC contributed an *amicus* brief to a lawsuit against Met Life and the Stuyvesant Town Corporation, but it was rejected by the Supreme Court. "Civil Rights Litigation is Expanding," *AVC Bulletin*, 12/49, p. 7; "Supreme Court Denies Briefs in Stuyvesant Case," *Atlanta World*, 12/7/49, p. 5. A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records. On the Stuyvesant Town controversy, see Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Three thousand people attended a rally called by AVC in late 1947 to protest discriminatory lending by the Mortgage Conference of New York, a consortium of financial institutions accused of price fixing by the U.S Justice Department.[108] When city housing czar Robert Moses made derisive comments about fair housing demonstrators, AVC urged the mayor to fire him.[109]

When blacks did manage to secure housing in previously all-white neighborhoods, they often faced harassment and physical threats from their new neighbors. After mob violence erupted at Chicago's Airport Homes housing project in late 1946, leaders of AVC and the United Negro & Allied Veterans of America called for a police crackdown at a rally held on the city's South Side. The following summer, teams of Chicago AVC members canvassed the Fernwood Park neighborhood urging tolerance after white residents attacked blacks moving into a public housing project. [110] In Redwood City, California, AVC called a mass meeting after racists burned down the home of chapter member John T. Walker. A group of black vets organized an armed watch over Walker's property, while AVC chapters in the Bay Area raised funds and volunteered to help rebuild his house.[111]

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[108] "Lawyer Charges Jim Crow Loans," *New York Amsterdam News*, 12/13/47, p. 19. On the Mortgage Conference lawsuit, see "Suit Charges Plot in Mortgage Loans," *New York Times*, 8/7/46, pp. 1, 2; "Consent Judgment in Mortgage Suit," *New York Times*, 7/17/48, pp. 37, 39.

[109] "Moses' [sic] Removal Asked," *New York Times*, 8/26/47, p. 25.

[110] "Oratorical Free for All on Housing," *Chicago Tribune*, 12/4/46, p. 12; "Negro Couple Flee Jeers at Project Homes," *Chicago Tribune*, 12/9/46, p. 17; AVC Chicago Area Council minutes, 12/13/46, box 3, folder 8, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records, Special Collections Research Library, University of Chicago Library; "Chicago Race-Haters Try to Bar Negroes in Project," *Labor Action*, 12/16/46, pp. 1, 2; "Fernwood Race Tension Threat to City," *AVC Focus* [Chicago Area Council], 9/5/47, p. 1. On the Airport Homes and Fernwood Park riots, see Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[111] "Plan to Rebuild Negro Vet's Home," *Ellensburg [Wa.] Daily Record*, 12/12/46, p. 5; "Fire Victim, Benefactor Sent Threat," *San Mateo Times*, 12/13/46, p. 1, 2; Mason Roberson, "AVC

Education

AVC found a wide audience among veterans attending colleges, universities, and trade schools on the GI Bill. During its heyday, AVC set the political tone on campuses as different as Harvard, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Jackson College in Mississippi.[112] At the University of Texas at Austin, AVC co-sponsored rallies in support of Heman Sweatt, whose application to the law school was rejected because of his race. AVC student members in Austin and Chapel Hill, North Carolina raised money to assist the NAACP's lawsuit on behalf of

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Aids War Vet Burned Out by KKK," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 12/21/46, p. 1; "Armed Negroes Massed to Aid Man Threatened by Lynchers," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1/16/47, p. 1; "Chapter #1 Helps Fight Klu [sic] Klux Klan," *AdVoCate* [AVC Berkeley, California chapter #1], 1/20/47, p. 2; *American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council, Second Anniversary Ball* program, 10/11/47, p. 8, carton 1, folder 1, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records.

[112] On Harvard, see "Harvard AVC Disbands; Will Join Local Chapter," *Harvard Crimson*, 3/14/52, p. 1; Halton C. Arp interview by Paul Wright, 7/29/1975, transcript, p. 6, Niels Bohr Library and Archives, American Institute of Physics, College Park, Maryland. On the University of Wisconsin at Madison, see Karl E. Meyer, "NSA and the Postwar World in 1947," in *American Students Organize: Founding the National Student Association after World War II: An Anthology and Source Book*, edited by Eugene G. Schwartz (Westport, CT: American Council on Education, 2006), p. 138; Keith W. Olson, "World War II Veterans at the University of Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 53(Summer)(1969-70), pp. 94-5. At Jackson College, officers of the city's AVC chapter staffed the student newspaper. Bennie Cole, "Citizens First, Veterans Last," *Blue and White Flash* [Jackson College, Miss.], 6/46, p. 1; "Class in Journalism," ibid. On Swarthmore, see "Campus AVC Hears Report from Kaiser," *Swarthmore Phoenix*, 10/3/47, p. 4; James R. Barrett, "Class Act: An Interview with David Montgomery," *Labor: Working-Class History of the Americas* 1(1)(2004), p. 26; David Montgomery interview by author, 10/15/2009, recording in author's possession. On Columbia, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Essential Wallerstein* (New York: New Press, 2000), p. xv; Murray Rothbard, *The Betrayal of the American Right* (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2007), p. 65; Norman Podhoretz, *Ex-Friends: Falling Out with Allen Ginsberg, Lionel and Diana Trilling, Lillian Hellman, Hannah Arendt, and Norman Mailer* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000), pp. 110-1.

Sweatt, and the AVC national office submitted an *amicus* brief in the case.[113] Ada Lois Sipuel's application to the law school at the University of Oklahoma likewise became a national *cause célèbre*, and the AVC chapter on the Norman campus championed her admission. AVC attorneys also filed an *amicus* brief in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*.[114] AVC campaigned for the admission of African-American students to Washington University in St. Louis[115] and succeeded in pressuring the University of Kansas City to accept its first black law student, AVC member

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[113] "Texas vs. Heman Sweatt," *Newsweek*, 12/30/46, p. 74; "Writ Denied in Texas Law School Case," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Home edition], 12/28/46, p. 2; "Supreme Court Receives Briefs from AVC," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/49, p. 2; "Brief Supports Negro's Right to Schooling," *AVC Bulletin*, 6/49, p. 2; "Civil Rights Litigation is Expanding," *AVC Bulletin*, 12/49, p. 7. A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records. On the Sweatt case, see Gary M. Lavergne, *Before Brown: Heman Marion Sweatt, Thurgood Marshall, and the Long Road to Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

[114] Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher with Danny Goble, *A Matter of Black and White: The Autobiography of Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996) pp. 106-7; "Vets File Brief in Sweatt, McLaurin Cases," *Atlanta World*, 2/5/50, p. 1. A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records.

[115] "Admission of Negroes Urged in AVC Letter," *Student Life* [Washington University, St. Louis], 5/2/46, p. 5; "9 Campus Groups Favor Negroes," ibid., 5/9/46, p. 1; "900 Jam Brown to Hear Paul Robeson," ibid., p. 5; "Reject Fund of $15,000, Hold on to Jim Crow," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 11/4/47, p. 9; Charles Oldham interview by Corrine Edwards, 11/11/2004, transcript, pp. 5-6, American Culture Studies Program, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; Charles Oldham interviews by Sheila Michaels, 7/8/1999 and 12/1/2001, transcript, Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University; Marvin Rich interview by Irvin Dagen, Margaret Dagen, and Bonnie Rosen, 7/29/1995, transcript, pp. 1-2, box 2, folder 24, Margaret and Irvin Dagen History of St. Louis CORE collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis. On the desegregation of Washington University, see Amy M. Pfeiffenberger, "Democracy at Home: The Struggle to Desegregate Washington University in the Postwar Era," *Gateway Heritage* (Winter 1989).

Harold Holliday, Sr.[116] In Indiana, the NAACP, AVC, and allied groups convinced the state legislature to abolish segregation in the public schools, from kindergarten through college.[117]

In Chicago, AVC helped open up a lily-white trade school to blacks.[118] In New York, AVC participated in a statewide march on Albany to demand legislation banning discrimination in higher education.[119] At the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where black females lived in separate dormitories, and Northwestern University, where blacks were forced to live off campus, AVC pushed for integrated student housing.[120] The AVC chapter at the University of Wisconsin at Madison demanded that the campus housing office stop publicizing vacancies in off-campus

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[116] Peter von Ziegesar, "Rebel with a Cause," *Kansas City Magazine*, 4/87, p. 30.

[117] "New Jim Crow Move in Gary School Killed," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 11/23/46, First Section, p. 1; "School Board to Get 2nd Jimcrow Protest," ibid., 12/21/46, p. 1, 2; "Indiana AVC Hits Jimcrow School Law," ibid., 2/8/47, p. 3; "School Strike 'Dies Down'; Jimcrow Faces Added Fire," ibid., 10/9/48, pp. 1, 7; "Public Schools Head Acclaims New Ind. Law," ibid., 6/18/49, pp. 1, 2; "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 8-9/49, p. 3. On the integration of public schools in Indiana, see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century,* edited by Lana Ruegamer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), Ch. 7.

[118] Richard Durham, "Star Finds U.S. Pays Bills for Jim Crow Trade Schools," *Chicago Star*, 7/20/46, p. 3; "Vets Crack Down on Race-Quota School," ibid., 7/27/46, p. 1; "Gen. Bradley Dodged Coyne Jim Crow Rap," ibid., 7/27/46, pp. 1, 16; "Star Exposure Brings Action on Coyne," ibid., 8/3/46, p. 3; "Vets to Call Halt to Coyne Racism," ibid., 8/17/46, p. 3; "Vets Seek Law to Ban Race-Hate Schools; VA Backs Coyne Jim Crow," ibid., 8/24/46, p. 4; Richard Durham, "42-Year Race Ban Broken by Star," ibid., 9/7/46, p. 3.

[119] Jean E. Campbell, "Council Continues Fight to End Educational Discrimination," *Atlanta World*, 3/29/47, p. 7.

[120] "AVC Enters Fight Against Segregation at I. U.," *Veterans Voice* [AVC Indiana State Council], 9/48, p. 7; Roland D. Paine, "Wants Info on Bias," *AVC Bulletin*, 4/15/47, p. 5; Roland D. Paine, Jr. to Dear Mr. [Richard G.] Axt, 2/2/47, box 2, folder "Civil Rights," Records of the Harvard Chapter of the American Veterans Committee, Harvard University Archives; "Evanston Chapter Gets Inter-Racial NWU Dormitory," *AVC Bulletin*, 9/47, p. 6. AVC endorsed the candidacy of an African-American chapter member who ran for student council in early 1947. "Local Youth Seeks Students' Council Seat at Indiana U.," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 5/17/47, p. 9; "Local Youth Named President of I. U. Branch of NAACP," ibid., 6/7/47, p. 9.

properties owned by racist landlords.[121] At the City College of New York, AVC agitated for a student strike to protest the administration's refusal to fire two professors accused of discriminating against blacks and Jews.[122] At Yale, a poll of the campus found strong support for AVC's proposal that the university establish a special scholarship fund for its African-American students.[123]

Popular culture

AVC employed a variety of tactics to combat racism in the mass media and popular culture more generally. Members stationed in the Philippines publicly called for the firing of a colonel who encouraged the staff of the *Daily Pacifican*, a military newspaper, to print racist cartoons.[124] After posters advertising a minstrel show appeared in their neighborhood, the AVC chapter at the University of Chicago threatened to picket the Hyde Park YMCA, which led to the cancellation of the show.[125] In Long Beach, California, the Civil Rights Congress, AVC, Congress of American Women, and Communist Party picketed movie theaters where Disney's

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[121] "14 UW Groups to Aid Co-ed," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 11/2/47, p. 2; "AVC Asks Boycott of Intolerants," ibid., 11/13/47, p. 10.

[122] "CCNY Strike Called to Oust Biased Professors," *Daily Worker*, 4/6/49, p. 4. Shortly after the strike fizzled, administrators banned the AVC chapter from campus for distributing leaflets without authorization. "2 Student Units Punished," *New York Times*, 4/28/49, p. 17.

[123] "Yale Students Vote Negro Scholarships," *New York Amsterdam News*, 12/28/46, p. 7. See also the subsection on general legislation, in the section on public accommodations above.

[124] "Manila Chapter Backs Paper in Fighting Discrimination," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, p. 2; "Probe of Bias Orders to Army Newspaper is Asked," *Atlanta World*, 7/11/46, p. 1; "GIs Ask Removal of 'Slurring' Colonel," ibid., 7/20/46, p. 1.

[125] "Threaten to Picket Y Minstrel Show," *Chicago Defender*, 5/24/47, p. 8; *The Second National Convention of the American Veterans Committee at Milwaukee Auditorium, Workshop Session, Thursday, June 19th*, pp. 228-9, box 97, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records.

"Song of the South" was screened.[126] In New York City, AVC picketed Carnegie Hall performances by European artists who had lent their talents to fascist regimes.[127] The national organization encouraged its members to see the anti-racist movie "Don't Be a Sucker," and in several Southern states AVC chapters persuaded reluctant theater owners to show the film. In Albany, New York, AVC staged the anti-racist play "Deep Are the Roots," despite a ban by the local school board.[128]

In Memphis, AVC found itself at the center of a controversy over the Freedom Train, a traveling display of historic documents that was scheduled to pass through the city in late 1947. Mayor James Pleasants, Jr. declared that segregation would be enforced at the event, which prompted the American Heritage Foundation, national sponsor of the tour, to cancel the Memphis stop. AVC launched a coalition opposed to the mayor's stand and began circulating petitions calling on him to reverse course. The white press criticized Pleasants, as did a wide range of organizations, including the NAACP, Congress of Industrial Organizations, League of Women Voters, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Refusing to bend, the mayor warned of impending violence and denounced local AVC chairman Barney Taylor as an "outside agitator" intent on subverting Southern mores. Taylor, a Texas-born union organizer and staunch anti-

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[126] "Organizations Picket 'Song of the South' in Beach Cities Area," *California Eagle*, 3/27/47, p. 3. The AVC chapter at the University of Oklahoma urged local theaters not to screen "Song of the South" and other films that caricatured blacks. David Platt, "AVC in Oklahoma Hits Disney, Crosby Films," *Daily Worker*, 3/18/47, p. 11.

[127] "AVC Units Protest Tour by Gieseking," *New York Times*, 4/20/48, p. 32; "Vets Picket to Stop U.S. Tour of Once-Banned German Pianist," *PM*, 4/20/48, p. 13; "Carnegie Hall Picketed," *New York Times*, 12/8/48, p. 33; "Flagstad Cheered at Recital Here," ibid., 12/13/48, p. 19; "Conflict," *Time*, 2/7/49, p. 37.

[128] "Movie Short Hits Intolerance," *AVC Bulletin*, 10/1/46, p. 3; "Will Stage Banned Play," *New York Times*, 9/22/47, p. 23; "Albany AVC Refused Use of High School Shifts Hit Drama," *New York Age*, 10/11/47, p. 3.

Communist, dissembled in the face of the mayor's race-baiting and red-baiting tirade. "Despite his efforts to make segregation customs of the South an issue, they are not," Taylor declared. "The question is a simple one. Shall Memphis, alone among the great cities of the South, be denied a view of the Freedom Train?" With opposition to Pleasants growing, AVC abruptly called off the campaign, claiming that the Freedom Train had "already come" in the form of a spirited public debate. This was a fudge, but the episode marked the beginning of the end of the Crump machine's control over Memphis politics.[129]

AVC played a significant role in the postwar struggle to desegregate league bowling. In the spring of 1947, AVC members in Los Angeles picketed the opening night of the American Bowling Congress national championships after failing to obtain a court injunction to halt the whites-only tournament. Shortly thereafter, twenty organizations, including the United Auto Workers, NAACP, and AVC, formed the National Committee for Fair Play in Bowling to coordinate the fight for reform of the ABC. Several groups, including the UAW and AVC, set up alternate tournaments rather than participate in segregated ABC-sponsored events. An AVC

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[129] Richard Wallace, "Veterans Will Circulate Petitions for Train," *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, 11/21/47, pp. 1, 2; Richard Wallace, "'Mayor is Clouding the Freedom Train Issue,' Says AVC," ibid., 11/24/47, p. 2; "VFW Post Wants Freedom Train Visit: 'No Race Issue,' 4 Ministers Say," ibid., 11/25/47, pp. 1, 3; "2 More Memphis Groups Want Freedom Train," ibid., 11/26/47, pp. 1, 3; Richard Wallace, "The City Administration's Attempts to Control Thought Denounced," ibid., 11/27/47, pp. 1, 3, 4; Richard Wallace, "'Freedom Train Has Already Come to Memphis,' Says AVC, Answering Mayor," ibid., 11/28/47, pp. 1, 2; "Information About an Imported Agitator," ibid., 11/29/47, p. 4. On the Freedom Train, see Laurie B. Greene, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 112-142; Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the 'American Way': The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 201-240; John White, "Civil Rights in Conflict: The 'Birmingham Plan' and the Freedom Train, 1947," *Alabama Review* 52(2)(April 1999), pp. 121-141; Stuart Little, "The Freedom Train: Citizenship and Postwar Political Culture, 1946-1949," *American Studies* 34(1)(Spring 1993), pp. 35-67. For biographical sketches of Taylor, see "New Organizer," *Farm Labor News*, 4/46, p. 1; "Union Organizer Decorated for Bravery," ibid., 6/46, p. 1.

contingent picketed the ABC finals held in Atlantic City, New Jersey in early 1949, and the Indianapolis AVC lobbied to prevent the ABC from renting the Indianapolis Coliseum for its 1950 championships.[130]

In Baltimore, AVC joined with the NAACP, Progressive Citizens of America, and other organizations in a campaign to open up municipal sports leagues to players of all races.[131] Leaders of AVC and fifteen other campus organizations at the University of Kansas at Lawrence signed a statement opposing the entry of the University of Oklahoma into the Big Six sports conference because of the latter school's discriminatory admissions policy.[132] The AVC chapter at the University of Cincinnati called upon administrators to ban the practice of benching black

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[130] "Veterans to Picket Bowlers," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3/27/47, p. 1; "Reports from Courier Sports Experts," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 4/5/47, p. 15; "UAW-CIO Fights Lily-White Clause in American Bowling," *Chicago Defender*, 4/12/47, p. 23; "Bowling League Formed," *L.A. Area Newsletter* [AVC Los Angeles Area Council], 6/1/48, p. 2; "Negroes Picket A.B.C. Bowling Meet Opening," *Chicago Tribune*, 2/13/49, Part 2, p. 5; "Bowlers Denied Building," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 4/30/49, p. 16; "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 6/49, p. 6. In late 1949, representatives of the Labor Youth League, AVC, pinsetters union, NAACP, Progressive Party, and other organizations pressured the owner of the National Bowling Academy in Los Angeles to admit black customers for the first time. "Labor Youth League Club Wins Democracy in Bowling Alley," *California Eagle*, 12/15/49, p. 2. On the struggle to desegregate the American Bowling Congress, see also James H. Rigali & John C. Walter, "The Integration of the American Bowling Congress: The Buffalo Experience," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 29(2)(July 2005), pp. 7-44; David M. Lewis-Colman, *Race Against Liberalism: Black Workers and the UAW in Detroit* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008), pp. 20-22, 33-34, 48-9; John C. Walter and Malina Iida, "The State of New York and the Legal Struggle to Desegregate the American Bowling Congress, 1944-1950," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 35(1)(January 2011), pp. 7-32; Patricia L. Dooley, "Jim Crow Strikes Again: The African American Press Campaign Against Segregation in Bowling During World War II," *Journal of African American History* 97(3)(Summer 2012), pp. 270-290; Eric Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City: Working-Class and Growth Politics in 1940s Milwaukee* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 192-202.

[131] "Maryland PCA Asks Ban on Jim Crow Sports," *Atlanta World*, 1/14/48, p. 5; see also "2 Reappointed to Park Board after Hearing," *Baltimore Sun*, 10/5/49, pp. 34, 23.

[132] "Kansas Groups Protest," *New York Times*, 3/30/47, Sports Section, p. 2.

players during athletic competitions against lily-white schools.[133] AVC members at the University of Miami condemned administrators' decision to cancel a football game against Penn State to avoid playing against an integrated team.[134] After a racist outburst by University of Wyoming basketball coach Everett Shelton during a game against City College of New York, AVC and other student organizations at CCNY circulated a petition demanding that Shelton be fired.[135]

Interracial sex was the ultimate taboo, but several chapters found creative ways to probe the limits of tolerance on this issue. The Atlanta AVC hosted a talk by Lillian Smith, author of the controversial novel *Strange Fruit*.[136] The Chicago Area Council sponsored an interracial beauty contest, while in California AVC succeeded in opening up the official Miss California pageant to contestants of all races in 1946.[137]

AVC honored the contributions of African-Americans in a number of ways. In early 1948, the national organization presented its man-of-the-year award to scholar-activist W. E. B. DuBois.[138] Many local AVC chapters were named after Dorie Miller, the black hero of Pearl

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[133] "Anti-Discrimination Resolution Revealed," *Atlanta World*, 12/17/46, p. 2.

[134] "Miami Univ. Hit for Football Discrimination," 11/27/46, folder "Negroes, 1946," Federated Press Records, Series 1, reel 96.

[135] "8 CCNY Student Groups Unite On Petition," *Daily Worker*, 1/2/47, p. 10.

[136] "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/48, p. 6.

[137] Chicago Area Council, Second Annual Convention program, Nov. 8-11, 1947, p. 11, carton 2, folder 22, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; "AVC Breaks Beauty Contest Ban…Negroes Eligible for 'Miss America,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8/10/46, p. 15.

[138] "DuBois Cited by D.C. AVC," *Atlanta World*, 5/20/48, p. 2.

Harbor. In Topeka, black and white AVC members insisted on marching together in the city's Memorial Day parade.[139]

Mob violence

Some of the largest anti-racist demonstrations of the period were called in response to shocking acts of violence in the South. After two African-American couples were lynched by a mob of whites near Monroe, Georgia in the summer of 1946, more than twelve thousand protesters marched through the streets of Washington, D.C. The crowd swelled to fifteen thousand by the time it reached the Lincoln Memorial, where leaders of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, AVC, National Negro Congress, NAACP, CIO, United Negro & Allied Veterans of America, and local churchmen denounced the murders and demanded the passage of federal anti-lynching legislation. In what one newspaper described as "the greatest demonstration of its kind in local history," thousands of businesses in Philadelphia were shut down during a day of picketing, rallies, and vigils sponsored by the NAACP, AVC, labor, religious, and fraternal groups. In San Francisco, five thousand people – including AVC members from across the Bay Area – participated in a silent march called by the NAACP to protest the Georgia slayings. A rally in New York sponsored by the Civil Rights Congress, CIO, AVC, and American Labor Party drew several thousand demonstrators to Madison Square Park to condemn the killings.

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[139] *The Second National Convention of the American Veterans Committee at Milwaukee Auditorium, Workshop Session, Thursday, June 19th*, p. 284, box 97, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records; Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 381.

AVC leader Charles Bolte wrote President Truman on behalf of the national organization, urging him to take action.[140]

AVC chapters in Los Angeles co-sponsored demonstrations against the Ku Klux Klan in early 1946 after a cross was burned outside the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Hickerson, plaintiffs in a restrictive covenant lawsuit.[141] In several Northern cities where fascist Gerald L. K. Smith attempted to organize, veterans' organizations, labor unions, and socialist groups mobilized large numbers to denounce their presence. AVC picketed appearances by Smith in Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Oakland in 1946. Hundreds of protesters, including a large contingent from AVC, prevented Smith from speaking in Minneapolis. The

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[140] "12,000 Marchers Protest Lynchings," *Washington Post*, 8/6/46, p. 4; "AVC Joins Protest Against Lynchings," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 8/46, p. 6; "Coeds Don Black in Lynch Protest," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 8/6/46, pp. 1, 2; Russell Morgan, "'Silent Parade' in Bay City Protests Against Lynchings," *The Militant*, 8/31/46, p. 1; Dick Goggin to All Chapter Chairmen, 7/31/46, carton 1, folder 2, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; "Rally Urges U.S. Act in Lynchings," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 8/1/46, p. 21; "N.Y. Citizens Rap Bilbo, Talmadge," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 8/10/46, p. 5; "Georgia Lynchings Protested by AVC," *AVC Bulletin*, 8/1/46, p. 1. Four hundred protesters marched in Cleveland, representing more than three dozen organizations, including the NAACP and AVC. "Cleveland Mourns Ga. Victims," *Daily Worker*, 8/13/46, p. 8. On the Georgia lynchings, see Wallace H. Warren, "'The Best People in Town Won't Talk': The Moore's Ford Lynching of 1946 and Its Cover-Up," in *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865-1950*, edited by John C. Inscoe (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), p. 266-88; Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake: The Last Mass Lynching in America* (New York: Scribner, 2003).

[141] "United Action to be Mapped; Lena Horne, Kenny Main Speakers," *California Eagle*, 5/16/46, pp. 1, 20; "AVC, Mobilization Press Fight on KKK Terrorists," ibid., 5/30/46, pp. 1, 20; "Los Angeles Wants No Part of the Ku Klux Klan!," ibid., 6/13/46, p. 8; "Mammoth Anti-Klan Youth Rally Slated Saturday, June 29, by AYD," ibid., 6/27/46, p. 13; "Youth Hold Anti-Klan Rally; Launch Campaign Calling on Mayor to End KKK Terrorism," ibid., 7/4/46, p. 13.

following summer, members of AVC and various CIO unions disrupted a Smith rally in Boston.[142]

In the South, where direct physical confrontation with paramilitary hate groups was a much riskier proposition, AVC urged the government to closely monitor the activities of such organizations. In Atlanta, AVC called for a ban on the Columbians, Inc. and demanded that the Ku Klux Klan be forced to reveal the names of its members. Racists retaliated by physically threatening individual AVC activists and raiding a meeting of the Atlanta chapter.[143]

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[142] "Picket Smith Meeting in Philadelphia," *Labor Action*, 3/18/46, p. 1; "Chicago Workers Picket Banquet for G. L. K. Smith," *Militant*, 3/23/46, p. 5; "Vets Take Over G. K. Smith Rally," *Daily Worker*, 4/6/46, p. 5; Gerry McDermott, "Labor, Vets Picket Smith in Cleveland," *Labor Action*, 8/12/46, p. 7; Russell Morgan, "Angry Oakland Workers Picket Fascist G. L. K. Smith Meeting," *Militant*, 10/26/46, p. 7; Russell Morgan, "5,000 Picket Fascist Smith at San Francisco Meeting," *Militant*, 11/9/46, p. 6; Milton Miller, "San Francisco Union Pickets Demonstrate Against Hate-Monger," *Labor Action*, 11/11/46, p. 8; "Student Pickets Aid in Smith Rout," *Minnesota Daily* [University of Minnesota], 8/23/46, p. 1; Barbara Bruce, "Minneapolis Picket-Line Smashes Fascist Rally," *Militant*, 8/31/46, pp. 1, 2; Nancy Austin, "Trounce Smith in Minneapolis," *Labor Action*, 9/2/46, p. 8; "Solid Civic Front Halts Smith Rally in Minneapolis," *Chicago Defender*, 9/21/46, p. 7; "Irate Boston Drives Out G. L. K. Smith," *Daily Worker*, July 14, 1947, p. 3. AVC members also helped picket a speech by Smith in Philadelphia in the spring of 1947. John Haas, "Militant Picket Line Greets Fascist Smith in Philadelphia," *Militant*, 5/10/47, p. 2; Max Geldman to Farrell Dobbs, 6/9/47, Socialist Workers Party records microfilm, Branch Correspondence Series, reel 3, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

[143] "Despite Claim Klan is New, Probe Continues," *Atlanta World*, 6/1/46, p. 1; "Police Seize Four in Atlanta Group," *New York Times*, 11/3/46, p. 35; "AVC Urges Klan be Designated Subversive," *Atlanta World*, 12/25/48, pp. 1, 4; "AVC Says KKK Uses Alias to Escape Subversive List," ibid., 1/2/49, pp. 1, 8; *Third Annual National Convention*, pp. 36 and 492, box 98, folders 1 and 4, American Veterans Committee records. When former Columbians, Inc. head Homer Loomis visited Detroit in 1947, "[t]he CIO and the American Veterans Committee threw picket lines around the meeting place and a battle royal ensued." "Free-for-All in Detroit," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10/18/47, p. 21.

Police brutality and wrongful convictions

AVC demanded justice in two egregious cases of police brutality against black veterans in February 1946. Isaac Woodard was still wearing his uniform when his eyes were gouged by police in Batesburg, South Carolina, leaving him permanently blind. AVC co-sponsored fundraisers for Woodward and joined with the NAACP and other organizations insisting that he be granted disability benefits.[144] The same month that Woodward was maimed, Freeport, Long Island police officer Joseph Romeika shot and killed Alfonzo Ferguson and his brother Charles. AVC chapters in New York and other cities participated in rallies and delegations demanding that Romeika be brought to justice.[145]

Though the cases were not as widely publicized, AVC also spoke out against the killing of black veteran William Howard by police in St. Louis; the fatal shooting of black veteran George Serrell by police in Charles Town, West Virginia; the brutal beating of Alfred Giles at the hands of police in San Pedro, California; and the clubbing to death of black veteran Herman Burns by police in Los Angeles.[146] In New York, AVC demanded justice for Frank Glenn and

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[144] "Federal Help Sought for Blinded Veteran," *New York Times*, 7/25/46, p. 23; Constance Curtis, "Army Stalling on Paying GI," *New York Amsterdam News*, 7/27/46, pp. 1, 3; "200 Veterans Wanted as Ushers," *New York Times*, 8/14/46, p. 32; "Makes Report on Benefit Tickets," *New York Amsterdam News*, 8/31/46, p. 4.

[145] "Ask Action on Killing," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/1/46, p. 2; "Freeport Rally Maps Fight to Indict Cop," *The Worker*, 2/10/46, p. 2; William S. Farrell, "Protest Meetings Assail Jim-Crow Murder of Vets," *Militant*, 2/23/46, pp. 1, 7; "63 Organizations Ask Freeport D. A. Ouster," *Daily Worker*, 2/25/46, p. 9; "Visit Dewey Friday on Freeport Justice," ibid., 3/7/46, p. 4; Claudia Jones, "Dewey 'Out' to Freeport Delegation," ibid., 5/4/46, p. 2; "Freeport Probe Hides Facts, Dewey Told," ibid., 7/19/46, p. 5; "Police Brutality Fought in Phila.," *Chicago Defender*, 5/25/46, p. 2.

[146] "Noted Liberal to Speak at NAACP Mass Meeting," *Chicago Defender* [St. Louis edition], 9/28/46, p. 19; "Clark Asked to Act in White-Washed Case," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/48, p. 6; "Seek to Reopen Vet Murder Case," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 3/6/48, pp. 1, 2; "New Trial Sought in Pedro Beating Case," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 2/6/47, p. 9; "AVC to Investigate," *LA AVC*

Allen Leftridge, two black soldiers killed by U.S. military police in France.[147] In Atlanta, AVC circulated a petition and gave testimony that helped convince officials to hire the city's first black police officers in late 1947.[148] Chapters in Jacksonville, Florida and New Orleans, Louisiana also campaigned for black police during this period.[149]

In Bayonne, New Jersey, the NAACP, AVC, CIO shipbuilders, and International Ladies Garment Workers Union demanded a new trial for black teenager Mike Choice, who was accused of stalking a white girl and forced to sign a false confession while in police custody. In St. Louis, the Washington University AVC chapter campaigned on behalf of a black soldier sentenced to death for allegedly raping a white woman. In Chicago, the Socialist Workers Party, AVC, and several local unions joined forces in a successful campaign to free James Hickman, a black man who shot his landlord for starting a slum fire that killed four of Hickman's children.[150]

Newsletter [Los Angeles Area Council], 9/3/48, p. 2; American Veterans Committee Los Angeles Area Council minutes, 9/27/48, carton 2, folder 22, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; "Burns Case," *LA AVC Newsletter,* 10/5/48, p. 2.

[147] "Leftridge Case Rally Tonight," *Daily Worker*, 5/15/46, p. 5; see also "Protest the Glenn-Leftridge Case," ibid., 5/21/46, p. 5; "Army Lies about Killing 2 Negro GIs, Buddies Say," ibid., 6/15/46, p. 3.

[148] Ozeil F. Woolcock, "American Veterans Group Back Negro Police Drive," *Atlanta World,* 7/11/47, p. 3; "AVC Backs Negro Police," ibid., 8/1/47, p. 1; "Colored Policemen for Atlanta Urged by Southern Council," *Norfolk Journal and Guide* [Home edition], 11/1/47, pp. 1, 2; "Council Rolls Over Opposition to Give Okay to Negro Police," *Atlanta World,* 11/18/47, p. 1; "Pleas for Negro Police Heard Here Wednesday," ibid., 11/27/47, p. 1.

[149] James M. Crawford, "Report on AVC Organizational Drive in the Southeastern United States from October 1, 1947 to February 29, 1948," p. 3, in carton 1, folder 31, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; "AVC Begins Organizational Drive," *Louisiana Weekly,* 6/28/47, p. 9.

[150] "Boy Declares Cop Beat Him," *New York Amsterdam News,* 8/10/46, p. 7; Alex Efthim, "Torpedoed: Or, The Tragedy of St. Louis A.V.C.," p. 10, carton 1, folder 24, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records; AVC Chicago Area Council minutes, 9/5/47, box 3, folder 8, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records; "Father of 7 Tried in Landlord Killing," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 9/25/47, pp. 1, 2; "Tallulah Bankhead Aids

Military

From its founding, AVC advocated complete integration of the U.S. armed forces.[151] When the army announced a temporary ban on new black enlistments in the summer of 1946, AVC condemned the move.[152] In the months before Executive Order 9981 was announced in July 1948, AVC leaders publicly needled President Truman and the secretaries of the various military branches, which led the CIO Committee Against Racial Discrimination to present its annual achievement award to AVC "for its tireless campaign against discrimination in the armed forces."[153] AVC did not endorse A. Philip Randolph's call for civil disobedience to integrate the military, however.[154] AVC lobbied for integration of the National Guard in Pennsylvania,

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Hickman Case," ibid., 10/23/47, p. 2. On the Hickman case, see Joe Allen, *People Wasn't Made to Burn: A True Story of Housing, Race, and Murder in Chicago* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011).

The SWP did not prioritize building AVC, and the party's newspaper, *The Militant*, contains only sporadic coverage of AVC activities. Mike Bartell to Dear Farrell [Dobbs], 8/26/46, Socialist Workers Party records microfilm, Branch Correspondence Series, reel 3, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Mike Bartell to Dear Farrell [Dobbs], 9/30/46, ibid.; Mike Bartell to Dear Farrell [Dobbs], 6/2/47, ibid.; Frank Fried interview by author, 11/14/2009, notes in author's possession.

[151] Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1981), p. 164.

[152] "AVC Hits Negro Enlistment Ban," *New York Times*, 7/22/46, p. 8.

[153] "AVC Favors Voluntary Recruitment for Army," *Atlanta World*, 12/28/47, p. 2; "Army Urged to Abolish Segregation," *AVC Bulletin*, 1/48, pp. 1, 8; "Replies Show Segregation Continues in Army, AAF," ibid., 2/48, pp. 1, 6; "Draft Unnecessary if Army Ends Bias; AVC," *Chicago Defender*, 4/3/48, p. 3; "Rickey, Six Others Cited for Bias Fight," *New York Times*, 8/8/48, p. 17; "Discrimination Hit in Hearing," 5/49, *AVC Bulletin*, p. 2.

[154] For debate over Randolph's civil disobedience campaign, see "Vet Paper Joins Fight Against Army Segregation Stand," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5/22/48, p. 5; "'Add Your Voice' Editorial Stirs Debate in SPC and in Chapters," *Pennsylvania Veteran* [AVC Pennsylvania State Council], 6/48, p. 2; Leonard Bernstein, "Questions Sincerity," ibid.; "The Resist Conscription

Connecticut, and Indiana. In Massachusetts, AVC sponsored the legislation that banned segregation in the state National Guard in 1949.[155]

Research and advisory

AVC played an important role in compiling and disseminating research on the status of African-Americans in general and black veterans in particular. AVC housing committee chairman Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. served on President Truman's historic Committee on Civil Rights, and AVC furnished the body with an incisive research brief.[156] That same year, AVC national chairman Charles Bolte and director of research Louis Harris co-authored a widely-circulated pamphlet, *Our Negro Veterans,* which presented a thorough analysis of institutional barriers to racial equality in clear, accessible language.[157]

Movement," *Labor Vets Bulletin*, 6/48, pp. 1, 2; Harry Hyde, Jr., "Agrees with Randolph," *Pennsylvania Veteran*, 8/48, p. 2.

[155] "Jim Crow National Guard in Penna. Under Fire," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3/20/48, pp. 1, 4; "Locally Speaking," *AVC Bulletin*, 6/48, p. 6; "Duff Urged to Abolish Discrimination in Guard," *Pennsylvania Veteran* [AVC Pennsylvania State Council], 10/48, p. 1; "White House Aide Assures Guard Funds," *Hartford Courant*, 3/4/49, p. 7; "Bowles Signs Bill Barring Discrimination," *AVC Bulletin*, 8-9/49, p. 3; "AVC Asks Indiana Governor to Integrate State Guard Units," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 7/10/48, Second News Section, p. 4; "Democratic Solons Urged to End Jimcrow Schools," *Indianapolis Recorder*, 12/25/48, pp. 1, 8; "Guard Segregation Tackled in Mass.," *Lewiston [Maine] Daily Sun*, 4/8/49, p. 12; "Scores Urge State to End Guard JC," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 4/16/49, p. 2; "Massachusetts Taps Peabody for Leader," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/49, p. 4. Connecticut banned segregation in its National Guard in early 1949. Mark Jones, "'They Stood Side by Side with White Troops': Integration of the Connecticut National Guard, 1940-1949," *Connecticut History* 49(1)(2010), pp. 56-77.

[156] "Truman Creates Civil Rights Board," *New York Times*, 12/6/46, p. 26; Kathleen J. Frydl, *The GI Bill* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 255-6.

[157] Charles G. Bolte and Louis Harris, *Our Negro Veterans* (New York: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 1947); see also Charles Bolte, "He Fought for Freedom," *Survey Graphic*, 1/47, pp. 69-71, 116-119. Ira Katznelson praises *Our Negro Veterans* for its critical analysis of the GI Bill in *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-*

At the municipal level, the AVC chapter in Montclair, New Jersey helped plan and carry out a "self-study" of racial discrimination in local schools, hospitals, restaurants, recreational facilities, employment, and housing. Utilizing a combination of methods, including interviews and experimental audits, the Montclair study received national press attention and sparked debate among the suburb's forty-five thousand residents, six hundred of whom attended a public meeting to discuss the findings.[158] In Portland, Oregon, AVC audited local restaurants, hotels, and recreational facilities, and presented its findings at hearings on a proposed citywide civil rights ordinance.[159]

Destroying an Organization in Order to Save It:
The Red Scare in the American Veterans Committee

Though much smaller than mainline veterans' organizations such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, AVC showed great promise in the years immediately following World War II. As we have seen, AVC participated in a wide range of anti-racist struggles in both the North and South. At its height, the group claimed roughly 100,000 members in 1,000 local chapters. Yet by the early 1950s, this once vital organization was reduced to a shadow of its former self. While there were multiple factors that contributed to AVC's rapid decline, I shall

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Century America (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), pp. 114-5. Louis Harris later became a famous pollster and political advisor.

[158] Austin Stevens, "Community 'Audit' Aids Study of Bias," *New York Times*, 12/12/47, p. 56; "City Exposes its Own Racial Bias," *New York Amsterdam News*, 12/20/47, p. 30; "Montclair Study Cited as New 'Freedom Yardstick,'" *AVC Bulletin*, 1/48, p. 3; Herbert Mitgang, "'Created Equal?'" *New York Times Magazine*, 6/13/48, pp. 54-5; Benjamin W. Lambert and Nathan E. Cohen, "A Comparison of Different Types of Self-Surveys," *Journal of Social Issues* 5(2)(1949), pp. 46-5.

[159] "AVC Documents its Race Stand," *New Veteran* [AVC Oregon State Council], Fall 1949, pp. 8-9. See also "Freedom Audit Underway in Providence," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/49, p. 7.

argue that internal factionalism, exacerbated by the onset of the Cold War, was decisive. The factional conflict within AVC expressed the strategic and tactical disagreements, ideological clashes, and divergent class interests that existed among progressive veterans. Under different circumstances, this conflict might have been manageable. But in the context of escalating geopolitical tensions and intensifying domestic repression, AVC became a hothouse.

There were no angels. The anti-Communists who ultimately emerged victorious engaged in undemocratic practices to maintain control of the organization, as some of their leaders later admitted. Their opponents – many of whom were indeed Communists – were sometimes obtuse and obstructionist. Though the allegations made against them were often specious, American Communists' uncritical support for the Soviet Union, and secrecy about their affiliations and beliefs, left them vulnerable to the charge that they would stop at nothing to gain control of an organization – and perhaps a country – whose principles they did not truly embrace.

