



Making the Internal Colony: Black Internationalism, Development, and the Politics of Colonial Comparison in the United States, 1940–1975

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Comparison in the United States, 1940–1975

Abstract

This dissertation argues that competing interpretations of decolonization contributed to a deepening rift between liberal policymakers and the black freedom movement in the United States between 1940 and 1975.

Growing discord between black activists and social policymakers in the 1960s and 1970s owed much to debates about self-determination, development, and the political economy of the decolonizing world that had been raging since the 1940s. In postwar planning discussions during the Second World War, NAACP leaders and black intellectuals presented colonialism as a problem of racialized economic exploitation, one that the granting of political sovereignty alone would not solve. Black activists translated this understanding of colonialism into postwar development politics, seeking to prevent decolonizing states from falling into positions of economic dependency. Fears of what would come to be called neocolonialism loomed large in African Americans' interventions in U.S. foreign aid policy, British colonial development policy, and the development strategies of decolonizing Ghana.

These debates about the international order generated new reflections on how colonialism should be understood—a question that took on new importance in domestic political discourse in the 1960s. Leading liberal thinkers promoted an image of the United States as the first postcolonial state, and philanthropists and antipoverty policymakers sought to apply the lessons of international development policy domestically, importing an emphasis on the promotion of

suitable “indigenous leaders” into the War on Poverty. Many African Americans, meanwhile, began to characterize American racism as a form of internal colonialism, drawing on a long tradition of black internationalist thinking about colonialism as racialized economic exploitation. The concept of internal colonialism became central to the political language of the Black Power movement, particularly as it sought to transform metropolitan political economies after the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. On the battlegrounds of metropolitan politics, black activists informed by the colonial analogy clashed with social policymakers who understood African American poverty in developmental terms.

Drawing on the archives of government officials, philanthropic organizations, social movement groups, social scientists, writers, and activists, this dissertation shows that contests over racial and class inequality at home were deeply intertwined with Americans’ ideas about colonialism, development, and the international order. “Making the Internal Colony” reframes the story of the relationship between liberalism and the black freedom movement in the U.S. as a longstanding struggle over the meaning of decolonization.

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Introduction

Decolonization transformed the terms of debate over race and class in twentieth-century America. “‘Colonialism,’ wrote Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter in August 1968, “is a rich source of varied metaphor.”¹ The Wohlstetters were two of the premier defense intellectuals in the Cold War United States. Comfortably ensconced in the Santa Monica, California headquarters of the RAND Corporation, they were among the country’s most influential and sought-after authorities on nuclear strategy and military intelligence. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, their writings focused principally on what Albert described as the “delicate balance of terror” that the U.S. needed to maintain in its conflict with the Soviet Union in the thermonuclear age.² In the summer of 1968, after an unprecedented spate of urban uprisings following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., these experts in the science of apocalypse turned their attention to metaphors.³

The rise of analogies between colonialism and various aspects of American society alarmed the Wohlstetters.⁴ In a RAND Corporation working paper, they outlined the proliferation of such metaphors, from depictions of urban violence as “guerrilla war” by both law enforcement officers and black militants, to analyses of the political economy of American racism.⁵ The language of colonialism was increasingly in vogue, they noted, to refer to the “large

¹ Albert Wohlstetter and Roberta Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models: Inequalities and Disorder at Home and Abroad,” RAND Corporation, D-17664-RC/ISA, August 27, 1968.

² Albert Wohlstetter, “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 1 (1958): 211.

³ I follow Thomas Sugrue in referring to the moments of civil disorder in cities in the 1960s, which were often referred to at the time as “riots” and which some scholars label “rebellions,” as “uprisings.” See Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁴ The distinctions among metaphor, analogy, and comparison, while important in the philosophy of language, are not my principal concern here. To avoid constant repetition, and to better capture the variable usages and strategies of the historical actors under examination, this study uses the three terms flexibly. For philosophical treatments of metaphor and analogy, see Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962); Paul F. A. Bartha, *By Parallel Reasoning: The Construction and Evaluation of Analogical Arguments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

handicaps placed on the Negro in America in acquiring and using his skills productively to earn income, in choosing a place to live, and in taking part in the political process.”⁶ Yet to view the political and economic position of black Americans as akin to that of the colonized, in their view, only “evoke[d] a cloud of ideologies of economic development” that could “confuse analysis of the actual problem of improving the status of the Negro in the United States.”⁷ This “evocative” but unhelpful language, moreover, had seduced not only “advocates of Black Power” but “civil rights moderates” and “some able social scientists.”⁸ Talk of colonialism, it seemed, was everywhere.