Writing in *Life* magazine in the summer of 1946, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. warned that the Communist Party constituted a "serious danger" to the American left, of which he considered himself a part. Yet he remained cautiously optimistic: "The recent fight for control of the American Veterans Committee shows that, when they are alert to the situation, liberals can lick the Communists." Schlesinger was clearly wrong in one sense, for the factional struggle within AVC was still far from resolved. But many interested observers shared Schlesinger's assessment that the outcome of AVC's internecine conflict would set a precedent for other progressive organizations and social movements. Hoping to tip the balance in favor of the anti-Communists, leaders of several organizations – including the American Civil Liberties Union, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and Socialist Party – offered advice, money, and manpower.

What one participant dubbed "the battle of AVC" was widely recognized by contemporaries as an important theater in a wider war, one in which the entire American left had a stake.[160]

Enter the Communists

Until early 1946, Communist domination of AVC was the exclusive concern of right-wing ideologues, for whom AVC's belief in racial equality and support for the welfare state were sufficient to prove that the organization was teeming with subversives. For their part, Communist Party leaders initially dismissed AVC as irrelevant, and counseled rank-and-file Communists to "bore from within" the American Legion and other established veterans' organizations with the goal of shifting them in a more progressive direction. This perspective was gradually abandoned as it became clear that the Legion, owing to its hierarchical structure and conservative traditions, was hostile political terrain, while AVC was attracting thousands of left-leaning, activist veterans. Alert to this opportunity for collaboration and recruitment to their party, several thousand Communists signed AVC membership cards during the first six months of 1946.[161]

Communists brought a number of strengths to AVC, including organizing and mobilizing skills derived from experience in previous social movements, and a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of energy that stemmed in part from their belief that even the most mundane tasks were

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[160] Daniel James, "The Battle of A.V.C.," *The Nation*, 6/14/47, pp. 706-8.

[161] I. Weise, "Bolte's Book on World War II Veterans Confuses the Main Issues," *Daily Worker*, 11/30/45, p. 11; Robert Thompson, "Party Policy in the Veterans' Field," *Political Affairs*, 1/46, pp. 42-49; Walter Bernstein, "Attacking Mr. Bolte," *The Nation*, 1/19/46, pp. 65-7; I. Weise, "Bolte Seems to be Sailing by Henry Luce's Maps," *The Worker*, 1/27/46, p. 13; Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: Fresh Blood in the Old Organizations," *Daily Worker*, 2/7/46, p. 5; Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: AVC Invites Curtains by Use of Peglerian Red-Baiting," ibid., 3/14/46, p. 5; Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: Vet Leaders Who Do Not Speak for Their Members," ibid., 3/18/46, p. 5; Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: Fight for Vets' Needs is Job of All Groups," ibid., 5/9/46, p. 11.

contributions toward an epochal, global social transformation. "The Communists I knew were perfectly civilized human beings," recalled Chuck Rowland, an AVC regional field organizer who decided to join the party after concluding that its members were "the most dedicated workers and soundest strategists."[162]

Communists raised probing questions about AVC policies and practices. They were particularly unsparing in their criticism of AVC leaders' opposition to cash bonuses for veterans. For the liberals who founded AVC, the bonus was a symbol of everything that was wrong with traditional veterans' groups, such as the American Legion, that pursued special privileges for their constituents at the expense of the wider society. The Communists argued that working-class veterans were strapped for cash, and that there was no principled reason for AVC to oppose bonuses when the organization enthusiastically supported policies and programs such as the GI Bill and VA hospital system. The United Auto Workers and many other labor unions supported cash bonuses for veterans, and Communists wondered aloud whether the elite background of many AVC leaders blinded them to the legitimacy of the demand. [163] Communists were also well aware that the bonus issue had galvanized a confrontational mass movement in years past.

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[162] "Field Secretaries," *American Veterans Committee Constitutional Convention* program, box 167, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records; Charles Dennison Rowland interview by Allan Bérubé, 3/19/1984, transcript, p. 15, Archives and Reading Room, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco; John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 61; see also Eric Marcus, *Making Gay History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 26-7.

[163] Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: Bonus Hush-Hush Keeps Needed Dough from Vets," *Daily Worker*, 4/23/46, p. 4; Joseph Clark, "Vets' Voice: AVC Parley and the Veteran's Bonus," *Daily Worker*, 6/20/46, p. 9; John Gates, "The American Veterans Committee Convention," *Political Affairs*, 8/46, pp. 734-41.

Despite their wariness about the influx of Communists into their ranks, AVC leaders were initially hesitant to openly attack their new comrades. American Communists had fought bravely in the U.S. armed forces, the Soviet Union had been a wartime ally against the Axis, and hopes for postwar international cooperation had not yet been dashed by the Cold War.[164] Furthermore, liberals were wary of being associated with conservative red-baiters like Westbrook Pegler, a syndicated newspaper columnist who penned a series of inflammatory articles castigating AVC for its support of labor unions and the New Deal. (So many liberal veterans joined AVC after reading Pegler's red-baiting tirades that one chapter declared him the winner of its recruitment contest.[165]) One indication of the mixed feelings that prevailed among members of the provisional National Planning Committee was their decision, after passing a resolution distancing themselves from Communism, not to mention it in the published meeting minutes.[166]

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[164] Several leading figures in AVC were also active in the "world federalist" movement, which advocated universal disarmament and a system of democratic global governance. "An Appeal to the Peoples of the World," *AVC Bulletin*, 4/1/46, p. 8; Harris Wofford, Jr., "Young Grass Roots," *Freedom & Union*, 11/46, pp. 6-7; Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980). On the world federalist movement, see Gilbert Jonas, *One Shining Moment: A Short History of the American Student World Federalist Movement 1941-1953* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2001).

[165] Westbrook Pegler, "As Pegler Sees It: Columnist Discusses New Veterans' Group," *New York Journal-American*, 2/19/46, p. 3; Westbrook Pegler, "As Pegler Sees It: Columnist Reviews AVC and PAC Actions," ibid., 2/20/46, p. 3; "First Prize – Socks for the Peg's Alopecia," *Capital Veteran* [AVC Greater Washington Area Council], 8/46, p. 1; Irving Levy, "Pegler and the AVC," *PM*, 2/26/46, p. 19. On Pegler, see Oliver Pilat, *Pegler, Angry Man of the Press* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963); David Witwer, *Shadow of the Racketeer: Scandal in Organized Labor* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Finis Farr, *Fair Enough: The Life of Westbrook Pegler* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1975).

[166] Harrison (2009), p. 101.

Los Angeles and New York City quickly became bastions of opposition to the national leadership of AVC, which reflected the concentration of Communist Party membership and influence in those cities. But even where they were strongest, Communists and their allies faced sharp challenges. Controversy erupted at a meeting of the AVC New York Metropolitan Area Council in the spring of 1946 when Lawrence Knobel was nominated for the salaried executive secretary position. Knobel was a heavily-decorated soldier and a forceful speaker who had previously worked as an organizer for the militant United Electrical Workers union; unbeknownst to most of his fellow veterans, Knobel was also a Communist.[167] Delegate John Ellis, an investment banker and Republican Party activist, put Knobel on the spot before the entire assembly. Ellis claimed that his own brother was a Communist who had acknowledged that Knobel was a fellow party member. Turning to Knobel, Ellis insisted, "I want you to answer. Are you a Communist?" Knobel was indignant: "I will neither affirm nor deny that I am a Communist because it is none of your business what I am. If you go looking for Communists, you are going to destroy the American Veterans Committee." Knobel won the election by a solid majority, but the anti-Communists vowed to keep fighting.[168]

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[167] As an undergraduate at City College during the Depression, Knobel edited the campus newspaper and was voted its best writer by the student body. A recipient of the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, he participated in the D-Day landing at Normandy, fought in the battle of Hürtgen Forest, and helped liberate Paris and Dachau. "City College Class Scoffs at Dudes," *New York Times*, 4/27/36, p. 6; Lawrence Knobel, "Former Campus Editor Explains Crusading Policy of Newspaper," *The Campus* [City College of New York], 5/8/36, p. 1; Lawrence R. Knobel curriculum vitae, FBI New York field office file # 100-80087 (Subject: American Veterans Committee), Sec. 5, American Veterans Committee FOIA files, Tamiment Library; Dana Welch [daughter of Lawrence Knobel] email to author, 7/28/2009.

[168] "Veterans Elect Man Called Communist," *New York Times*, 5/12/46, p. 35; "Communism Charges Hurled at A.V.C. Parley," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 5/12/46, p. 44. On Ellis, see also "Baldwin Names 2 as Campaign Aides," *New York Times*, 6/10/46, p. 31; "Differs with Brother," *New York Times*, 10/3/48, p. 46. Ellis's brother was a longtime United Electrical

Enter the Socialists

The liberal anti-Communists bolstered their strength by allying with a group of Socialist Party members and sympathizers, located mainly in New York. Though far fewer in number than the Communists, the Socialists had years of practical experience vying with them for the leadership of labor unions and other organizations. "It is difficult to explain to the uninitiated the bond that existed among these semiprofessional Communist-fighters," recalled John Roche, an AVC activist at Cornell University. "The face of the world has changed so [much in the years since then] that Communist-fighting in liberal organizations has become…a superfluous activity. But a generation of radical young men and women were weaned on it, and developed it to a fine art. Moreover, it was a bitter business, fought with all the zeal of a religious war; to the anti-Communist [socialist], the Communist was a perverter of the precious tradition, a desecrater of the sanctuary of radicalism."[169]

The key figure within this network was Gus Tyler, political director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Indefatigable and tactically shrewd, Tyler provided less-

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Workers activist who refused to discuss his political affiliations when called before a Congressional investigative committee in 1948. "Testimony of Rudy Ellis, Member of Local No. 301, UERMWA, Schenectady, N. Y.," *Investigation of Communist Infiltration of UERMWA. Hearings Before a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Eightieth Congress, Second Session, Pursuant to H. Res. 111 (80th Congress), Hearings Held at Washington, D.C., September 2, 28, and 29, Schenectady, N.Y., September 30 and October 1, and at New York, N.Y., October 6, 1948* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 298-309.

[169] Roche typescript, p. 33. Roche was elected national vice president of the Student League for Industrial Democracy in the spring of 1947. He went on to advise the Kennedy administration and subsequently became an outspoken neo-conservative. John P. Roche, "Politics on the American Campus," *New Leader*, 8/9/47, pp. 4, 14; John P. Roche, "Was Everyone Terrified? The Mythology of 'McCarthyism,'" *Academic Questions* 2(2)(1989), pp. 64-5, 74-7.

seasoned AVC activists with invaluable advice on how to defeat the Communists and their allies.[170] Playing a behind-the-scenes role at first, Tyler became the whip of the "Independent Progressive" caucus, whose main purpose was to coordinate the activities of all anti-Communist forces within AVC – liberal and radical alike – on a national scale.

The first national convention

As delegates headed to Des Moines for the first national convention of AVC in June 1946, the organization claimed approximately 60,000 members in more than five hundred local chapters, and was growing at the dizzying pace of 2,000 new members per week.[171] By all accounts, the convention was an inspiring event. Guest speakers Henry Wallace and Walter

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[170] Harrison (2009), pp. 101-2; John Feild, *Making a Difference: A Civil Rights Memoir* (Seattle: TFCD, 2000), pp. 11-12; Michael Straight, *After Long Silence* (New York: Norton, 1983), p. 236; Meyer (1980), pp. 52-3; Roche typescript, p. 37. Born Augustus Tilove, Tyler began writing for the Yiddish Socialist press as a teenager; he changed his surname to honor Wat Tyler, the 14th-century English peasant rebel. Tyler resigned from the Socialist Party after concluding that only the U.S. military could stop Hitler. He was drafted into the Air Corps but did not see combat during World War II. He served as educational director of ILGWU Local 91 until the fall of 1947, when David Dubinsky tapped him to head the ILGWU's new political department. Tyler joined AVC at Dubinsky's behest after liberal AVC leaders appealed to ILGWU officials for assistance in their fight against the Communists. Gus Tyler, "The Intellectual and the ILGWU," in *Creators and Disturbers: Reminiscences by Jewish Intellectuals of New York*, edited by Bernard Rosenberg and Ernest Goldstein (New York: Columbia University, 1982), pp. 155-175; (1982); Bernard Bellush, "Writing – and Living – the History of America's Left," *Forward*, 10/12/2001, p. 2; Robert D. Parmet, *The Master of Seventh Avenue: David Dubinsky and the American Labor Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), pp. 211-218; Oren Root, *Persons and Persuasions* (New York: Norton, 1974), pp. 189-91; Jay Lovestone to David Dubinsky, 4/2/46, box 238, folder "Dubinsky, David, 1946," Jay Lovestone papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

The ILGWU, a historically Socialist-led union, was one of the few labor organizations that provided AVC with financial support. "AVC Gets $5,000 Gift from Garment Union; Dubinsky Praises Veterans' Labor Support," *New York Times*, 8/30/46, p. 10.

[171] "Bolte Reports to Members of AVC," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, p. 10.

Reuther gave AVC their blessings. Journalists marveled at the optimistic mood among the delegates and the seriousness with which they debated issues late into the night. Discussions were conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, and a free mimeograph machine was made available to any delegate or group of delegates that wished to publish a statement. "This convention was something…never seen before by this writer in 25 years of covering national and state political and other conventions," reported Thomas Stokes of the *New York World-Telegram*.[172]

Yet the presence of competing factions was palpable throughout the proceedings. On some issues, the Communists and their allies were clearly in the minority. Denver delegate Clinton Jencks argued that veterans of the Spanish Civil War should be eligible for membership in AVC, but the proposal was defeated handily. A resolution to put AVC on record in support of cash bonuses was likewise rejected, though the vote was closer. The convention also adopted a constitution whose preamble invoked the principles of "free speech, free press, free worship, free assembly, and free elections" and the goals of "full production and full employment…under a system of private enterprise in which business, labor, agriculture, and government cooperate."[173] These seemingly innocuous phrases would later be used as weapons against the Communists.

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[172] "Housing Program is Undermined by Lobbyists, Wallace Maintains," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, p. 11; "'We're With You,' Reuther Tells Convention Delegates," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, p. 11; Stokes quoted in American Veterans Committee, *Six Questions and Answers*, undated [circa 1946], carton 2, folder 16, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Council records.

[173] *Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of American Veterans Committee, Held in Des Moines, Iowa, Hotel Fort Des Moines and Shrine Temple, June 14, 15, and 16, 1946*, pp. 142-3, box 97, folder 2, American Veterans Committee records; "'Left-Wing' Offer Rejected by AVC," *New York Times*, 6/16/46, p. 26; George Eckel, "Moderates Win in AVC Election," ibid., 6/17/46, p. 15; Guy Gentry, "Vote Down Reds on Constitution of Vets' Group," *Chicago Tribune*, 6/16/46, p. 27.

A solid majority of the officers elected at the convention, including national chairman Charles Bolte and vice chairman Gilbert Harrison, were liberal anti-Communists identified with the Independent Progressive caucus. However, a minority of candidates associated with the rival "Unity" caucus, in which the Communists were active, won election to the twenty-four member National Planning Committee, along with several independents.[174] While the convention was widely recognized as a victory for the anti-Communists, it was by no means a rout.

Deepening divisions

Factional conflict intensified in the months following the first convention. Shortly after returning from Des Moines, Bolte and Harrison fired several regional field organizers suspected of being Unity supporters.[175] Meanwhile, Unity activists called for referenda on a series of proposals that would have altered the balance of power within AVC. Some of the proposals, such as establishing a procedure for recall of national officers, seemed unobjectionable on their face. Others, such as allowing Spanish Civil War veterans to join, and increasing the proportion of membership dues retained by the localities, were attempts to reopen questions decided by the

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[174] The Unity caucus did not adopt this moniker until after the convention, and later changed its name to the "Progressive" caucus. For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to it as the Unity caucus throughout.

[175] The official reason given for the dismissals was a serious budget crunch, but Harrison later admitted that some of the firings were politically motivated. "AVC Staff is Reduced Due to Lack of Funds," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/15/46, pp. 1, 2; Gilbert A. Harrison interview by Joel Gardner, 1975-1978, UCLA Oral History Program, Charles E. Young Research Library Special Collections, UCLA, p. 277. Field organizer Chuck Rowland was "canned" a few months later. Chuck Rowland to Hal Call, 2/16/57, First Church of One Brotherhood Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, University of Southern California; Rowland interview by Bérubé, p. 15; Chuck Rowland interview by Jim Kepner, 12/31/1976, audio recording, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

national convention just a few months earlier. The Independent Progressives criticized the referenda as a waste of members' time, and advocated waiting until the next convention to address these issues.[176]

The rival factions also clashed over strategy and tactics. On October 19, 1946, seventy veterans occupied the New York State Senate chambers, demanding that the governor call a special session to address the housing shortage. The seizure was apparently spontaneous, but it occurred during a 3,000-strong "March on Albany" organized by the AVC New York Metropolitan Area Council and several left-led unions.[177] In a letter to the *New York Herald-Tribune*, AVC national chairman Charles Bolte expressed sympathy with the occupiers' demands, but also made it clear that "AVC holds no brief for this type of demonstration." AVC National Planning Committee member Oren Root, Jr. publicly derided the occupation as "a publicity stunt that can do no good."[178]

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[176] National Administrative Committee, "Don't Cut the Dues!" *AVC Bulletin*, 9/15/46, p. 1; Hobert W. Burns, "Californian Attacks Root," *AVC Bulletin*, 10/1/46, p. 5; Oren Root, Jr., "Root Hits Referendum Move," *AVC Bulletin*, 10/1/46, p. 5.

[177] Though it failed to secure any firm commitments from the governor, the protest was front-page news. "75 Veterans Seize State Senate, Demand Dewey Act on Housing," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 10/20/46, pp. 1, 46; "Veterans See Dewey, Lift Albany Seige," ibid., 10/21/46, pp. 1, 17.

[178] Charles Bolte, "A.V.C. at Albany," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 10/25/46, p. 26; "Albany Besiegers are Cheered on Return, but AVC Leader Scores 'Publicity Stunt,'" *New York Times*, 10/21/46, p. 3. Arguing that "seizure of government property…is not to be tolerated," NPC member Arnold Rivkin compared the occupiers to Herman Talmadge, the racist Georgia politician who locked a rival candidate out of the governor's office during a succession crisis that ensued after Talmadge's father, Gov. Eugene Talmadge, passed away in 1946. Arnold Rivkin, "Democratic and Constructive Action," *AVC Bulletin*, 2/15/47, p. 3. According to Lincoln Lauterstein, an Independent Progressive who served as AVC national counsel during this period, the occupation was led by Communists who were not interested in obtaining "more housing in less time. Rather, the goal of the Communists is the exploitation of the suffering…arising out of the lack of decent low cost and medium housing. Within the field of constructive action Communists have little or nothing to offer…. They can vilify and condemn, but they will make

In contrast to the majority of their national officers, many AVC members expressed support for the occupation. Thomas Perry of Manhattan reminded readers of the AVC national newsletter that the United States has a proud tradition of disruptive protest. "If Mr. Bolte and Mr. Root condemn the Veterans Senate as 'illegal' and undignified and un-American, then they must condemn…the Boston Tea Party, the freeing of the slaves via the underground railroad, John Brown's insurrection, and the sit-down strikes of the 1930s." Such sentiment was widespread in New York City. When the New York Metropolitan Area Council held officer elections just days after the occupation ended in Albany, the Independent Progressives were trounced.[179]

A referendum on Communism

The majority on the National Planning Committee threw down the gauntlet in November 1946 by introducing a resolution explicitly barring Communists from membership in AVC. "The attempts of honest progressives to attain their objectives by intelligent, constructive action have repeatedly been hamstrung or completely nullified by the irrational, ill-considered tactics of…Communist Party members who have clung leech-like to them and whose sole purpose is to agitate and confuse, not to achieve reforms where reforms are needed," the resolution stated. "We spurn the insincere cooperation of a minority group unquestioningly obeying leaders whose

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no attempt to enlist the cooperation of conservative groups in the community which are not always reactionary in the extreme." Research Committee for AVC Development, "Housing – Goals and Methods," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/48, p. 2.

A few weeks before the Albany protest, AVC received official accreditation from the Veterans Administration, empowering the organization to represent individual veterans in their dealings with the VA. This was a major selling point for the organization, and concerns about losing this special status may have colored some AVC activists' reactions to the occupation in Albany. "Bradley Grants AVC Accreditation by VA," *AVC Bulletin*, 10/1/46, pp. 1, 8.

[179] Thomas L. Perry, "Cheers Senate Seizure," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/15/46, p. 5; "A.V.C. Curbs Left-Wing Actions; Council Must Pass on Big Issues," *New York Herald-Tribune*, 10/28/46, p. 17.

objectives, including a totalitarian dictatorship of the left, are irreconcilable with our own. In taking this position, we are unhappily aware that we shall be accused from some quarters of having joined forces with those distasteful spokesmen of the right who have loosely and maliciously applied the label 'Communist' to many commendable organizations. We wish emphatically to disassociate ourselves from the red-baiting tactics of the henchmen of reaction, but we cannot let their bad example dissuade us from our determination to make known our stand."[180]

Instead of defending the right of Communists to join AVC, the minority of Unity supporters on the National Planning Committee contended that they had no jurisdiction to decide the matter, and recommended postponing further discussion until the next national convention where the membership could weigh in. Anticipating this objection, supporters of the resolution proposed polling the chapters.[181] They also introduced a parallel resolution to bar fascists from joining AVC, on the assumption that it would pass without controversy, thereby undercutting objections to the anti-Communist resolution on the grounds that AVC should not impose political litmus tests on its members.

For the next several months, AVC chapters across the country debated the nature of Communism, the rights of political minorities, and the future of American liberalism. A flurry of impassioned letters – far too many to print in the organization's newsletter – arrived at the national office. "There is but one criterion in judging the qualification for membership of any individual, and that is subscription to the principles of our organization as embodied in the

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[180] National Planning Committee, "Statement on Communism," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/15/46, p. 3.

[181] National Planning Committee minutes, 11/10/46, box 101, folder 2, American Veterans Committee records.

Preamble to our Constitution," wrote Howard Zinn of Brooklyn. "It is not for us to decide, *a priori*, whether a member of AVC disagrees with any part of that preamble. Such disagreement can only be shown in real life, by the specific actions of that individual. Our Constitution has ample provision for the expulsion of those who deliberately take action inimical to the basic principles of AVC. We will wholeheartedly endorse the expulsion of any member who discredits AVC or acts in a manner detrimental to its welfare, whether that member be a Communist, a Socialist, a Democrat or a Republican. But we deplore wholesale categorization as unscientific, irrational and unjust."[182]

James McGrew of Manhattan considered such arguments naive, since the Communists were beholden to a foreign power. "A very fine organization, the American Student Union, was wrecked when the tiny minority of Communists who had gained control of it attempted to swing the entire organization from an anti-Hitler stand to a pro-Hitler stand solely because Stalin had found it convenient to sign a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany," McGrew pointed out. "I say give the Communists all the blessings of free speech, free press and free political activity, but DON'T let them take over and wreck AVC."[183]

J. C. Brown of Minneapolis, a self-described non-Communist with socialist leanings, wondered whether the resolution required him to quit the organization. "I am sure there must be other AVCers who regard private enterprise as something less than hallowed…. The question is not whether AVC is socialist, but…does AVC tolerate socialists…in its ranks?" Gilbert Harrison replied by clarifying what he saw as the main intent of the resolution. "As far as I am concerned,

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[182] Howard Zinn to National Planning Committee, 12/27/1946, box 107, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records.

[183] James W. McGrew to The AVC Bulletin, 12/16/46, box 106, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records; see also James W. McGrew to The AVC Bulletin, 10/31/46, ibid.

the Socialists are welcome. That phrase 'private enterprise' is an extremely vague phrase, and…many of those who speak most of private enterprise do the most to kill it. The more basic principle…in the Preamble to the AVC Constitution is…political democracy. This is where we depart [sic] company from the Communist Party and this, to me, is a matter so fundamental that no kind of compromise is tolerable."[184]

Leon Taubenhaus of Houston, Texas worried that the proposed cure was worse than the disease. "In Greece where the Communists are attacked, as also in Spain, we see democracy destroyed. Shouldn't we learn from this?"[185] Supporters of the anti-Communist resolution countered that there was an important difference between wholesale repression of Communists – which they opposed – and the decision by a voluntary, non-governmental organization to bar Communists from membership.[186] Many liberals nevertheless remained wary. "I was so confused," recalled Ed Wood, an AVC activist in Chicago. "I didn't like the Communists. Hell, I KNEW they had done terrible things…. But treating them as they would treat us stuck in my craw. What gave us the right to repress them? Why were we so arrogant, so goddamn sure of ourselves?"[187] To assuage concerns that the anti-Communist resolution would set a dangerous precedent, Harrison solicited the assistance of Roger Baldwin, president of the American Civil

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[184] J. C. Brown to The AVC Bulletin, 11/25/46, box 106, folder 6, American Veterans Committee records; Gilbert Harrison to J. C. Brown, 12/3/46, ibid.

[185] Leon Taubenhaus to Charles G. Bolte, 12/20/46, box 106, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records.

[186] Gilbert Harrison to Russell Ames, 12/10/46, box 106, folder 6, American Veterans Committee records.

[187] Edward W. Wood, Jr., *On Being Wounded* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991), p. 87.

Liberties Union. In a letter reprinted in the *AVC Bulletin*, Baldwin explained that the ACLU had already purged itself of Communists a few years earlier, and advised AVC to do the same.[188]

When the votes were tallied, approximately 160 chapters approved the anti-Communist resolution, 110 opposed it, and 40 abstained. As expected, the opposition was concentrated in New York and California. But several large chapters in other regions rejected the resolution by a wide margin, including the Topeka, Kansas chapter.[189] Some chapters were deeply divided over the resolution. At the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the vote was evenly split, half for and half against.[190] Strikingly, the majority of chapters did not report any results at all, and turnout was consistently low even in branches that did report results. "If the National Planning Board [sic] sought deliberately to lop off 10,000 members from the A.V.C. roll, it couldn't have thought up a better device than that of demanding a chapter by chapter vote on its 'Communist Manifesto,'" complained John Daniel, a Congregational minister and chapter vice chairman from Newark, New Jersey.[191] Daniel may have significantly underestimated the number of members who voted with their feet, as less than 10,000 members participated in the referendum nationally.

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[188] Roget Baldwin to Gilbert Harrison, 11/27/46, box 107, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records; Gilbert Harrison to Roger Baldwin, 12/3/46, ibid.; Roger Baldwin to Gilbert Harrison, 12/4/46, ibid.; Roger Baldwin, "Baldwin Says 'Go Further,'" *AVC Bulletin*, 12/15/46, p. 5. On Baldwin, see Robert C. Cottrell, *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). On the purge of Communists from the ACLU, see also Judy Kutulas, *The American Civil Liberties Union and the Making of Modern Liberalism, 1930-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Chapter 3.

[189] Topeka, Kansas chapter #1, national chapter #577, "This is to certify…," 12/12/46, box 107, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records; Arthur Marshall to National Planning Committee, 12/19/46, ibid.

[190] University of Wisconsin chapter, national chapter #602, "This is to certify…," 12/18/46, box 106, folder 11, American Veterans Committee records.

[191] John I. Daniel to Gilbert Harrison, 12/2/46, box 106, folder 6, American Veterans Committee records; see also John I. Daniel, "Call Off the Civil War!," ibid.

Ed Wood dropped out of AVC after his chapter endorsed the anti-Communist resolution. "I went to the meeting, but my heart was no longer in the organization; it offended me to deny others their rights, no matter what their political belief."[192]

The Cold War at home

The year 1947 was marked by rising international tensions and a sharp right turn in domestic politics. After sweeping the mid-term Congressional elections, Republicans and their conservative Democratic allies passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which barred labor unions from engaging in sympathy strikes, empowered states to enact right-to-work legislation, and mandated that union officials sign non-Communist affidavits in order to utilize the services of the National Labor Relations Board. President Truman announced a loyalty program for government employees and pledged that the U.S. would actively fight the spread of Communism globally.

One important development in the social movement field was the formation of Americans for Democratic Action in early 1947. "The historic significance" of ADA, the *New York Times* observed, "was the cleavage which it creates in the American liberal movement." While the group reiterated its support for the New Deal, opposition to Communism was a central point of unity. "We reject any association with Communists or sympathizers with Communism in the United States as completely as we reject any association with fascists or their sympathizers." Among the founders of ADA were David Dubinksy of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers, Walter White of the NAACP, Minneapolis mayor Hubert Humphrey, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, historian Arthur

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[192] Wood (1991), p. 88.

Schlesinger, Jr., and several national officers of AVC, including Charles Bolte, Gilbert Harrison, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.[193]

As the son of FDR and an elected member of the National Planning Committee, Roosevelt was among the most recognized figures in AVC. He caused an uproar in mid-January when he told the press that the "chief trouble" facing AVC was infiltration by Communists. Letters poured in to the national office decrying his statement, such as the following one from Miami: "At our last meeting, which was attended by all four chapters, a motion was passed to convey to the national organization our feeling that the time has long since passed when we should continue feeding our opponents with protestations of non-Communist taint. The action of the NPC some weeks ago in passing anti-Communist and anti-fascist resolutions should have been sufficient to disclose our sympathies. The local area urges…members of the NPC…to make it a national policy to desist from discussing the Communist issue." Officers of the Nashville chapter complained to Gilbert Harrison that Roosevelt's statement resulted in "very unfavorable publicity for our chapter, and we desire some explanation." Judging Roosevelt's statement "very detrimental to our local organization," the Battle Creek, Michigan chapter unanimously passed a

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[193] Among the other prominent AVC activists who held leadership positions in ADA during this period were Louis Harris, William Batt, Jr., Richard Bolling, Barney Taylor, Melvyn Douglas, and Hal Libros. "130 Liberals for a Group on Right," *New York Times*, 1/5/47, p. 5; "Greeks Merit Aid, Porter Declares," ibid., 3/30/47, p. 46; Harold Libros, *Hard Core Liberals: A Sociological Analysis of the Philadelphia Americans for Democratic Action* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1975), p. 21; Richard W. Bolling interviews by Niel M. Johnson, 10/21/1988 and 4/20/1989, transcript, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri; Johannes Hoeber interview by Jerry N. Hess, 9/13/1966, transcript, ibid.; Douglas Steven Gallagher, "'Walking the Tightrope': Americans for Democratic Action in the South, 1947-1963" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Florida, 2008), Ch. 3. According to Dubinsky's biographer, Gus Tyler often attended ADA executive board meetings in Dubinsky's place (Parmet 2005:218). Niebuhr publicly endorsed AVC in the spring of 1947. "AVC 'Hopeful, Creative' – Niebuhr," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/15/47, p. 5. On ADA, see Steven Gillon, *Politics and Vision: ADA and American Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

resolution calling on the National Planning Committee to enjoin its members from making public statements without prior approval from the entire body. The Nashua, New Hampshire chapter reacted to Roosevelt's statement by voting to disband.[194]

Writing in the *AVC Bulletin*, National Planning Committee member and Unity leader Morris Pottish claimed that Roosevelt and his fellow anti-Communists were hoping to shield AVC from the growing wave of conservative reaction.[195] It is unclear whether Roosevelt believed that criticizing the Communists would help insulate AVC from attack, but Gilbert Harrison claimed to harbor no illusions regarding the possibility of appeasing the right wing in this manner. Reflecting on the mix of motives that led anti-Communist liberal leaders of AVC such as Roosevelt and himself to oppose the Communists so stridently, Harrison acknowledged that many of them aspired to hold political office or receive appointments to government posts. "In our skirmishes with the Communists we [were] true to ourselves, but we were also aware that our careers would be furthered by this proof of loyalty," he recalled.[196]

If there was any confusion on the matter, it soon became clear that attempts to placate AVC's external critics were unlikely to succeed unless the organization was willing to abandon its founding principles. In the spring of 1947, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs voted to bar AVC from testifying on any pending legislation, a move urged by leaders of the Veterans of

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[194] Burnett Roth to Gilbert Harrison, 1/24/47, box 107, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records; S. Love and W. T. Mallison, Jr. to Gilbert Harrison, 1/24/47, ibid.; Miguel P. DeCruz to National Planning Committee, 1/21/47, ibid.; Telegram from Benjamin C. Bradley to Charles Bolte, undated [circa 1/17/47], ibid.

[195] Morris Pottish, "AVC Analysis," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/1/47, p. 3.

[196] Harrison (2009), p. 105; Harrison interview by Gardner, pp. 289, 309; Mendel Lieberman to Gilbert Harrison, 7/7/61, box 5, folder "American Veterans Committee, 1956-1961," Gilbert A. Harrison papers, Library of Congress.

Foreign Wars. The stated reason was that AVC allowed merchant seamen to join and was therefore not a *bona fide* veterans' organization. Charles Bolte believed the prime mover was committee member John Rankin of Mississippi, who sought revenge for AVC's role in the campaign to oust Theodore Bilbo from the Senate.[197]

Several months later, at the behest of American Legion officials, the California legislature voted to deny AVC various benefits and privileges afforded to veterans' groups by the state government. Once again the official rationale was that the merchant marine was not a branch of the military, and therefore AVC was not a legitimate veterans' group. Reluctantly, both the executive committee of the AVC California State Council and the AVC National Planning Committee voted to exclude veterans of the merchant marine from the organization. Though they constituted only about half of one percent of total AVC membership, merchant seamen suffered high casualty rates during the war, and the decision to kick them out was generally recognized as a retreat from principle, made under duress.[198]

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[197] As Bolte pointed out, the VFW allowed contract surgeons to join and occasionally granted honorary membership status to civilians. Yet the committee did not bar the VFW from testifying, which suggests that the official rationale for excluding AVC was merely a pretext. "AVC Barred from House Committee," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/1/47, pp. 1, 4. VFW leaders began labelling AVC a Communist front the previous year. "VFW Officer Brands AVC 'Red Front,'" *AVC Bulletin*, 7/15/46, pp. 1, 3.

[198] "California Bill to Cripple AVC May Pass Legislature," *AVC Bulletin*, 5/15/47, pp. 1, 8; David O. Smith, "Wants to Keep Merchant Marine," ibid., 9/47, p. 9; Archie Green, "Green Presents California Views," ibid.; Robert W. Hollingsworth, "Pleads Case of Merchant Marine," ibid., 10/47, p. 5; "Calif. Views on Merchant Marine," ibid.; Jules G. Szanton, "Merchant Marine Record Presented," ibid., 11/47, p. 9; V. S. Fitzpatrick, "Mariner Approves California Stand," ibid.; Nathan Duff, "Urges Mariners to be Unselfish," ibid.; "NPC Okays Plan to Bar Mariners," ibid., 12/47, p. 2; "California Votes for State Bonus," ibid., 3/48, p. 7. Many merchant seamen were members of left-led unions, but the decision to exclude them from AVC was not merely a factional maneuver, at least not in California where the Independent Progressives were a minority on statewide leadership bodies.

The second national convention

On the eve of its second national convention, held in Milwaukee in June 1947, AVC claimed roughly 100,000 members in more than 950 chapters.[199] One of the highlights of the event was a chapter workshop in which dozens of delegates reported on their local efforts and offered practical advice on how to build the organization. An overwhelming majority of delegates voted to condemn both the Truman doctrine and government proposals to institute a peacetime draft.[200] Beneath this surface unity, however, factional divisions were even more pronounced than at the previous year's gathering.

Prior to the convention, Independent Progressives in New York and Philadelphia strategically bolted from chapters led by Unity supporters to form breakaway chapters under their own control. Harrison and his allies at the national office covertly encouraged this practice, which bolstered anti-Communist voting strength at the convention.[201] Gus Tyler, who served as point man for the Independent Progressives in Milwaukee – as he had done in Des Moines the year before – produced several issues of a factional newsletter that provided its readers with talking points in the months and weeks leading up to the conclave.

A significant development at the second convention was the appearance of a "Build AVC" caucus, which consisted of avowed non-Communists who balked at the aggressive anti-Communism of the Independent Progressives. The most prominent figure associated with this

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[199] "Membership Has Doubled Since Des Moines, 964 Chapters Listed," *AVC Bulletin*, 6/1/47, p. 5.

[200] "AVC Votes 4 to 1 Against UMT," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/47, p. 3.

[201] Roche typescript, p. 65-7.

group was *New Republic* editor Michael Straight, a member of the AVC National Planning Committee. The Build caucus proposed a slate of candidates for national leadership that included supporters of the Unity and Independent Progressive factions, as well as several independents.[202]

Bolte and Harrison declined to stand for re-election, as both men had been awarded Rhodes scholarships for the coming year. The Independent Progressives ran Chat Paterson, the AVC legislative representative in Washington, D.C., and Richard Bolling, an ADA field secretary based in Kansas City, for chairman and vice chairman.[203] Paterson received twice as many votes as the Unity candidate, and four times as many as the Build candidate. Bolling narrowly defeated his opponent Franklin Williams, an African-American attorney and National Planning Committee member endorsed by both Unity and Build. The Independent Progressives won an overwhelming majority of seats on the National Planning Committee, with Straight and

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[202] Members of the Workers Party – a small socialist organization led by Max Shachtman – announced the formation of the "Labor Vets Group" at the Milwaukee convention. The Labor Vets criticized the Build AVC caucus for failing to recognize the "totalitarian" nature of the Communists, and for dividing the anti-Communist forces within AVC. S. Berg [Saul Mendelson], "AVC Convention Registers Progress," *Labor Action*, 6/30/47, p. 4; "Form Labor Vet Group at AVC Convention," ibid., 7/7/47, p. 3; "Labor Veterans Group in AVC Sets Forth its Program in First Issue of Monthly Bulletin," ibid., 8/4/47, p. 4; "The Center Caucus," *Labor Vets Bulletin*, 2/48, p. 1; "Who Are the Labor Vets?," ibid., 11/25/48, p. 1. Throughout the factional battles of 1947-48, the Labor Vets functioned as a wing of the Independent Progressive caucus, but criticized IP leaders for employing undemocratic means to defeat the Communists. Steve Parker, "Lack of Labor Tie and Stalinist Infiltration Cloud AVC Future," *Labor Action*, 11/25/46, p. 3; W. Fargo, "How to Fight Stalinism in the AVC," ibid., 1/6/47, p. 8; W. Fargo, "How Can Militant Vets Meet the Crisis in AVC?," ibid., 6/16/47, pp. 1, 8; "The Gates Case," *Labor Vets Bulletin*, 9/48, pp. 1-3; "The Constitutional Amendment," ibid., 11/15/48, pp. 1-5; "The Crohn Case," ibid., p. 5; "Why We Belong to and Support the IP," ibid., 11/25/48, pp. 1-2; Labor Vets Group, "From a Catch-All of Hopefuls to---??? A Message to 'Build AVC'ers,'" undated [circa fall 1948], box 106, folder 2, American Veterans Committee records.

[203] For biographical sketches of Bolling and Paterson, see Bolling interview; "Paterson, Chat," *Current Biography 1948* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1949), pp. 490-2.

Archie Green of California the lone Build supporters, and Morris Pottish of New York the sole Unity voice.[204]

"The Communist issue has now been settled in AVC," Paterson announced following the convention. "We will have no witch hunts, and we will avoid red-baiting, but we have made it clear that AVC is not going to follow anybody's party line."[205] However, as events would soon demonstrate, "the Communist issue" was not settled, within AVC or outside it.

Seeing red in the South

As an interracial organization with a "red" taint, the AVC faced immense obstacles in the South. Three chapters in North Carolina fell apart in 1947 because "we were smeared as a Communist front group, deprived of meeting places because we were organized interracially, and economic pressure of every description was brought to bear on our members," reported field organizer James Crawford. "Generally, our chapters are smeared by rival veterans' organizations or politicians seeking an issue on which to base a political campaign. The usual tactics [are] to have the chapter barred from its meeting place, and to send committees to call on the employers

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[204] On Williams, see "Fordham Law Graduate Among Top AVC Leaders," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 9/21/46, p. 7; National Planning Committee minutes, 11/11/46, pp. 3-6, box 101, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records; Franklin H. Williams, "An Open Letter," *Vets Voice* [New York Metropolitan Area Council], 2/47, pp. 1, 2. On Green, see Sean Burns, *Archie Green: The Making of a Working-Class Hero* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Kieran Taylor, "Shipwrights and Salmonbellies: How Archie Green Discovered Laborlore," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4(3)(2007), pp. 33-58.

Initial press coverage of the convention failed to report the election of Pottish, due to tabulation errors on the part of tellers that were only discovered during a recount of the ballots several days later. "Pottish Gains NPC Seat as Roth Loses in Recount," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/47, p. 12.

[205] Straight was endorsed by all three caucuses and received the most votes of any candidate for national office. "Politicking is More Mature this Year than in 1946," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/47, pp. 4, 5.

of the chapter's white membership, particularly chapter officers. It is not rare that our members are faced with the choice of losing their jobs or resigning from AVC."[206]

Crawford acknowledged that several Southern chapters were led by Communists, who were often the first veterans in a locality to take the initiative to establish a chapter. Some Communists were open about their political affiliations, but most were circumspect, which did not necessarily reflect a predilection for secrecy. "Nothing would please me more than to stand up in [a] public meeting and say, 'I am a Communist and this is my viewpoint,'" explained the writer of an anonymous letter to the *AVC Bulletin*. "If I did, I would lose my job and find it impossible to get another in my field."[207] However, the line between circumspection and deception was nebulous, and when Communists lied they risked undermining their own credibility, with potentially explosive consequences for the organizations in which they were active.

In the fall of 1947, Tampa, Florida AVC chairman Louis Ornitz appeared before county commissioners requesting permission to set up a chapter headquarters in a building owned by the county. At the hearing, members of the American Legion insisted that AVC was a Communist front, and when county officials asked Ornitz whether he had ever been a member of the

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[206] James M. Crawford, "Report on AVC Organizational Drive in the Southeastern United States from October 1, 1947 to February 29, 1948," carton 1, folder 31, American Veterans Committee San Francisco Area Council records. Crawford joined AVC at Georgia Tech in the spring of 1946, shortly after organizing a massive student demonstration against Herman Talmadge. He was also a leader of Georgia Veterans for Majority Rule, which sought to overhaul the state's undemocratic "county unit" voting system. "Jim Crawford to Organize in Southeast," *AVC Bulletin*, 11/47, p. 1. On the postwar movement to end Georgia's county unit system, see Brooks (2004), Ch. 3.

[207] Unsigned to The Editors, 11/20/46, box 106, folder 6, American Veterans Committee records.

Communist Party, he answered in the negative. AVC members were shocked when the local press revealed that Ornitz had run as a Communist candidate for the New York State Assembly in 1940. Ornitz resigned his position as chapter chairman, and the Tampa AVC "pledged 100 percent vigilance against Communism in [its] ranks." Despite the controversy, the chapter managed to double in size, which provided additional ammunition for those who argued that AVC was better off without the Communists.[208]

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[208] "Tampa U. Bars AVC Chapter," *St. Petersburg Times*, 9/28/47, p. 4; "Devens Chapter Condemns Tampa University Action Banning AVC," *Massachusetts Veteran* [AVC Massachusetts State Council], 10/47, p. 7; "Legion Denounces Communism, Will Probe Tampa Activities of Veterans Committee," *St. Petersburg Times*, 10/6/47, p. 13; Sam Mase, "Who Is Louis Ornitz? The Record Speaks," *Tampa Daily Times*, 10/9/47, pp. 1, 2; "Ornitz Resigns from Local AVC," ibid., 11/14/47, pp. 1, 2; "Legion Attack Spurs Tampa Chapter," *AVC Bulletin*, 12/47, p. 1; "Tampa Story," *Independent Progressive Newsletter*, 4/48, pp. 3-5. In his letter of resignation, Ornitz refused to admit any fault on his part. "The attack upon me as being a Communist by the American Legion is in reality an attack on the civil liberties of the people, veteran and non-veteran alike," he wrote. "[I]t is unfortunate that some who profess to be liberals have allowed their minds to be imprisoned and have become spineless in their thinking." The Tampa chapter had unanimously rejected the National Planning Committee's anti-Communist resolution in late 1946. Jose Gonzalez [Tampa] chapter #1, national chapter #705, "This is to certify…," 12/19/46, box 107, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records.

Ornitz fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigades in Spain, where he was captured by Franco's forces and spent over a year in fascist jails. A seasoned union organizer, Ornitz was employed by the AFL cigar makers after World War II. In testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1954, several witnesses claimed that they and Ornitz were members of the Communist Party during the mid-to-late 1940s. William P. Carney, "Writer Sees 80 Americans Held in Spanish Rebel Camp," *New York Times*, 7/11/38, pp. 1, 8; "14 U.S. Captives Freed by Rebels," *New York Times*, 10/9/38, p. 38; Lou Ornitz, *Captured by Franco* (New York: Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 1939); "7 Consulate Pickets Guilty, One Jailed," *New York Times*, 4/5/40, p. 18; "Bail Denied to Pickets," *New York Times*, 4/18/40, p. 47; "Five Hundred and Fifty Union Officials Assail 'Red-Hunt,'" *The Worker*, 5/25/47, p. 9; *Investigation of Communist Activities in the State of Florida, Part 1. Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-Third Congress, Second Session, November 29 and 30, 1954* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 7307, 7389, 7394.

The Cold War heats up

Escalating geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1948 deepened rifts within domestic social movements. In late February, Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia in what their opponents denounced as a *coup d'état.* Shortly thereafter, the U.S. implemented the Marshall Plan, an offer of financial assistance to war-ravaged European governments that was viewed by officials in both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. as an attempt to buttress American influence on the continent. The Soviet blockade of Berlin began in early summer, followed soon after by the U.S. airlift. On the home front, politicians introduced a raft of state and federal legislation aimed at destroying the Communist Party USA. In July, party leaders were indicted under the Smith Act of 1940, which criminalized membership in organizations advocating the forcible overthrow of the government.

In this charged atmosphere, liberal hero Henry Wallace launched a third-party presidential campaign, lambasting Jim Crow segregation and the Truman doctrine. The Communists backed Wallace and his new Progressive Party, but the majority of liberals supported Truman as the only realistic option in a tight race against Dewey. Heated debates broke out within labor unions and other movement organizations as Progressive and Democratic partisans pursued endorsements, donations, foot soldiers, and votes for their respective parties. Truman's advisors – several of whom were active in Americans for Democratic Action, the AVC Independent Progressive caucus, or both – encouraged the president to brand Wallace a Communist dupe.[209]

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[209] AVC leaders William Batt, Jr., Kenneth Birkhead, Phil Dreyer, and Frank Kelly were employed by the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee in 1948. William L. Batt, Jr. interviews by Jerry N. Hess, 7/26/1966 and 7/27/1966, transcript, Truman Library; Kenneth M. Birkhead interview by Jerry N. Hess, 7/7/1966, transcript, ibid.; Frank K. Kelly interview by Niel M. Johnson, 4/15/1988, transcript, ibid.; Hoeber interview. On the importance

Robert Tyler, a member of the AVC chapter at the University of Minnesota, recalled that in 1948 "factionalism reached…the dark complexity of palace intrigues in nineteenth-century Serbia. The American Youth for Democracy, the postwar successor to the Young Communist League; the new Students for Wallace; the Students for Democratic Action, the collegiate auxiliary of the ADA; even on the sidelines the Young Republicans and the sleepy Young People's Socialist League, all contributed to the Byzantine politics inside the…chapter. The few genuinely independent leaders…found themselves suddenly ground to bits in the unsafe middle."[210]

Raiding California

Nowhere were "genuinely independent leaders" more numerous than in California, where the Build AVC caucus held the balance of power at the state level. In March, delegates to the California state AVC convention passed a resolution calling for a statewide cash bonus for veterans by a two-to-one margin. The convention also endorsed a proposal to let the United Nations allocate Marshall Plan funds, and elected Unity stalwart Ben Rinaldo as AVC state chairman. A few days later, Will Rogers, Jr. – a former Congressman, publisher of the *Beverly*

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of the Research Division to Truman's campaign, see Zachary Karabell, *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won the 1948 Election* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). On the Wallace campaign, see Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: A Life of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), Chs. 24-26; Curtis D. MacDougall, *Gideon's Army* (New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1965).

[210] Tyler (1966), p. 435. Tyler (no relation to Gus Tyler) was a supporter of the Independent Progressive caucus. Robert L. Tyler, "The Completely Unique and Paradoxical in Thinking about Nuclear Arms," undated [circa 1983], copy in author's possession.

Hills Citizen, and son of the famous actor and humorist – publicly announced his resignation from AVC, claiming that Communists had captured the organization in California.[211]

Other disgruntled anti-Communists – including actors Ronald Reagan and Melvyn Douglas – attempted to undermine the elected state leadership by forming a "California Committee of the National AVC." The group urged disaffected members to form new chapters under their own control, and implored chapters with solid anti-Communist majorities to sever relations with the existing state organization. Chat Paterson threw the full weight of the AVC national office behind the rump group; indeed he helped plot its formation. As one commentator pointed out, this was more than just an organized effort to unseat the standing leadership in California; it was "a full-scale raid."[212]

The case of John Gates

In late July, *Daily Worker* editor and AVC member John Gates was charged by the federal government with violating the Smith Act. Shortly thereafter, the AVC national office received a complaint from two members demanding that Gates be expelled from the organization, on the grounds that the aims and methods of the Communist Party were incompatible with those of AVC. Most of AVC's national officers were inclined to agree, but in the context of a frontal attack on the Communist Party by the Truman administration, many were queasy about taking immediate action against Gates. When the complaint was mysteriously

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[211] "California Votes for State Bonus," *AVC Bulletin*, 3/48, p. 7; "Rogers Defends Charges AVC Follows Red Line," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/3/48, Part II, p. 3.

[212] "Committee Aims to Rebuild Cal. AVC," *AVC Bulletin*, 6/48, pp. 3, 6; "Statement of the California SEC on 'Cal. Committee for Nat. AVC,'" ibid., 7/48, p. 5; Roche typescript, p. 125 quote.

leaked to the press, AVC leaders were compelled to issue a public statement and began ouster proceedings. "It seems that the leadership of AVC, whose red-baiting and disruption has resulted in a disastrous decline in membership, is out to deliver for Truman at all costs," Gates remarked.[213]

Since Gates's membership in the Communist Party was public information, and the AVC national leadership had already declared its opposition to Communism, it was not entirely clear what purpose the hearing was intended to serve. Though Gates considered it a show trial, he used the opportunity to explain why he saw no conflict between the goals of AVC and the immediate aims of the Communist Party. The National Planning Committee voted to expel him by a vote of sixteen to one, with one abstention. "Jan Masaryk and Eduard Benes…could not live under Communists," explained an editorial in the *AVC Bulletin*. "Sixteen members of NPC admitted in all humility that they had no reason to believe they could survive better than Masaryk and Benes."[214]

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[213] "Newspaper Leak Forces AVC Story on John Gates Hearing," *AVC Bulletin*, 8/48, p. 1; "'The John Gates Case,'" ibid., p. 8; "AVC Moves to Oust Gates as Member," *New York Times,* 8/10/48, p. 2; "Gates to Fight AVC Trial," ibid., 8/11/48, p. 2. One of the authors of the complaint, Wadsworth Likely, was a co-founder of AVC.

[214] The lone dissenter was Bernard Bellush, an Independent Progressive who argued that the matter should be decided at the upcoming national convention. Unity leader Morris Pottish made it clear that he opposed the expulsion, but abstained from the vote because he had served as Gates's counsel at the ouster hearing. Michael Straight, who led the Build AVC caucus at the second national convention, voted in favor of expulsion. Build AVC leader Archie Green was absent from the meeting at which the vote was taken. "NPC Expels Gates from AVC; 16 to 1 Vote, One Abstention," *AVC Bulletin*, 9/48, p. 1; "The Case of Gates' [sic] Rights," ibid., p. 4; "Daily Worker Editor Expelled from AVC," *New York Times*, 9/19/48, p. 5.

The case of Richard Crohn

The Gates case proved that AVC leaders were prepared to expel Communists, if they could find them. But unlike Gates, most Communists did not publicly identify as such, so there was no simple way to purge them *en masse*. Luckily for the Independent Progressives, Unity supporters in New York committed a series of blunders that provided the AVC national leadership with the excuse they needed to carry out a massive house-cleaning of Communists and their allies.

Throughout the 1948 election season, AVC leaders reminded members that the organization was committed to non-partisanship, and attempted to clarify what sorts of actions would constitute violations of this principle.[215] Independent Progressives kept close tabs on the political activities of their factional opponents and filed formal complaints against Unity supporters who breached the non-partisanship rule. Manhattan activist Richard Crohn was charged in this manner after he spoke on behalf of AVC at a peace rally sponsored by the American Labor Party. At his disciplinary hearing, Crohn maintained that he had been invited to explain AVC's position on the draft, that his chapter had authorized him to represent AVC for this purpose, and that his speech at the rally did not express support for the ALP or any of its candidates. Crohn's accusers argued that he should have known – and probably did – that one purpose of the rally was to drum up support for Henry Wallace. After a lengthy investigation, Crohn was found guilty and suspended for six months.[216]

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[215] Lincoln Lauterstein, "By-Laws to Limit AVC Units in Sponsoring Other Groups Explained by Nat'l Council," *AVC Bulletin*, 2/48, p. 4; "Non-Partisan AVC Stand Strengthened by NPC," ibid., 3/48, p. 5.

[216] "AVC'er Dropped Six Months for 'Partisan Politicking,'" *AVC Bulletin,* 9/48, p. 1; "The Richard Crohn Case," ibid., p. 4. Unity leaders maintained that the Independent Progressives held Crohn to a higher standard than they held themselves, citing numerous instances in which

The Crohn affair spiraled into a full-blown crisis in September when the New York Metropolitan Area Council voted to seat him as a delegate, despite his suspension. The national office responded by threatening disciplinary action against forty New York chapters unless they repudiated their support for Crohn. In early November, the National Planning Committee suspended sixteen recalcitrant chapters, along with the New York Metropolitan Area Council itself. In addition, Morris Pottish, the lone Unity representative on the AVC national leadership, was expelled for abetting the New York chapters' insubordination.[217]

Pottish, who counseled both Gates and Crohn during their respective disciplinary hearings, had chaired the New York Metropolitan Area Council meeting where the vote to seat Crohn was taken.[218] A tall, hollow-cheeked attorney who resembled "a Jewish Abraham Lincoln," Pottish was known to allies and enemies alike as a brilliant parliamentarian who made even-handed procedural judgments during heated debates, despite his strong opinions on the substantive issues under discussion.[219] In this instance, Pottish's factional opponents seized upon his misstep and played it to maximum advantage.

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prominent IP activists went unpunished despite *prima facie* violations of AVC's non-partisanship rule. Morris Pottish, "One Year Under IP," *AVC Progressive News*, 9/1/48, pp. 19-25. Franklin Williams, who frequently sided with Unity against the Independent Progressives in earlier clashes, sat on the panel of inquiry that unanimously found Crohn guilty.

[217] "Morris Pottish Expelled, N.Y.A.C. Charter Suspended; 16 Charters Suspended Pending NPC Referendum," *AVC Bulletin,* 11/48, pp. 1, 2; "New Fight Splits AVC on Leftists," *New York Times,* 11/11/48, p. 20.

[218] The majority on the National Planning Committee argued that Pottish should have ruled the proposal to seat Crohn out of order. Pottish claimed that he deferred to a vote of the area council delegates because, as Crohn's lawyer, he was biased in the matter. "New Yorker Ousted by AVC Committee," *New York Times*, 11/14/48, p. 31; "AVC Suspension Move Scored as 'Illegal,'" ibid., 11/15/48, p. 26; *Third Annual National Convention*, pp. 139-164, box 98, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records.

[219] Julian Markels, *From Buchenwald to Havana: The Life and Opinions of a Socialist Professor* (Dublin, OH: Evening Street Press, 2012), p. 48; Roche typescript, pp. 59-60. Pottish was a

The third national convention

The AVC's third national convention was held in Cleveland over the Thanksgiving holiday, shortly after the flurry of expulsions and suspensions described above. The organization claimed approximately 30,000 members, a huge decrease compared to the previous year, and the mood was somber. On the opening night, delegates from the suspended New York chapters appeared before the credentials committee. Outgoing national chairman Chat Paterson described the rebel chapters as "a dagger in the back" of AVC, and after a close vote they were denied seating at the convention.[220] The next day, a majority of delegates endorsed a resolution calling on national leaders to "clean out and keep out" the Communists. Despite eloquent appeals from Pottish and Gates, the convention upheld their individual expulsions.[221]

Russian immigrant and New York University Law School graduate who worked for the Office of Price Administration before joining the army. He was active in the American Labor Party throughout the 1940s and early 1950s and ran for public office on the ALP ticket on several occasions. I have been unable to determine whether Pottish was a member of the Communist Party, though his voting record on the AVC National Planning Committee evidenced strong sympathy with both the CPUSA and the Soviet Union. "Convention Elects 24 NPC Members of Various Backgrounds and Occupations," *AVC Bulletin*, 7/1/46, p. 14-16; Morris Pottish, *Army Letters Home* (Ukiah, CA: Susan Pottish, 2004); "Republicans Act to Avoid Contests," *New York Times*, 8/15/41, p. 12; "GOP Puts $16,500 into Contests Here," ibid., 10/28/48, pp. 1, 18; "Listing of All Candidates on City Voting Machines," ibid., 11/6/49, p. 26; "Election Tables Showing Voting for Governor, Senator, and Mayor; Local Representatives," ibid., 11/9/50, p. 26; "New Vote Line Up is Queens Puzzle," ibid., 10/31/52, p. 20.

[220] "AVC Group Moved to Bar Communists," *New York Times*, 11/26/48, p. 48; "AVC Meeting in Cleveland Bars Group from Some Chapters Here," ibid., 11/27/48, p. 9. The official convention program included a reprint of an article from the *Washington Post* that described Communist infiltration as a "clear and present danger" and concluded by asserting that "communism and reaction…in the final analysis are the same thing." "Liberal Solution," untitled 1948 national convention program, p. 25, box 167, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records.

[221] "Veterans Elect Anti-Red Ticket," *New York Times*, 11/29/48, p. 8; *Third National Convention*, pp. 469-472, 509-516, box 98, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records.

Conclusion

As geopolitical rivalry and domestic repression intensified, AVC's internal difficulties became increasingly severe. New York and California were the epicenters of factional strife, but chapters elsewhere were directly and indirectly affected. Independent Progressives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina acknowledged that their efforts to marginalize a small group of Communists took precedence over the chapter's plan to campaign against the state university's whites-only admissions policy.[222] Several officers of the Jackson, Mississippi chapter joined the Southern Negro Youth Congress and the Progressive Party, which may explain why they were rarely in contact with regional and national AVC leaders, who considered these groups Communist fronts.[223] Of course, Southern AVC activists faced an array of obstacles, and further research is needed to ascertain the fates of local chapters across the region. Still, it seems reasonable to conclude that if AVC's national leadership had not been so preoccupied with factional intrigue, they could have devoted more attention and resources to embattled chapters below the Mason-Dixon line.[224]

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[222] John Webb, "If We Identify Ourselves with Our Community," *AVC Today* [Chapel Hill chapter], 1/49, p. 2.

[223] "College Represented at Youth Congress," *Blue and White Flash* [Jackson College, Miss.], 12/46, p. 1; "Youths Present Congress Eight Point Legislative Program on Liberties," *Jackson [Miss.] Advocate*, 1/18/47, p. 1; "This is a Sample Ballot…," *Greenville [Miss.] Delta Democrat Times*, 11/1/48, p. 2. Southeastern regional organizer Jim Crawford was a staunch anti-Communist who strongly supported the expulsion of John Gates. Jim Crawford, "Why Not Sooner?" *AVC Bulletin*, 9/48, p. 6. I was able to locate only one issue of the AVC Southeastern regional newsletter, the bulk of which was devoted to the Gates case. *Regional Newsletter* [AVC Southeastern Region], 8/26/48.

[224] AVC did not hire a full-time, paid field organizer in the Southeast until 1947. "Field Secretaries," *American Veterans Committee Constitutional Convention* program, box 167, folder

Alternative explanations

Many commentators on the postwar political scene observed that returning veterans became preoccupied with marriage and children. We should be skeptical about simplistic life course explanations of AVC's decline, however. The assumption that husbands and fathers tend to become more conservative or politically disengaged is empirically dubious.[225] Insofar as some AVC members did retreat from political activism into family life, this may have been a reaction to the factional strife within the organization and the hostile political climate outside it, rather than a distinct cause of AVC's decline.[226]

1, American Veterans Committee records; National Planning Committee minutes, 11/9/46, p. 160, box 101, folder 1, ibid.

[225] Statistical analyses of the impact of marriage and parenthood on various forms of political participation have not found a consistent negative relationship, which suggests that the effects of these life-course variables are context-sensitive. Compare Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba, *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 318-321; Kraig Beyerlein and John R. Hipp, "A Two-Stage Model for a Two-Stage Process: How Biographical Availability Matters for Social Movement Mobilization," *Mobilization* 11(3)(2006), pp. 219-240; Laura Morales, *Joining Political Organizations: Institutions, Mobilization and Participation in Western Democracies* (Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2009), pp. 80-82; Catherine Corrigall-Brown, *Patterns of Protest: Trajectories of Participation in Social Movements* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 16-58.

[226] In August of 1948, AVC sent surveys to 500 randomly-selected former members, hoping to ascertain the reasons why they had drifted away from the organization. The response rate was very low (only 26 surveys were mailed back) and the raw data is no longer available, but with these limitations in mind, some findings may be briefly noted. Respondents were allowed to check one or more responses from a list of options. The most popular responses were "conflicting duties kept me from attending chapter meetings" (13 respondents) and "became bored or irritated with chapter meetings" (12 respondents). Though the meaning of "conflicting duties" is ambiguous, it is doubtful that many respondents interpreted it to mean family obligations, since far fewer respondents checked the option "family life interfered" (5 respondents). Tied for the third most common response were "felt that AVC wasn't accomplishing much" (7 respondents) and "disliked struggle for power among factions in AVC" (7 respondents).

Some AVC leaders hypothesized that the organization's ambivalence toward its members' veteran status – reflected in the group's slogan "Citizens First, Veterans Second" – was a recipe for attrition. Unlike the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, which touted and reinforced their members' identities as war heroes, AVC often denied that it sought special privileges for veterans, and eschewed the military salutes, uniforms, and ranks embraced by the mainline veterans' organizations. However, as we have seen, AVC did fight for a variety of reforms geared specifically toward veterans, notwithstanding its opposition to cash bonuses. Furthermore, AVC chapters actively cultivated group loyalty in a variety of ways, such as throwing parties, sponsoring athletic teams, and encouraging members to wear AVC pins.

One reason for AVC's initial rapid growth was the organization's vigorous response to the postwar housing shortage and consumer price spike. It therefore seems plausible that the resolution of these crises may have contributed to AVC's subsequent decline. Still, many issues about which AVC members felt passionate – such as racial discrimination and peace – remained decidedly unresolved, so this explanation is at best incomplete.[227]

There were undoubtedly multiple factors that contributed to AVC's decline on a national scale, and there are elements of truth to several of the alternative explanations canvassed above.

A separate survey was sent to all chapter chairmen in July of 1948, with a much higher response rate and the respondents "geographically distributed about as AVC's membership is distributed." Forty-one percent of respondents agreed that "the tactics of the anti-Communists in AVC" had "seriously hurt AVC membership"; an additional sixteen percent agreed that the anti-Communists in AVC had done "some harm" to membership. Approximately forty-six percent of chapter chairmen agreed that "the Communists in AVC have seriously hurt membership," and an additional twenty-one percent agreed that the Communists in AVC had done "some harm" to membership. "AVC's Members Speak: Some Findings of the Research Committee for AVC Development," undated [circa 1948], box 196-16, folder 1, William R. Ming papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[227] In the survey of lapsed members cited above, only one respondent chose "felt there was no longer a need for an AVC."

It should nevertheless be borne in mind that virtually every mass organization in the anti-racist field suffered a major crisis during the late 1940s and early 1950s. While the precise timing and precipitants varied, the fact that the AVC, NAACP, CIO, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, Progressive Party, Southern Negro Youth Congress, Civil Rights Congress, United Negro and Allied Veterans, and Communist Party all experienced debilitating splits and/or dramatic membership losses during this period reinforces the conclusion that the Cold War and red scare were the main causes of AVC's decline.

Epilogue

With less than 10,000 members and only a handful of active chapters, the AVC's work on behalf of African-Americans during the 1950s and early 1960s consisted mainly of litigation, lobbying, and research.[228] AVC submitted *amicus* briefs in *Brown v. Board* and other landmark civil rights cases, and conducted large-scale surveys of black veterans that revealed widespread discrimination in mortgage lending and other institutional practices.[229] At the local level, the Washington, D.C. chapter won a lawsuit in late 1955 that opened up area bowling alleys and swimming pools to blacks. The chapter also campaigned for quality education for deaf African-American children.[230] The Atlanta chapter lobbied for equal access to municipal libraries,

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[228] On AVC and race in the 1950s, see also Hoefer (2010), Ch. 4 and *passim*.

[229] J. Arnold Feldman, "Audit of Negro Veterans and Servicemen." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 2(1)(1961), pp. 79-81; Milton David Levine, *What Made Mickey Run? Episodes from the Memoirs of Milton David Levine* (Arch Cape, OR: Westwinds at Hemlock Ridge, 1999). A copy of the brief can be found in box 143, folder 1, American Veterans Committee records. Attorney John Scott, who argued the *Brown* case in its initial phase, was active in the Topeka AVC chapter (Kluger 1975:381).

[230] Paul Cooke, "Racial Integration in Education in the District of Columbia." *Journal of Negro Education* 25(3)(Summer 1956), p. 240; *Chapter Newsletter* [AVC Washington, D.C. chapter],

without success.[231] In Massachusetts, the NAACP and AVC charged the Boston Red Sox with violating the state's civil rights laws in 1959 because the team still had no black players.[232] Northern AVC chapters picketed Woolworth's stores in solidarity with Southern sit-ins during the 1960s, and a contingent of approximately fifty AVC members participated in the 1963 March on Washington.[233]

A number of former AVC members went on to play important roles in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. St. Louis AVC activists Charles Oldham and Marvin Rich became national leaders of the Congress of Racial Equality. New York AVC leaders Howard Zinn and Harry Wachtel became advisors to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, respectively. Miami, Florida AVC member Jack O'Dell became an SCLC staffer. AVC activists William Ming, Jr., Marvin Caplan, Oliver Hill, Sr., Robert Carter, and Franklin Williams became (or remained) leading figures in the NAACP.[234]

9/1/56, p. 1; Sandra Jowers-Barber, "The Struggle to Educate Black Deaf Schoolchildren in Washington, D.C.," in *A Fair Chance in the Race of Life: The Role of Gallaudet University in Deaf History*, edited by Brian H. Greenwald and John V. Van Cleve (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2008), pp. 113-131.

[231] "Group Meets on Use of Local Library," *Atlanta World*, 7/9/55, p. 2; Howard Zinn, "A Case of Quiet Social Change," *The Crisis* (October 1959), pp. 473.

[232] "Yawkey, Harris Called," *New York Times*, 4/15/59, p. 38; "Boston Team Cleared," ibid., 6/4//59, p. 32.

[233] "D.C., Md., Mass., Va. Active in Sit-Ins," *AVC Bulletin*, 7-8/63, pp. 1, 4; "AVC on the March," ibid., 9/63, p. 1. In the months prior to his assassination, Mississippi NAACP organizer Medgar Evers was attempting to revive the Jackson, Mississippi AVC chapter. Medgar Evers to J. Arnold Feldman, 4/4/63, box 188, folder 8, American Veterans Committee records. Evers had recently been elected to the AVC national board. "Medgar Evers and the American Veterans Committee," *The Crisis*, 8-9/63, p. 409.

[234] On Oldham and Rich, see citations in note 115 above; on their roles in CORE, see also August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*

AVC members also went on to play leading roles in a host of other social movements. Eduardo Idar, Jr. and Cristóbal Aldrete became early leaders of the American G.I. Forum. AVC field organizer Chuck Rowland co-founded the Mattachine Society. University of Chicago AVC activist Jack Geiger helped launch the community health center movement, the Medical Committee for Human Rights, and Physicians for Social Responsibility. Rhode Island AVC activist Irving Strasmich, who changed his name to Irving Stowe, co-founded Greenpeace.[235]

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). Wachtel chaired the AVC Brenner-Felson chapter in Brooklyn and served on the New York state leadership body. Julian Ross, "A.V.C. Notes," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 11/22/46, p. 20. On Wachtel's role in SCLC, see Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999). Zinn chaired the AVC Gung Ho chapter in Brooklyn and served as a vice chairman of the New York Metropolitan Area Council. Howard Zinn to National Planning Committee, 12/27/1946, box 107, folder 3, American Veterans Committee records; "Meet Your New Executive Board, *Vets Voice* [AVC New York Metropolitan Area Council], 11/46, pp. 2, 7. On Zinn's role in SNCC, see Martin Duberman, *Howard Zinn: A Life on the Left* (New York: New Press, 2012). On O'Dell, see citation in note 76 above. On O'Dell's role in SCLC, see Nikhil P. Singh, "'Learn Your Horn': Jack O'Dell and the Long Civil Rights Movement," in Jack O'Dell, *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell*, edited by Nikhil P. Singh (Berkeley: University of California, 2010), pp. 1-68. After serving on the National Planning Committee, Ming was elected national vice chairman of AVC in 1949. In addition to his many other contributions to the civil rights movement, Ming served as defense attorney for Martin Luther King, Jr. after the state of Alabama charged King with tax evasion. Jim McElhatton, "Standing on 'the Shoulders of Bob Ming,'" *Washington Times*, 12/7/08, pp. A1, A10. On Caplan, see Caplan (1999). On Hill, see Hill (2000). On Carter, see citations in note 44 above. On Williams, see citations in notes 204 and 216 above. On Williams's subsequent career, see Glenn Fowler, "Franklin H. Williams Dies at 72; Lawyer and Former Ambassador," *New York Times*, 5/22/90, p. B11.

[235] On Aldrete and Idar, see "Student Groups Tell Jester School Segregation Illegal," *Abilene [Tex.] Reporter-News*, 10/3/47, p. 3; Ed Idar, Jr. to Fred Montes, 2/29/48, box 10, folder 2, Eduardo Idar, Jr. papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin; on the American GI Forum, see Allsup (1982). On Rowland and the origins of Mattachine, see citations in notes 162 and 175 above. On Geiger, see citations in note 57 above; on the Medical Committee for Human Rights, see John Dittmer, *The Good Doctors: The Medical Committee for Human Rights and the Struggle for Social Justice in Health Care* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009); on the origins of the community health center movement, see also H. Jack Geiger, "A Life in Social Medicine," in *The Doctor-Activist: Physicians Fighting for Social Change*, edited by Ellen L. Bassuk (New York: Plenum Press, 1996); H. Jack Geiger, "A Health Center in Mississippi: A Case Study in Social Medicine," in *Medicine in a Changing Society*, edited by Lawrence Corey, Steven E.

Among the many AVC members who subsequently became well-known progressive scholars were historians Howard Zinn, David Montgomery, Ira Kipnis, Ray Ginger, George Tindall, Philip Curtin, Alvin Josephy, Jr., John Higham, Irving Howe, Bernard Bellush, Archie Green, Timuel Black, Marc Karson, and Robert L. Tyler; sociologists Robert Bellah, Morris Janowitz, and Lewis Killian; economists James Tobin, Hyman Minsky, Lloyd Ulman, and Leo Troy; philosopher John Ladd; and literature scholars Walter Rideout and Julian Markels.[236] AVC

Saltman, and Michael F. Epstein (St Louis: C. V. Mosby Company, 1972), pp. 157-167; Bonnie Lefkowitz, *Community Health Centers: A Movement and the People Who Made It* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007). On Strasmich, see "R. I. Chapter Acts to Get FEPC Passage," *AVC Bulletin*, 4/15/46, p. 1; "Freedom Audit Underway in Providence," ibid., 3/49, p. 7; on the origins of Greenpeace, see Rex Weyer, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004); Frank Zelko, *Make it a Green Peace! The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 12.

In the winter of 1947-1948, several AVC members at the University of Arizona at Tucson helped launch a local chapter of the recently-formed Committee to Organize the Mexican People, a short-lived civil rights organization based in Denver, Colorado. "COMP Formed in Tucson," *Ruptured Duck* [AVC Tucson campus chapter], 1/9/48, pp. 1, 3. On COMP, see Ellen R. Baker, *On Strike and on Film: Mexican American Families and Blacklisted Filmmakers in Cold War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 287 note 66; Lorence (2013), pp. 68-70.

[236] Historians: On Montgomery, see citations in note 112 above. On Tindall, see George Tindall, "Jumpin Jim Crow," in *Historians and Race: Autobiography and the Writing of History,* edited by Paul A. Cimbala and Robert F. Himmelberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 10; George B. Tindall interview by Steven Channing, 1/7/2005, transcript, pp. 23-5, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; George B. Tindall to Dear Joe [Clorety], 10/13/48, box 192, folder 7, American Veterans Committee records; Joe Clorety to George Tindall, 10/14/48, ibid.; George B. Tindall to Dear Joe [Clorety], 10/18/48, ibid.; Joe Clorety to George Tindall, 10/20/48, ibid. On Kipnis, see "Delegates, Chicago Area Convention," undated, box 3, folder 9, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records; *Third National Convention*, pp. 495-6, box 98, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records. On Ginger, see Victor G. Devinatz, "McCarthyism on the Charles: The Life and Times of Labour Historian Ray Ginger before and after his Dismissal from Harvard University," *Left History* 13(2)(Winter 2008), pp. 137-8. On Curtin, see "Swarthmore AVC's Delegates," *Chester [Pa.] Times*, 5/16/47, p. 14. On Josephy, see Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *A Walk Toward Oregon: A Memoir* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), pp. 228-230. On Higham, see Olson (1969-70), p. 95; "A Program for AVC," undated [1947], box 1, folder 37, Julius Bernstein papers. On Howe, see Gerald Sorin, *Irving Howe: A Life of Passionate Dissent* (New York: New

members Alfred G. Meyer, Samuel P. Huntington, and John P. Roche became prominent anti-Communist political scientists.[237]

York University Press, 2002), p. 307 note 8. On Bellush, who served on the AVC National Planning Committee, see e.g. "NPC Expels Gates from AVC; 16 to 1 Vote, One Abstention," *AVC Bulletin*, 9/48, p. 1; Bernard Bellush, "The American Veterans Committee," in *American Students Organize,* edited by Eugene G. Schwartz (American Council on Education/Praeger Publishers, 2006), pp. 707-711; Bernard Bellush interviews by author, 8/24/2009 and 8/26/2009, recordings in author's possession. On Green, see citations in note 204 above. On Black, see Steve Schmadeke, "Veterans Set to Stand Down," *Chicago Tribune*, 2/7/08, Section 2, pp. 1, 8. On Karson, see Alexandria, Virginia chapter #1, national chapter #482, "This is to certify...," 12/3/46, box 106, folder 11, American Veterans Committee records; Stanley Karson interview by author, 3/10/2010, recording in author's possession. On Tyler, see citations in note 210 above.

Sociologists: On Bellah, see Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 2, box 187, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records. On Killian, see Killian (1994). On Janowitz, see "Delegates, Chicago Area Convention," undated, box 3, folder 9, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records. Sociologist George P. Homans had also been a member of AVC. Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 9. Immanuel Wallerstein was too young to join the military during World War II, but he attended meetings of AVC as an undergraduate and "saw it torn apart" (Wallerstein 2000:xv).

Economists: On Tobin, see Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 20. On Minsky, see ibid., p. 14. On Ulman, see Eastman Birkett to Joe Clorety, 6/8/48, box 187, folder 4, American Veterans Committee records. On Troy, see Leo Troy, "A Repudiation," *Daily Collegian* [Pennsylvania State University], 12/15/48, p. 2.

Philosophers: On Ladd, see Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 11.

Literature scholars: On Markels, see "Delegates, Chicago Area Convention," undated, box 3, folder 9, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records; Markels (2012), pp. 46-9. On Rideout, see Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 17.

[237] On Meyer, see Harvard chapter American Veterans Committee membership list, 11/1/47, p. 14. On Huntington, see "Delegates, Chicago Area Convention," undated, box 3, folder 9, American Veterans Committee Chicago Area Council records. On Roche, see citations in note 169 above.

Chapter 3

"Did Emmett Till Die In Vain? Organized Labor Says No!" The United Packinghouse Workers of America and Civil Rights Unionism in the mid-1950s

Introduction

As Grace Falgoust approached the courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, on the morning of September 20, 1955, she felt the chill of hostile stares. At first glance, there was little that distinguished the plainly-dressed 34-year old from the hundreds of other white folk who had come to observe the trial of J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant, the men accused of killing 14-year old Emmett Till. However, since arriving in Sumner the previous day, Falgoust had been quietly passing out leaflets that described the teenager's death as a "criminal, depraved act." To make matters worse, some locals spotted Falgoust and her interracial delegation from the United Packinghouse Workers of America sharing a picnic lunch together. Word quickly spread that the union activists were race-mixers. "Evidently our 'sin' of integration was far greater in the minds of these people than the gruesome murder of a Negro child," Falgoust caustically observed.[238]

Scholars have analyzed the Till case from a variety of perspectives, producing insightful analyses of newspaper bias, gender discourse, and artistic representation.[239] But relatively little

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[238] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust on the Observations of the Delegation of UPWA Women from Louisiana Attending the Trial at Sumner, Miss., Sept. 19-23," Sept. 24, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse, Food, and Allied Workers Records (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison).

[239] On media coverage, see Matthew A. Grindy, "Mississippi Terror, Red Pressure: The *Daily Worker*'s Coverage of the Emmett Till Murder," *Controversia*, 6 (Spring 2008), 39-66; Davis W. Houck and Matthew A. Grindy, *Emmett Till And The Mississippi Press* (Jackson, Miss., 2008); Christopher Metress, "Truth Be Told: William Bradford Huie's Emmett Till Cycle," *Southern Quarterly*, 45 (Summer 2008), 48-75; Margaret Spratt, Cathy F. Bullock, Gerald Baldasty, Fiona Clark, Alex Halavais, Michael McCluskey, and Susan Schrenk, "News, Race, and the Status Quo: The Case of Emmett Louis Till," *Howard Journal of Communications*, 18 (April 2007),

attention has been paid to the outpouring of protest sparked by the murder. This neglect is surprising, for tens of thousands of people rallied in dozens of cities across the country, including in the Deep South. "Not since Pearl Harbor has the country been so outraged," *The Crisis* observed.[240] Nor has the labor movement's role in the Till case been studied in any detail. This inattention presumably stems from an assumption that labor leaders were loathe to champion the cause of a black teenager accused of sexually harassing a white woman, especially in the face of

169-92; John R. Tisdale, "Native Son: Rob Hall and the *Daily Worker* Coverage of the Emmett Till Murder Trial," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 68 (Summer 2006), 113-27. On gender discourse, see Ruth Feldstein, *Motherhood in Black and White: Race and Sex in American Liberalism, 1930-1965* (Ithaca, 2000), 86-110. On artistic representation, see Philip C. Kolin, "Haunting America: Emmett Till in Music and Song," *Southern Cultures*, 15 (Fall 2009), 115-38; Harriet Pollock and Christopher Metress, eds., *Emmett Till in Literary Memory and Imagination* (Baton Rouge, 2008). On the murder and trial, see David T. Beito and Linda Royster Beito, *Black Maverick: T.R.M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power* (Urbana, 2009), 115-69; Devery S. Anderson, "A Wallet, A White Woman, and a Whistle: Fact and Fiction in Emmett Till's Encounter in Money, Mississippi," *Southern Quarterly*, 45 (Summer 2008), 10-20; Hugh Stephen Whitaker, "A Case Study in Southern Justice: The Murder and Trial of Emmett Till," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8 (Summer 2005), 189-224; Stephen J. Whitfield, *A Death in the Delta: The Story of Emmett Till* (New York, 1988). On federal and local government responses, see Anders Walker, "The Violent Bear It Away: Emmett Till and the Modernization of Law Enforcement in Mississippi," *San Diego Law Review*, 46 (May-June 2009), 459-504; David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York, 2007), 115-19; Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge, 2003), 89-91. On the wider significance of the case, see Krystal D. Frazier, "Till They Come Back Home: Transregional Families and the Politicization of the Till Generation," in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington, Ky., 2011), 137-162; Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (Chicago, 2007), 179-212; Frederick Harris, "It Takes a Tragedy to Arouse Them: Collective Memory and Collective Action During the Civil Rights Movement," *Social Movement Studies* 5 (May 2006), 19-43; Anne Sarah Rubin, "Reflections on the Death of Emmett Till," *Southern Cultures* 2 (Fall 1995), 45-66; Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Emmett Till: The Sacrificial Lamb of the Civil Rights Movement* (Troy, Mich., 1994).

[240] "Editorials: Till Protest Meeting," *Crisis*, 62 (November 1955), 546-47; "100,000 Across Nation Protest Till Lynching," *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 8, 1955, p. 4; "2,500 at Jackson, Miss. Rally Hit Racist Terror," *Daily Worker*, Nov. 8, 1955, pp. 1, 3; John LeFlore, "2,000 In Mobile Hear Diggs Rip Dixie Terror," *Chicago Defender*, Nov. 12, 1955, p. 3.

a growing racist backlash against the *Brown* decision.[241] But the labor movement was not a monolith, and the Till case galvanized many union members. In fact, the largest protest rallies called in response to the murder were sponsored by unions. Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Bradley, recalled that "the unions were just fantastic."[242]

The United Packinghouse Workers of America, a labor union renowned for its commitment to African-American equality, launched an especially vigorous campaign on behalf of Emmett Till in both the North and South.[243] In Chicago, the UPWA's stronghold, the union's

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[241] The merger of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in late 1955 was emblematic of the general trajectory of union politics in this period: although CIO leaders chafed at the AFL's tolerance of segregated affiliates, they did not let this awkward fact stand in the way of a rapprochement with their former arch-rivals. Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill, 1995), 363. On white rank-and-file opposition to the *Brown* decision, see Alan Draper, *Conflict of Interests: Organized Labor and the Civil Rights Movement in the South, 1954-1968* (Ithaca, 1994).