The Wohlstetters were onto something. Discussions of politics in the United States in the 1960s frequently referred to the history of European and American colonial rule in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and to the ongoing process of decolonization. Colonial comparisons were marshaled in struggles over how to define the U.S. system of government, its racial order, and its political economy. These definitional contests, waged by popular movements, state actors, and intellectuals, reached a peak of intensity in the 1960s. Paul Potter, co-founder of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), captured the perceived urgency of projects of definition when he famously declared, at an anti-Vietnam War march in 1965, “We must name [the] system.”⁹ The Wohlstetters’ alarmist proclamation represented a project of definition of their own. By attempting to rule out references to colonialism in discussions of race and economics in the United States, the Wohlstetters only testified to their importance.

⁶ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

⁷ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

⁸ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

⁹ Quoted in James Miller, *“Democracy Is in the Streets”: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 232.

Naming the system is always a relational activity. Every effort to promulgate new terms of social analysis implies, or states outright, a rejection of competing terminologies and modes of description. Prominent labels given to American society in the decades following the Second World War often sought to contrast the postwar years with the years of the Great Depression, or to draw distinctions among the global hegemon of the United States, the crumbling European empires, and the Soviet Union. A great deal of scholarly attention has focused on the bundle of semantic innovations that construed the United States as a land of material security and a polity defined by consensus: an “affluent society,” which bred a politics that had reached the “end of ideology.”¹⁰ Yet the “politics of nominalization” in the postwar U.S. were also, as the Wohlstetters observed, deeply entangled with decolonization.¹¹

These entanglements are the subject of this dissertation. In the pages that follow, I explore how decolonization provoked profound changes in Americans’ political language and political behavior. A variety of Americans, from policymakers and prominent academics to activists and independent social critics, looked to the history of colonialism and the unfolding process of decolonization for resources that would help them understand and influence struggles over racial and class inequality in the United States between the 1940s and early 1970s. The idea that African Americans constituted an “internal colony” represented the most prominent attempt to rethink race and political economy in the U.S. in these terms. This concept gained widespread popularity, especially—although, as the Wohlstetters accurately noted, not exclusively—in the Black Power movement. As many scholars recognize, the concept of internal colonialism

¹⁰ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960); Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideologies in the Fifties* (Glencoe, IL: 1960); Howard Brick, *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social Theory and Political Reconciliation in the 1940s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction: American thought and Culture in the 1960s* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998).

¹¹ Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 66, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 46.

represents an important element of the Black Power movement's political thought.¹² Both the genealogy and the significance of this language, however, are poorly understood.

“Making the Internal Colony” places the concept of internal colonialism in the context of the broader changes in American political language and political conflict that decolonization elicited. As one contemporary scholar observes, growing recognition of the intersections of foreign and domestic spheres of racial governance calls for a “rethinking [of] the genealogy of the idea of the ‘internal colony,’” which is often mistakenly “blamed on a misguided despair and problematic readings of Lenin.”¹³ More than simply providing an alternative genealogy of a single concept, however, this dissertation illuminates how colonial comparisons in a wide range of settings influenced the trajectory of struggles over international politics and the politics of racial and class inequality at home. In so doing, this dissertation places black internationalism at the center of one of the most important stories of twentieth-century U.S. history. Competing interpretations of the meaning of colonialism, the political economy of the decolonizing world, and the relation between colonial rule and the political order of the United States, I argue, deepened the developing rift between postwar liberalism and the black freedom movement.

This story begins with debates during the Second World War about the international system. As the war shifted Americans' horizons of expectations about the structure of the international order, new discussions arose about the nature of colonialism and its connections to American racial hierarchy. African American thinkers and activists, in disputes with

¹² Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Hold and Co., 2006); Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Sean Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017); Christopher Tinson, *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

¹³ Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 175.

policymakers about the future of colonial rule in Africa and the structure of the United Nations, articulated a view of colonialism as a problem of racialized economic exploitation, one that the mere granting of political sovereignty would not solve. Black activists translated this idea into the sphere of international development politics in the early years of the Cold War. Fears of what would later be called neocolonialism—the persistence of economic dependency after political independence—loomed large in African Americans’ interventions in U.S. foreign aid policy, British colonial development policy, and the development strategies of decolonizing nations such as Ghana.

These debates about the international order produced new ways of thinking about the definition of colonialism—a question that took on new importance in domestic political discourse in the 1960s. Social scientists, State Department officials, and liberal politicians, including most notably John F. Kennedy, began to depict the United States as the “first new nation” to emerge from colonial rule. Meanwhile, leading philanthropists and War on Poverty policymakers, drawing on their experiences in international development work, increasingly saw domestic poverty as analogous to underdevelopment in the decolonizing world. At the Ford Foundation and in the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, these figures developed a new policy instrument, known as community action. Inspired partly by their narrow vision of decolonization as a transfer of power to appropriate, politically moderate leaders, they planned to elevate and empower so-called “indigenous leaders” in poor communities throughout the United States.

Black thinkers and activists largely rejected both the image of the U.S. as the “first new nation” and the emphasis on elevating suitable “indigenous leaders” in antipoverty policy. Instead, drawing on the definition of colonialism as racialized economic exploitation forged

through black internationalist activism in prior decades, many African Americans began to portray American racism as a form of internal colonialism. Black Power advocates, in particular, turned to the concept of internal colonialism in their efforts to transform metropolitan political economies after the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. On the battlegrounds of metropolitan politics, black activists informed by the colonial analogy clashed with social policymakers who understood African American poverty very differently, but still in terms dependent on a reading of decolonization and postcolonial development. Even among those who organized under the sign of Black Power, varied interpretations of what a program of internal decolonization entailed indexed a growing divide between radical and conservative strands of the movement. As conflicts in American cities came to occupy the center of national attention at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, these struggles were mediated by the colonial comparisons that actors on all sides embraced. Decolonization haunted the politics of the urban crisis.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s, the political valences of colonial comparison shifted in response to international events, domestic social politics, and intellectual developments. The unfolding of decolonization itself had the greatest impact on the extent and polarities of colonial comparison in the United States. The normative delegitimation of colonial rule after the Second World War prompted a shift in outlook among certain state actors, from a willingness to identify the United States as a successful model of quasi-imperial governance to a desire to label the country a postcolonial state—in fact, the very first one in history. Whereas State Department planners during the early 1940s may have been happy to identify the U.S. as a “composite” state consisting of both democratic governing structures and colonial arrangements, by the early 1960s

it was much more common for policymakers to emphasize the nation's origins in anti-imperial revolt.

The progress of decolonization also emboldened those invested in the black freedom movement to pursue new lines of comparison between American racism and colonial rule. Such comparisons, it is important to note, predated the period under study here. From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, many black thinkers argued that African Americans constituted a “nation within a nation.” This formulation was a foundational element of the political tradition of black nationalism. From its very first articulations, moreover, the vision of black Americans—enslaved and free—as constituting a “nation within a nation” relied on an explicit comparison with European empires. As Martin Delany, the so-called “father of black nationalism,” put it in 1852, “We are a nation within a nation, as the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, the Welsh, Irish and Scotch in the British dominions.”¹⁴ Delany's references here illuminate the exemplarity of intra-European imperialisms before the establishment of the British Raj in India in 1858 and the assertions of political sovereignty by European powers over much of Africa in the period surrounding the Berlin Conference of 1884.¹⁵ Delany's comparisons suggest that he saw relations of political-economic inequality and cultural domination that were not explicitly racialized as directly relevant to the struggle for African American freedom. Delany envisioned American slavery, and racial inequality more broadly, as linked to European imperial domination through their shared suppression of the collective, national identities of subordinate groups. At the same time, as philosopher Tommie Shelby illustrates, for both Delany and the broader

¹⁴ Martin Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered* (1852; Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1993), 12.