[242] Mamie Till-Mobley interview by Clenora Hudson-Weems, Jan. 6, 1988 and March 24, 1988, transcript, in Hudson-Weems, *Emmett Till*, 227. Between 10,000 and 20,000 people participated in a rally called by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Harlem. Approximately 20,000 people joined a demonstration in Manhattan's garment district organized by District 65 of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union, the NAACP, and the Jewish Labor Committee. "Harlem Rally," *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 8, 1955, p. 2; "20,000 Unionists in N.Y. Protest the Till Lynching," *National Guardian*, Oct. 10, 1955, p. 1.

[243] On the UPWA and race, see Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904-1954* (Urbana, 1997); Roger Horowitz, *'Negro and White, Unite and Fight!' A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking, 1930-90* (Urbana, 1997); Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, *Meatpackers: An Oral History of Black Packinghouse Workers and Their Struggle for Racial and Economic Equality* (New York, 1999); Randi Storch, "The United Packinghouse Workers of America, Civil Rights, and the Communist Party in Chicago," in *American Labor and the Cold War: Grassroots Politics and Postwar Political Culture*, ed. Robert W. Cherny, William Issel, and Kieran Walsh Taylor (New Brunswick, N.J., 2004), 72-84; Rick Halpern, "Interracial Unionism in the Southwest: Fort Worth's Packinghouse Workers, 1937-1954," in *Organized Labor in the Twentieth Century South*, ed. Robert Zieger (Knoxville, 1991), 158-182; Rick Halpern, "The CIO and the Limits of Labor-Based Civil Rights Activism: The Case of Louisiana's Sugar Workers, 1947-1966," in *Southern Labor in Transition, 1940-1995*, ed. Robert Zieger (Knoxville, 1997), 86-112; Bruce Fehn, "'The Only Hope We Had': United Packinghouse Workers Local 46 and the Struggle for Racial Equality in Waterloo, Iowa, 1948-1960," *Annals of Iowa*, 54 (Summer 1995), 185-216;

response to the murder intersected with its ongoing efforts to defend black residents of the Trumbull Park housing project from attacks by white mobs. In the sugar refinery towns of southern Louisiana, where racial divisions and anti-Communism had nearly destroyed the UPWA a year earlier, a series of tumultuous strikes led workers like Grace Falgoust to question traditional ideas about gender and race – and to demand justice for Emmett Till.

In addition to revising our image of a signal event in African-American history, this essay contributes to wider historiographic debates over the relationship between organized labor and the black freedom struggle. The burgeoning "whiteness" literature has highlighted European-American workers' assimilation of racist ideology and the complicity of labor unions in the subordination of African-Americans. But whiteness scholarship has done little to illuminate the contexts and strategies that have fostered durable interracial working-class solidarity. Analysis of "deviant cases" like the UPWA can help address this issue.[244]

Bruce Fehn, "Race for Justice: The Terry Lee Sims Rape Case in Sioux City, 1949-1952," *Annals of Iowa*, 64 (Fall 2005), 311-39; Bruce Fehn, "African-American Women and the Struggle for Equality in Meatpacking, 1940-1960," *Journal of Women's History*, 10 (Spring 1998), 45-69; Wilson J. Warren, "The Limits of Social Democratic Unionism in Midwestern Meatpacking Communities: Patterns of Internal Strife, 1948-1955," in *Unionizing the Jungles: Labor and Community in the Twentieth-Century Meatpacking Industry*, ed. Shelton Stromquist and Marvin Bergman (Iowa City, 1997), 128-58; Wilson J. Warren, "The Impasse of Radicalism and Race: Omaha's Meatpacking Unionism, 1945-1955," *Journal of the West*, 35 (April 1996), 50-54; Paul Street, "The 'Best Union Members': Class, Race, Culture, and Black Worker Militancy in Chicago's Stockyards during the 1930s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 20 (Fall 2000), 18-49; Paul Louis Street, "Working in the Yards: A History of Class Relations in Chicago's Meatpacking Industry, 1886-1960" (Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, 1993); William C. Pratt, "Workers, Bosses, and Public Officials: Omaha's 1948 Packinghouse Strike," *Nebraska History*, 66 (Fall 1985), 294-313; Moses Adedeji, "Crossing the Colorline: Three Decades of the United Packinghouse Workers of America's Crusade against Racism in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1936-1968" (Ph.D. diss., North Texas State University, 1978); John Hope II, *Equality of Opportunity: A Union Approach to Fair Employment* (Washington, D.C., 1956).

[244] For an assessment of the CIO by a leading whiteness scholar, see David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (New York, 2005), 199-234. Recent sociological analyses of interracial working-class solidarity during the CIO era include Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The*

A second body of scholarship, more attuned to the diversity of racial practices within the labor movement, has underscored the destructive impact of anti-Communism on unions with impressive records of challenging white supremacy.[245] But while the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s gravely weakened the forces of "civil rights unionism," the impulse was never completely suppressed.[246] Indeed the United Packinghouse Workers of America represents a significant thread of continuity in the "long civil rights movement."

Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement (New York, 2006); Terry Boswell, Cliff Brown, John Brueggemann, and T. Ralph Peters, Jr., *Racial Competition and Class Solidarity* (Albany, 2006); Judith Stepan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin, *Left Out: Reds and America's Industrial Unions* (New York, 2003), 232-65.

[245] For overviews of the "Communist-dominated" unions and race, see Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin, *Left Out*, 212-65; Eric Arnesen, "Up From Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History*, 26 (March 1998), 146-74; Michael Goldfield, "Race and the CIO: The Possibilities for Racial Egalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 44 (Fall 1993), 1-32; Steve Rosswurm, "Introduction: An Overview and Preliminary Assessment of the CIO's Expelled Unions," in *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*, ed. Steve Rosswurm (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 1-18. Recent studies of individual left-led unions include Clarence Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union* (New York, 2011); Rosemary Feuer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950* (Urbana, 2006); Gerald Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica* (New York, 2005); Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth Century South* (Chapel Hill, 2003); Mary E. Harding, "Eleanor Nelson, Oliver Palmer and the Struggle to Organize the CIO in Washington, D.C., 1937-1950" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2002); Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton, 2001), 89-141.

[246] For debate over the red scare's impact on the relationship between organized labor and the black freedom struggle, see Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History*, 75 (Dec. 1988), 786-811; Draper, *Conflict of Interests*, 9-13; Adam Fairclough, "Segregation and Civil Rights: African American Freedom Strategies in the Twentieth Century," in *The State of U.S. History*, ed. Melvyn Stokes (New York, 2002), 157-58; Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003); Michael K. Honey, "Operation Dixie, the Red Scare, and the Defeat of Southern Labor Organizing," in *American Labor and the Cold War*, ed. Cherny, Issel, and Taylor, 216-44; Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History*, 91 (March 2005), 1233-63; Risa L. Goluboff, "'Let Economic Equality Take Care of Itself': The NAACP, Labor Litigation, and the Making of Civil Rights in the 1940s," *UCLA Law*

"Mrs. Bradley, Your Fight is Our Fight":
Chicago Packinghouse Workers Respond

Emmett Till's mutilated body arrived back in Chicago by train on September 2, 1955. The following day, UPWA District 1, representing packinghouse locals in the Windy City, issued its first press release, which stressed that racial violence and discrimination were not confined to the South. "Our union heartily endorses and welcomes the statement by Mayor Richard J. Daley…urging that President Eisenhower act in securing justice in the Mississippi murder of young Till. We wish to point out to Mayor Daley, however…that right in his own backyard in Trumbull Park, Negro men, women, and children have been besieged, stoned, and threatened by the same kind of white supremacists as those who lynched Emmett Till in Mississippi."[247]

The following day, September 4, the UPWA District 1 Women's Activities Committee held its annual Labor-Community Tea, attended by 150 packinghouse workers and representatives of various community groups. The Committee announced that it was donating

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Review, 52 (June 2005), 1393-486; Kevin Boyle, "Labour, the Left, and the Long Civil Rights Movement," *Social History*, 30 (August 2005), 366-72; Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *Journal of African-American History,* 92 (Spring 2007), 265-88; Sophia Z. Lee, "Hotspots in a Cold War: The NAACP's Postwar Workplace Constitutionalism, 1948-1964," *Law and History Review*, 26 (June 2008), 327-78; Eric Arnesen, "Reconsidering the 'Long Civil Rights Movement,'" *Historically Speaking*, 10 (April 2009), 31-34; Philip F. Rubio, *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality* (Chapel Hill, 2010); William P. Jones, "The Unknown Origins of the March on Washington: Civil Rights Politics and the Black Working Class," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, 7 (Fall 2010), 33-52; Steven Lawson, "Long Origins of the Short Civil Rights Movement," in *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer (Lexington, Ky., 2011).

[247] UPWA District 1 press release, Sept. 3, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records. UPWA District 1 was comprised of locals in eastern Illinois and Wisconsin, with the bulk of its membership concentrated in Chicago.

$300 to Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Bradley, to defray funeral costs and grocery bills.[248] That same afternoon, UPWA organizer Frank Brown addressed a rally at Greater Bethesda Baptist Church sponsored by the Chicago branch of the NAACP. Brown complained that the National Guard had been dispatched to protect Emmett Till's murderers as they awaited trial in Mississippi, but not to restrain the white mobs that continued to terrorize black residents of Trumbull Park.[249]

On September 8, two days after her son was laid to rest, Mamie Bradley attended her first protest rally. The event was sponsored by UPWA District 1 and held at the union's South Side meeting hall. "Mrs. Bradley, we assembled here are members of a labor union, and your fight is our fight," announced District Director Charles Hayes. A collection was taken up, and Mamie gratefully accepted a gift of $358.33. "I want you to stand by me," she told the audience of 1,000 packinghouse workers. "If you will stand by me, I will stand by you. I shall fight to the end." [250]

On September 23, J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant were acquitted of Emmett Till's murder by an all-white jury in Mississippi. Two days later, the Chicago NAACP staged a rally at the Metropolitan Community Church that drew more than 10,000 people, most of whom were unable to fit into the building. The UPWA organized a "protest march and parade" from the

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[248] "Dist. 1 Women Hold Tea; Aid Till Boy's Mother," *Packinghouse Worker*, Sept. 1955, p. 9; "Trophy," ibid.

[249] Carl Hirsch, "Lynching of 14-Year-Old Boy Arouses Nation," *Worker* (DuSable edition), Sept. 11, 1955, p. 1.

[250] UPWA District 1 flier, "Did Emmett Till Die in Vain? Organized Labor Says No!," Sept. 8, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records; "Presidential Petition on Emmet [sic] Till Case," Sept. 9, 1955, videotape, CBS News Archive (New York, N.Y.); "Packinghouse Workers Give to Till's Mom," *Chicago Defender* (Chicago edition), Sept. 17, 1955, p. 36; "Chicago UPWA Rally Raps Slaying; Bias Groups Twist Econ Screws," *CIO News*, Sept. 19, 1955, p. 8.

union hall to the church, where featured speakers included the union's own Charles Hayes, journalist Simeon Booker, Chicago NAACP executive board chairman and United Auto Workers organizer Willoughby Abner, and honorary "Mayor of Bronzeville" John Earl Lewis. Prosecution witnesses Mandy Bradley and Willie Reed were introduced to riotous applause. Outside the church, Chicago NAACP president Cora Patton and UPWA's Frank Brown addressed the overflow crowd. Several days later, Brown and Lewis were the keynote speakers at a protest meeting sponsored by the youth wing of the Chicago NAACP.[251]

During the month of September, District 1 collected 50,000 signatures on a petition initiated by the Women's Activities Committee, demanding that President Eisenhower call a special session of Congress to pass civil rights legislation. In early October, Mississippi Senator James Eastland and his Senate Internal Security Subcommittee came to Chicago to conduct an investigation into the use of the postal system to spread "Communist propaganda." Members of District 1 picketed the Customs Building where the SISS meeting was held, carrying signs that read, "Senator Eastland – Who Killed Emmett Till?" The protesters also distributed a handbill that declared, "Eastland's Witchhunts in Chicago Won't Stop Child Lynchings in Mississippi."[252]

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[251] Robert Birchman, "10,000 Jam Till Mass Meet Here," *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 8, 1955, p. 4; UPWA District 1 flier, "Did Emmett Till Die in Vain? Organized Labor Says No! Attend the NAACP Mass Rally," Sept. 25, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records; Chicago NAACP flier, "Unite Youth for Justice and Equality for All at Chicago Youth Memorial to Emmet [sic] Louis Till," Sept. 30, 1955, in John H. Bracey, Jr. and August Meier, eds., *Papers of the NAACP, Part 18, Series C* (microfilm, 33 reels, University Publications of America, 1995), reel 14.

[252] "Union Carries Fight for Justice to Scene of Trial," *Packinghouse Worker*, Oct. 1955, p. 4; *Chicago Defender* (Chicago edition), Oct. 15, 1955, p. 35 photo caption; "To the Citizens of Chicago," n.d. [Oct. 7, 1955], folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records.

Hot Stuff: Dick Durham and the National Campaign

The UPWA's national response to the Till murder was coordinated by Richard "Dick" Durham. Born in Mississippi in 1917, Durham grew up in Chicago and attended Northwestern University. He was employed by the Works Progress Administration's Writers Project during the Depression and participated in the South Side Writers Group founded by Richard Wright. In the years following World War II, Durham emerged as one of Chicago's most prominent black activist-intellectuals. He was the main creative force behind several landmark radio series that dramatized the struggles and achievements of African-Americans, including WMAQ's award-winning "Destination Freedom" (1948-1950). A leading figure in the Radio Writers Guild, Durham was also involved in a union drive at the *Chicago Defender*, which may explain why he was fired from the paper's editorial staff. "Dick Durham was a militant. He...provided leadership [that most] Negroes don't know about, but boy, he was hot stuff," recalled a colleague.[253]

The UPWA initially hired Durham to work in its Publicity Department, and he was the principal author of the union's pamphlet *Action Against Jim Crow*. Durham's writing skills, organizing savvy, and encyclopedic knowledge of African-American history made a deep impression on his coworkers. In early 1953, the union overhauled its Education Department and invited Durham to head the new Program Department, tasked with ensuring that the UPWA's

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[253] "Radio Writers Nominate Slate for July Election," *Billboard*, June 17, 1944, p. 7; "Top Offices Are Refilled in Chicago," *Guild Reporter*, Dec. 1, 1944, p. 6; Richard Durham interview by J. Fred MacDonald, n.d. [circa Feb. 1975], audiotape (MacDonald & Associates, Chicago); Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948* (Chapel Hill, 1999), 260-70; Judith E. Smith, *Visions of Belonging: Family Stories, Popular Culture, and Postwar Democracy, 1940-1960* (New York, 2004), 208-15; Oscar Brown, Jr. interview by Julieanna Richardson, Sept. 19, 2000, videotape (The HistoryMakers, Chicago).

broader social agenda was actively pursued throughout the organization. Durham thus became the union's point man on civil rights.[254]

Durham had little difficulty convincing UPWA regional leadership bodies to pass resolutions condemning the Till murder, such as the one approved unanimously at a meeting of District 3 officers in Des Moines, calling for a special session of Congress to pass stronger civil rights legislation. UPWA members also introduced resolutions before state and regional labor bodies. At the California state CIO convention, packinghouse organizer Arthur Morrison called upon union leaders to "get off their hands and get into action." He criticized labor spokesmen who extolled the United States as a beacon of freedom for people around the world "after what's happened in Mississippi… Let's straighten out America."[255]

As in Chicago, packinghouse locals in Kansas City and elsewhere participated in mass rallies to protest the Till murder and verdict. In early October, the UPWA embarked on a national petition campaign to demand a federal investigation and the passage of anti-lynching and anti-poll tax legislation. Each local was encouraged to seek the co-sponsorship of the CIO council in its area. New York-area Field Representative William Rix suggested a goal of one

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[254] Norman Dolnick, "Packinghouse Workers Face the Cold War: A Memoir," *Labor History*, 38 (Fall 1997), 506-507; Russell Lasley to Bookkeeping Department, memo, Jan. 7, 1952, folder 16, box 346, United Packinghouse Records; Richard Durham to Russell Lasley, memo, July 3, 1952, ibid.; Ralph Helstein interview by Elizabeth Balanoff, July 16, 1974, transcript, pp. 271-2, Oral History Project in Labor History (Roosevelt University Archives, Chicago). Unbeknownst to most UPWA leaders, Durham was a member of the Communist Party during this period. Oscar Brown, Jr. interview by Cyril Robinson, Sept. 23, 1995, electronic transcript (Illinois Labor History Society, Chicago).

[255] "More UPWA Districts Act on Till Outrage," *Packinghouse Worker*, Oct. 1955, p. 3; "California CIO Demands Federal Action on Mississippi," *Southerner* (Dalton, Ga.), Dec. 1955, p. 6.

million signatures, and he proposed that union members travel to Washington to present the petitions in person.[256]

The most unusual component of the UPWA's nationally-coordinated response to the Till murder was a decision to send eight union activists from around the country to Sumner, Mississippi to observe the trial of Bryant and Milam firsthand. The UPWA contingent included five women, two African-Americans, and five native Southerners. They traveled in three separate delegations, whose paths never crossed during their time in Mississippi. Two of the delegations – one from Chicago, the other from Louisiana – produced detailed reports about their experiences at the trial.

"This Is Where I Belong": Frank London Brown

Frank London Brown and his wife Evelyn were among the thousands of Chicagoans who waited in line at Roberts Temple Church of God to pay their last respects to Emmett Till. Horrified by the sight of the 14-year-old's mangled face, the Browns identified with the courage of Emmett's mother, Mamie Bradley. They too wanted the whole world to know the ugly reality of racial violence: ever since moving into the Trumbull Park housing project the previous year, the Browns and their young children faced an almost daily barrage of rocks, bricks, broken bottles, and explosives that mobs of angry whites hurled at black tenants. Frank's stomach was cut open during one of these episodes, leaving him with a permanent scar; Evelyn's nerves eventually got so frazzled that she broke out in hives. For all that, the Browns chose to remain in

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[256] UPWA-CIO District 4 flier, "Mass Memorial Meeting for Emmitt [sic] Louis Till," 9/25/55, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records; William Rix to Russell Lasley, Oct. 26, 1955, folder 3, box 364, ibid.; "UPWA Board Opens Petition Drive for Federal Civil Rights Laws," *Packinghouse Worker*, Oct. 1955, p. 3.

Trumbull Park. As Frank told a reporter, "[T]his is where I belong…. I feel that I have a duty to stay out here, a duty to every Negro in the world, a duty to every white person in the world that believes in democracy, not to let them down by showing that mobs can win…. They will have to carry me out of here."[257]

No one who knew Frank Brown was particularly surprised when he volunteered to attend the trial of Emmett Till's killers. Brown had been hired as District 1 Program Coordinator by the UPWA six months earlier, and he was therefore responsible for implementing the union's civil rights agenda in Chicago. Of the eight UPWA representatives who attended the Till trial, only Brown lived in the North.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1927, Brown moved with his family to Chicago while still in grade school. Growing up on the South Side, he was exposed to both poverty and protest. He recalled how neighbors physically resisted the eviction of his family, moving furniture and clothing back in "as fast as the landlord moved [us] out for non-payment of rent." Brown participated in the ROTC program at DuSable High School and sang baritone in the choir at Coppin Chapel AME. He briefly attended Wilberforce University before entering the army in early 1946. After recovering from an injury sustained during basic training, he was honorably discharged and returned to Chicago, where he enrolled at Roosevelt University under the GI Bill.[258]

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[257] Evelyn Colbert [widow of Frank London Brown] interview by author, Dec. 16, 2008, notes (in author's possession); "Says Future of Trumbull Up to Mayor," *Chicago Daily Defender,* April 25, 1956, p. 7; "American Week," July 4, 1954, videotape, CBS News Archive.

[258] Frank Brown, "Eye Witness Account: Trumbull Park, U.S.A.," *American Negro,* 1 (August 1955), 5-11; Evelyn M. Brown Colbert, "The Works of Frank London Brown," paper submitted for English 333, Chicago State University, March 31, 1980 (copy in author's possession); Evelyn Colbert interview by author, May 27, 2009, notes (in author's possession); "27 Receive DuSable ROTC Promotions," *Chicago Defender*, Nov. 4, 1944, p. 20.

At Roosevelt, Brown met a dynamic group of black student activists, many of them fellow veterans intent on realizing at home the democratic ideals for which they had fought abroad during World War II. Handsome and eloquent, Brown was elected to the student council alongside future mayor Harold Washington. Before joining the UPWA staff, he held down a variety of jobs, including auto worker, postal clerk, loan interviewer, and bar proprietor. A jazz fanatic, he occasionally sang in bebop combos.[259]

The Browns moved into Trumbull Park in April, 1954, hoping to finally escape the shabby, overpriced housing to which Chicago blacks were largely confined. After the project's first African-American residents, Donald and Betty Howard, moved out in early May, Frank Brown quickly emerged as the black tenants' most prominent spokesperson. He also became closely acquainted with Chicago UPWA activists, who had been campaigning on behalf of Trumbull Park's black families since the start of the conflict.[260]

As early as April, 1952, UPWA staff attempted to set up a meeting with the commissioners of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) after an Argentine family was pressured to leave Trumbull Park by neighbors who assumed they were black. When mob violence erupted in response to the Howard family's arrival in August, 1953, the District 1 Anti-Discrimination Department sent a group of white workers to the scene to investigate. Delegations from the UPWA met with the district attorney, mayor, police commissioner, and CHA officials,

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[259] "Hal Washington Elected President," *Roosevelt Torch*, Oct. 25, 1948, p. 1; John O. Killens, "Frank London Brown," *AMSAC Newsletter* (January 1963), 4-6.

[260] "Minutes of Meeting of District #1 Staff and Trumbull Park Families on Sunday, June 20, 1954," folder 4, box 422, United Packinghouse Records; "American Week," July 4, 1954, CBS News Archive; "Cops, Rioters, Merchants Hit in Trumbull Suits," *Chicago Defender*, Aug. 14, 1954, p. 5; Alan Paton, "The Negro in the North," *Colliers*, Oct. 29, 1954, p. 76; Arnold R. Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *Journal of American History*, 82 (September 1995), 546.

insisting that more be done to protect the Howards. When the CHA commissioners began debating whether to evict the couple, black and white UPWA members repeatedly picketed the CHA offices and City Hall, carrying placards that read, "We Don't Pay Taxes to Build Jim Crow Houses" and "CHA Commissioners Don't Be Cowards Fight for the Howards." The UPWA also invited the Howards to address the union's first national Anti-Discrimination Conference. Throughout 1954, District 1 organized regular shopping trips, doctor visits, and holiday outings for Trumbull Park families. When principled integrationist Elizabeth Wood was fired from the CHA, UPWA International president Ralph Helstein sent a telegram to Mayor Kennelly protesting the decision, and District 1 Director Charles Hayes joined an NAACP protest delegation that met with Kennelly and CHA officials. In September, 1954, the UPWA and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters jointly sponsored an ad in the *Chicago Daily News* condemning Kennelly's failure to end the violence. District 1 also paid for Frank Brown's train fare to the 1954 NAACP national convention.[261]

Frank London Brown first met UPWA District 1 Program Coordinator Oscar Brown, Jr. (no relation) in late spring, 1954. Oscar Brown was a Communist, Frank Brown a Methodist – but this didn't prevent the two from becoming fast friends. Both men were as passionate about books and music as they were about racial justice and political activism. Their personal bond,

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[261] Leo Turner, "Anti-Discrimination, District #1," April 26, 1952, folder 14, box 348, United Packinghouse Records; Oscar Brown, Jr., "The First Year," n.d., folder 11, box 354, ibid.; "UPWA-CIO Pickets City Officials: Wins Victory," *District 1 Champion*, Sept. 1953, p. 3, folder 8, box 456, ibid.; UPWA-CIO District 1, *Action Against Discrimination*, Oct. 30, 1953, folder 4, box 422, ibid.; "CHA Opens Four More Projects to Non-Whites," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 27, 1953, p. 3; "Labor Spurs CHA to Drop Color Bar," *Packinghouse Worker*, Sept. 1953, p. 5; "To Push A-D Community Program," ibid., Dec. 1953, p. 11; ibid., July-Aug. 1954, p. 11 photo caption; "An Open Letter to Mayor Kennelly," *Chicago Daily News*, Sept. 4, 1954, p. 7; "Protests Made on Dismissal of Top Housing Official," *Atlanta Daily World*, Sept. 10, 1954, p. 1; "Since Sioux City," n.d. [circa Sept. 1954], folder 11, box 422, United Packinghouse Records; *Packinghouse Worker*, Dec. 1954, p. 6 photo caption.

and the union's consistent role in the Trumbull Park crisis, brought Frank into the UPWA fold. When Oscar was drafted into the armed forces in late 1954, the union granted him a leave of absence and hired Frank to fill his place.[262]

Trumbull Park remained central to Frank Brown's work with the union. In June, 1955, he led a picket of City Hall with black families from the project. Two weeks before Emmett Till was abducted, Brown and other UPWA leaders joined an NAACP delegation that met with Mayor Daley to protest the ongoing violence directed at African-American tenants.[263]

The formula for staying alive

Frank London Brown flew from Chicago-Midway airport into Memphis and rode from there by bus to Clarksdale, Mississippi, about 20 miles from Sumner. Though he had become skilled at evading the mobs in Trumbull Park, he realized that he was "singularly unfamiliar with the formula for staying alive in Emmett Till's death place." Driving by taxi through the cotton fields on the way to the courthouse, the winding dirt road looked to him like "a venomous tongue."[264]

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[262] "District One Program Report," June 29, 1954, folder 11, box 354, United Packinghouse Records; Evelyn Colbert interview by author, Jan. 24, 2009, notes (in author's possession); Oscar Brown, Jr. interview by Richardson.

Oscar Brown, Jr. later enjoyed a successful musical career. Best known for his songs "Forty Acres and a Mule" and "Brown Baby," he also wrote the lyrics for Max Roach's album *We Insist*.

[263] Frank Brown, "June 1-30 Program Coordinator's Report," folder 11, box 362, United Packinghouse Records; "Chicago Mayor Hears NAACP on Trumbull Park Mobsters," *Daily Worker*, Aug. 19, 1955, p. 4.

[264] Frank London Brown, "In the Shadow of a Dying Soldier," *Southwest Review*, 14 (Autumn 1959), 292-306.

Brown arrived on the second day of the proceedings, shortly after Judge Swango had called a recess to enable the prosecution to locate additional witnesses. He met Mamie Bradley as she stood outside the courthouse with her father John Carthan and cousin Rayfield Mooty, waiting for their ride. Brown had escorted Bradley to the UPWA District 1 protest meeting, so they were not complete strangers. But he observed that Mamie and her companions "seemed apprehensive, and somewhat afraid" because they were "unguarded." Brown felt the same way.[265]

He met up with Mamie Bradley and her entourage again that evening. Mamie expressed interest in continuing to work with the UPWA, but quite understandably she asked to postpone further discussion in order to focus her attention on the trial. She also "expressed fear" that the distribution of leaflets in Sumner by other UPWA representatives might negatively affect the outcome. Brown found Mooty to be downright antagonistic, and he wondered whether Mooty's "position as president of [a] United Steel Workers union local may have had something to do with this attitude."[266] The hypothesis was certainly plausible: the UPWA was widely regarded as

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[265] Frank Brown, "Program Coordinator's Report," Sept. 29, 1955, folder 11, box 362, United Packinghouse Records.

[266] Mooty was the president of United Steel Workers of America Local 3911 at Reynolds Metals in McCook, Illinois. As Mamie recalled, Mooty was "steering me which way to go because he was active in the labor movement and he knew the politicians." The day after Emmett was kidnapped, Mooty "arranged for me to meet with the Chicago branch of the NAACP, and we were referred immediately to [Chicago NAACP attorney] William Henry Huff.… Between Rayfield Mooty and William Henry Huff, things started happening. The story was appearing in the Chicago papers and I was getting calls. Lots of calls." Mooty strongly supported Mamie's decision to have an open-casket funeral for Emmett, and he helped arrange the public viewing. Mooty also contacted Steelworkers officials in Pittsburgh, who convinced USWA president David McDonald to send a telegram to Mississippi governor Hugh White. Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America* (New York, 2003), 119-20; Till-Mobley interview, 239; Rayfield Mooty interview by Elizabeth Balanoff, n.d. [1973-1976], transcript, pp. 140-46, Oral History Project in Labor History (Roosevelt University Archives); Rayfield Mooty to Frank Shane, Aug. 31, 1955, folder

a "red" union, despite its affiliation with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Over the next several days, Brown concluded that Mooty had advised Bradley to avoid contact with him. He nevertheless remained optimistic that the UPWA would be able to enlist Mamie's support in its anti-discrimination campaigns, including the Trumbull Park fight.[267]

Brown could not get into the courthouse on Wednesday, given the severe restriction on the number of seats reserved for blacks. He spent most of the day standing on the courthouse lawn, talking to the other African-American men who had been refused entry. "Used to be they would charge us with clubs and chase us off the grass," one of the men told him, "but they know we ain't running no damn where this time." Indeed what impressed Brown most about his visit to Mississippi was the bravery displayed by Emmett's great-uncle Mose Wright, and by the scores of anonymous black men who stood outside the courthouse despite the presence of hostile whites, many of whom brandished guns openly. After court let out, Brown noticed Wright standing alone. He approached the aging sharecropper-preacher and asked him where he found the courage to testify against Milam and Bryant. "Some things are worse than death," Wright replied. "If a man lives, he must still live with himself."[268]

Back in Clarksdale, Brown heard rumors that several black witnesses to the Till murder had been killed. His notes regarding his activities on Thursday and Friday, September 22 and 23, 1955, the last two days of the trial, are uncharacteristically vague. However, a short story that Brown published in 1959, "In the Shadow of a Dying Soldier," is suggestive. The narrator and

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53, box 7, United Steel Workers of America Civil Rights Department Records (Pennsylvania State University Special Collections Library, University Park); David J. McDonald to Hugh White, telegram, Sept. 6, 1955, ibid.

[267] Brown, "Program Coordinator's Report."

[268] Brown, "In the Shadow of a Dying Soldier"; "Union Carries Fight for Justice to Scene of Trial."

protagonist, "Frank" (husband of "Evelyn"), is dispatched to the Till trial by an unnamed Chicago union that employs him as a "Program Coordinator." Upon his arrival in Clarksdale, a hotel manager repeatedly warns him that the slightest breach of local custom could land him in a pine box. The manager also tells him that black stool pigeons will inform on him if they find out why he has come to Mississippi. "Frank" has nightmares, and even the faintest noise in the hotel startles him from his sleep. On the fourth day of the trial, a taxi driver from the hotel comes to find him at the courthouse and insists that he get in the car. Back at the hotel, the manager informs him that "everybody in town" knows he is a Northern supporter of Mamie Bradley, and advises him to leave immediately. The following morning, "Frank" catches the first bus out of Mississippi.[269]

"Discrimination is a Weapon to Divide Us":
The Louisiana Sugar Refinery Strikes

Predictably, the intensification of the UPWA's anti-racist initiatives during the mid-1950s met with resistance from many white members. These discontented rank-and-filers became core supporters of a disaffiliation drive led by members and staff who charged that the UPWA was "Communist-dominated." At the epicenter of this controversy were several sugar refinery locals in southern Louisiana. Blacks, who composed roughly half the refinery workforce, generally opposed bolting from the UPWA, and with assistance from the national

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[269] "Union Carries Fight for Justice to Scene of Trial"; Brown, "In the Shadow of a Dying Soldier."

Brown is best known for his semi-autobiographical novel *Trumbull Park* (Chicago, 1959). He also pioneered in the reading of fiction to jazz accompaniment, helped launch Fair Play for Cuba, and organized the first course in African-American history at the University of Chicago downtown campus. He died of leukemia in 1962 at the age of 34.

union staff they were largely successful in defeating the secessionists. In the course of their struggle, black activists recast the leadership of their locals, deposing open racists and forging stronger alliances with sympathetic whites.[270]

Escalating conflict with refinery owners bolstered the arguments of UPWA loyalists, who maintained that only through unity could workers improve their lot. In the spring of 1955, the union struck Godchaux Sugars and Colonial Sugars in the towns of Reserve and Gramercy. Located in bayou country, 45 miles up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, both Reserve and Gramercy resembled 19th-century company towns. Many employees lived in company-owned housing and purchased household goods from company stores. In Gramercy, the town's drinking water and electricity were supplied by Colonial.[271]

From the perspective of the UPWA national leadership, the main issues in the strikes that began at both plants on April 14, 1955 were pay and benefit differentials that threatened to undermine union gains elsewhere. After nine months of negotiations, Godchaux and Colonial refused to grant the same 10-cent wage increase and 5-cent benefit increase won by workers at the bellwether American Sugar plant near New Orleans. Instead of reducing the North-South pay differential, as the American contract did, the 5-cent wage hike offered by Godchaux and Colonial would increase the differentials between the regions and within Louisiana itself. For the

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[270] Halpern, "The CIO and the Limits of Labor-based Civil Rights Activism." For background on union drives in the Louisiana sugar industry, see also Thomas Becnel, *Labor, Church, and the Sugar Establishment: Louisiana, 1887-1976* (Baton Rouge, 1980); "Here is the Union's Side," *New Orleans Item*, July 8, 1955, pp. 1, 17.

[271] Alfred Maund, "Louisiana's Good Strike: Unity vs. Injunctions," *Nation*, Aug. 27, 1955, pp. 174-75; UPWA-CIO, "The Southern Sugar Strike – 1955," n.d., folder 3, box 369, United Packinghouse Records. On the towns and their surrounding parishes, see for instance Lillian C. Bourgeois, *Cabanocey: The History, Customs, and Folklore of St. James Parish* (Gretna, La.: 1999); *Survey by St. John the Baptist Parish Development Board* (n.p., n.d. [circa 1955]).

1500 workers at Godchaux and Colonial, and especially for blacks, substandard pay and benefits translated into shoddy housing, missed educational opportunities, and a perpetual feeling of insecurity. The vote in favor of strike action was nearly unanimous in both locals.[272]

The two refineries employed blacks and whites in roughly equal numbers, mirroring the population mix of the communities. The whites were mostly Catholics of Cajun and German ancestry, the blacks mostly Baptists; both groups spoke a mix of French and English. Though African-Americans were allowed to participate in parish and town elections, public schools in the area were rigidly segregated. Inside the plants, the UPWA made significant headway in breaking down racial barriers prior to the strike: blacks cracked into formerly lily-white departments, and separate water fountains were eliminated. Though the presidents of both union locals were white, blacks held roughly half of the executive board positions. The national union trumpeted the fact that there were no serious racial incidents throughout the duration of the walkouts, despite various provocations by management and law enforcement. Interracial unity was a recurring theme in the strike bulletins published by the locals. Union leaders reported that at strike meetings "the old custom of self-segregation has disappeared, for the most part spontaneously." As one white striker explained, the workers "see now that its [sic] not only black that's slaves but white workers as well, and that discrimination is a dangerous weapon to divide us."[273]

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[272] "Strike Two Sugar Refineries in South Close Godchaux, Colonial; 1,500 Out," *Packinghouse Worker*, May 1955, p. 2; "How's This for a Strike Vote?" ibid.

[273] "Officers Report, District No. 8," n.d. [circa April 18, 1955], folder 1, box 365, United Packinghouse Records; Richard Durham to George Thomas, Oct. 8, 1954, folder 5, box 438, ibid.; "Minutes of the District Council No. 8 Executive Board Meeting," Oct. 9, 1954, folder 10, box 429, ibid.; Alvin Vicknair to Grover Hathaway, April 26, 1955, folder 7, box 438, ibid.; C.J. Clark interview by author, Jan. 24, 2009, notes (in author's possession); Farrell Scott interview by author, Jan. 23, 2009, notes (in author's possession); "Louisiana Sugar Strikers Win,"

In Reserve, the strike quickly turned violent as rifle shots were reportedly fired into a manager's home. Strikebreakers were herded into the refinery at gunpoint, eviction notices were sent out to workers living in company-owned housing, and *Life* magazine quoted owner Leon Godchaux II to the effect that the town might have to be "repopulate[d]." Several weeks into the strike, workers chased down a car driven by a member of the Godchaux family and flipped it over. The company secured a sweeping injunction against mass pickets, and the entire executive board of Local 1124 was charged with contempt. In Gramercy, the strike began with less fanfare, but the conflict escalated eight weeks into the walkout when a Pullman train full of scabs rolled onto company property, escorted by heavily-armed guards. A judge sympathetic to Colonial management issued a total ban on picketing, which resulted in jail terms for twenty seven members of Local 1167. After addressing a strike rally in a local high school, UPWA International President Ralph Helstein and District 8 Director George Thomas were charged with conspiracy. Despite this level of intimidation, very few strikers – and virtually no blacks – broke ranks. "[We] didn't have nothing in the first place," one black striker remembered.[274]

Southerner, Feb. 1956, p. 7; UPWA-CIO, "The Southern Sugar Strike – 1955"; Emerson Moseley, "Reserve, La. – A Year Later," *Packinghouse Worker*, Feb. 1957, p. 10; Ralph Helstein interview by Merle E. Davis, June 12, 1983, transcript, pp. 182-84, Iowa Labor History Oral Project (State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City); Anna Provenzano, untitled report, n.d. [circa July 1955], folder 6, box 433, United Packinghouse Records. Racist attitudes were rife among white sugar refinery workers in the early 1950s; see John Hope II, "Human Relations in New Orleans, La.: 1951," June 1953, folder 6, box 344, ibid.

[274] "Sugar Foreman's House Fired On," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, April 17, 1955, p. 1; "Minutes, District No. 8 Council," June 25-26, 1955, folder 10, box 429, United Packinghouse Records; "Sugar Strike Turns Bitter," *Life*, July 18, 1955, pp. 42-43; Thomas Sancton, "What Do the Companies Say About Sugar Strike?" *New Orleans Item*, July 7, 1955, pp. 1, 13; Charles Fischer interview by Rick Halpern & Roger Horowitz, Jan. 27, 1986, audiotape, United Packinghouse Workers of America Oral History Project (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison); Scott interview.

By the summer of 1955, the Louisiana sugar refinery strikes had become a major crusade for the entire UPWA. The union launched a national "Don't Buy Scab Sugar" boycott campaign, printing more than 600,000 leaflets, 750,000 posters, and 70,000 stickers. In New Orleans, a broad array of AFL and CIO locals endorsed the boycott, and union members visited over 400 stores to secure compliance. Packinghouse workers across the country "adopted" families from Reserve and Gramercy and donated school clothing for the strikers' children. Packinghouse locals in Chicago adopted 80 families and took up weekly collections at the plant gates. The national CIO endorsed the boycott of Colonial and Godchaux products, and in a welcome show of international solidarity, Cuban unions blocked the export of raw sugar to the struck refineries.[275]

Though the refinery workforce was overwhelmingly male, one of the most remarkable aspects of the sugar strikes was the militancy and initiative displayed by women. At the first meeting of the Local 1124 Women's Committee, strikers' wives voted to join the picket lines. The women also initiated a petition to recall the judge responsible for jailing the local's leaders. In Gramercy, the Local 1167 Women's Committee likewise voted to picket, in defiance of the blanket injunction. In addition to more traditionally "feminine" activities such as running strike

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[275] Russell Lasley to R. Helstein, "Report No. 1 on 'Don't Buy,'" July 28, 1955, folder 4, box 369, United Packinghouse Records; Russell Lasley, "Report No. 2 on UPWA's 'Don't Buy Godchaux and Colonial Sugar' Campaign," Aug. 8, 1955, ibid.; Russell Lasley to All District Directors and Local Unions, Oct. 7, 1955, ibid.; Russell Lasley to Charles Hayes, Oct. 28, 1955, folder 1, box 366, ibid.; "Scab Sugar Out of New Orleans Area; CIO Boosts Campaign," *Packinghouse Worker*, Aug. 1955, p. 4; "Cuba Unions Crack Down on Godchaux, Colonial Sugar Supply," ibid., July 1955, p. 12.

kitchens, women also kept lookout for scabs and travelled across Louisiana to spread the "Don't Buy" message.[276]

Twenty weeks into the strike, 150 female representatives of UPWA locals in Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma met in Gramercy for the first-ever District 8 Women's Activities Conference. Emmett Till's body had been discovered just a few days earlier, and the case became the main topic of discussion at a "political action workshop" held on September 3rd. During the workshop, International Vice President Russell Lasley argued that the Till murder represented "a move to deter Negroes and whites from the unity UPWA is trying to develop.... There must be opposition on the part of organized labor." Lasley recommended that the locals send protest messages to President Eisenhower and Attorney General Brownell, and he urged cooperation with NAACP branches. Lasley also called for delegations to Washington, D.C. and suggested a "mass rally" in Mississippi "to let the residents know lynching and murder are not condoned." The conference passed a resolution which read in part: "Our heads are bowed with grief and compassion as we send to Mrs. Mamie Bradley of Chicago…our heartfelt sympathy. As women and mothers, we share her tragedy, and offer her the comfort that in her sorrow she is not alone. Out of our struggles today, added to her own, we are building a new, free, unafraid South."[277]

Over the next ten days, International Vice President Tony Stephens repeatedly contacted the directors of Districts 8 and 9, responsible for union locals in the South, to determine who

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[276] "Women's Activities of Local 1124, Reserve, Louisiana," n.d. [circa July 1955], folder 10(2), box 365, United Packinghouse Records; Anna Provenzano, untitled report; "Women Swing into Action Behind Sugar Strike," *Packinghouse Worker*, Aug. 1955, p. 10; "From a Striker's Wife," *L'Observateur* (Reserve, La.), Sept. 9, 1955, p. 6.

[277] "Minutes, First District #8 Women's Activities Conference," Sept. 3, 1955, United Packinghouse Records, folder 6, box 370.

would travel to Sumner, Mississippi to witness the Till murder trial.[278] Stephens insisted that the group should be interracial, and he hoped that both organizers and rank-and-file workers would be able to make the trip. After some shuffling of schedules, it was decided that white field staffers Bruce Nolan and Ada Lee Howell would represent District 9, and that white program coordinator Jack Telfer would bring several women from Reserve and Gramercy, Louisiana, to represent District 8.[279]

Standing fast: Jack and Marge Telfer

A group of five traveled to Sumner together from Louisiana: Jack Telfer and his wife Marge, Freida Vicknair, Lillian Pittman, and Grace Falgoust. All were white except for Pittman, an African-American. Telfer was technically the Program Coordinator for District 9, but he was on temporary loan to District 8 to assist with the sugar strikes in Reserve and Gramercy. Falgoust was a worker at one of the struck refineries, and Vicknair and Pittman were both strike supporters active in the women's committees established by the local unions.

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[278] District 8 was comprised of locals in Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. District 9 was comprised of locals in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia.

[279] [Anthony] Stephens to [Ed] Dumas, teletype, [Sept.] 9, Sept. 16, Sept. 19, 1955, folder 11, box 430, United Packinghouse Records; Anthony Stephens to George Thomas, Sept. 13, 1955, ibid.; Anthony Stephens to Ed Dumas, Sept. 13, 1955, ibid.; "Officers Report," n.d. [circa Feb. 1956], p. 15, folder 10(1), box 365, ibid.

Howell and Nolan did not leave written accounts of their experiences at the trial, and it is unclear how long they stayed in Mississippi. According to the *Packinghouse Worker*, few white residents of Sumner disputed Nolan's contention that J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant were guilty, but the locals invariably replied, "The jury knows better than to do anything to them." "Union Carries Fight for Justice to Scene of Trial."

John Harley "Jack" Telfer was born in Thomas, Oklahoma in 1907 and grew up in rural La Farge, Wisconsin. His parents divorced when he was young, leaving his mother in poverty, so Jack trapped and hunted to help support the household. He took two years off from high school to work as a lumberjack before graduating from a Seventh Day Adventist academy in 1929. Telfer slowly worked his way through college, taking whole semesters and years off to save up money. He sold bibles door to door, worked in a saw mill, and wrote for a WPA-funded historical preservation project. After finally earning a degree from Milwaukee State Teachers College, he became the Director of Public Forums for the U.S. Department of Education. In this capacity, he established the "Town Hall Forum of Milwaukee," which brought John L. Lewis to speak in 1937.[280]

An ordained minister, Telfer pastored Congregationalist and Unitarian churches continuously from 1940 to 1952. He believed that "Christianity arose as a resistance movement" and often referred to Jesus as "a hand worker of Nazareth." During the height of the Cold War, he travelled throughout Europe – including the Eastern Bloc – to "study the conditions of working people." He presented elaborate slide shows to his congregations, hoping to debunk stereotypes about Communist societies and thereby reduce the chance of nuclear war.[281]

During the mid-1940s, Telfer worked closely with the UPWA in Ottumwa, Iowa, hosting a radio show sponsored by the union. In 1948, he served as vice chair of the Iowa Progressive

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[280] John ("Jack") H. Telfer resume, folder 9, box 353, United Packinghouse Records; Jack Telfer to Tony and Mike Ambrose, July 9, 1974, audiotape (copy in author's possession); Jack Telfer interview by Clive Knowles, June 11, 1974, audiotape (Illinois Labor History Society).

[281] John Harley Telfer, "Autobiography," *La Farge (Wis.) Epitaph*, July 10, 1974, p. 4; "Invocation by Jack Telfer at the First District 9 Anti-Discrimination Conference Banquet," Dec. 6, 1953, folder 9, box 353, United Packinghouse Records; "Available for lectures and discussions…Rev. John H. Telfer," ibid.

Party and toured the state with Paul Robeson. In 1950, he moved to Wichita to pastor the First Unitarian Universalist Church. On Sundays, Telfer would sometimes accompany a group of black and white congregants to Dockum Drug Store to demand service at its segregated lunch counter. In 1952, Telfer's church caused an uproar when it insisted on sending a black delegate to the annual meeting of the South West Unitarian Conference. "Every sort of inducement and threat of professional retaliation was directed against me…. But I stood fast." It was this episode that first brought Telfer to the attention of the UPWA's Dick Durham.[282]

In the spring of 1953, Telfer moved to Atlanta to serve as UPWA District 9 Program Coordinator. "I had no idea what I was settin' off," he later admitted. In Jacksonville that September, Telfer was flogged by supporters of District 9 Director Adrian McKinney, a staunch anti-Communist who was encouraging locals to secede from the UPWA.[283] The following spring, racist union members in Moultrie, Georgia broke up an educational retreat that Telfer had organized. The white supremacists "hurled insults and curses constantly," destroyed a blackboard, slashed car tires, and threatened a black organizer at knifepoint. The stress took a toll on Telfer, and on at least one occasion he requested a transfer out of District 9, but he was ultimately convinced to stay. "Someone obviously has got to make equal rights a paramount

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[282] "CIO Commentator on Midwest Air," *Billboard*, Aug. 23, 1947, p. 16; Jack Telfer interview; Gretchen Cassels Eick, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72* (Urbana, 2001), 58; Jack Telfer to Richard Durham, Feb. 11, 1954, folder 5, box 361, United Packinghouse Records.

[283] Jack Telfer interview; "White Leader Flogged, Defied Jim Crow Policy," *Atlanta Daily World*, Sept. 8, 1953, pp. 1, 4.

issue throughout the locals in the South," Dick Durham told him. "That glorious opportunity seems to be yours."[284]

Marjorie Telfer was born in Austin, Texas in 1922, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. Marge's parents were not particularly liberal and she did not socialize with black people growing up, but her horizons expanded during World War II when she joined the Navy and spent long stretches in New York and other Northern cities. When Marge met Jack Telfer in the winter of 1954-1955, she was employed as a cartographic draftsman by the Army Corps of Engineers in Memphis.[285]

Once assigned to the sugar strike, Jack Telfer moved from Atlanta to New Orleans. On weekends, he occasionally visited an old friend in Searcy, Arkansas, where Marge's father led a church. At a mass one Sunday, Jack heard Marge sing a solo and decided to ask around for her phone number. Open-minded and adventurous, Marge was attracted to Jack's iconoclasm. On September 4, 1955 – four days after Emmett Till's body was found – Jack and Marge married. They would later joke that they spent their "honeymoon" in Sumner, Mississippi.[286]

Hard knocks: Grace Falgoust, Lillian Pittman, and Freida Vicknair

Grace Falgoust was a white Godchaux striker who served as president of Local 1124's Women's Committee. Born in 1921, she was one of nine children who "came up from hard knocks" in nearby LaPlace. In the days before the union, Grace's father walked five miles to the

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[284] Jack Telfer to Richard Durham, April 6, 1954, folder 18, box 350, United Packinghouse Records; John Henry Hall, "This is a report on my visit…in Moultrie," April 5, 1954, folder 5, box 361, ibid.; Richard Durham to Jack Telfer, March 30, 1954, ibid.

[285] Marjorie Telfer interview by author, Oct. 4, 2008, audiotape (in author's possession).

[286] Ibid.

refinery every morning, unsure if he would find work because the company utilized a daily shape-up to recruit its labor force. For extra income, Grace's mother raised and cleaned chickens for a local butcher. "We were all poor. It was a poor community," one of her sisters explained.[287]

Grace was born with a rare skin disease that prevented her from walking until she was four years old. The day after her high school graduation, she moved to New Orleans to seek treatment. She found a job as a welder's helper in a shipyard, but the work irritated her skin, so she returned to LaPlace and began working at the Godchaux refinery. The filth that pervaded the plant was a major grievance among female workers. Because there was no cafeteria, the women ate together in their dressing room, where "rats would eat your lunch."[288]

Despite her poverty and disability, Grace devoted much of her energies to helping others. At Easter time, she bought dresses for girls who couldn't afford them. She and her husband Willis (himself a Godchaux worker) were unable to conceive, so they adopted a mentally disabled girl. Grace's mother taught her that racial brotherhood is a Christian ideal, and Grace did not hesitate to entertain black guests at her home.[289]

Grace's siblings hypothesized that her skin disease "made her feisty," and she was known for doggedly defending her opinions. "If you crossed her line…about religion or politics…she

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[287] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust"; Yvonne Plaisance [sister of Grace Falgoust] interview by author, July 1, 2009, notes (in author's possession).

[288] Plaisance interview.

[289] Ibid.

would fight you…until she was hoarse." Grace's compassion and willingness to stand up for her beliefs made her a highly effective union leader. "She didn't take nothing from nobody."[290]

Lillian Pittman served as president of Local 1167's Women's Committee. An African-American, she was born in Linwood, Louisiana in 1919. She and her husband Robert, a Colonial striker, lived in company-owned housing a few miles' walk from the refinery. Lillian's mother gave birth to her at age 13, and Lillian too became a parent at a young age: at the start of the sugar strike, she had two grandchildren and a third on the way. In years past, Lillian had worked the morning shift at the refinery, relying on neighbors to help get her daughter Oralee off to school.[291]

Lillian's husband Robert had to quit school as a young boy to work in the rice fields, so Lillian and Oralee taught him how to read. Though Robert didn't want Lillian to walk the picket lines, she was among the first women to do so. She was also active in the "Don't Buy" campaign, appearing on regional television with Jack Telfer. As she explained to fellow delegates at the UPWA special convention in Chicago in August, 1955, "I worked in the [strike] kitchen, from the kitchen to the picket line, and from the picket line to the courthouse, and what I mean by the courthouse is, I was put on the stand and tried.... But we housewives didn't give up because we don't want our husbands to go back in that plant unless they have a contract."[292]

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[290] Suzanne Mustanich [niece of Grace Falgoust] interview by author, June 30, 2009, notes (in author's possession); Plaisance interview.

[291] "Union Carries Fight for Justice to Scene of Trial"; Oralee Broden [daughter of Lillian Pittman] interview by author, Nov. 11, 2008 and May 23, 2009, notes (in author's possession).

[292] Broden interview; *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*, Police Jury Ward 9, Gramercy, St. James Parish, Louisiana, Sheet 12B, Lines 86-87; "UPWA Program on TV Gives Viewers Sugar Strike Story," *Packinghouse Worker*, Aug. 1955, p. 4; *Proceedings, First Special Convention of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, C.I.O.,* Aug. 8, 1955, p. 65 (State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

Freida Vicknair, 38, was active in the Local 1124 Women's Committee. Her father was a Lithuanian immigrant who ran a boarding house in Reserve. Freida's husband Alvin, a mechanic at Godchaux, became a UPWA field representative in 1954. The appointment was welcomed by black union activists, who considered Alvin a reliable ally. Freida initially resented the long hours her husband put in as a union rep, but she recognized the importance of his work and stuck by him. At the District 8 Women's Activities Conference, Freida introduced a resolution condemning the state of Louisiana for its failure to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board.* She was convinced that "there cannot be a 'our way of life' in any section of our country… If we want to grow and prosper we must all live the same way of life which allows every citizen the same privileges and freedom."[293]

How bad it is in Mississippi

Driving 350 miles from Louisiana to Mississippi resulted in "innumerable problems" for the interracial delegation from District 8, as all of the public accommodations en route were strictly segregated. When they entered the Magnolia state, inconvenience and indignity were compounded by fear – and the eerie sensation of having traveled backward in time. "Throughout the delta we saw endless fields of cotton," recalled white Godchaux worker Grace Falgoust. "Negro men, women, and children were picking this cotton under the broiling Mississippi sun. A

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[293] *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920*, 5th Ward, Reserve, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, Sheet 18B, Lines 77, 80; Alex Summers to Anthony Stephens, April 6, 1954, folder 1, box 113, United Packinghouse Records; Russell Lasley to International Officers, memo, April 8, 1954, ibid.; Alex Summers to Anthony Stephens, April 12, 1954, folder 14, box 357, ibid.; Alex Summers to Anthony Stephens, April 19, 1954, ibid.; "Minutes of Political Action Workshop, 1st Women's Conference, District No. 8, UPWA-CIO"; Freida Vicknair, "Report on the Till trial," n.d., folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records. Lillian Pittman seconded Freida Vicknair's resolution, which passed unanimously.

vivid picture of the Old South!" Even the sleepy refinery towns of the Louisiana bayou seemed positively cosmopolitan in comparison. "Upon entering the state of Mississippi, one could almost feel the 'steel curtain' ring down," Falgoust explained. "At different times it was necessary to ask for directions.... When inquiring from any of the Negro race, we could immediately see the tension on their faces. Indeed they live in fear and oppression. One must actually see this to realize their need for emancipation. Slavery still exists…not in actual form, but in the heart and mind of the people."[294]

When the District 8 delegation arrived at the Sumner courthouse on Monday morning, September 19, Jack Telfer convinced Sheriff Strider that he was a *bona fide* journalist and proceeded to occupy a vacant seat in the white press section. He made a point of introducing himself to the black newsmen crowded around the small card table the court had designated for them, and he worked out an arrangement with photographer Ernest Withers to purchase pictures from the trial for *Packinghouse Worker* newspaper.[295]

Telfer's four female companions were unable to get into the courthouse, so they spent the morning outside on the lawn, passing out copies of the UPWA District 8 Women's Conference resolution on the Till murder. During the midday recess, the women shared a picnic lunch under a nearby tree. Their interracial group met with "disapproving and shocked glances" from locals. "The three white ladies and I were sitting down and along came a white photographer and took

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[294] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust."

[295] Jack Telfer to Richard Durham, Sept. 20, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records.

our picture," recalled Lillian Pittman. "He asked us were we from Chicago, and we all answered, 'No, we are from Louisiana.' He couldn't believe it."[296]

After lunch the women tried once more to enter the courthouse. This time only Pittman was rebuffed. While waiting outside the courthouse, she eavesdropped on a conversation between two prospective jurors. Both men felt certain that Bryant and Milam were guilty. But rather than risk physical retaliation by voting to convict, the pair admitted that they had deliberately answered questions in a manner that ensured their disqualification from the jury pool.[297]

On Tuesday, September 20, the white press section filled to capacity, and several journalists complained that Jack Telfer was sitting in a space reserved for someone else. When Sheriff Strider ordered Telfer to move, Telfer produced the press credential that Strider himself had signed just the day before. Telfer pleaded that the labor press deserved a presence at the trial, but the sheriff was not convinced. Strider was an imposing figure, "a short man weighing 270 pounds who carries no visible gun, but appears to depend upon the brutal armament of an oversized black jack, sticking prominently out of the right-hand pocket of his trouser." Telfer may have been intimidated, but he was not cowed. He walked over to the black press section, which had been outfitted with a longer table for the second day of court, and sat down in an

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[296] Lillian Pittman to Dick Durham, n.d., ibid.

[297] Jack Telfer to Richard Durham, Sept. 23, 1955, ibid. Several prospective jurors were rejected because they said they had donated money to the defense, another because he admitted that he was biased against blacks. John Brehl, "Smoked Fags During Trial Happily Light Up Stogies as Jury Says 'Not Guilty,'" *Toronto Star*, Sept. 26, 1955, pp. 1, 2.

empty seat. To his surprise, no attempt was made to remove him, and so he remained in the "black" section throughout Tuesday's proceedings.[298]

Mamie Bradley made her first appearance in court that morning, escorted by her father John Carthan and cousin Rayfield Mooty. Bradley was "modishly dressed" in a dark gray suit with a pleated skirt and a small black felt hat, exhibiting "absolute poise under the most difficult circumstances." Jack Telfer presented her with a copy of the District 8 resolution, which she "graciously accepted, despite the swirl of confusion" caused by dozens of reporters and photographers angling to get near her. During a quiet moment after the chaos subsided, Bradley and her father read the document. "I am so grateful to them all," Bradley told Telfer during a recess. "Please tell the women of your union that what they have sent to me means so much to me at this terrible time."[299]

The white women from District 8 were able to get into the courtroom on Tuesday, but Lillian Pittman was again turned away. She spent the morning distributing copies of the District 8 resolution to blacks standing outside on the lawn, as she had done the previous day. Pittman's conversations gave her a clearer sense of "just how bad it is for the poor people in Mississippi." She "talked to some of the people about political action. They didn't know what I was talking about. I had to explain to them what I meant. Then some answered me, 'Lady, do you want us to be killed and put in the Tallahatchie River?'" Pittman also tried to "talk union to the people," most of whom were cotton pickers. Disenfranchised, lacking even the most basic workplace

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[298] Telfer to Durham, Sept. 20, 1955.

[299] Ibid.

rights, Pittman's interlocutors were palpably scared. Later that evening, a cross was burned near a railroad depot on the outskirts of Sumner.[300]

The Till trial began in earnest on Wednesday, September 21. Rather than push his luck with Sheriff Strider, Jack Telfer took a seat in the white press section, which had been enlarged since the previous day. Telfer hadn't made his peace with the Jim Crow courtroom, however; he had merely changed tactics. At the urging of Dick Durham, Telfer spoke with some of the black journalists about issuing a joint statement condemning the separate and unequal facilities. There was some interest in the proposal, but attorney Basil Brown, an advisor to Rep. Charles Diggs of Detroit who accompanied the Congressman to the trial, insisted that the idea was "ridiculous."[301]

In a curious reversal of fortune, only one of the women from District 8 was able to get into the courtroom on Wednesday: Lillian Pittman was among the two dozen African-Americans permitted to sit in the audience. From the next-to-last row, Pittman took detailed notes on the trial to share with black journalists denied entry into the building.[302]

Meanwhile, rather than wait on the lawn, Freida Vicknair, Grace Falgoust and Marge Telfer decided to venture downtown to gauge the sentiment of the wider community. To their dismay, all of the whites they encountered were dyed-in-the-wool racists. Two "aristocratic" elderly ladies averred that blacks positively enjoyed picking cotton in the hot sun. A store clerk boasted that only whites voted in Tallahatchie County and the three adjoining counties. Though

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[300] Pittman to Durham; "Cross Burning is Ignored," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, Sept. 22, 1955, p. 8.

[301] Jack Telfer to Richard Durham, Sept. 21, 1955, United Packinghouse Records, box 369, folder 7.

[302] Caption on photograph of Lillian Pittman, box 13, photo accessions, Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America Records, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Vicknair got him to concede that this amounted to "taxation without representation," he was otherwise unmoved by counter-argument. Regarding the murder trial, several townspeople "insisted that the body sent to Chicago was not that of Emmett Till. No one protested the innocence of Bryant and Milam – in fact, we were told that this crime was justified." The locals were uniformly confident that any juror who dared vote in favor of a conviction would be killed in short order.[303]

During the afternoon recess, the District 8 delegation dined with a Canadian journalist who had expressed interest in the sugar strike. After lunch, Falgoust, Vicknair and Marge Telfer made an unsuccessful attempt to sweet-talk the sheriff's deputies guarding the main entrance to the courthouse. Falgoust was warned that "something might happen" if she continued to mix with Negroes, "because we don't do that here." She responded to the thinly-veiled threat with her characteristic sass: "We just love to mix."[304]

After court let out for the day, the District 8 delegation took a long drive with *Nation* correspondent Dan Wakefield to discuss the sugar strike. The group was threatened by a white man in a passing car, who "told us we had better get the 'Hell' out of Mississippi before he killed a half-dozen of us," recalled Pittman. "I asked the man did he own Mississippi? He couldn't answer me." Though outwardly defiant, Pittman felt "so scared I didn't know what to do. After I had seen the picture of the Till boy's body what was killed. It was a horrible sight to look at. After I got back to my hotel room I put the two large chairs against the front door and the back

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[303] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust"; Vicknair, "Report on the Till trial."

[304] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust"; Pittman to Durham.

door. I even turned the fan off, and burned the light all night, and pulled the shade down. That's the way all the [black] people feel in Mississippi, because they told me so."[305]

"It is clear," Jack Telfer wrote to Dick Durham, assessing the trial up to that point, "that a great whitewash is being prepared in this place. The thing stinks more every day as urgent and pertinent questions are not asked [by the prosecution]. Whole blocks of inconsistency are allowed to go unchallenged." Telfer complained that even the Northern liberal journalists covering the trial were too soft on the judge and prosecutors. How could justice be served when "pressing hard on the back of every person's neck is the knowledge that brutality and physical cruelty can fall swiftly" in response to even the slightest violation of Jim Crow etiquette?[306]

The entire District 8 delegation was able to view the trial on both Thursday and Friday. Having thoroughly alienated the lawmen stationed at the main entrance, Vicknair, Falgoust and Marge Telfer managed to get into the courthouse by following a group of white locals through an auxiliary door in the back of the building. Anticipating an acquittal, the UPWA group decided to call a press conference, to be held immediately following the announcement of the verdict. However, they abandoned this plan on Friday morning, judging that the scene at the courthouse would be far too chaotic. Instead, they chose to write a joint statement, which they circulated as a press release. "Obviously, the statement had to be prepared before we could know the decision of the jury," Jack Telfer explained, since the reporters would rush back to their hotel rooms to write after the verdict was announced. "There were some sharper thrusts which I felt might well go into this statement, but since the women from Reserve and Gramercy felt that these more bitter

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[305] Pittman to Durham.

[306] Telfer to Durham, Sept. 21, 1955.

statements ought not to be included…we deferred to their judgment since they were putting the thing out." Marge Telfer frantically typed twelve copies during the noon recess.[307]

PRESS RELEASE, SEPTEMBER 23, 1955,
FROM DELEGATION OF WOMEN FROM UPWA-CIO, LOUISIANA

> We four Southern women…came to the Sumner trial of the kidnappers and killers of young Emmett Till as an inter-racial delegation of labor unionists and union housewives....
>
> In the struggles we have had to wage in defense of our standard of living against the exploitation and oppression of the wealthy sugar barons of Louisiana, we have slowly and painfully learned a few lessons about race relations which have prepared us to understand…the things which we have seen and heard this week.
>
> The chief lesson which experience has driven home to us…is the absolute necessity of both white and Negro workers standing together if the people of either race are to win decent wages, job security, and the full rights and privileges of American citizenship….
>
> Another of the lessons we have learned [is] that our employers tried to keep us workers divided along racial lines by discriminating against Negro people....
>
> Therefore, for a number of years now we have held un-segregated union meetings, elected union officers of both races without discrimination, and refused to sign any contract with the sugar companies that provided for differences in pay based on race or color.
>
> As we came to accept both Negroes and whites as having an equal right to respect and consideration, we have discovered new and precious meaning in the words of brotherhood taught us by religion.... We have spelled out our background of experience in order to show why we are so shocked by what we have seen and heard in and around Sumner these last five days.
>
> 1. In the courtroom we have seen an attempt at respect for the <u>forms</u> of legal justice in this trial, but we have seen the <u>substance</u> of respect for human beings violated, by limiting the attendance of Negroes to 23 in a courtroom holding 200 white persons. We have seen the press representatives of Negro newspapers and radio stations placed against a far wall 50 feet from the jury seats, where many words of testimony were inaudible, while the non-Negro reporters were placed in a semi-circle around the jury seats, close at hand. We regard such…arrangements as intolerable discrimination against both Negro people and the American principles of free speech and free press.

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[307] "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust"; Telfer to Durham, Sept. 23, 1955.

> 2. Throughout the trial.... [t]he most deeply offensive epithet than can be substituted for the word 'Negro' has been used again and again. Such terms are not used among our union members.... We believe their use in this trial violates the right of all citizens to equal treatment, and prejudices a fair outcome.
>
> 3. We observe that no Negro citizens were called as prospective jurors…due to the fact that there is not a single registered voter in this county.... In these circumstances we cannot agree that a fair trial leading to justice is assured.
>
> 4. The widespread existence…of prejudice and a distorted sense of what is just and right where Negro people are involved was indicated to us by the many people in Sumner and nearby towns who stated that even if the two defendants, Bryant and Milam, had slain Emmett Till as charged, they should be acquitted because 14 year old Till had 'wolf-whistled' at Mrs. Bryant….
>
> 5. We express our sympathy for Mrs. Mamie Bradley in her cruel bereavement and call upon all women, Negro and white, North and South, to join in condemning and working together to end the race discrimination out of which such crimes as this one are inspired.[308]

With the exception of the *Toronto Star*, which briefly quoted Jack Telfer, none of the major newspapers mentioned the UPWA's presence at the Till trial, nor the District 8 delegation's trenchant criticism of Mississippi justice. Grace Falgoust was nevertheless convinced that the trip was worthwhile: "I am sure that the people present will long remember the women who broke the racial barriers in this section."[309]

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[308] Press release, "From Delegation of Women from UPWA-CIO, Louisiana," Sept. 23, 1955, folder 7, box 369, United Packinghouse Records.

[309] Brehl, "Smoked Fags During Trial Happily Light Up Stogies as Jury Says 'Not Guilty'"; "Report by Mrs. Grace Falgoust." In mid-November, the Telfers spoke to hundreds of Dillard University students about their trip to Sumner. In early 1956, the union sent Jack to Washington, D.C. to discuss the Till case with the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights. "Union Organizer Tells DU Students of Till 'Trial,'" *Louisiana Weekly*, Nov. 19, 1955, p. 3; Jack Telfer, "Report on Legislative Work at Washington, D.C.," Jan. 27, 1956, Folder 6, Box 369, United Packinghouse Records.

Small Victories

Langston Hughes eloquently expressed the sentiment of millions of African-Americans in the aftermath of the Till verdict: "I Feel Mississippi's Fist In My Own Face." UPWA leaders believed the time was ripe for a "march on Washington" to pressure the federal government to enact stronger civil rights legislation. But only the NAACP possessed the legitimacy, financial resources, and organizational infrastructure needed to organize a national march, and the Association's national leadership balked at the tactic. "[T]his was the kind of situation that needed real mass action, so we thought, and it wasn't forthcoming," complained UPWA president Ralph Helstein.[310]

Though they were frustrated by their inability to force the hand of the federal government, packinghouse unionists had an impact at the local level. In Chicago, where UPWA leaders insisted that "Mississippi is right here…out at Trumbull Park Homes," outrage at the Till verdict reinvigorated the campaign to defend integrated public housing. On October 25, 1955, upwards of 2,000 people – some estimates ranged as high as 5,000 – picketed City Hall for four hours demanding more decisive measures to quell the racist mobs. UPWA staff claimed that 1,000 of the protesters were packinghouse workers. Frank London Brown, whose car was stoned by racists shortly after he returned from Mississippi, spoke at plant gate meetings urging workers

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In the spring of 1956, the Telfers moved to California, where Jack helped the UPWA organize farm workers. During the 1960s, Jack returned to the ministry and taught courses on African-American history. Marge became a librarian in the Berkeley public schools.

[310] Langston Hughes, "I Feel Mississippi's Fist in My Own Face, Says Simple," *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 15, 1955, p. 9; Russell Lasley to Roy Wilkins, Nov. 8, 1955, in John H. Bracey, Jr. and August Meier, eds., *Papers of the NAACP, Part 21* (microfilm, 22 reels, University Publications of America, 1996), reel 10; Ralph Helstein interview by Elizabeth Balanoff, April 29, 1974, transcript, p. 222, Oral History Project in Labor History (Roosevelt University Archives). Among the prominent figures advocating a 'march on Washington' in the wake of the Till verdict were Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., T.R.M. Howard, and Rev. Charles Hill of Detroit.

to attend the mass picket, and a substantial number of white workers turned out. Two weeks later, in what Chicago NAACP officials described as the "first significant break in the Trumbull Park situation" in months, the chief of police announced that blacks would be permitted to walk through the neighborhood without escort if they chose.[311]

In Louisiana, meanwhile, the Colonial Sugars strike was settled in mid-September on terms favorable to Local 1167. Godchaux Sugars proved more stubborn, and as their strike dragged on, members of Local 1124 became increasingly convinced that management was bent on crushing the union altogether. Finally, in late December, eight months into the walkout, the company agreed to a 10-cent pay increase. To celebrate its victory, the local sponsored an interracial Christmas party for the workers and their children.[312]

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[311] "Step Up Fight for Trumbull Crackdown," *Worker* (DuSable edition), Sept. 18, 1955, p. 15; Richard Durham to UPWA International Executive Board, "Program Activities for 1955," n.d., p. 4, folder 4, box 368, United Packinghouse Records; George F. Brown, "Say KKK Cross Burned at Trumbull Park," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Oct. 8, 1955, p. 2; Richard Saunders, Todd Tate and Annie Collins interview by Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, Sept. 13, 1985, United Packinghouse Workers of America Oral History Project; Chicago NAACP press release, "News From Chicago Branch," Nov. 7, [1955], in John H. Bracey, Jr., Sharon Harley, and August Meier, eds., *Papers of the NAACP, Part 26, Series C* (microfilm, 13 reels, University Publications of America, 2000), reel 1.

[312] "Fact Summary Sheet, Southern Sugar Strike – 1955," Sept. 19, 1955, folder 4, box 369, United Packinghouse Records; "Reach Godchaux Agreement; 'Our Heads High' – Thomas," *Packinghouse Worker*, Dec. 1955, p. 3; Moseley, "Reserve, La. – A Year Later"; Farrell Scott interview; Edward Shanklin to Russell Lasley, Jan. 4, 1956, folder 13, box 372, United Packinghouse Records.

Both black and white workers remained active in local union affairs throughout the late 1950s. In 1958, an interracial group from Local 1167 launched the St. John Parish Voters League. Alvin Vicknair, "Notes from the Road," *Packinghouse Worker*, Oct. 1957, p. 10; Emerson Moseley, "Job Now is to Register," ibid., July 1958, p. 9.

A New Phase

The Montgomery bus boycott, which began in early December, 1955, marked the beginning of a new phase in the black freedom struggle. The UPWA quickly embraced the burgeoning protest movement and its leadership.[313] Martin Luther King, Jr. met with UPWA officials for the first time during a visit to Chicago in mid-February, 1956. The union's research department had just discovered that National City Lines, which owned the Montgomery buses, also owned subsidiaries in some forty cities across the country. Dick Durham urged King to contact labor leaders in each of these cities to discuss the prospects of spreading the boycott. There is no record of King's response, but Durham's proposal probably seemed like pie-in-the-sky. Which unions would be willing and able to help coordinate a nationwide boycott? For its part, the UPWA could only offer the support of its locals in Sioux City, Cedar Rapids, and a few small cities in Illinois, since the union lacked a presence in most of the other places where National City Lines held transportation contracts. If nothing else, King must have been struck by the boldness of his newfound allies.[314]

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[313] In April, 1955, UPWA delegates to the Alabama State CIO convention attempted to introduce a resolution condemning segregated public carriers. A few months later, twenty-six black members of UPWA Local 108 in Atlanta sat at the front of city buses, expecting to be arrested. Though they were threatened and cursed at, they were not removed from their seats. "Officers Report," n.d. [circa Feb. 1956]; Richard Durham to UPWA International Executive Board, "Program Activities for 1955," p. 5; *Eleventh Constitutional Convention, The United Packinghouse Workers of America (AFL-CIO), District No. 9*, March 10-11, 1956, p. 124, box 24, United Packinghouse Records.

[314] "Proceedings, The Montgomery, Ala. Bus Boycott Conference," Feb. 13, 1956, folder 6, box 373, United Packinghouse Records; "National City Lines, Inc.," n.d. [circa Feb. 1956], ibid.; "National City Lines," n.d. [circa Feb. 1956], ibid.; "Support to Montgomery Bus Boycott," undated draft, ibid.; UPWA District Council 3 resolution, "Montgomery Passive Resistance Movement," March 2, 1956, folder 10, box 456, ibid.

On March 28, 1956, approximately 17,000 packinghouse workers in Chicago stopped work for five minutes in solidarity with the Montgomery bus boycott. That same month, the UPWA International Executive Board donated $1,000 to the Montgomery Improvement Association. Packinghouse locals around the country raised money for the MIA, and by June the union's direct contributions totaled $3,350. In early 1957, UPWA leaders participated in the first meetings of what would eventually become the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. An $11,000 donation from the union proved critical to the SCLC's survival during its first year, when income from all sources totaled just $13,000. "[Y]our generous gift was really the means by which our then infant organization was able to begin its work," King acknowledged. The UPWA remained a staunch supporter of King and the civil rights movement throughout the 1960s.[315]

Conclusion

The haunting image of Emmett Till's mangled face is seared into our collective memory, a tragic epitome of the brutal violence that helped maintain white supremacy in the Jim Crow

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[315] "Prayers," *Packinghouse Worker*, April 1956, p. 2; "UPWA Aids Bus Boycott," ibid., March 1956, p. 3; "UPWA Has Hefty Contribution for Bus Boycotters," ibid., June 1956, p. 4; Russell Lasley and Charles Hayes, "Report on the Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation & Non-Violent Integration," Jan. 14, 1957, folder 5, box 381, United Packinghouse Records; Russell Lasley, "Southern Negro Leaders Conference," n.d. [circa Feb. 1957], ibid.; Martin Luther King, Jr. to Members of United Packing House [sic] Workers of America, May 17, 1961, folder 8, box 395, ibid.; David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986), 648 note 20.

Little has been written about the UPWA's role in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, but see James Ralph, *Northern Protest*: *Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 71; Peter Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana, 1994), *passim*; Peter Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland* (Gainesville, 2003), 128.

South. But Emmett's death was more than just a tragedy, for it also inspired an outpouring of determined protest, in which labor unions played a prominent role. The United Packinghouse Workers of America campaigned energetically, from the Chicago stockyards to the Louisiana bayou. UPWA leaders drew parallels between lynching in the South and mob violence in the North, arguing that both black and white workers stood to gain from a united struggle against racism in all its forms. Packinghouse workers petitioned, marched, and rallied to demand justice; the UPWA organized the first mass meeting at which Mamie Bradley spoke; and an interracial group of union activists traveled to Mississippi to observe the trial of Emmett's killers, defying segregation inside and outside the courtroom.

A growing body of scholarship has highlighted the ruinous effects of anti-Communist repression and factionalism on labor unions with impressive records of challenging racial inequality.[316] While the red scare dealt a hammer blow to the forces of "civil rights unionism," the impulse was never completely suppressed. Like a number of other Old Left institutions that managed to survive the McCarthy era – such as the Highlander Folk School and the Southern Conference Educational Fund – the United Packinghouse Workers of America represents a thread of continuity in the long civil rights movement.[317]

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[316] For references to this literature, see note 245 above.

[317] Furthermore, despite the virtual disappearance of the organizational milieu in which they cut their political teeth, a cadre of older activists – including Bayard Rustin, Ella Baker, Anne Braden, Jack O'Dell, Randolph Blackwell, and Howard Zinn – brought to the civil rights movement a wealth of organizing skills honed in earlier labor and leftist struggles.

As the only left-led union to remain within the CIO after the expulsion of eleven "Communist-dominated" affiliates in 1949 and 1950, the UPWA was certainly an anomaly.[318] It was relatively insulated from the government harassment and "raiding" by rivals that crippled most of the expelled unions, yet it managed to avoid a wholesale purge of radicals from its leadership and maintained a highly-democratic internal regime.[319] As importantly, African-Americans comprised a growing minority of the meatpacking and sugar refinery workforces, often assigned to critical roles in the production process; in Chicago, the union's historic stronghold, the vast majority of packinghouse workers were black.[320] This unusual combination of circumstances facilitated the pursuit of an aggressive civil rights agenda during the mid-1950s.[321]

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[318] On the expulsions, see for instance Zieger, *CIO*, 253-93. For a survey of the expelled unions' fates, see F. S. O'Brien, "The Communist-Dominated Unions in the United States since 1950," *Labor History*, 9 (Spring 1968), 184-209.

[319] Three clarifications are in order. Firstly, although the UPWA was *relatively* insulated from external challenges, the union was not completely immune to anti-Communist attacks and made some concessions to them. Secondly, while there were many Communists and leftists of other stripes on the union staff and in local leadership positions, none of the UPWA's elected national officers during this period were Communists. Dolnick, "Packinghouse Workers Face the Cold War," 492-507. Thirdly, democracy in the UPWA was combined with a strong dose of centralism. For example, regional Program Coordinators were accountable to the union's national leadership, not to regional leadership bodies.

[320] Like other African-Americans of their generation, many black packinghouse workers were emboldened by the anti-fascist spirit of home front mobilization for World War II and by their service in the armed forces. Charles Pearson interview by Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, July 17, 1986, United Packinghouse Workers of America Oral History Project.

[321] Horowitz, *Negro and White, Unite and Fight*, 203-27; Rick Halpern, "Getting to Grips with the CIO: The Significance of the Packinghouse Experience," *Labor History*, 40 (May 1999), 226-31; Rick Halpern, "Organized Labour, Black Workers, and the Twentieth Century South: The Emerging Revision," *Social History*, 19 (Oct. 1994), 372-82. UPWA leaders were building upon a tradition of anti-racism that traced back to the union's formative years; see references in note 243 above.

Of course, resolutions and speeches meant little unless flesh-and-blood individuals were willing to press the union's program in the face of resistance from within and outside. Not all UPWA leaders were as bold as Frank London Brown and Jack Telfer, Program Department staff who frequently risked their lives confronting racism.[322] But no other majority-white union fought with such vigor.[323] As the backlash against *Brown v. Board* gathered pace, the UPWA provided an infrastructure and an ethos that enabled working-class Southerners like Grace Falgoust and Lillian Pittman to forge meaningful solidarity across the color line. Falgoust and her coworkers may not have cast off all the vestiges of "whiteness," but they defied prevailing class, gender, and racial norms during a deeply conservative period.

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[322] In early 1957, UPWA president Ralph Helstein forced Dick Durham to resign from his position as head of the Program Department. For some time, Durham had been coordinating a loose caucus pushing for greater black representation on leadership bodies and a more militant stance on racial issues. Helstein feared that the caucus's approach would alienate white members and destabilize the union; he was also concerned that Durham's white ally Tony Stephens was gunning for the union presidency. Helstein interview by Balanoff, pp. 271-79; Oscar Brown, Jr. interview by Robinson.

In the mid-1960s, Durham became the editor of the Nation of Islam's newspaper, which led to his collaboration with Muhammad Ali on the boxer's memoir, *The Greatest*. During the early 1980s, Durham began working with Emmett Till's mother on a book about her life, but they did not complete the project together.

[323] Herbert Hill, *Black Labor and the American Legal System: Race, Work, and the Law* (Madison, Wis., 1977), 270-73; William B. Gould, *Black Workers in White Unions: Job Discrimination in the United States* (Ithaca, 1977), 402-3; Draper, *Conflict of Interests*, 37. David Roediger acknowledges that the UPWA "pushed uncommonly hard for antiracist positions in the workplace and beyond," but he erroneously characterizes the union's general approach during this period as "nonracial syndicalism" – the blinkered, opportunistic stance he attributes to the CIO as a whole. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 222. On the problem of overgeneralization in whiteness scholarship, see Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History*, 89 (June 2002), 154-173.

"Did Emmett Till Die In Vain?" asked a leaflet circulated by District 1 in early September, 1955.[324] Given the racial inequality that continues to plague this country more than half a century later, the question remains salient. Those who seek to revive the tradition of civil rights unionism would do well to remember the UPWA activists who answered resoundingly: "Organized Labor Says No!"

[324] UPWA District 1 flier, "Did Emmett Till Die in Vain? Organized Labor Says No!," Sept. 8, 1955.

Chapter 4

From the Ashes of the Old:
The Old Left and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Introduction

This essay contends that scholars have underestimated the impact of the "Old Left" – the socialist milieu of the 1930s and 1940s – on the African-American insurgency of the 1950s and 1960s. In support of this claim, I present a case study of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) from its formation through the height of its influence. I demonstrate that a group of talented organizers with experience in prior Old Left struggles helped launch, lead, staff, advise, and raise funds for SCLC. I establish that Martin Luther King, Jr. was personally acquainted with Old Left activists from his college years onward, and that these relationships influenced his political outlook. I show how several Old Left organizations that managed to survive the repression of the McCarthy era went on to form alliances with SCLC, including a handful of "red" unions that provided critical infusions of cash.

These findings are consistent with the general thrust of the growing sociological literature on cross-movement diffusion, which has identified a variety of mechanisms through which social movements may influence one another. However, the repression and stigmatization of the Old Left during the Cold War led many SCLC activists to hide or downplay their connections to the socialist movement, which has distorted both popular and scholarly understanding of the origins of the civil rights movement.

A touchy subject

The civil rights movement is widely recognized as one of the great milestones in the history of the United States. The birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. is marked by a federal holiday, on which politicians of all persuasions claim to uphold the ideals of the movement's most famous leader. The situation is rather different when it comes to the Old Left. In the minds of many Americans, "communism" and "socialism" are evils roughly on par with cannibalism and Satanism. In this context, the claim that the Old Left made vital contributions to the civil rights movement – and hence to American democracy – is not only counterintuitive, but potentially inflammatory.

If reasoned discourse about communism and socialism is rare in the U.S. today, matters were far worse during the civil rights movement's heyday, when supporters of Jim Crow claimed that black protesters were being manipulated by Communists as part of an elaborate conspiracy to destabilize the government. My intention is certainly not to lend retrospective credence to these hysterical accusations. Nor should my argument be construed as a blanket endorsement of the ideas and actions of the Old Left. Rather, my goal is to highlight a pattern of cross-movement interactions that previous scholarship on the civil rights movement has missed. Let the political chips fall where they may.

Movement interactions and the civil rights movement

Scholars have identified a variety of mechanisms through which ostensibly distinct social movements may affect one another (Rupp and Taylor 1987; Taylor 1989; McAdam and Rucht 1993; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Tarrow 1994; Whittier 1995; Minkoff 1995, 1997; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Isaac and Christiansen 2002; Roth 2003; Van Dyke 2003; for overviews, see

Soule 2004; Whittier 2004; Givan, Roberts, and Soule 2010). The civil rights movement has figured centrally in this literature, serving as the paradigmatic case of an "initiator" movement that spawned a host of "spin-offs" (McAdam 1995), including the second wave women's movement (Evans 1979; Minkoff 1995, 1997), the movement against the Vietnam War (Breines [1982] 1989; Polletta 2002), and efforts to revive the labor movement (Voss and Sherman 2000; Isaac and Christiansen 2002). Scholars also recognize that the civil rights movement itself was shaped by other social movements, including Gandhian pacifism (Chabot 2012; Isaac et al. 2012), the labor movement (Frymer 2008; Chen 2009), and racist counter-movements such as the Ku Klux Klan (McAdam [1982] 1999; Morris 1984; Andrews 2004). The present essay contributes to this latter stream of research by focusing on a neglected influence on the civil rights movement: the Old Left.

Rethinking the origins of the civil rights movement

The Old Left plays no role in McAdam's canonical ([1982] 1999) sociological analysis of the origins of the civil rights movement. According to McAdam, the burgeoning movement was sustained by human and material resources derived from black churches, black colleges, and the NAACP.[325] Morris (1984) made a signal contribution by highlighting the important roles of relatively obscure "movement halfway houses" such as Highlander Folk School, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Southern Conference Educational Fund. Moreover, Morris recognized that SCEF and Highlander traced their origins to the Old Left (see also Polletta 2002; Roy

[325] In a later study, McAdam (1988:50, 63) found that 15% of Freedom Summer participants listed affiliations with "Socialist or Leftist" groups on their applications.

2010).[326] But the movement halfway houses – which lacked a mass base in black communities and rarely organized protests under their own auspices – were not the only significant conduits between the Old Left and the civil rights movement. As we shall see, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a black-led mass organization, was itself heavily dependent on the Old Left as a source of leadership cadre and funding.

Several recent works by social scientists have called attention to overlooked sources of the civil rights movement's strength. Skocpol, Liazos, and Ganz (2006) showed that black fraternal orders engaged in voter education and registration efforts, lobbied for civil rights legislation, and helped fund the NAACP's litigation during the 1940s and 1950s. Fraternal organizations also provided opportunities for future civil rights leaders to network and develop their organizational skills. Parker (2009) demonstrated that black military veterans were more likely to support integrated schooling and to vote than were non-veterans. He contends that several prominent civil rights movement leaders first became politically active as a result of their experiences in the armed forces (compare Mettler 2005). Thus while the analyses of McAdam and Morris remain foundational, this essay joins a growing body of research that points to a more diverse range of institutions and experiences that helped propel the civil rights movement.

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[326] Morris does not mention that Fellowship of Reconciliation director A. J. Muste had been a prominent figure in the labor and socialist movements of the 1920s and 1930s (Robinson 1981). Morris also understates the Old Left pedigrees of Highlander and SCEF. Highlander's co-founders were all members of the Socialist Party, and one was the party's Tennessee state organizer (Adams 1992; Horton 1990; Lorence 2007). Highlander musician Pete Seeger, who played a key role in disseminating labor songs within the civil rights movement, was a former Communist and a fixture of the Old Left folk music scene (Roy 2010). SCEF staffers Carl and Anne Braden had been active in the Progressive Party and the Civil Rights Congress during the late 1940s and early 1950s (Fosl 2002). Morris's sweeping (1993) analysis of the black protest tradition ignores the Old Left altogether.

The Case

By all accounts, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was one of the civil rights movement's major direct-action organizations. Founded in the wake of the bus boycotts of 1955-1956, SCLC remained central to the civil rights movement organizational field throughout the 1960s. Led by Martin Luther King, Jr. until his death, SCLC supported local movements across the South, initiated major protest actions of its own, and influenced the strategic and tactical agenda of the movement as a whole. This essay focuses on the years 1957 through 1965, from the organization's inception through the height of its influence.

In common parlance, the term "Old Left" is somewhat ambiguous. In its narrowest sense, the expression refers to socialists of various stripes, including members of the Communist and Socialist parties. Sometimes the term is used more broadly, to encompass labor unions and other organizations concerned primarily with mitigating class disadvantage. For the purposes of this essay, I use the term to refer to the socialist *milieu*, which included a wide range of organizations in which socialists played central roles.

This essay focuses on three main mechanisms of interaction between the Old Left and SCLC, each of which is common coin in the sociological literature: overlapping personnel, network ties, and organizational alliances. Overlapping personnel refers to SCLC activists with first-hand experience in the Old Left. Network ties refers to SCLC activists whose personal acquaintances (friends, parents, teachers, etc.) had first-hand experience in the Old Left. The concept of organizational alliance should be self-explanatory.

These were certainly not the only mechanisms through which the Old Left affected SCLC or the civil rights movement more generally. One reason segregationists were inclined to view the civil rights movement as a Communist conspiracy was because the Old Left had previously

led tumultuous anti-racist struggles in the South (on which more below). Moreover, one of the civil rights movement's perennial nemeses, the FBI, was flush with funding and legitimacy because of its prior efforts to repress the Old Left. These examples illustrate how government and counter-movement responses to one social movement can shape the general political environment in which subsequent movements arise. We shall encounter additional mechanisms of cross-movement interaction in what follows. However, I have chosen to focus on the three diffusion mechanisms outlined in the previous paragraph because the empirical phenomena to which they draw our attention have been largely overlooked in both sociological analyses of the civil rights movement and in the historiography. Even readers who know this literature well are likely to find my results surprising.

Preliminary Objections

The prospects for a case study of diffusion from the Old Left to SCLC might seem unpromising for several reasons. SCLC was a civil rights organization led by blacks; the Old Left was a class-based movement led by whites. SCLC was religious; the Old Left was secular. SCLC was vibrant and youthful; the Old Left, hobbled by repression, was weak and senescent. Though plausible on their face, all of these objections rest on mistaken assumptions about the Old Left and/or SCLC. In the sections that follow, I address each of them in turn.

The Old Left and race

Scholars have long recognized that socialists played pivotal roles in the unemployed and labor union struggles of the 1930s and 1940s in the U.S. (Piven and Cloward 1979; Levine 1988; Goldfield 1989), but it is less widely known that Old Left groups also championed racial

equality. The Communist Party, in particular, devoted enormous energy to protesting racism, recruiting African-Americans, and developing black leadership. Communists petitioned for the integration of Major League baseball, picketed screenings of films such as "Gone with the Wind," and utilized direct-action tactics to desegregate a variety of public spaces, including parks and restaurants (Gilmore 2008; Kelley 1990; Naison 1983; Solomon 1998; Silber 2003). Many black cultural icons – including Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, and Lorraine Hansberry – joined the Communists or worked closely with them (Denning 1997). The percentage of African-Americans on the Communist Party's highest leadership body rose steadily from 7.4% in 1930 to 15.4% in 1948 (Klehr 1978:62).

Communists and Socialists strove to involve African-Americans in the unemployed movement (Folsom 1991; Lorence 2011; Skotnes 1996). "In the early years of the Depression," according to Meier and Rudwick, "blacks formed a large proportion of participants in the hunger marches, which were generally Communist inspired…. After government relief agencies were created, they also became targets for mass demonstrations. These actions were generally Communist-inspired and interracial, even when they took place in Negro ghettos" (Meier and Rudwick 1976:332-3). Left-led unemployed organizations often physically resisted the eviction of tenants who could not afford to pay their rent. As Drake and Cayton observed in their classic ethnography of black Chicago, "When eviction notices arrived, it was not unusual for a mother to shout to her children, 'Run quick and find the Reds!'" (Drake and Cayton [1945] 1962:87).

Hundreds of thousands of African-Americans participated in the union drives of the Great Depression and World War II eras. In the South, Communists and Socialists organized tens of thousands of blacks into sharecroppers' unions (de Jong 2002; Grubbs 1971; Kelley 1990). In the North, where the Congress of Industrial Organizations succeeded in significantly reducing the

black-white unemployment gap during the 1940s (Zeitlin and Weyher 2001), CIO unions led by Communists stood out in their efforts to combat workplace discrimination (Goldfield 2003; Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 2003). Left-led unions also engaged in a variety of community struggles for racial justice in both the North and South (Biondi 2003; Feuer 2006; Honey 1993; Horne 2005; Korstad 2003).

In addition to their role in struggles of workers and the unemployed, Old Left activists also helped launch an array of militant civil rights organizations during the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s. Among the most dynamic of these were the International Labor Defense (Hill 2008; Martin 1976, 1985), the Workers Defense League (Sherman 1982), the National Negro Congress (Gellman 2012), the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (Reed 1991), the Southern Negro Youth Congress (Gellman 2012; Kelley 1990), the March on Washington Movement (Bates 2001), the Civil Rights Congress (Anderson 2003; Brown 2004; Heard 2010; Horne 1988; Martin 1987; Rise 1998), the Progressive Party (MacDougall 1965; Sullivan 1996), and the National Negro Labor Council (Thompson 1978; Lang 2009). Employing a range of tactics, from lobbying and petitions to marches and sit-ins, these organizations challenged segregated public accommodations, racist hiring policies, suffrage restrictions, police brutality, and wrongful convictions of African-Americans.

Surviving repression

The repression meted out during the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s had a devastating impact on the Old Left. Hundreds of suspected Communists were jailed or deported, thousands were victims of mob attacks and vigilante violence, and an untold number were blacklisted from their trades and professions. In many instances, government investigators

treated professed belief in racial equality as *prima facie* evidence of disloyalty. Civil rights organizations in which Communists were active became targets of state repression, which forced many of them to disband. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 nullified the bargaining rights of labor unions whose leaders refused to sign affidavits foreswearing allegiance to Communism, crippling many of the most racially-egalitarian unions (Caute 1978; Schrecker 1998; Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 2003; see also Pontikes, Negro, and Rao 2010).

Nevertheless, a number of Old Left organizations managed to survive the McCarthy era and continued to press vigorously for racial justice. As importantly, many individual Old Left activists remained committed to building movements for racial equality, despite the decimation of the organizational milieu in which they had cut their political teeth. Others retreated from activism for a time, only to be galvanized once again by the growth of the civil rights movement.

Religion

Left-led unions, unemployed councils, and civil rights organizations often utilized religious imagery, collaborated with churches, and welcomed the faithful into their ranks during the 1930s and 1940s. Even the Communist Party itself forged close alliances with progressive ministers and recruited religious believers (Gellman and Roll 2011; Kelley 1990:107-8; Korstad and Lichtenstein 1988:791-2; Dunbar 1981; Weaver 1947). As sociologist Robert Bellah recalled of his decision to join the Communists in the 1940s, "[T]here was an easy transition for me from a Christian commitment to social justice to a recognition that some people were doing something about it…. The people I came to know in the party were…fighting for black equality and so on. I was very impressed with them" (quoted in Bowen 2006). Harlem's most prominent black Baptist minister, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., proclaimed in 1945, "[T]here is no group in America,

including the Christian church, that practices racial brotherhood one-tenth as much as the Communist Party" (Powell [1945] 1973:67).

If the Old Left was not strictly secular, nor was the Southern Christian Leadership Conference strictly religious – its moniker notwithstanding. While the SCLC's most prominent figures were indeed clergymen, a number of SCLC staffers were atheists, several key advisors were Jewish, and many of the organizations with which SCLC collaborated had no religious affiliation.

Anti-Communism

Anti-Communism remained a potent weapon in the arsenal of white supremacists during the mid-1950s and 1960s, long after the downfall of Senator Joseph McCarthy (Woods 2004; Lewis 2004). SCLC took several measures to shield itself from accusations of Communist influence. The word "Christian" was added to the group's name primarily for this purpose, and Communists were barred from participation.[327] However, *former* Communists were not officially excluded, and in any event, the Old Left was considerably broader than the membership of the Communist Party alone. Moreover, SCLC leaders rarely scrutinized the backgrounds and wider political convictions of individual activists, unless pressured to do so by forces external to the organization. In short, while anti-Communism was indeed a barrier to Old Left interaction with SCLC, it was not an insuperable one.

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[327] The SCLC's 1957 bylaws did not expressly prohibit Communist participation, but this subsequently became the organization's official policy. *Constitution and By-laws of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (Atlanta: undated [1957]), *Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970, Part 4: Records of the Program Department* (microfilm, 29 reels, University Publications of America, 1995), reel 1; "O'Dell Resigns."

Age

The civil rights movement helped initiate the New Left protest wave, but SCLC's early leaders were considerably older than the student activists who participated in the lunch counter sit-ins of 1960. Born in the 1920s or earlier, this cohort reached adulthood at a time when the Old Left was still a significant presence in U.S. society. As we shall see, a surprising number of SCLC leaders were active in the socialist milieu early in their careers.

Data

In what follows, I present biographical sketches and organizational profiles of more than a dozen SCLC co-founders, officers, top-level staff, major fundraisers, institutional donors, and advisors to Martin Luther King, Jr. This data is drawn from a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including forty-nine mainstream, African-American, and leftist periodicals; twenty archival collections; and more than three dozen biographies, memoirs, and oral history interviews. Many of these sources have never been utilized before, including several FBI files that were declassified for the first time in response to requests I made under the Freedom of Information Act.[328]

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[328] I am generally skeptical of hearsay evidence supplied by FBI informants, many of whom were under duress and/or received financial compensation for their services (Leab 2000; Lichtman and Cohen 2004; Taylor 2014). However, in several instances such testimony provided useful clues that enabled me to locate more reliable forms of evidence. In addition, FBI files often include newspaper clippings, fliers, and other primary source materials that have not been preserved elsewhere.

In Friendship and the Origins of SCLC

Though Martin Luther King, Jr. had already been meeting informally with activist ministers from across the South for some time, SCLC was formed in early 1957 largely due to the persistence and foresight of three Northerners. Bayard Rustin, Stanley Levison, and Ella Baker co-founded the organization In Friendship in New York City in early 1956 to raise funds for Southern civil rights activists facing economic reprisals. Formed during the early weeks of the Montgomery bus boycott, In Friendship made support for that struggle one of its top priorities. The group solicited donations from local unions, churches, and liberal organizations, and raised thousands of dollars for Montgomery at its gala concerts in New York. In Friendship initially used office space donated by the Workers Defense League, and counted several prominent labor leaders among its sponsors.[329]

Rustin, Levison, and Baker were convinced that the burgeoning church-based direct-action movement needed to establish its autonomy from the more cautious, legalistic NAACP. At the same time, the trio strongly believed that Southern activists could benefit from the financial assistance and organizing savvy of sympathetic Northerners. King agreed.[330] In order to minimize friction with the NAACP, Rustin, Levison, and Baker envisioned an umbrella group with which local movements could affiliate, rather than a mass membership organization that would recruit individuals. Rustin drafted a series of short papers that clarified the group's *raison*

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[329] Workers Defense League, National Action Committee minutes, Feb. 24, 1956, *The Papers of A. Philip Randolph* (microfilm, 35 reels, University Publications of America, 1990), reel 19. The WDL was closely associated with the Socialist Party.

[330] Stanley Levison interview by James M. Mosby, Jr., Feb. 14, 1970, transcript, Ralph. J. Bunche Collection (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.), pp. 19-20; Ella Baker interview by John Britton, June 19, 1968, transcript, Bunche Collection, p. 8.

d'etre, and these documents formed the basis for discussions at SCLC's initial meetings. "It is difficult to overestimate the contribution of Rustin, Levison, and Baker to SCLC's early development," observes historian Adam Fairclough (1987:38). Indeed all three were master organizers – and veterans of the Old Left.

Bayard Rustin

Bayard Rustin's conversations with Martin Luther King, Jr. during the early weeks of the Montgomery bus boycott helped deepen the young minister's commitment to the philosophy and practice of non-violence. Rustin ghost wrote the first article that King published about the boycott, and he quickly became one of King's most trusted advisors. Rustin was also the main behind-the-scenes organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and numerous other national protests (Anderson 1997; D'Emilio 2003; Levine 2000).

Rustin was born and raised in West Chester, Pennsylvania by his maternal grandparents, who were active in the NAACP. He attended Wilberforce University before moving to Harlem in 1937 to attend City College of New York. Rustin joined the Young Communist League (YCL) during this period and became an organizer for the group in 1939.

> I discovered at City College during the Depression that when Tom Mooney was in trouble, it was the Communists who came to his assistance. When it was the Scottsboro boys, it was the Communists. When it came to speaking out against Jim Crow, it was the Communists. Every black who got into trouble, the Communists made a great deal of fuss about. So I got involved in the Young Communist League. (quoted in Viorst 1979:201)

During the New York City bus boycott of 1941, Rustin and his comrades engaged in mass picketing to force the hiring of black bus drivers. It may have been through the YCL that Rustin first met Stanley Levison.

Rustin broke with the Communists when they suddenly abandoned their opposition to U.S. participation in World War II. Shortly thereafter he joined the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation. He became a youth organizer for the March on Washington Movement, a national campaign against discrimination in hiring led by socialist A. Philip Randolph with the backing of his union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Because Rustin refused to fight in World War II, he served two years in a federal penitentiary. After his release, he participated in the Congress of Racial Equality's 1947 "Journey of Reconciliation," a freedom ride through the upper South, for which he was sentenced to hard labor on a North Carolina chain gang. Rustin also helped Randolph launch the League for Non-Violent Civil Disobedience Against Military Segregation in 1948.

Despite his break with the Communists, Rustin continued to move within Marxist circles during the 1950s and eagerly recruited members of Old Left youth groups to work alongside him in the civil rights movement. In the spring of 1956, on the recommendation of Michael Harrington, Rustin hired Young Socialist League activists Tom Kahn and Rachelle Horowitz to work at the In Friendship office. Kahn and Horowitz helped organize a massive Madison Square Garden rally that raised $20,000. The pair also helped Rustin and Ella Baker plan the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom. Rustin's organizing staff for the 1958 and 1959 Youth Marches for Integrated Schools likewise included a core of socialist youth, among them Kahn, Horowitz, and Norman Hill. Throughout the months of preparation leading up to the 1963 March on Washington, Horowitz served as national transportation coordinator and Kahn as Rustin's unofficial chief-of-staff (Williams 2004:114-5; Horowitz 2007; LeBlanc and Yates 2013).

Ella Baker

Ella Baker was SCLC's first full-time employee, and she served as the organization's acting director for part of 1959 and 1960. In addition to establishing the SCLC office in Atlanta, she helped coordinate the Crusade for Citizenship voter registration drive.

Baker was born in Virginia and grew up in North Carolina, but she came of age politically in New York City during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Her early intellectual mentor was African-American journalist George Schuyler, then a sharp critic of both American capitalism and Soviet Communism. Baker helped Schuyler launch the Young Negroes Cooperative League in 1930. "From economic planning must spring our second emancipation," she argued (quoted in Ransby 2003:87).

Baker identified with the struggles of the unemployed, which provided her with object lessons in the power of direct-action tactics. In early 1936, she helped organize the founding conference of the National Negro Congress, an alliance of political, fraternal, and church groups that proved instrumental in cementing black support for union drives in steel and other industries ("Negro Congress Plans"). That same year, Baker began working at the leftist Rand School for Social Science. She relished debating with her coworkers, many of whom were members of radical political parties. Though Baker considered the Communist Party "the most articulate group for social action," she was especially sympathetic to the Communist Party (Opposition), a small revolutionary organization that criticized the lack of democracy in the USSR. She also supported the American Labor Party, an electoral third party backed by New York's progressive unions ("Stone, Ruddock").[331]

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[331] Baker interview by Britton, pp. 80-1; Ella Baker interview by Sue Thrasher and Casey Hayden, April 19, 1977, transcript, Southern Oral History Program (Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), p. 51. On the

Baker was hired as an NAACP field organizer in 1940, at the beginning of a period of explosive growth for the Association. NAACP membership increased ninefold between 1940 and 1946, and Baker helped establish scores of branches in the South. She also assisted with several union drives among black workers in the region. Convinced that opportunities for "mass action" existed across the country, Baker chafed at the elitist, bureaucratic outlook of the NAACP's national leadership. In 1946, she resigned from her post as NAACP director of branches.

During the 1950s, Baker struggled to reconcile her radical views with her recognition that the NAACP was the only civil rights group that enjoyed mass support among blacks. As president of the New York NAACP, she complied with a mandate to purge known Communists from the branch. Yet she also spoke out against McCarthyism and worked closely with alleged Communists on a number of issues. In the early 1950s, she collaborated with Stanley Levison to protest the passage of federal anti-Communist legislation. In 1956, as In Friendship was being formed, Baker organized a rally in solidarity with Louisville civil rights activist Carl Braden, an alleged Communist imprisoned on sedition charges (Ransby 2003).

Baker's tenure in the SCLC office was rocky, in part because the ministers whose activities she was trying to coordinate were dismissive of female leadership. Shortly before leaving SCLC in 1960, she organized the conference at Shaw University that gave birth to the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.

Communist Party (Opposition) in Harlem, see Alexander (1981:38, 40). A number of minor biographical errors have crept into the literature on Baker. Jones (2013:61) writes that Baker "joined" the Communist Party (Opposition). While Baker was clearly part of the Lovestoneite milieu, as she herself acknowledged, it remains unclear whether she formally joined the CP(O). Several scholars have stressed the significance of Baker's experiences at Brookwood Labor College, a workers' school headed by socialist A. J. Muste (Ransby 2003:73-4; Polletta 2002:36; compare Grant 1998:33). However, Baker was never a Brookwood student proper; rather, she attended the annual summer institute of the moderate Cooperative League of America, which was held on Brookwood's campus in 1931 ("Co-operative League Awards Scholarship"). Polletta erroneously claims that Baker spent a year a Brookwood.

Stanley Levison

Bayard Rustin introduced Stanley Levison to Martin Luther King, Jr. in the summer of 1956, and Levison quickly became one of King's most trusted advisors. He edited or ghost wrote many of King's speeches, articles, and book manuscripts (Garrow 1981).

Born and raised in New York City, Levison was a Jewish attorney and businessman who served as a highly effective fundraiser for several organizations during the 1940s and 1950s, including the American Jewish Congress and the Communist Party. At the height of the red scare, he secretly advised Communist leaders on financial matters and helped oversee several small businesses that provided the party with a revenue stream (Branch 1988; Barron 1996; Friedman 1998:108-111; Garrow 2001; Kotz 2005; Schwartz 2010:516; Kamin 2014).[332]

Levison's fundraising skills helped place the SCLC on a solid financial footing. In 1961, he persuaded the SCLC board to hire former Communist Jack O'Dell (the subject of a separate section below) to help oversee an experimental direct-mail solicitation effort. The project proved fantastically successful, netting $80,000 in its first year, which covered roughly half of SCLC's operating expenses (Branch 1988:574-5). "There is no way to calculate what Stanley Levison

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[332] Levison never publicly acknowledged his ties to the Communist Party, but the evidence – the recollections of relatives and acquaintances, in addition to FBI surveillance records compiled over many years – is overwhelming. Questions nevertheless remain. Though Levison ceased to play a significant role in Communist affairs during the mid-1950s, FBI informants within the party reported that he continued to make occasional donations as late as 1962. While this claim should not be dismissed out of hand, several statements attributed to Levison and others by the informants strain credulity. SAC, New York to Director, FBI, Aug. 15, 1966, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-392452 (Subject: Stanley David Levison), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Record Group 65 (National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md).

and Jack O'Dell have meant to the SCLC in this regard," beamed executive director Wyatt Walker (quoted in Garrow 1986:168).

Officers

SCLC was governed by an executive board that varied in size from roughly two dozen members in the late 1950s to more than three dozen by the mid-1960s. A subset of board members also served as officers of the organization (president, secretary, etc.). To keep the scope of my biographical research within manageable limits, I chose to focus on the organization's officers in 1961 (the middle year of the period under study), of which there were nine total.[333] At least three of those nine[334] – Joseph Lowery, Samuel Williams, and Lawrence Reddick – participated in Old Left groups prior to the formation of SCLC. [335] A fourth officer – Martin

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[333] The officers of SCLC in mid-1961 were: Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. (president), Rev. C. K. Steele (first vice president), Rev. Joseph E. Lowery (second vice president), Rev. Samuel W. Williams (third vice president), C. O. Simpkins (fourth vice president), Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth (secretary), Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy (financial secretary-treasurer), Rev. Kelly Miller Smith (chaplain), and Lawrence D. Reddick (historian). All had been officers since the formation of SCLC, with the exception of Lowery and Simpkins, who had previously served on the executive board.

[334] I say "at least" because there is reason to believe that Rev. Ralph Abernathy joined the Southern Negro Youth Congress as an undergraduate at Alabama State Teachers College. At some point during the mid-to-late 1940s, an FBI informant furnished what appears to be a master list of SNYC members that includes Abernathy's name, college affiliation, and address. Many other names on the list match those found on official SNYC chapter rosters from the same time period that survive in various archival collections, which suggests that the list is authentic. FBI Birmingham field office report, "Southern Negro Youth Congress," May 4, 1948, p. 43, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-6548 (Subject: Southern Negro Youth Congress), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

[335] Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth and Rev. C. K. Steele began working closely with the Southern Conference Educational Fund after SCLC was formed. Shuttlesworth joined the SCEF executive board in the late 1950s and was elected president of the group in 1963 (Morris 1984:172; Manis 1999; Fosl 2002). Steele began working with SCEF in the late 1950s and joined its executive board in the early 1960s.

Luther King, Jr. – probably did not,[336] but his politics were shaped in part by his exposure to socialist activists and ideas as a young man. In light of King's centrality to SCLC and the wider civil rights movement, a closer examination of these influences is warranted.

King

Martin Luther King, Jr. served as president of SCLC from the group's founding until his death in 1968. Born and raised in Atlanta, King was the son of a prominent Baptist minister and NAACP leader. He was mentored by scholar-activists in college and studied with progressive theologians in seminary and graduate school. By the time he assumed the pastorship of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, King was critical of both capitalism and racism. Collaboration with veterans of the Old Left during the Montgomery bus boycott convinced him that Northern radicals possessed skills and networks that could benefit the civil rights struggle in the South.

King attended Morehouse College, where he majored in sociology. Previous scholarship has established that King's favorite professors were advocates of bold social reform (Garrow 1986; Branch 1988; Long 2002; Jackson 2006; Rieder 2008). But researchers have overlooked the fact that several of King's undergraduate mentors were also active in Old Left organizations at the time.[337] Morehouse president Benjamin Mays was an exponent of the "social gospel" who

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[336] I say "probably" because King's FBI file – which is riddled with errors and remains heavily redacted – alleges that he attended Progressive Party meetings in 1948 (Garrow 1981:24). In addition, Jack O'Dell has told interviewers that in conversation King acknowledged supporting Henry Wallace's presidential campaign (Honey 2007:19, 516). Garrow hypothesizes that the FBI may have confused King with his father (Garrow 1981:234). Martin Luther King, Sr. supported Truman in 1948, but he allowed Progressive Party activists to canvas at his church (Vandegrift 2011:54; Sullivan 1984:97). On the Progressives at Morehouse College, see note 342 below.

[337] George Kelsey, whose year-long course on the Bible had a major impact on King's intellectual development, was an exception. It is nevertheless noteworthy that Kelsey believed

held leadership positions in the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, and the Civil Rights Congress (Mays 1945; "New Civil Rights Group"; "Let Freedom Ring").[338] Walter Chivers, an African-American sociologist and *Atlanta Daily World* columnist with whom King took ten classes at Morehouse, was active in the SCHW, SNYC, and CRC as well. Chivers also served as president of Local 746P of the United Public Workers of America, a "red" union that attempted to organize the Atlanta University faculty during this period (Chivers 1940, 1942, 1944:109; *Discrimination in Higher Education:*67).[339] Brailsford

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"the economic philosophy which has dominated modern western life in general, and American life in particular, is a theoretical contradiction to Christian faith" (Kelsey 1949:33). He maintained that "the C.I.O. is doing more toward the creation of democratic, intergroup living than any branch or perhaps all branches of organized religion in America" (Kelsey 1947:82). See also "Christian Faith and Socialism," undated, folder 3, box 23, George D. Kelsey papers (Drew University Archives, Madison, N.J.).

[338] During King's undergraduate years, Mays served as vice president of the SCHW Committee for Georgia, sat on the SNYC advisory board, and served as honorary co-chairman of the CRC. He also endorsed Paul Robeson's American Crusade to End Lynching and participated in the founding conference of the United Negro & Allied Veterans of America. "The Southern Negro Youth Congress Summons You To – The Southern Youth Legislature, Columbia, South Carolina, October 18, 19, 20, 1946," folder 9, Junius Irving Scales papers (Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Louis E. Burnham to Dear Friend, March 5, 1948, *ibid*.; American Crusade to End Lynching, "A Call to the American People," folder 12, box 27, J. B. Matthews papers (David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.); Jones (1947). Mays was clearly not a Communist, but he spoke out against anti-Communist legislation and was repeatedly red-baited for his associations with Old Left groups (Mays 1947a; "Mays Joins Vet in Plea"; "We Negro Americans"; "Prominent Negro Leaders"). Mays downplayed these associations in his autobiography (Mays 1971:230), and recent scholarly biographies have done the same (Jelks 2012; Roper 2012).

[339] "Proceedings, Sixth All-Southern Negro Youth Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2, 3, 1944," p. 11, folder 5, box 3, Edward E. Strong papers (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center); "The Southern Negro Youth Congress Summons You To – The Southern Youth Legislature"; *Communist Political Subversion, Part 2, Appendix to Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fourth Congress, Second Session* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 8146; Walter R. Chivers to Clarence A. Bacote, January 6, 1947, folder 71, box 5, Clarence A. Bacote papers (Archives and Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center). Chivers conducted interviews for Arthur Raper's *The Tragedy of Lynching* and provided research

Brazeal, who taught King's freshman seminar and oversaw the college's summer work-study program (Pickens 1982), endorsed the CRC and served on the executive board of Highlander Folk School ("Civil Rights Unit"; "Joins Labor School").[340] Samuel Williams, with whom King took a two-semester philosophy sequence during his senior year, was a statewide leader of the newly-formed People's Progressive Party of Georgia.[341]

While King probably did not join any of the abovementioned organizations, some of his friends and acquaintances did, a fact that has likewise been overlooked in the historiography. The Southern Negro Youth Congress established a chapter at Morehouse in the fall of 1947 that remained active through at least the spring of 1948, and King was a friend of chapter president Alexander Romeo Horton, who also served on the SNYC national executive board from late 1946 through late 1947.[342] As one of King's classmates described it, "the Morehouse campus was alive with political and social ferment" (Bennett 1989:27).

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assistance for Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. For an appreciation by one of King's classmates, see Willie (1982). On the United Public Workers, see Harding (2002).

[340] Brazeal was the leading scholarly authority on the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a proponent of global labor solidarity (Brazeal 1946; "Says Labor Should"). King participated in an interracial discussion group at Morehouse that Brazeal had founded many years earlier. Brailsford Brazeal interview by Judy Barton, Feb. 16, 1972, transcript (The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, Ga.), pp. 4-5.

[341] Williams later served as an officer of SCLC alongside King. He is the subject of a separate section below.

[342] Southern Negro Youth Congress, Morehouse College chapter roster, October 14, 1947, folder "Morehouse College," box 5, Southern Negro Youth Congress papers, (Moorland-Spingarn Research Center); "Registration Campaign Opens"; "Minutes of the Executive Board of the Southern Negro Youth Congress," December 7, 1946, folder 13, box 3, Strong papers; "Southern Negro Youth Congress Executive Board Meeting," January 3, 1948, folder 14, box 3, *ibid*. In the spring of 1948, King and Horton were finalists in an oratorical contest in which Horton argued that blacks should back Progressive Party presidential candidate Henry Wallace ("Freshman Wins Award"). Wallace spoke on the Morehouse campus in late 1947 and won a mock election at the college in the spring of 1948 (Mays 1947b; "Student Poll Favors Wallace"). On King's friendship with Horton, see Reddick (1959:181) and Horton (2004:257).

During his summer breaks from college, King picked tobacco and worked in a mattress factory. “I saw economic injustice firsthand, and realized that the poor white was exploited just as much as the Negro,” he later recalled (King [1958] 2010:77-8). In his junior year at Morehouse, King was elected membership committee chairman of the Atlanta NAACP youth council (“Atlanta NAACP Youth”). Writing in the Morehouse student newspaper, he complained that too many of his classmates “think that education should equip them with…instruments of exploitation so that they can forever trample over the masses” (King [1947] 1992a). In the spring of his senior year, King published a journal article on “The Economic Basis of Cultural Conflict” (“M.L. King, Jr. Contributes”).

After graduating from Morehouse, King attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, where he engaged with the writings of progressive theologians such as Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Reinhold Niebuhr. He also read *The Communist Manifesto* and Marx’s *Capital*. Though King criticized what he saw as Marxism’s ethical relativism, he agreed that capitalism had “outlived its usefulness” and was now “like a losing football team in the last quarter trying all types of tactics to survive” (King [1951] 1992b). King’s mentor during this period, Rev. J. Pius Barbour, concurred that capitalism was outmoded and must eventually give way to a “new order based on cooperation” (Gay 1948; “World Faces New Social Order”; Lischer 1995:67). King also studied Gandhi intensively at Crozer, which challenged his belief that “the only way we could solve our problem of segregation was an armed revolt” (King [1958] 2000; Barbour 1956).

As a doctoral student at Boston University during the early 1950s, King delved more deeply into Niebuhr and embarked on a study of Hegel. With fellow black graduate students, he formed a “Dialectical Society” to discuss theological and political issues. One of the group’s

participants, Douglas E. Moore, was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation who had previously served on the national executive board of the Young Progressives of America.[343] Coretta Scott had been a Progressive as well (Carson et al. 1994:37-8; Bagley 2012:79-80), and King was pleasantly surprised by her political sophistication. During their courtship, she gave him a copy of Edward Bellamy's classic socialist novel, *Looking Backward*. "I would certainly welcome the day to come when there will be a nationalization of industry," King replied (King [1952] 2007).

Several of King's mentors at Boston University were outspoken pacifists, including dean Walter G. Muelder and professor Allan Knight Chalmers (King [1958] 2010:88). Muelder was a prominent figure in the theological trend known as "Boston personalism" (Dorrien 2003, 2006, 2011), a champion of labor union rights, and a proponent of democratic socialism (Muelder 1947, 1948, 1950a, 1953, 1954-1955, 1955a, 1955b). Chalmers was a longtime NAACP leader and former head of the Scottsboro Defense Committee, a coalition of liberal and leftist groups that sought to free nine African-American youth wrongfully convicted of rape in Alabama during the Depression (Carter 2007).[344]

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[343] "National Council Meeting, Young Progressives of America, In Pittsburgh, November 20-21, 1948, Credentials Report," folder "Youth," box 38, Progressive Party records (Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City); "Mock Election Creates Interest." A serial violator of segregation rules, Moore helped launch SCLC and served on its early executive board (Moore [1956] 1997; Morris 1984:198).

[344] Muelder and Chalmers were white ordained ministers and sharp critics of both the Soviet Union and Communist Party USA (Chalmers 1951; Muelder 1953; Lieberman 2010:121). Muelder had been active in the Socialist Party from the late 1920s through the late 1940s (Muelder 1986; "Educational Ballot"; "Life of the Party"). Among the organizations with which he was publicly associated during the early 1950s were the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Methodist Federation for Social Action, Religion and Labor Foundation, and the Workers Defense League (Muelder 1950b). Chalmers played a leading role in numerous organizations during the 1930s and 1940s, including the FOR, Religion and Labor Foundation, American Civil Liberties Union, National Council for a Permanent FEPC, Church League for Industrial

King's personal relationships with radical activists and his interest in socialist ideas firmed his resolve in the face of attempts by segregationists to discredit the civil rights movement. He refused to distance himself from Highlander Folk School, despite a vicious publicity campaign that denounced him for attending a "Communist Training School." He signed petitions calling for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and he supported campaigns to free Carl Braden and other imprisoned radicals ("Abolish"; "Britons"; King [1959] 2005, [1960] 2005; "Prominent Americans"; "Southern Leaders"; Fosl 2002; Morris 1984). Faced with accusations of Communist influence within SCLC, King went to great lengths in attempt to retain the services of his colleagues with Old Left backgrounds. When the Kennedy administration pressured him to cut ties with Jack O'Dell and Stanley Levison – the FBI insisted that both men were undercover Communist Party operatives – King lied to the press about O'Dell's status as an employee, and he secretly maintained communication with Levison through go-betweens (Branch 1988; Fariello 1995:500-506; Garrow 1986; O'Dell 1987).

From the mid-1950s onward, King repeatedly called for an alliance between the civil rights movement and organized labor (King [1957] 2000, 1958:196-9, [1967] 2010:148-151, 2011). In an article published in *The Socialist Call* during the Montgomery bus boycott, he condemned "the inequalities of an economic system which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes" (King 1956). In 1965, he penned a paean to longtime Socialist Party

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Democracy, and the War Resisters League. Though not a member of the Socialist Party, he endorsed Norman Thomas's presidential bid in 1932 ("Dr. Allan K. Chalmers Backs Thomas"). S. Paul Schilling, who served on King's dissertation committee, had been active in the Socialist Party and the unemployed movement during the 1930s ("Death Knell"; Walley 1939; Schilling 1986). Edgar S. Brightman was less politically engaged than some of his younger colleagues, but during the Depression he wrote that "the form of society which will have the brightest prospects for survival will be…. some form of socialistic democracy" (Brightman 1935). Brightman endorsed Norman Thomas's presidential campaign in 1936 ("John T. Flynn").

spokesman Norman Thomas, entitled "The Bravest Man I Ever Met" (King 1965). As urban riots became regular occurrences and the war in Vietnam intensified, King became increasingly explicit in his belief that a "democratic socialist economy" and a corresponding "revolution in values" were necessary in order to eliminate the "triple evils of racism, economic exploitation, and militarism" (King [1967] 1970; Dyson 2000; Jackson 2006).[345] King's last major undertaking was an interracial Poor People's Campaign demanding full employment, a guaranteed annual income, and the construction of hundreds of thousands of low-cost housing units. He was assassinated in Memphis while supporting a strike for union recognition by the city's sanitation workers (Honey 2007).

Joseph Lowery

Rev. Joseph E. Lowery helped co-found SCLC and was elected Second Vice President in 1959. Born in Huntsville, Alabama, Lowery spent part of his youth in Chicago before returning to Huntsville for high school. He attended Knoxville College in Tennessee, where he worked on the student newspaper and became acquainted with crusading editor Vernon Jarrett. Lowery also joined the campus NAACP chapter, which Jarrett headed ("Vernon Jarrett Named"; "N.A.A.C.P. Presents"; "N.A.A.C.P. Sponsors").[346]

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[345] "Dr. King's Speech, Frogmore - November 14, 1966," transcript, *Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970, Part 1: Records of the President's Office* (microfilm, 21 reels, University Publications of America), reel 20.

[346] Joseph Lowery interview by Robert Wright, Oct. 19, 1970, transcript, Bunche collection, p. 1. After graduation, Jarrett moved to Chicago, where he was active in American Youth for Democracy, the unofficial youth group of the Communist Party ("Southside Youths"). Lowery's only solo-authored editorial in the Knoxville College student newspaper criticized Communists for opposing U.S. entry into World War II (J. L. [Joseph Lowery] 1940).

During the mid-1940s, Lowery studied at Daniel Payne College and edited the *Birmingham Informer*.[347] When Alabama legislators attempted to circumvent the Supreme Court's 1944 ban on all-white primary elections, Lowery and other black newsmen formed the Alabama Newspaper Association to coordinate their efforts to prevent the imposition of new suffrage restrictions. Lowery thus became part of a network of black activists around *Birmingham World* editor and state NAACP leader Emory O. Jackson ("Ala. Editors"; "Alabama Newspaper Association").

Lowery and Jackson also participated in the Southern Negro Youth Congress, a regional civil rights organization in which Communists played leading roles. Birmingham was the group's stronghold in the years following World War II, and local SNYC activists initiated campaigns to integrate rail travel, prevent evictions from public housing, and register African-American voters ("Shores to Represent"; "Tenants to Carry Fight to Capital"; "Qualified to Vote"). In the winter of 1946-1947, Lowery headed a SNYC recruitment drive in the predominantly black suburb of Smithfield ("Southern Youth Congress Ends Meet").

Lowery ministered to Methodist congregations in Alexander City and Mobile, Alabama during the 1950s. He established himself as one of Mobile's most prominent civil rights advocates, working closely with local NAACP leader John LeFlore (Atwater 1955).[348] When the NAACP was outlawed in Alabama, Lowery and LeFlore formed the Alabama Civic Affairs Association to help fill the political vacuum. During the Montgomery bus boycott, Lowery and

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[347] Joseph Lowery interview by Renee Poussaint, Jan. 7, 2003, digital transcript, National Visionary Leadership Project (American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.).

[348] J. L. LeFlore to J. Echols Lowery, Dec. 1, 1953, folder 26, box 2, John L. LeFlore papers (Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Southern Alabama, Mobile).

activists from several other cities began meeting regularly with Martin Luther King, Jr. to discuss strategy and solidarity actions, thus forming the nucleus of what eventually became SCLC (Lowery 2011).

Samuel Williams

Rev. Samuel W. Williams served as Third Vice President of SCLC from the organization's founding through the mid-1960s. He taught philosophy at Morehouse College and ministered at Atlanta's historic Friendship Baptist Church throughout this period, and served several terms as president of the Atlanta NAACP. A friend of the King family, Williams was one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s undergraduate professors at Morehouse.

Born in Arkansas in 1912, Williams was a decade older than most of SCLC's other early officers. He received his bachelor's degree from Morehouse and a master's from the Howard University School of Religion. During the early 1940s, he served on the executive board of the National Negro Congress.[349] In the spring of 1941, he participated in a student strike at Howard demanding reduced tuition, affordable housing, and lower prices at university cafeterias. The walkout was timed to correspond with a national day of action against U.S. involvement in World War II, and culminated with an anti-war rally addressed by Williams and NNC head John P. Davis ("200 Howardites").[350]

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[349] John P. Davis to Samuel Williams, May 14, 1941, *Papers of the National Negro Congress, Part 1: Records and Correspondence, 1933-1942* (microfilm, 94 reels, University Publications of America), reel 23; Samuel W. Williams to George B. Murphy, Jr., Sept. 26, 1942, *ibid.*, reel 27.

[350] Several months later – after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, but before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor – Williams attended a National Conference of Negro Youth, whose delegates endorsed a program of complete support for U.S. war preparations. Williams was elected treasurer of the conference continuations committee (Johnson 1941).

Williams took graduate courses in philosophy at the University of Chicago and taught sociology at black colleges in Mississippi and Alabama before joining the Morehouse faculty in 1946. Two years later, he helped launch the People's Progressive Party of Georgia, serving as a vice president of its statewide leadership body and co-chair of the Atlanta Wallace-for-President committee ("Macon Negro"; "Election Freedom").[351] The Progressive effort in Georgia was "closer to guerilla warfare than an American political campaign," according to one observer. Campaign workers faced arbitrary arrest, cross burnings, and physical attacks as they boldly pursued both black and white votes in Ku Klux Klan strongholds (MacDougall 1965:741-4).

Williams resigned from the Progressive Party in the summer of 1949 ("Williams Quits"). In an article analyzing the party's electoral failings, he argued that growing anti-Communist sentiment necessitated a more forthright explanation of the differences between the Progressive platform and that of the Communist Party (Williams 1949a). As the Cold War intensified, Williams adopted a more overtly anti-Communist stance ("Communism, Capitalism Irreconcilable"; Williams 1949b; "U.S. is Unable to Cope"). He nevertheless warned that "the biggest mistake in the world is for this country to believe that an idea can be stopped with the dropping of an atom bomb." The only way to stop the spread of Communism, Williams argued, was to ensure that all citizens enjoyed democratic rights and economic security ("Believe in Democracy").

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[351] Larkin Marshall to Samuel W. Williams, June 29, 1949, folder 19, box 11, Samuel W. Williams Collection (Archives and Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center); Samuel W. Williams to The Atlanta Committee, July 3, 1949, *ibid*.

Lawrence Reddick

Lawrence Reddick was an African-American academic who joined the SCLC executive board at the group's inception and served as its official historian. He wrote *Crusader Without Violence* (Reddick 1959), an authorized biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., and helped King produce *Stride Toward Freedom*, an account of the Montgomery bus boycott (King [1958] 2010:xxxi, 173). Reddick also edited the *SCLC Newsletter* during the early 1960s.

Born in Florida, Reddick studied at Fisk University and earned a Ph.D. in history at the University of Chicago. He served on the Presiding Committee of the National Negro Congress at its founding convention in 1936 (*The Official Proceedings*:5). While teaching at Dillard University in New Orleans, Reddick and two colleagues disrupted a parade celebrating Italy's conquest of Ethiopia. The three professors "haunted the paraders throughout their march by trailing and sometimes cutting in front of them with an automobile bearing a placard, 'We Protest Against This Celebration of Aggressive War and Fascism.' Police, after several futile attempts to frighten the professors away, finally surrounded the car and hurled threats while a group of angry Italians tore off the sign," one newspaper reported ("Protest New Orleans Italian Victory Parade"). Reddick also supported efforts to unionize Louisiana's sugar cane cutters during the Depression (Becnel 1980:36).

Reddick moved to Harlem in 1939 to become curator of the New York Public Library's Division of Negro History, Literature, and Prints. An independent radical, he published in socialist journals and collaborated with a variety of leftist groups during the 1940s and early 1950s, including the NNC, American Labor Party, Southern Negro Youth Congress, Stage for Action, and the Southern Conference Educational Fund (Reddick 1940, 1942a, 1942b, 1943,

1944; "The George Washington Carver School"; "Sunday Parley"; *Discrimination in Higher Education*:3).[352]

In early 1948, Reddick left New York to become head librarian at Atlanta University. He remained an outspoken critic of segregation, colonialism, and McCarthyism, which drew the ire of Georgia's white elite. In 1953, Governor Herman Talmadge accused Reddick of being a Communist, citing the scholar's participation in a rally sponsored by the National Council for American-Soviet Friendship in late 1946. "I am not nor have I ever been a member of the Communist Party," Reddick shot back. "Over the past ten or fifteen years I have done quite a bit of public speaking. From time to time I have been on the same platform as Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the governor of Connecticut, Dr. Azikiwe of Nigeria and the mayors of New York City, Nashville, Tenn., and Atlanta. It has never occurred to me that in appearing on the same platform that the views of all the speakers must be the same. I hope some day to appear on the same platform with Governor Talmadge. Will this mean that he will agree with my views against race segregation?" ("Not a Communist").

Reddick joined the faculty of Alabama State Teachers College in the summer of 1955. Like many of his colleagues, Reddick was active in the Montgomery bus boycott from the outset. He analyzed the movement in an article published in the socialist magazine *Dissent* in the spring of 1956 (Reddick 1956). After student sit-ins erupted on the Alabama State campus in 1960,

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[352] "Negro Youth Fighting for America, Fifth All-Southern Negro Youth Conference, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, April 17, 18, 19, 1942," folder 3, box 3, Strong papers; "If Your Neighbors' House Were Burning," undated flier [1946], *Schomburg Clipping File, Part I, 1924-1975* (microfiche, 9,673 fiche, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library), #004,226; *Testimony of Walter S. Steele Regarding Communist Activities in the United States, Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, July 21, 1947* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947)**,** 41, 114-115. See also Ella Baker interview by Eugene Walker, September 4, 1974, transcript, Southern Oral History Program, pp. 84-5; Polsgrove (2001:106-111).

Reddick was red-baited by Alabama governor John Patterson and fired from his teaching position (Ingram 1960).

Staff

SCLC's paid staff remained small during the late 1950s, but expanded rapidly during the 1960s as the organization's revenue base grew. In order to keep data collection manageable, I chose to focus on top-level staff, ignoring secretaries and field organizers. It was discovered that half of the Executive Directors (two of four) and half of the Program Directors (one of two) during the period under study had Old Left backgrounds. Ella Baker (the subject of a previous section) and Wyatt Tee Walker held the position of Executive Director for a combined total of approximately three-quarters of the period from 1958 (when the position was created) through 1965, and Randolph Blackwell served as Program Director for approximately one-third of the period from 1961 (when the position was created) to 1965.[353] The Old Left backgrounds of staffers C. T. Vivian and Jack O'Dell are also addressed below.

Wyatt Walker

Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker became executive director of SCLC in mid-1960. The son of a Baptist preacher who idolized Frederick Douglass, Walker grew up in the segregated town of Merchantville, New Jersey. He joined the Young Communist League as a teenager after hearing a speech by Paul Robeson. "My senior paper at Merchantville High School in 1946 – you would

[353] During the period under study, the position of Executive Director was held by Rev. John Tilley, Ella Baker, Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, and Rev. Andrew Young. The position of Program Director was held by Rev. Andrew Young and Randolph Blackwell.

never dream what it was about: the five-year plan of the Soviet Union. In a town with two thousand people, that's where my mind was." To his parents' dismay, Walker declared himself an agnostic. "Then I worked downtown in [New York's] garment district. Eighteenth Street and Fourth Avenue. I used to go to Union Square Park to eat my lunch. And I heard the Trotskyites and those folks over there…. It just further radicalized me" (quoted in Powledge 1991:108-9).

Walker attended Virginia Union University, where he was active in the NAACP. During his senior year, he took an ethics class taught by Rev. Samuel DeWitt Proctor, who challenged him to envision the pulpit as a platform for social change. Walker decided to enroll in seminary, and in 1953 he was called to pastor Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg, Virginia. There he apprenticed himself to activist minister Vernon Johns, who had recently moved to Virginia from Montgomery, Alabama. Over the next several years, Walker emerged as a leading figure in the local civil rights movement. He was elected president of the city's NAACP chapter, helped found the Petersburg Improvement Association, and became state director of CORE. In 1958, Martin Luther King, Jr. invited Walker to join the SCLC board. The following year, Walker led a march on the Virginia state capitol demanding integrated schools.[354]

Walker's first major undertaking as SCLC director was the adoption of a voter education program developed by Highlander Folk School. Highlander was reeling under charges of Communist infiltration at the time, but Walker was not easily intimidated by red-baiting. As he later explained, he had a left-wing background of his own, and he was "proud" of it (Powledge 1991:108-9).

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[354] Wyatt T. Walker interview by Renee Poussaint, Aug. 30, 2005, digital transcript, National Visionary Leadership Project; Wyatt Tee Walker interview by John Britton, Oct. 11, 1967, Bunche Collection.

Randolph Blackwell

Randolph Blackwell became SCLC's Program Director in August, 1964. In this capacity, he supervised all of the organization's main departments, including voter registration and political education. Though his role was largely invisible, he helped coordinate and publicize the Selma demonstrations in early 1965 (Raines [1977] 1983). Blackwell was also instrumental in establishing the Department of Economic Affairs, which promoted economic development projects, and the Dialogue Department, which sought to attract working-class whites to the movement (Hickmott 2010).

Born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina, Blackwell attended meetings of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association with his father as a young boy. In high school, he heard a speech by Ella Baker that inspired him to found a local NAACP youth council. After serving two years in the army during World War II, Blackwell enrolled at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College.[355]

While still an undergraduate, Blackwell ran for state legislature on the Progressive Party ticket.[356] Comprised of Communists and staunch liberals, the Progressives opposed President Truman's increasingly bellicose foreign policy and condemned racial segregation. In North Carolina, the Progressive motto was "Jim Crow Must Go!" (MacDougall 1965:733; Uesugi 2000). In his speeches and campaign literature, Blackwell exposed the business interests that dominated North Carolina politics. "While I was not elected to the state legislature, we were able, through house-to-house canvassing and using a sound truck and other techniques, to

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[355] Randolph Blackwell interview by William Chafe, March 5, 1973, transcript, box 2, William Henry Chafe Oral History Collection (David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

[356] National Youth for Wallace Committee, "Call to a National Founding Convention of a Youth Organization," folder 14, box 426, Matthews papers.

register more Negro citizens than at any other similar period in the history of Guilford County," he recalled. Blackwell identified so strongly with the Progressives that he traveled to Georgia to help collect signatures in order to ensure ballot access in that state. In Macon, he was "constantly threatened by members of the Ku Klux Klan." Though the Progressives were trounced at the polls, Blackwell considered the campaign a success. "I think it set the stages for the beginning of integrated activities and an attack on discrimination and segregation" in the South.[357]

After graduating from college in 1949, Blackwell moved to Washington, D.C. to attend law school at Howard University. He quickly gravitated to Washington's small but vibrant leftist milieu, becoming a fixture of the Coordinating Committee to Enforce the D.C. Anti-Discrimination Laws (CCEAD). Led by African-American clubwoman Mary Church Terrell and white Communist Annie Stein, CCEAD combined litigation with direct-action protest in a successful multi-year campaign to integrate the city's department store restaurants and dime store lunch counters (Caplan 1999; Jones 2004). Blackwell sat on the CCEAD executive board, served as a picket captain, and produced much of the group's literature ("New Horizons").[358]

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[357] Blackwell interview by Chafe; Randolph Blackwell interview by Patricia Sullivan, March 22, 1979, transcript, folder 7, box 4, Progressive Party Oral History Interviews (Manuscript, Archives & Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.), pp. 3, 5. FBI informants alleged that Blackwell attended meetings of the Labor Youth League in the summer of 1950 and that he was a Communist Party member in the mid-1950s. FBI Charlotte field office report, "Randolph Talmadge Blackwell," Jan. 27, 1951, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-379394 (Subject: Randolph Blackwell), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; FBI Charlotte field office report, "Randolph Talmadge Blackwell," Feb. 2, 1955, in *ibid.*

[358] Mary Church Terrell and Randolph T. Blackwell to Dear Friends, Jan. 15, 1951, *Mary Church Terrell papers* (microfilm, 34 reels, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress), reel 14; "An Autobiographical resume of Randolph T. Blackwell," Nov. 3, 1962, *Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970, Part 3: Records of the Public Relations Department* (microfilm, 10 reels, University Publications of America), reel 4. On Blackwell's milieu, see "Czech Embassy"; FBI Washington, D.C. field office report, "Randolph Talmadge Blackwell," Dec. 3, 1951, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-379394 (Subject: Randolph

After graduating from law school, Blackwell taught at Southern black colleges for the better part of a decade. In 1962, while teaching at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College, he helped lead sit-ins in nearby Huntsville. The following year, he quit his job as an associate professor at Alabama A&M to work full time in the civil rights movement. Before joining the SCLC staff, he served as field director of the Voter Education Project, a joint effort between SCLC and other civil rights organizations.

C. T. Vivian

Rev. C. T. Vivian co-founded the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference, helped lead the Nashville student protests in 1960, and was among the first arrested during the Freedom Rides into Jackson, Mississippi in 1961. He became SCLC's Director of Affiliates in 1963 and played a central role in the Birmingham, St. Augustine, and Selma campaigns.

Vivian grew up in Macomb, Illinois and briefly attended Western Illinois University before moving to Peoria, Illinois in the early 1940s. In Peoria, he was drawn into two distinct activist networks. One was composed mainly of students and professionals; inspired by the ideas of CORE, they staged sit-ins that desegregated several area restaurants. The second group was more working class in composition and focused much of its attention on workplace issues: "I was one of those who helped open Caterpillar tractor company to African Americans," Vivian recalled (Vivian 2001:7).

Within the working-class activist circle, Vivian became particularly close to African-American union leader Ajay Martin, who was affiliated with the left-led United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers of America. Martin was an "organizer of Caterpillar, and one of the greatest

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Blackwell), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; FBI Washington, D.C. field office report, "Randolph Talmadge Blackwell," June 23, 1955, in *ibid*.

guys I've ever met. [He] was very important in my life…. I called him a triple threat man: he could write, he could speak, he could organize, alright? He had it all. He could do it. He gave management hell daily."[359]

"I was a Christian. Ajay wasn't. Ajay didn't care anything about church, because it was a bunch of hypocrites as far as he was concerned. But the point is, he was a better Christian than ninety percent of them, white or black, because he was really laying down his life for other people," Vivian explained. "They called him a communist, they called him pinko, see, because all those were terms they used to try to destroy people you couldn't control…. Here was a man that couldn't be bought. Here was a man who had integrity. Here was a man who stood up" (quoted in Adams 1999a).[360]

Vivian met Paul Robeson in April 1947 during the radical singer's controversial visit to Peoria. When Robeson's concert plans were announced, Peoria's white American Legion posts organized a successful campaign to deny him a public venue. In a show of defiance, Robeson insisted on coming to Peoria anyway (Duberman 1988:317-19). Vivian and Ajay Martin arranged to meet Robeson at a remote train station, in order to avoid a confrontation with armed

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[359] C.T. Vivian interview by Anne Braden, undated [circa 1982], transcript, box 9, Anne Braden papers (Archives & Special Collections, Ekstrom Library, University of Louisville, Louisville, Ky.), pp. 157, 162. Ajay Martin held a number of offices in FE Local 105 during the mid-1940s, including recording secretary, grievance committee chairman, and strike committee chairman; in the summer of 1946, he was elected president of the Peoria NAACP and an international vice president of the FE. "Cat Local"; "Caterpillar Local 105"; Wright (1946); "Union Sets Mark"; "Labor Leaders."

[360] In June, 1948, Martin and three other FE international executive board members resigned from their posts rather than sign Taft-Hartley non-Communist affidavits. Martin moved to Detroit shortly thereafter, and Vivian lost touch with him. "Undivided Attention"; Vivian interview by Braden, p. 168. Years later, when asked if he thought Martin was really a Communist, Vivian responded: "Probably. It really didn't bother me one way or another, you know what I mean? It was not one of those things I needed to know to like him or to be with him." *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Legionnaires massed downtown. The three men drove to Martin's house, where Robeson addressed a small group of activists (Adams 1999b).

After a brief move to Chicago, Vivian returned to Peoria, where he was elected vice president of the local NAACP. In 1954, while working at a mail-order company, he was called to the ministry. He moved to Nashville the following year to attend American Baptist Theological Seminary. After completing his course of study, Vivian chose to remain in Nashville, where he participated in James Lawson's workshops on non-violent civil disobedience and became a leading figure in the local civil rights movement.

Jack O'Dell

As noted earlier, Jack O'Dell and Stanley Levison devised a direct-mail fundraising operation that stabilized SCLC's financial situation in 1961. For much of the following year, O'Dell directed SCLC's voter registration projects in the South. According to Wyatt Walker, O'Dell was the most efficient and reliable member of the SCLC staff during this period.[361]

An African-American born and raised in Detroit, Hunter Pitts "Jack" O'Dell attended Xavier University in New Orleans before joining the merchant marine during World War II. As a sailor, he became active in the National Maritime Union (NMU), a left-led CIO affiliate renowned for its racial egalitarianism (Horne 2005). He read voraciously at sea and enjoyed discussing politics with his crewmates, many of whom were Communists (Singh 2010; Munro 2005).

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[361] J. H. O'Dell to J. H. Calhoun, March 5, 1962, *Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970*, Part 4, reel 3; Walker interview by Britton, p. 79.

After the war, O'Dell helped organize restaurant workers for the CIO in Miami, Florida. He also served as education director of the Miami chapter of the Southern Negro Youth Congress. "I went to [the 1946 SNYC] convention in Columbia, South Carolina, and this was the first time blacks had used the city auditorium.... [On] the walls [the conference organizers had hung] the pictures of all the blacks who had been elected during Reconstruction. I had never seen that in my life before. I had…twelve years of high school and three years of college, and I did not know that there had been black Congressmen…. So it was a great educational experience."[362]

O'Dell remained a member of the NMU throughout the late 1940s. A Progressive Party supporter, he was active in Seamen for Wallace (Fariello 1995:413-18). As part of a union contingent, he helped defend Paul Robeson from attack during the infamous Peekskill riots in upstate New York in 1949. The following year, O'Dell joined the Communist Party. "I did it as much in defiance of the climate as anything," he recalled. "I understood that the Communists were being made…the big scapegoat, and that these were decent people that were being jammed. And I respected them, and I respected them enough to join their ranks…. I've never taken a census, but I never met a black person who was in the Communist Party because of the Soviet Union. We joined the Communist Party because they fought against racism [in the United States] and they were dependable in that fight. And they were union builders. They were mass movement organized builders."[363]

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[362] *The Miami Southern Negro Youth Congress Presents Langston Hughes*, May 30, 1947, folder 9, Scales papers. O'Dell was also active in one of the Miami chapters of the American Veterans Committee, on which more below.

[363] Jack O'Dell interview by Sam Sills, Aug. 5, 1993, digital transcript (copy in author's possession), pp. 8, 22.

As the red scare intensified, the NMU purged its left wing, and O'Dell was expelled from the union for circulating a peace petition ("Texas NMU Ousts Seaman"). He spent the next several years working in the construction and restaurant industries while trying to build the Communist Party in the South (O'Dell 1956). In the spring of 1956, he was subpoenaed to appear before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) after police raided his New Orleans apartment and found Marxist literature. Refusing to answer questions about his political activity, O'Dell instead criticized SISS chairman Sen. James Eastland of Mississippi for his racism and opposition to the labor movement ("La. Red Suspect").

Blacklisted in New Orleans as a result of the SISS hearing, O'Dell moved to Birmingham, Alabama to work at an insurance company owned by a supporter of the defunct SNYC. After the NAACP was outlawed in the summer of 1956, O'Dell joined the newly-formed Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, led by Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth. Several months later, O'Dell was assigned to the insurance company's office in Montgomery. With the Montgomery bus boycott still in progress, he joined the Montgomery Improvement Association.

In the summer of 1958, O'Dell was called before the House Un-American Affairs Committee (HUAC) in Atlanta. He once again refused to comply with his inquisitors, whom he castigated for ignoring the "un-American activities" of white supremacists across the South ("Red Hunters Accused"). To protect his employer from government harassment, O'Dell resigned from his insurance job.

In late 1958, O'Dell moved to New York, where he soon became involved in tenant organizing in Harlem. In the spring of 1959, he assisted Bayard Rustin with preparations for the second Youth March for Integrated Schools. Using his credentials as a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, O'Dell toured black colleges across the South, gathering signatures on a

petition supporting the march's demands. Throughout early 1960, he served on the Committee to Defend Martin Luther King, which raised money to defray King's legal expenses.

Called before HUAC for a second time in February, 1960, O'Dell again refused to answer questions about his political affiliations, even though his Communist Party membership had lapsed since moving to New York. In light of the growing direct-action movement in the South, O'Dell had arrived at the conclusion that "we were likely to get civil rights before we got socialism," and that therefore all efforts should be bent toward that goal (McWhorter 2001:165). He would have no truck with government attempts to incriminate his former comrades, and he remained friends with many of them. But he recognized that continued membership in the Communist Party would severely limit his ability to participate in the civil rights movement, given the prevailing climate of anti-Communism.[364]

O'Dell helped organize a successful fundraiser in Harlem for the Southern sit-ins in the spring of 1960. He also worked on the Kennedy campaign in the Bronx and helped Rustin plan protests outside the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. In early 1961, he headed a team that organized a successful benefit concert for SCLC at Carnegie Hall. Shortly afterward, on the recommendation of Stanley Levison, SCLC hired O'Dell to work in its New York office as director of fundraising.

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[364] O'Dell interview by Sills, pp. 36-9. O'Dell also recognized that the American Communist Party was severely disoriented by Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin-era crimes and by the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. "I felt that the amount of time they were putting into defending the Soviet Union…wasn't necessarily a good use of time." *Ibid.*, 38.

Fundraising Network

United Packinghouse Workers of America

The SCLC received financial support from a variety of institutional donors, including churches and synagogues, NAACP chapters, fraternal organizations, charitable foundations, and labor unions. Among the most reliable sources of funding were a handful of left-led unions that managed to survive the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s with their radical leadership largely intact. The most important of these was the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA), headquartered in Chicago (Jones and Connelly 2001:25).[365]

Martin Luther King, Jr. met with leaders of the UPWA for the first time in mid-February, 1956. [366] The following month, approximately 17,000 Chicago packinghouse workers walked off their jobs for five minutes in solidarity with the Montgomery bus boycott ("Prayers"). UPWA locals around the country raised money for the Montgomery Improvement Association, and by June 1956 the union's contributions to the MIA totaled $3,350 ("UPWA Aids Bus Boycott"; "UPWA Has Hefty Contribution").

UPWA leaders were invited to participate in the founding of SCLC in early 1957. UPWA executive board members Charles Hayes and Russell Lasley and southern field organizer John Henry Hall attended the initial SCLC meeting in Atlanta, where Lasley led one of the breakout

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[365] While none of the UPWA's elected national officers during this period were Communists, the union is generally considered left-led because it had a strong radical presence at the local and national levels throughout its formative years and never undertook a thoroughgoing purge of its ranks during the McCarthy era. See Horowitz (1997) and Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (2003:14). Other highly supportive unions included District 65 of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (on which more below) and Local 1199 of the Retail Drug Employees Union, both based in New York City. On 1199, see Fink and Greenberg (1989).

[366] "Proceedings, The Montgomery, Ala. Bus Boycott Conference," Feb. 13, 1956, folder 6, box 373, United Packinghouse, Food, and Allied Workers of America Records (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison).

sessions.[367] A donation of $11,000 from the UPWA helped SCLC survive its first year, when income from all sources totaled just $13,000 (Garrow 1986:648). "[Y]our generous gift was really the means by which our then infant organization was able to begin its work," Martin Luther King, Jr. acknowledged.[368]

Harry Belafonte

It was not unusual for African-American entertainers to lend their support to grassroots protest movements during the mid-1940s, but the practice became riskier during the McCarthy era, when outspoken performers such as Paul Robeson and Canada Lee were blacklisted from their professions. In this context, it is significant that singer and actor Harry Belafonte – who reached the height of his popularity in the mid-1950s – publicly championed SCLC, donated huge sums to the organization, and encouraged his friends and acquaintances to do the same. In addition to playing a key role in SCLC fundraising, Belafonte also became one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s confidants.

The son of Caribbean immigrants, Belafonte was raised in Harlem by his mother, who regaled him with stories of Marcus Garvey and urged him to "be like Paul Robeson." During World War II, Belafonte enlisted in the Navy and was politicized by his conversations with

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[367] Russell Lasley and Charles Hayes, "Report on the Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation & Non-Violent Integration," Jan. 14, 1957, folder 5, box 381, United Packinghouse Records; Russell Lasley, "Southern Negro Leaders Conference," undated [circa Feb. 1957], *ibid.*

[368] *The Fourth Biennial Wage & Contract Conference and the Third National Anti-Discrimination Conference and the Third National Conference on Women's Activities*, Sept. 30 – Oct. 4, 1957, 206-34, box 526, United Packinghouse Records; Martin Luther King, Jr. to Members of United Packing House [sic] Workers of America, May 17, 1961, folder 8, box 395, *ibid.*

fellow black soldiers, who encouraged him to read the work of W.E.B. Du Bois. After the war, Belafonte joined the American Negro Theater and befriended left-wing actors Ossie Davis and Sidney Poitier. He also met Paul Robeson during this period, and the two developed a lifelong friendship. "It was Robeson who gave me the backbone to use my art to reach people," Belafonte explained (quoted in Ross 2011:190).

Before becoming the "King of Calypso" in the mid-1950s, Belafonte honed his singing skills at Progressive Party rallies, labor union gatherings, and left-wing folk music venues (Smith 2014). "I wasn't an artist who'd become an activist," he recalled. "I was an activist who'd become an artist" (Belafonte 2011:225). Belafonte's career was nearly ruined in 1954 when the far-right magazine *Counterattack* labeled him a Communist fellow-traveler. The FBI interrogated his wife, which contributed to their marital difficulties. In an attempt to clear his name, Belafonte proclaimed his opposition to Communism and disavowed many of the organizations with which he had previously been associated ("Harry Belafonte States His Case").

Belafonte first met Martin Luther King, Jr. in New York City during the Montgomery bus boycott and was deeply moved by the encounter. Belafonte endorsed the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom in 1957 and the Youth March for Integrated Schools in 1958. In late 1959, he decided to take a hiatus from acting and filmmaking in order to devote more time to the movement. When Belafonte expressed uncertainty about whether to prioritize his conscience over his career, his friend Ossie Davis wrote him, "[I]t is in the very center of this movement that you belong, Harry, as do the rest of us…. [W]hatever the red flag stood for yesterday, it is the black flag [of Negro Liberation] under which mankind will take its next step forward" (quoted in Ross 2011:208-9).

Joseph Filner

Joseph H. Filner was a friend and business associate of Stanley Levison who raised or donated tens of thousands of dollars to SCLC during its first decade. [369] The son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, Filner grew up in Pittsburgh and participated in the city's tumultuous labor struggles during the Depression. Throughout the late 1930s and much of the 1940s, he headed the Pittsburgh branch of the Communist Party (Filner 1939).

Filner ran for U.S. Congress on the Communist ticket in 1940, which prompted a conservative local newspaper to publish the names of individuals who had signed his nominating petitions. Faced with the prospect of being fired from their jobs and blacklisted, many signers publicly recanted, claiming they had been confused or misled ("Text of Filner's Letter"). As a result, Filner was convicted of conspiracy to violate election laws, for which he was sentenced to a year in a workhouse (Lamb 1942).

After his release, Filner enlisted in the Army. He fought in North Africa and Italy during World War II and participated in the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. Upon his return to the United States, he led delegations of Communist veterans to Washington, D.C. to protest housing shortages and anti-subversive legislation (Hall and Clark 1946; "Red Veterans").

Filner learned the basics of business management as a young man while working in his family's rye bread bakery. At some point during the late 1940s or early 1950s, he moved to New York City, where he launched a succession of companies engaged mainly in trade with the Soviet Union (Henriques 1990). He drew on his extensive network of business contacts to solicit donations to SCLC (Harrison 2000).

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[369] Stan [Levison], Tom [Kahn], and Joe [Filner] to Dear Bayard [Rustin], Nov. 1, 1959, *The Bayard Rustin Papers* (microfilm, 23 reels, University Publications of America, 1988), reel 20.

King's Advisory Committee

In June, 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr. began meeting with an informal advisory circle every few weeks to discuss current events and their implications for movement strategy and tactics. The Research Committee, as it came to be known, brought together leading figures from SCLC and allies from outside the organization. Of the eleven individuals historian Adam Fairclough (1987:170-1) has identified as regular participants in these meetings in 1964 and 1965, at least seven had Old Left backgrounds.[370] In addition to Bayard Rustin, Lawrence Reddick, and Stanley Levison (subjects of earlier sections), their number included attorneys Clarence Jones and Harry Wachtel and union leaders Cleveland Robinson and Ralph Helstein (president of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, the subject of an earlier section).

Clarence Jones

African-American attorney Clarence B. Jones first met Martin Luther King, Jr. in the spring of 1960 and quickly became one King's closest advisors. Jones helped write or edit many of King's most celebrated speeches − including "I Have a Dream" − and he helped smuggle the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" out of King's cell in 1963 (Jones and Connelly 2011).

Born to a poor family in North Philadelphia, Jones was placed in foster care at age six (Brinkley 2006). He was fortunate to attend an integrated boarding school run by a Christian charity, and went on to graduate from high school at the top of his class. He received a scholarship to attend Columbia University, where he played football, ran track, and led the

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[370] According to Fairclough, the regular participants in the Research Committee were King, Bayard Rustin, Lawrence Reddick, Clarence Jones, Harry Wachtel, Cleveland Robinson, Ralph Helstein, Ralph Abernathy, Andrew Young, Walter Fauntroy, and Stanley Levison.

campus chapter of the Young Progressives of America, the youth wing of the Progressive Party (Jones 1950).

Jones met Paul Robeson (an acquaintance of his uncle) during this period and attended Camp Wo-Chi-Ca, a leftist summer camp.[371] He was also active in the campus NAACP, and his proposal to co-sponsor a talk on the impending execution of Willie McGee caused a controversy within the chapter ("NAACP Splits"; "Chapter Prexy"; Jones 1951) because the Mississippi rape case had become a rallying point for the Civil Rights Congress, an organization branded a "Communist front" by the U.S. Attorney General (Heard 2010). At the height of the red scare, Jones was the principal organizer of a National Student Conference for Academic Freedom, Equality, and Peace held in Madison, Wisconsin in the spring of 1952 (Fogel 1952).[372]

Jones was drafted into the Army the following year. An opponent of the Korean War, he refused to sign a loyalty oath and received a dishonorable discharge. He succeeded in getting the designation changed on appeal, which enabled him to attend law school on the GI Bill.[373] After receiving his law degree from Boston University in 1959, he took a lucrative job with an entertainment law firm in southern California. A few months later, radical New York attorney Arthur Kinoy recommended Jones as someone who might be willing to help Martin Luther King,

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[371] "Wo-Chi-Ca Reunion Newsletter," undated [circa 1976], Camp Wo-Chi-Ca papers (Tamiment Library, Bobst Library, New York University). On Camp Wo-Chi-Ca, see Levin and Gordon (2002); Mishler (1999).

[372] "Call to a National Student Conference for Academic Freedom, Equality, and Peace," April 25 – 27, 1952, *Papers of the NAACP, Part 19, Series C* (microfilm, 27 reels, University Publications of America, 1995), reel 14. FBI informants alleged that Jones had been a member of the Labor Youth League during the early-to-mid 1950s. FBI New York field office report, "Clarence Benjamin Jones," March 19, 1957, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-407018 (Subject: Clarence Benjamin Jones), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

[373] Clarence B. Jones interview by Mark Gonnerman, Jan. 17, 2008, transcript, Aurora Forum (Stanford University, Calif.), pp. 2-3.

Jr.'s legal team prepare for King's tax evasion case (Charkes 2008; Kinoy 1983). Jones was reluctant to abandon his new job, but King shamed him into coming to Alabama.

Harry Wachtel

Harry H. Wachtel was a Jewish attorney and corporate executive who helped establish the Gandhi Society for Human Rights, SCLC's tax-exempt fundraising arm, in 1962. He also played a key role in the legal defense of SCLC leaders charged with libel by Alabama authorities. Wachtel developed a close friendship with Martin Luther King, Jr., assisted King with speechwriting, and participated in high-level SCLC strategy discussions (Garrow 1986; Branch 1988, 1999).

A native of Brooklyn, Wachtel attended City College of New York during the mid-1930s, when the campus was a hub of radical activism. For several years he worked in the law firm of Charles Abrams, a prominent public housing advocate and critic of residential segregation (Abrams 1939:xiii). Wachtel graduated from Columbia University's law school in 1940 and served in the army signal corps during World War II.[374]

Returning to Brooklyn after the war, Wachtel helped establish a local chapter of the American Veterans Committee (AVC), the first racially-integrated national veterans' organization formed in the United States since the Civil War era (Saxe 2007). The chapter was one of the largest in the country, and Wachtel was elected to the AVC statewide leadership body (Ross 1946). In the summer of 1946, he helped coordinate a citywide "buyers' strike" to protest rising food prices ("31 New Groups").

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[374] FBI New York field office report, "Harry Herzhaft Wachtel," May 25, 1962, in FBI Headquarters file # 100-437828 (Subject: Harry Herzhaft Wachtel), Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

When the red scare began, Wachtel spoke out against the persecution of Communists, but as the curtain descended on the Old Left in the early 1950s, he withdrew from movement activity to focus on his career ("Foes of Communism Assailed").[375] The rise of the civil rights movement stirred his conscience once again, however. After meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. in early 1962, Wachtel resolved to use his legal expertise and business contacts to assist King's work.

Cleveland Robinson

Cleveland Robinson was the secretary-treasurer of District 65 of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU), one of the largest labor unions in New York City. He worked as a constable and elementary school teacher in his native Jamaica before emigrating to the U.S. during World War II. After leading a successful union drive among his co-workers at a Manhattan dry goods shop, Robinson was hired as an organizer by left-led Local 65 of the United Retail and Wholesale Employees. He quickly rose through the ranks of the union, which went through a series of splits and mergers due to the reluctance of its leaders to sign the non-Communist affidavits required by the Taft-Hartley Act. During the early 1950s, Robinson also helped launch the National Negro Labor Council, an organization of black union militants that fought for equality on the job and greater black representation on union leadership bodies.[376]

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[375] "Wachtel, Harry H.," drawer F, cabinet 3, Card File Series, Matthews papers.

[376] Cleveland Robinson interview by Joseph Wilson, April 11, 1985, audiotape, Columbia Center for Oral History (Butler Library, Columbia University, New York). Union leaders distanced themselves from the Communist Party in the early-to-mid 1950s, but their efforts to "clean house" in the warehouse division were relatively shallow. District 65 was more like the United Packinghouse Workers of America than the National Maritime Union in this regard. On District 65, see Opler (2007) and Phillips (2013). On the NNLC, see Thompson (1978) and Lang (2009).

Robinson was an early sponsor of In Friendship. He began corresponding with Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Montgomery bus boycott, and District 65 RWDSU donated $3,500 to the Montgomery Improvement Association in the spring of 1956 ("UPWA Has Hefty Contribution"). Over the next decade, District 65 proved a consistent financial backer of SCLC, and King spoke at several of the union's conventions. Robinson chaired the administrative committee for the 1963 March on Washington, which was attended by more than 5,000 RWDSU members, the vast majority of them from District 65 (Conn 1963).[377]

Discussion

Recent scholarship on diffusion within and between social movements has stressed the importance of distinguishing between *what* is diffused, *how* it is diffused, and the *effects* of this diffusion (Givan, Roberts, and Soule 2010). In the interest of making my main causal claims transparent, in the sections that follow I examine these three dimensions of the diffusion process separately.

Diffusion mechanisms

Throughout the essay, I have focused on three mechanisms of diffusion between the Old Left and SCLC: personnel overlap, network ties, and organizational alliances. Regarding personnel overlap, I have demonstrated that a surprising number of SCLC leaders had Old Left backgrounds, including all three co-founders of In Friendship; at least three of nine SCLC officers in 1961; two of four Executive Directors during the period 1957 through 1965; two of

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[377] Robinson interview by Wilson; David R. Paskin, "References to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in District 65 History," folder 3, box 4, Cleveland Robinson papers (Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Bobst Library, New York University).

four Program Directors during that same period; and roughly two-thirds of the Research Committee during the years 1964 and 1965. Regarding network ties, I have shown that Martin Luther King, Jr. was personally acquainted with a wide range of Old Left activists from his college years onward. Regarding organizational alliances, Morris (1984) established that SCLC worked closely with "movement halfway houses" such as the Southern Conference Educational Fund, many of whose leaders were veterans of the Old Left. As we have seen, SCLC also collaborated with left-led unions such as the United Packinghouse Workers of America.[378]

What was diffused?

These mechanisms facilitated the diffusion of a variety of human and material resources, including money, skills, and ideology. Previous research has shown that skills acquired in one movement may prove useful in a variety of subsequent movements (Voss and Sherman 2000; Martin 2013). Bayard Rustin, whose key role in SCLC was examined above, recognized the significance of such skill diffusion: "I learned many of the most important things I learned about organization and detail and writing clearly and the like from my experience as a communist…. I'm happy I had it. It taught me a great deal, and I presume that if I had to do it over again, I'd do the same thing" (quoted in D'Emilio 2003:36).

Ideology diffused from the Old Left to SCLC as well. This is clearly true of individuals like Rustin who remained avowed socialists into the 1960s. But the Old Left also influenced the strategic thinking of those who never considered themselves socialists, or who no longer identified as such by the time they became involved in SCLC. For example, during a 1966 debate

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[378] Other diffusion mechanisms are also apparent in the data. For example, King's study of thinkers such as Marx and Rauschenbusch illustrates the diffusion of socialist ideas through print media.

with Stokely Carmichael, SCLC leader Randolph Blackwell defended the feasibility of building an interracial movement of the poor by recalling his experiences in the Progressive Party a generation earlier: "Back in 1947 [sic], I came down to Georgia to work on a voter registration drive as a college student and found in the back woods of Dawson, Georgia a very broken down, extremely rural, white congregation that had over its pulpit – and to get some picture of how poor the church was, they had split a bed sheet and had made two signs – something about the supremacy of God and the brotherhood of mankind without regard to race…. So that I approach the conclusion that poor whites are the most racist with some degree of trepidation" ("Black Power":72).

Effects

What difference did such diffusion make? The transmission of money and skills was clearly a boon to SCLC. In fact, this flow of resources may have been critical at various points in the organization's development, particularly in the early years. Without the assistance of Rustin, Baker, and Levison, SCLC might not have coalesced as a permanent organization. And without the financial backing of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, it is doubtful that SCLC would have survived its first year. Of course, counterfactuals of this nature are impossible to evaluate with certainty, but the plausibility of these claims suggests that diffusion from the Old Left to SCLC was not only beneficial, but perhaps even crucial to the organization's success.

The transmission of ideology shaped SCLC's trajectory as well, notwithstanding the diverse range of views held by the organization's leaders (and frequent disagreements among them). Despite the growth of separatist sentiment in the broader freedom movement during the mid-to-late 1960s, SCLC maintained a commitment to interracial coalition building and

intensified its efforts to forge an alliance with progressive labor unions (Honey 2007; Fink and Greenberg 1989; Foner 1973). This strategic orientation arguably reflected the fact that many SCLC leaders were veterans of the Old Left and retained significant elements of its worldview.

Conclusion

"The [thing] nobody wants to say, or has not said, or doesn't *know* to say, is that the people around Dr. King, and Dr. King himself – we were all left-wingers."

- Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker (quoted in Powledge 1991:108-9)

As we have seen, a group of experienced activists with backgrounds in the socialist milieu of the 1930s and 1940s helped found, lead, and advise SCLC. These individuals brought with them valuable organizing, mobilizing, and fundraising skills honed in earlier struggles. They were firmly committed to interracial organizing strategies, and many retained a vision of economic justice inherited from the Old Left. In addition, a handful of radical organizations that managed to survive the repression of the McCarthy era went on to form alliances with SCLC. Left-led unions such as the United Packinghouse Workers of America provided SCLC with much-needed financial assistance, while smaller "movement halfway houses" such as Highlander Folk School and the Southern Conference Educational Fund made a variety of contributions to SCLC and the wider civil rights movement.

Of course, connections to the Old Left were also a liability. Supporters of segregation never tired of denouncing the civil rights movement as a tool of Communist subversion. Though this claim was demonstrably false, the "red" label invited government repression and threatened to alienate potential supporters. Cognizant of these risks, SCLC leaders devoted considerable time and mental energy debating how to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of interaction with the Old Left. For the most part, civil rights activists who had passed through the

Communist Party and other stigmatized organizations tried to hide this fact, in order to insulate themselves, SCLC, and the wider movement from attack. This culture of secrecy helps explain why scholars have failed to recognize the Old Left backgrounds of many leading civil rights activists and organizations.[379]

Toward a longer, wider view of social movements

Substantial Old Left influence on the black insurgency of the mid-1950s and 1960s should not come as a total surprise. A growing body of historiography has established that several other major U.S. social movements of the 1960s were also shaped, in part, by interactions with the Old Left, including the antiwar movement (Halstead 1978; Isserman 1987; Gosse 1993; Hunt 2003; Lieberman 2010), the feminist movement (Horowitz 1998; Weigand 2002; Cobble 2004; Castledine 2012), and the gay liberation movement (D'Emilio [1978-9] 1992; Timmons 1990; see also Valocchi 2001; Armstrong 2002). Such findings suggest that even heavily repressed, virtually moribund movements can leave legacies that affect future contention across a range of issues. This conclusion is consistent with the general thrust of the social-scientific literature on cross-movement diffusion, which has identified a plethora of mechanisms through which such diffusion may occur, both in the short run and across successive protest waves. Students of social movement origins and dynamics must therefore be prepared to adopt a longer, wider perspective than is typical of most case studies.

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[379] While recent historiography has illuminated the Old Left's role in the anti-racist struggles of the Great Depression and World War II eras, historians too have underestimated the Old Left's influence on the civil rights movement of the mid-1950s and 1960s (Meier and Rudwick 1976; Korstad and Lichtenstein 1988; Hall 2005; for recent exceptions, see Jones 2013; LeBlanc and Yates 2013).

Circuitous biographical trajectories of long-term activists

Activists often migrate from one organization or movement to another in response to perceived changes in the external environment (Meyer 2002:11; Fisher 2006). In the wake of major setbacks, they may also reduce the intensity of their involvement or withdraw altogether, only to return to regular movement activity later, when the political situation changes (Corrigall-Brown 2011). Indeed the biographical trajectories of many of the SCLC activists examined in this essay were highly circuitous, entailing multiple organizational transfers and fluctuating levels of participation. Unlike the radical feminists who formed "abeyance structures" to survive the 1950s (Rupp and Taylor 1988; Taylor 1989), many of the Old Left veterans in SCLC did not maintain organizational continuity through the McCarthy era, and some took lengthy hiatuses from activism. Nevertheless, individually and collectively they made significant contributions to the civil rights movement.

From the ashes of the old

Though the Cold War has been over for two decades, conservative politicians in the U.S. continue to denounce movements and policies they oppose as "socialist" and "communist." However, recent opinion polls suggest that these epithets are beginning to lose their bite, especially among young people (Pew Research Center 2010). The Great Recession, and the Occupy movement to which it gave rise, have called into question the free-market verities that dominated the political landscape for a generation. Perhaps the time is ripe for a reassessment of the socialist contribution to the civil rights movement.

As the final stanza of the song "Solidarity Forever" proclaims, Old Left activists sought to "bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old." Of course, they failed to effect a

socialist transformation in the United States. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the case of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the ashes of the Old Left helped fertilize the soil from which the civil rights movement sprang.

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Conclusion

Implications for the Sociology of the Civil Rights Movement

Three decades have passed since the publication of Doug McAdam's landmark *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, which remains the canonical sociological analysis of the civil rights movement. In this section, I argue that McAdam's analysis is problematic in several respects. Firstly, it fails to explain the *timing* of the civil rights movement's emergence with sufficient precision. Secondly, it provides an incomplete explanation of the *centrality of the black church*. Thirdly, it overlooks the *importance of the Old Left* as a source of the civil rights movement's strength. Fourthly, it provides an incomplete explanation of the movement's *decline*.

Political Repression and the Pace of Insurgency

According to McAdam (1982), the decline of cotton tenancy and the consequent migration of blacks to cities and the North facilitated the growth of black organizations and created a more favorable "structure of political opportunity" for blacks to press their demands. A more favorable structure of political opportunity and the growth of organizations enhanced blacks' sense of collective efficacy, and together these three proximal variables explain the emergence of mass protest.

McAdam's model is undeniably powerful, but it cannot explain the timing of the movement's emergence with much precision. In fact, virtually all of McAdam's quantitative

measures of his proximal variables reached their maxima during the mid-1940s, *a decade before* the onset of sustained insurgency.[380]

The solution to this puzzle is straightforward. As we have seen, a mass movement for racial equality *was* beginning to emerge by the mid-1940s, under the auspices of a loose alliance of labor, leftist, civic, religious, and fraternal organizations. However, the backlash against labor and the left during the late 1940s and early 1950s severely weakened this nascent insurgency. It

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[380] Consider first organizational growth. McAdam's data on lynching show that this obstacle to black organizational growth had become quite rare by the late 1930s. McAdam's data on NAACP membership and active NAACP units show accelerated organizational growth during the late 1930s and explosive growth during the 1940s. (Although McAdam does not present data for the years after 1950, in fact NAACP membership reached a pre-insurgency peak in both the North and South in the mid-1940s.) McAdam's data on black colleges reveal that by 1945 total enrollment had reached approximately 85% of its 1960 level, and that the most rapid pre-insurgency acceleration occurred during the mid-1940s.

Consider next McAdam's main indicators of political opportunity: black electoral influence and favorable Supreme Court decisions. McAdam acknowledges that black votes could decide electoral outcomes in key Northern states as early as the mid-1930s. He also points out that Northern blacks provided the margin of victory in the presidential elections of 1944 and 1948. McAdam's quantitative evidence on Supreme Court decisions shows that the number of favorable decisions shot up during the late 1930s and reached a pre-insurgency peak in the years immediately following World War II.

McAdam does not present any quantitative data on "cognitive liberation" during the 1940s and 1950s.

In more recent writings, McAdam (1988, 1999) has stressed that the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. for influence among newly-independent states in Asia and Africa created a favorable structure of political opportunity for African-Americans. However, I am skeptical that geopolitical rivalry can explain the timing of the civil rights movement's emergence with much precision either. Firstly, the Cold War began in the mid-1940s, which is also when the British Empire began to disintegrate. Furthermore, some of the most influential studies of the relationship between geopolitics and domestic racial reform (e.g. Dudziak 2002) focus heavily on court decisions, and we have already seen that McAdam's data on court decisions would lead him to predict movement emergence in the mid-1940s. Santoro's (2008) regression analysis revealed no relationship between geopolitical rivalry and voting rights legislation, though his measure of geopolitical rivalry was admittedly crude.

took roughly a decade for a new constellation of forces, less vulnerable to repression and factional schism, to emerge.

Reading History Backwards

It is undeniable that the black church was a central pillar of the civil rights movement, supplying charismatic leaders, a mass base, money, meeting space, and other crucial resources. But once we recognize that labor unions and leftist groups were central to the developing black protest movement of the 1940s, McAdam's analysis of the church appears incomplete. To explain how the church became central, we need to explain how these other institutions became marginal.

The same tendency to read history backwards is apparent in McAdam's discussion of the growth of the NAACP. From McAdam's account, one would never know that the NAACP nearly collapsed during the Depression, or that it faced serious competition from more militant upstarts such as the National Negro Congress and the Communist Party. To put it bluntly, McAdam's analysis of the evolution of the movement's organizational infrastructure prior to the mid-1950s amounts to a "just so" story, in which the winners appear preordained, and the losers are erased from the historical record.

Origins Reconsidered

In addition to ignoring the marginalization of labor and the left during the late 1940s and early 1950s, McAdam also overlooks the important contributions made by the Old Left's surviving remnants during the mid-1950s and 1960s. Morris's (1984) analysis of "movement halfway houses" is an important corrective here. But as I demonstrated in the chapter on SCLC,

both McAdam and Morris underestimate the pervasiveness of personnel overlap, network ties, and organizational alliances between the Old Left and the civil rights movement.

Limits of the Civil Rights Movement

According to McAdam (1982:206), during the mid-1960s "the issue of an anachronistic regional caste system was replaced by fundamental questions concerning the equity of the prevailing distribution of wealth and power in America." The civil rights movement began to fragment as activists searched desperately for strategies, tactics, and organizational vehicles capable of addressing the problem of black economic disempowerment.

McAdam's analysis is correct as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Specifically, it ignores the ways in which the red scare of the late 1940s and early 1950s limited the organizational capacity of the civil rights movement to transform the U.S. political economy in the 1960s and 1970s, accelerating fragmentation and demoralization.

During its heyday in the 1940s, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) – and especially its Communist-led affiliates, which claimed more than one million members at the end of World War II – successfully challenged discriminatory hiring patterns, wage disparities, and other forms of *de facto* racial inequality (Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 2003; Zeitlin and Weyher 2001). But repression and factionalism crippled the left-led unions, undermined labor's opposition to the Taft-Hartley Act, sidelined some of the most outspoken white anti-racists in the CIO, and weakened the postwar drive to organize the South.

The consequences were far-reaching. As the civil rights movement regained momentum in the mid-1950s and early 1960s, the labor movement played only a subsidiary supporting role. Frustrated by the limited cooperation they received from unions, many civil rights activists drew the conclusion that organized labor was a conservative force, and separatist ideas gained wider currency. Labor's official embrace of official U.S. foreign policy objectives widened these rifts as civil rights leaders began to openly question the Vietnam War.

Implications for Social Movement Theory

Political Opportunity for Whom?

Social movements are typically composed of an assortment of organizations with varying strategies, tactics, demographic makeups, etc. Because authorities are likely to respond to these organizations in different ways, it is misleading to speak of political opportunities for "the" movement (Meyer 2004). In the case of the black freedom struggle, one cannot characterize the political opportunity structure in the mid-1950s as favorable (as McAdam does) or unfavorable without first specifying: favorable for whom? While this may have been an auspicious period for the Montgomery Improvement Association, it was a highly inauspicious one for groups like the National Negro Labor Council and the Civil Rights Congress, whose leaders were being prosecuted as subversives by the federal government.

Effects of Repression

For many years, social movement theorists debated whether state repression increases or decreases the frequency of protest; most now acknowledge that "it depends." My research suggests that more attention should be paid to the qualitative transformations that repression may engender. For example, some scholars have suggested that repression encourages coalition formation, as organizations band together to resist common threats (Chang 2008). During the McCarthy era, however, the anti-racist organizational field became more fractured, as the NAACP, AVC, and CIO sought to distance themselves from the Communists. I suspect that as case studies accumulate, we will find that the impact of repression on coalition formation depends on such factors as whether the repression is relatively indiscriminate or exploits pre-existing cleavages within the movement.

Scholars also recognize that repression may induce activists to migrate from one organization or movement to another, rather than simply drop out of movement activity altogether (Fisher 2006; Corrigall-Brown 2011). Therefore, even when repression succeeds in weakening its primary target, it may have the unintended effect of strengthening another organization or movement, in the same protest cycle or a subsequent one.

The Strength of Weak Movements

As we saw in the chapter on the Old Left and SCLC, even moribund movements can significantly impact the development of subsequent movements. Attentiveness to cross-movement diffusion is therefore not an optional extra. Students of social movement dynamics must be prepared to adopt an expansive view of their "case."

When Bad Things Diffuse to Good Movements

Studies of diffusion within and between movements typically focus on the transfer of ideas and resources that strengthen the receiving movement. The case studies of AVC and SCLC demonstrate that "bad" things – such as grudges and stigmas – also diffuse, and that movement activists expend precious time and resources dealing with the consequences.

Implications for Historiography

Cold War Civil Wrongs

An influential body of scholarship maintains that the Cold War helped the cause of civil rights in the United States (Layton 2000; Borstelmann 2001; Dudziak 2002; Skrentny 2002). While the Cold War certainly sensitized the federal government to foreign criticism of U.S. race

relations, officials generally sought to mitigate the most embarrassing surface manifestations of the Jim Crow system, while leaving the fundamentals intact. Furthermore, as we have seen, the Cold War led to intensified domestic repression. While "Cold War Civil Rights" scholars sometimes acknowledge that individuals like Paul Robeson suffered as a result of the red scare, they generally fail to register the destructive impact of repression and factionalism on the anti-racist organizational field. Far from being an unmitigated boon to the black freedom struggle, geopolitical rivalry had, at best, a contradictory impact, and the negative repercussions were profound.

In Defense of the Long Civil Rights Movement

Readers familiar with the historical literature on the "long civil rights movement" will immediately recognize that I am taking a side in an ongoing debate between supporters of the "lost opportunity thesis" (Marable 1984; Korstad and Lichtenstein 1988; Honey 1993; Hall 2005) and their critics (e.g. Fairclough 2002; Boyle 2005; Arnesen 2009, 2012; Lawson 2011). While I do not agree with all of the subsidiary claims made by proponents of the lost opportunity thesis,[381] my findings support its central thrust.

Some critics of the thesis have argued that racism was far too pervasive and entrenched for majority-white organizations, whatever their political complexion, to play more than a peripheral role in the civil rights movement (Draper 1994; Hill 1999; Roediger 2005). However,

[381] For example, I disagree with the claim that the NAACP abandoned working-class issues during the Cold War (Hall 2005; Goluboff 2005; compare Hamilton and Hamilton 1997; Lee 2008).

the track records of organizations like the UPWA and AVC suggest that this pessimistic conclusion is overdrawn.[382]

Others have argued that American Communists' allegiance to the Soviet Union overrode their commitment to civil rights (Hill 1951; Record 1951; Howe and Coser 1958; Arnesen 2009). While I share these authors' moral revulsion toward Stalinism, during the postwar period[383] American Communists were aggressive anti-racists.[384] Others have also argued that the Communists did not have a monopoly on militancy, and therefore their marginalization was not a huge setback for the cause of civil rights (Boyle 2005; Arnesen 2009). However, the process of marginalizing the Communists did not just affect the Communists. It also devastated liberal organizations, as we saw in the case of AVC. Furthermore, when Communist-led unions and civil rights groups were repressed, their non-Communist members often found it difficult to find or create effective surrogates.

Coda

In a 1965 essay, Anne Braden observed that

> by the postwar period, the seeds of freedom were growing, providing the makings of a mass movement for Negro freedom. Why, then, was it almost 10

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[382] Hill (1977:270-3) acknowledged the exemplary record of the UPWA, but apparently failed to recognize that it undermines his claim that majority-white unions invariably degenerate into "white job trusts" (Hill 1999).

[383] Critics of the Communist record on civil rights often focus on the World War II years. While the Communists strenuously opposed strike action once the U.S. entered the war, by no means did the party abandon the fight against racism (Isserman 1982; Harding 2002; Biondi 2003; Taylor 2011).

[384] Arnesen (2012) argues that the purge of alleged "white chauvinists" from the party in the early 1950s shows that the Communists were often their own worst enemies. But this episode is impossible to understand outside the context of the intense government repression the party was experiencing at the time.

> years later before it finally came? No one can answer that question for sure, but one reasonable theory is that the delay was related to the general atmosphere that pervaded the nation between 1945 and 1955….
> Every organization working for change was embattled and all were on the defensive. Thus the Southern Negro, while ready to revolt, had no framework in which he could act.
>
> The lack of a framework does not stop a revolt that is ready to be born; if it is ready, it just creates its own form, and that eventually is what the Negro revolt did. Had there been on-going movements when the first embryonic stirrings swept over the South with the veterans returning from the war, it might have come sooner. It might have also been a different movement.

As a participant in those "embryonic stirrings" who remained active through the darkest days of the McCarthy era and then went on to play a leadership role in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Braden understood that the midcentury black freedom struggle was characterized by elements of continuity and discontinuity. My hope is that this dissertation helps clarify the significance of both.

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Appendix

Coding Manual for Anti-Racist Protest Events in the Proquest Historical *New York Times* Database, 1946-1956

Articles vs. events

We read articles to discover events. Some articles do not contain any relevant events, while some articles contain more than one. Read through the entire article, multiple times if necessary, to find all of the relevant events. Often an event is surrounded by irrelevant information. For instance, a long article about a university might mention in the very last paragraph that a protest occurred on campus. An article about a criminal trial might mention that a protest occurred outside the courthouse. An article about an athlete might mention that he or she participated in a protest.

Read news articles only. Do not read advertisements, classified ads, letters to the editor, editorials, or book reviews. (These types of article are supposed to be filtered out by the database search engine, but occasionally they make it through the filter.)

What kinds of events should be coded?

Events must meet three basic criteria in order to be eligible for coding:

1) Expression of grievances and/or demands for social change

Protest involves the expression of grievances and/or demands for social change. Such demands often involve calls for passage of laws, alteration of laws, or repeal of laws. Or, they may involve calls for changes in the policies or practices of businesses, schools, or other institutions. Or, they may involve calls for changes in the attitudes and/or practices of a broad class of people, such as whites, Southerners, or Americans.

Protest demands are often explicit ("The protesters demanded X"). Sometimes demands and/or grievances are not stated explicitly, but they can nevertheless be inferred from context. For example, if a riot occurred immediately following the acquittal of police officers who were accused of brutality, it is clear from the context that the rioters were expressing their discontent with the criminal justice system, even if they did not formulate clear, explicit demands for redress.

If no explicit or implicit demand or grievance is identifiable, the event should not be coded. As a result, we will ignore the majority of street crimes, ceremonies, celebrations, and 'firsts' ("Joe Blow is the first African-American to attend Choate Academy").

2) African-American actors and/or issues

We code protest actions that include African-American participants. We do so even if the protesters' demands do *not* invoke racial equality or integration *per se*. For example, if a mixed group of whites and blacks participates in a march for unemployment relief, the event should be coded.

If protesters' demands do not invoke racial equality or integration, and it cannot be determined whether there were any African-American participants, we do not code the event. For example, if there is no information on the racial composition of a strike for higher wages, the event should not be coded.

We code protest actions that articulate demands for racial equality or integration. We do so even if there are no African-American participants. For instance, if students at an all-white university hold a rally demanding the admission of blacks, the event should be coded.

We also code protest action that *opposes* racial equality or integration, e.g. protest by white supremacists. For example, if the White Citizens Council stages a rally, the event should be coded. If a white mob attacks a group of blacks, the event should be coded. In addition, we code protest action by black separatist groups.

3) Non-routine and/or disruptive action

We are interested in non-routine and/or disruptive forms of protest, including but not limited to: boycotts, strikes, pickets, marches, demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, and vigils. We also code acts of violence such as riots.

We ignore purely verbal and/or written forms of protest, such as press conferences, speeches, testimony at government hearings, the publication of reports, letter-writing campaigns, and petitions. We also ignore lawsuits (even when these are filed by activist groups).

We do not code actions by elected officials (or their appointed staff) who are carrying out their official duties. For example, Congressional hearings and investigations should not be coded. Likewise, if a delegation from an activist group is granted a meeting with an official, the meeting should not be coded. (Of course, if an activist group were to disrupt a Congressional hearing, the disruption should be coded. Similarly, if an activist group were to barge into an official's offices without an appointment -- or hold a rally demanding a meeting with the official -- such actions should be coded.) Resignations by elected or appointed officials should not be coded. We do not code the activity of police carrying out their duties.

If elected officials or their appointed staff, acting outside of their official capacity, participate in or endorse a protest, the protest event should still be coded. For instance, if a

Congressman joins a sit-in, the sit-in should be coded (just as it would if the Congressman were not involved).

In general, we ignore elections and election-related activity, such as voter registration, canvassing, and campaign rallies. We ignore lobbying (even if it is done by representatives of a movement organization).

We code actions that violate segregation laws or customs. For example, if blacks sit in the whites-only section of a bus or restaurant, code the event. If blacks attempt to register to vote in a Southern locality where this is prohibited, code the event. (This is an important exception to the abovementioned rule regarding election-related activity.)

We ignore the formation of organizations; conferences, conventions, and meetings of organizations; and resolutions passed by organizations.

Note that routine actions are often combined with non-routine or disruptive actions, in which case only the non-routine or disruptive action should be coded. For instance, if a petition is circulated at a picket, we code only the picket. Similarly, if the petitioners were to barge into an official's offices to present the petition, we code only the barging in. Likewise, if a conference concludes with a rally against lynching, we code only the rally. If police arrest participants in a sit-in, we code the sit-in, but not the arrest. If a funeral for a civil rights worker includes a protest march, we code the march, but not the funeral.

A more detailed list of non-routine and/or disruptive action types is provided later in this manual.

In addition to actual protests, code threatened protests and announcements of plans to protest.

One event or many?

Treat protests that occur in different geographic locations as distinct events. Exception: if a group marches from Selma to Montgomery to demand voting rights, code as a single event.

A protest may last more than one day. This is often the case with boycotts and strikes. We use a 24-hour rule: if actions are separated by a gap of more than 24 hours, code them as distinct events. For student protests and workplace-related actions (such as strikes), weekends do not count as gaps.

Sometimes individuals and organizations join or abandon a protest while it is still in progress. If actions lack any common participants or sponsors, code them as distinct events.

Long protests sometimes involve escalating or modified demands. For example, if strikers demand higher wages, and then, several days into their strike, add a demand that a fired worker be rehired, treat this as one event. Similarly, if a bus boycott begins with a demand for more courteous treatment on the buses, and the demand is subsequently modified, calling for an end to segregated bus seating, this should still be treated as one event.

Protests involving more than one action type should be coded as distinct events, unless the actions have the same start date and the same end date. For example, if the organizers of an ongoing bus boycott call a rally, code these as distinct events. By contrast, if a morning march culminates in an afternoon rally, code as a single event (with primary and secondary action types).

Multiple articles about the same event

You will often encounter multiple articles about the same event. An event that occurred on Friday might be covered in both the Saturday and Sunday issues of the newspaper. Or, if a protest lasts several days, there may be a series of articles covering the latest developments. Each article about an event should be coded independently. Don't "borrow" information from previous database entries. Code all of the information provided in each article, even if another article contains some or all of the same information.

Exception: you may "borrow" information from another article in the database if (and only if) it contains information that can resolve uncertainty about whether an event deserves to be coded at all. For instance, if you are reading an article about a protest with race-neutral demands, you can refer to other articles about the same event to locate additional information about the race of participants. If you do borrow information in this way, note this in the summary field.

African-American participants

If the article mentions that there were African-American participants in a protest action, choose 'Yes.' Otherwise, choose 'No' or 'Unknown.'

Information on race is often provided when participants are quoted ("Steve Smith, a Negro, said...")

It is generally safe to assume that protests sponsored by organizations with the word "Negro" (or cognates such as "Black" or "Colored") in their moniker had African-American participants. (Examples of such organizations include: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Negro Congress, the Southern Negro Youth

Congress, etc.) If you make an inference about the race of participants based solely on an organization's name, note that in the summary field.

If African-Americans are merely targets of a protest or victims of a violent attack, code as 'No.'

White participants

See above on African-American participants.

Action type

Use the following action types to describe each protest event:

Blockage of traffic / blockade
Boycott of event, business, or product
Defiance of segreg law or custom – arrest
Defiance of segreg law or custom
Disruption of institutional proceedings (misc.)
March, parade, caravan
Picketing
Rally / protest mtg / mass mtg – outdoor
Rally / protest mtg / mass mtg – indoor
Riot / mob violence / threat of violence
Sit-in or building occupation
Strike / walkout by workers
Student strike / school boycott
Vigil
Z – Other

Note that articles frequently use the general terms "protest" or "demonstration" to describe various action types. You will need to glean more detailed information about the nature of the event in order to code it.

For protests involving more than one action type, code as primary action type, secondary action type, etc., in the order the actions occurred. For example, if students boycotted their classes and then picketed the classroom buildings, code the student boycott as primary and the picket as secondary. If the temporal order is unclear, code in the order the actions are mentioned in the article.

Blockage of traffic / blockade

If a protest is clearly intended to block traffic, use this code. For instance, if a group of protesters sit down in front of traffic, use this code. If a march has the incidental or accidental effect of blocking traffic, this code does not apply.

Boycott of event, business, or product

In addition to more obvious cases, use this code when a person or group refuses to participate in an event (or cancels the event altogether) to protest a policy or practice. For instance, if Henry Wallace cancels a scheduled speech in Birmingham to protest local segregation policies, use this code. Similarly, if a university football team declines to participate in a tournament because the hosting town is segregated, use this code.

If employees protest a policy or practice of their employer by refusing to work, code as 'strike.'

Defiance of segregation law or customs

Actions that would not otherwise qualify as protests, but which involve intentional violation of segregation laws or norms, should be coded. The article should make clear that a

violation of segregation laws or norms took place; you are not expected to know the laws and customs of particular localities.

Examples of defiance of segregation include:

- an interracial meeting is held in a city where segregation is the norm;
- an interracial dance is held at an all-white college;
- segregated seating rules are violated in a theater, restaurant, or bus;
- blacks try to register to vote, despite efforts by whites to dissuade or intimidate them;
- an interracial couple requests a marriage license, even though they know this is illegal.

In the most straightforward cases, the article will state explicitly that a violation of segregation laws or norms occurred (or quote someone to that effect).

It is also reasonable to infer that such a violation occurred if the article describes prior efforts by white supremacists to intimidate potential violators in the area where the event occurred. (In such cases, we code two distinct events: the act of intimidation, and the defiance of segregation.)

The most difficult cases involve situations where laws have recently changed and/or norms are in flux. If it seems unclear whether the actors knew that they were violating a law or norm, do not code the article.

Defiance of segregation may be pre-planned and well-organized, or it may be quite spontaneous and brief. The actors may be trying to make a wider political statement about the injustice of segregation, or they may just be personally unwilling to abide by the rules. We would code the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation, organized by the Fellowship of Reconciliation to test the enforcement of civil rights laws. We would also code Rosa Parks's 1955 refusal to move to

the back of a bus simply because she was tired and didn't think it was right that she should have to move.

Do not code purely verbal or written opposition to segregation. For instance, if students at a segregated university tell reporters that they think the university should be integrated, this is not a codable event. Do not code lawsuits aimed at overturning segregation laws. If people arrested for violating a segregation law become plaintiffs in a lawsuit to challenge that law, we would code the violation but not the lawsuit.

If an action that violates segregation rules also fits under another action type, use primary and secondary action codes. For example, if blacks and whites sit-in together at a segregated restaurant, code as both a sit-in and a violation of segregation.

Defiance of segregation law or customs - arrest

If some or all of the actors defying segregation are arrested for doing so, use the code 'defiance of segregation – arrest.' Otherwise, use the general 'defiance of segregation' code.

Note that authorities sometimes charged people who defied segregation with disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, or trespassing (rather than violation of a segregation law) in order to avoid lawsuits. If it is clear from context that the arrest was a direct result of the actor's defiance of segregation, use the 'arrest' code, regardless of the formal charges.

Picketing

Picketing, as we use the term, involves standing or marching in front of an entrance while holding signs.

Note that “picket sign” is a generic term used to describe protest signs. Do not code events as ‘pickets’ just because protesters carried “picket signs.”

Rally / protest meeting / mass meeting

Some meetings constitute protests, and should be coded. Usually, such meetings will be described as “protest meetings” or “mass meetings” or “rallies.” If the main purpose of a meeting is to publicly express a grievance or demand, it is probably a protest.

As noted earlier, conferences and conventions do not constitute protests and should not be coded; however, conferences and conventions sometimes include protest meetings, which should be coded.

In general, election campaign rallies should not be coded.

Riot / mob violence / threat of violence

Use this code for racially-motivated violence. Examples include:

- a “mob” of whites attacks blacks;
- a “lynching” occurs;
- a “race riot” occurs;
- a “racial disturbance” occurs;
- blacks “riot” in response to police brutality;
- a black activist is shot by a sniper;
- the home of a black activist is bombed.

In addition, use this code for racially-motivated threats of violence. For example:

- a cross is burned on the lawn of a minister who supports integration;
- a KKK leader announces that his group will prevent meetings of an interracial labor union using any means necessary.

If there is insufficient information to determine whether a violent outbreak expressed racial grievances, do not code the event. For instance, if a handful of blacks and whites get into a bar fight for reasons unclear, do not code the event.

Note that biased journalists used the term "riot" loosely in connection with black protests in the early 20th century, especially when police and protesters clashed. In some instances you may conclude that a "riot" warrants a different action code.

Sponsor

Protest action is typically initiated by an activist organization, though this is not always the case. For instance, if a group of friends stages a sit-in, we still code the event.

In the database, you will have a pull-down list of organization names to choose from. You can also enter new organization names, which will then appear as pulldown options in the future.

You do not need to distinguish between the various local units of national organizations. For example, treat the Bronx chapter of the NAACP as 'NAACP,' treat the Detroit Negro Labor Council as 'National Negro Labor Council.' If you aren't sure whether a local organization is an affiliate of a national organization, enter the organization name as it appears in the article text, and note any uncertainty in the summary field.

Some events are sponsored by multiple organizations. Code organizations in the order mentioned in the article. If a coalition of organizations has a name of its own, enter the coalition name as well as the individual organization names.

If no organizational sponsor is listed, enter n/a.

Demand type

Use the following categories to describe each protest demand / grievance:

Black separatism / back-to-Africa
Civil liberties (free speech, association, etc.)
Drugs / street crime
Foreign policy (war, colonialism)
Government aid to needy
Housing
Immigration / naturalization
Military internal practices
Police brutality / criminal justice system
Public accommodations (buses, parks, dining)
Racism - general / media images
Schools
Voting rights (poll tax, literacy tests) / pol power
Violence against blacks (excl. police) – general
Women's rights / gender
Workplace (hiring, pay, work conditions, unions)
Z – Other or ambiguous

Protesters often articulate multiple grievances or demands. Choose one code per demand. If there are multiple distinct demands, code as primary, secondary, etc. in the order the demands are mentioned in the article.

The demand codes are intended to be mutually exclusive, though this may not be obvious from the code label alone. For example, a demand for housing subsidies for the poor might sound like a case of ‘government aid to needy’ as well as ‘housing.’ Likewise, a demand for hiring of

black women might sound like a case of ‘workplace’ as well as ‘women’s rights / gender.’ In such cases, refer to the detailed instructions below; if one of the codes is described as a ‘miscellaneous’ or ‘residual’ category, choose the other code. If you still cannot resolve the ambiguity, choose status ‘question’ and describe the problem in your coder notes.

Black separatism / back-to-Africa

Unlike most of the other demand codes, this one is not applicable to white supremacist protests. Use it to code protests in which blacks demand the establishment of a separate black economy, call for cultural autonomy from whites, etc. In addition, use it to code protests in which blacks encourage emigration to Africa. Journalistic keywords that are often used to describe black separatist demands include: “black nationalist,” “black separatist,” and “Garveyite.”

Note that black separatist groups sometimes participate in protests with non-separatist demands. For example, if the separatist group Nation of Islam participates in a rally in support of demands by black hospital workers for better pay, code the demand as ‘workplace’ rather than ‘black separatist / back-to-Africa.’

Civil liberties (free speech, association, etc.)

Use this code for demands for redress of miscellaneous civil liberties violations that are not covered by other codes. For example, use it to code protests against the banning of an organization by the government, or protests against restrictions on the right to picket.

Foreign policy (war, colonialism)

Use this code for demands that pertain to the foreign policy of the U.S. government, e.g. opposition to U.S. involvement in a war. In addition, use this code for demands that pertain to the foreign or domestic affairs of other countries, e.g. opposition to South African apartheid, British colonialism, or European fascism.

Government aid to needy

Use this code for miscellaneous demands for government assistance to the needy, such as relief payments.

Housing

Use this code for demands pertaining to housing construction, housing conditions, the cost of housing, discrimination in housing markets (rental, mortgage, etc.), and patterns or residence.

Military internal practices

Use this code for grievances and demands pertaining to the treatment of soldiers. In addition, use this code for demands pertaining to the entry of blacks into the military, including demands to desegregate the armed forces. Use this code for protests in opposition to the draft, compulsory military training, etc.

Use the code ‘foreign policy’ for protests in opposition to wars.

Police brutality / criminal justice system

Use this code for demands and grievances pertaining to the actions of police and the functioning of the criminal justice system, including opposition to: police brutality; wrongful conviction; the death penalty; discrimination by judges, jurors, or prison officials. In addition, use this category for demands that the criminal justice system act more vigorously, e.g. a demand that the FBI investigate a lynching.

Public accommodations (buses, parks, dining)

Use this code for demands pertaining to discrimination in access to public spaces, including restaurants, buses, and parks. In addition, use this code for complaints about the availability or quality of such spaces, e.g. demands for a new a playground, or complaints about price gouging by a local supermarket. Note that there are more specific codes that apply to demands pertaining to housing, employment, schools, and the military.

Racism - general / media images

Use this as a residual category for general expressions of opposition to (or support for) racism.

Schools

Use this code for demands pertaining to the condition of schools, funding of schools, integration or segregation of schools, etc. Use the code ‘Workplace’ for demands pertaining to school employees’ pay.

Voting rights (poll tax, literacy tests) / pol power

Use this code for demands pertaining to voting rules and restrictions, such as the poll tax, literacy tests, the "white primary," and grandfather clauses.

Violence against blacks (excl. police) – general

Unlike most of the other demand codes, this one is not applicable to white supremacist protests. Use it for protests opposing violence committed by white supremacists (excluding violence by police, which should be coded as 'police brutality').

Women's rights / gender

Use this code for demands pertaining to the rights and roles of women and/or gays and lesbians.

Workplace (hiring, pay, work conditions, unions)

Use this code for demands pertaining to employer practices, such as hiring policies, promotion, wages and benefits, and workplace safety. In addition, use this code for demands pertaining to labor unions, including demands for union recognition and demands for (or against) the integration of labor unions.

Use this code for criticisms of the capitalist system as a whole.

Note that the term 'fair employment practices' refers to policies designed to stop discrimination against racial minorities in the workplace.

Use the code 'women's rights / gender' for demands pertaining to the hiring and promotion of black women.

Valence

For each grievance / demand that you code, choose one of three valences: 'Anti-racist,' 'White supremacist,' or 'Neutral.'

'Anti-racist' grievances and demands express opposition to racial inequality or segregation. For instance, if protesters complain that blacks are prevented from registering to vote, that black schools are inferior to white schools, or that blacks are paid less than whites, each of these are 'Anti-racist' grievances.

'White supremacist' grievances and demands express support for racial inequality or segregation.

'Neutral' demands make no reference to racial inequality or segregation. For instance, if protesters call for higher wages, more money for schools, etc., these are 'Neutral' demands.

Code all black separatist demands as 'Anti-racist,' even if the protesters oppose racial integration.

Note that the same basic demand could be Neutral, Anti-racist, or White supremacist, depending on the context. For instance, opposition to the poll tax might be Neutral or Anti-racist, depending on whether the protesters mention the implications of that policy for blacks.

If an article refers to "discrimination" or "bias" but does not explicitly mention race or African-Americans, do your best to infer from context whether the demands pertain to racial discrimination, and note any uncertainty in the summary field. If information about demands is missing or too vague to evaluate, code as 'Neutral.' For instance, if African-Americans are involved in a strike, but the article does not mention the strikers' demands, code as 'race-neutral' and note the ambiguity in the summary field.

An important exception: events coded with action type ‘riot / mob violence / threat of violence’ should never be coded with the valence ‘Neutral.’ If information about underlying grievances is not provided, apply the following conventions: If whites attack blacks or destroy their property, code as ‘White-supremacist.’ If whites and blacks engage in violence against one another, code as ‘White supremacist.’ If blacks loot or destroy property, and there is no mention of whites attacking blacks, code as ‘Anti-racist.’

Number of participants

If the article specifies the number of protesters, enter it as an integer in this field.

If the article gives an exact number but qualifies this as an estimate (e.g. “approximately 500 protesters”), don’t treat as an estimate; enter the number.

If the article gives no more than a vague description of the number of protesters (e.g. “several hundred protesters,” or “a large gathering of protesters”), leave this field blank.

Estimated number of participants

If the article does not specify the number of participants, it may be possible to estimate the number. Use the following guidelines:

Article descriptors	Recommended selection
Small, few, handful:	1-9
Group, committee:	10 to 49
Large, gathering:	50 to 99
Hundreds, mass, mob:	100 to 999
Thousands:	1,000 to 9,999
Tens of thousands:	10k or more

If the article provides no basis for an estimate, choose ‘no basis for estimate.’

Occurred

This field defaults to ‘yes.’ If an article describes a planned or threatened protest event that has not yet occurred, enter ‘no.’

Event start date

To ascertain the event start date, begin by locating the article dateline (at the very beginning of the first paragraph), which specifies when the article was written. (It is often one day prior to the newspaper’s publication date, but not always.) Then, look for temporal indicators (“today,” “yesterday,” “last Tuesday,” etc.) in the article text.

The database allows you to enter partial date information. For instance, if an article mentions only that the event began “last week,” you can enter the exact month and year, and select ‘unknown’ in the day field. You should also note pertinent clues about missing dates in the summary field (e.g. note that the event began ‘last week’).

For threatened or planned events that have not yet taken place, enter whatever information is known about the intended start date.

Event end date

For events that last one day or less, the end date is identical to the start date. This will be true of the vast majority of events.

If the event is still ongoing at the time the article was written, select 'ongoing.'

If the event is finished but the end date is somewhat ambiguous, select ‘unknown’ in the appropriate field(s) and note any pertinent clues in the summary field.

For threatened or planned events that have not yet taken place, enter whatever information is known about the intended end date.

Event length

If the event is finished and the article states how long it lasted, enter the event length (in days). If the article provides the start and end dates, calculate the event length (length = end date - start date + 1). Events that start and end on the same day should be coded as length = 1.

If the event is ongoing, leave this field blank.

If there is ambiguity regarding event length, leave this field blank and note any pertinent clues in the summary field.

Brief summary

Summarize what happened in a sentence or few. Significant detail that can't otherwise be coded can be captured here.

For example: Bronx NAACP picketed a construction site in Harlem because contractors refused to hire local black workers.

For example: Members of United Public Workers attending a union convention walked out of Hackney's restaurant and picketed it because restaurant staff allegedly refused to seat black patrons. (The black patrons were not part of the protest action.) When police arrested two protesters without clear justification, whole group insisted on being arrested since they were doing the same thing, and all were taken into custody. Police offered to let everyone off without

charges, but group insisted on formal dismissal or prosecution, so the two were charged. Rather than pay fine, the two insisted on jury trial.

Use the ‘Brief summary’ field to clarify missing information. For example, if the article lacks a precise event start date, you might enter: Event occurred “last month.”

Coder notes

Problems and suggestions regarding coding scheme and database design go here.

For example: Is walking out of a restaurant a ‘boycott,’ ‘other’, or not a protest action? Coded as boycott. Is insistence on arrest a protest action? Insistence on trial? Coded both as ‘other.’

For example: Database is forcing me to enter a target type, not specified in article.