¹⁵ On the importance of intra-European empires, and their dissolution, for the intellectual history of empire and decolonization globally, see Natasha Wheatley, “Law, Time, and Sovereignty in Central Europe: Imperial Constitutions, Historical Rights, and the Afterlives of Empire” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2016).

tradition of black nationalism, claims to nationhood did not always entail demands for territorial sovereignty and political separatism.¹⁶

In addition to flexible representations of African Americans as a “nation within a nation,” the demand of the Communist International (Comintern) for “self-determination in the Black Belt” significantly influenced the postwar history of colonial comparison in U.S. black politics. Adopted in a resolution at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in 1928, the new Communist policy called for “national self-determination in the southern states where the Negroes form a majority of the population.”¹⁷ This position reflected Stalin’s own thinking on the national question and relied on substantial input from Harry Haywood, a Nebraska-born son of former slaves and early member of the African Blood Brotherhood in Chicago, who had moved to Moscow in 1925. The development of this Communist Party line not only signaled a shift in party policy—which had previously regarded any form of black nationalism as inherently reactionary—but reflected the efforts of some of its leaders to respond to the mass support built by Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).¹⁸ As Haywood recalled in his autobiography, “to the slogan ‘Back to Africa,’ I argued, we must counterpose the slogan ‘right of self-determination here in the Deep South.’”¹⁹ The ability of the party to blend its Leninist understanding of African Americans as an “oppressed nationality” with existing

¹⁶ Tommie Shelby, “Two Conceptions of Black Nationalism: Martin Delany on the Meaning of Black Political Solidarity,” *Political Theory* 31, no. 5 (October 2003): 664–92.

¹⁷ Quoted in Harvey Klehr and William Tompson, “Self-Determination in the Black Belt: Origins of a Communist Policy,” *Labor History* 30, no. 3 (1989): 355.

¹⁸ Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978), 230.

traditions of black nationalism contributed to its strongest period of growth among African Americans, both North and South, in the 1930s.²⁰

These earlier articulations form an essential part of the background to the story I tell here. But there are several reasons why my narrative begins in 1940. First, the material and ideological effects of the Second World War radically shifted expectations about the continued viability of European empires after the war's end. Decolonization slowly began to appear as an inevitability, even though its timeline and form were the subjects of sustained and vigorous debate.²¹ Second, the Great Migration saw millions of African Americans move from the largely rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest, and West, reducing the demographic concentration of the African American population in the "Black Belt." Mass migration and the formation of an urban black working class facilitated the decoupling of the politics of black self-determination from efforts to assert control—whether in terms of sovereignty or property—over southern land and the means of agrarian production. While questions of territorial control were often implicated in invocations of the "internal colony" in the 1960s and 1970s, as I will discuss, the conditions that produced the "Black Belt thesis" in its classical form no longer applied.

These transformations had profound consequences for the black politics of colonial comparison. The progress of decolonization and the ongoing reconstitution of black politics during and after the Great Migration inspired more widespread and more flexible uses of colonial

²⁰ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Eric Arnesen, "No 'Graver Danger': Black Anticommunism, the Communist Party, and the Race Question," *Labor* 3, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 13–52.

²¹ Todd Shepard argues that, in the French case, policymakers and intellectuals portrayed decolonization as part of the "tide of history" in order to absolve the French state of responsibility both for colonial violence and for the condition of former French citizens in Algeria. See Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). For the British case, see John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

comparison in black political debate.²² These comparisons spread in part because, between 1945 and the 1960s, African American activists began to perceive their own freedom struggle as lagging behind African liberation movements. In the early twentieth century, a range of black internationalist thinkers and activists, from those involved in the Pan-African Congress movement to the UNIA, argued that African Americans should serve as the natural leaders of movements for African freedom.²³ This claim reflected the intertwining of Pan-Africanist thought with the dominant discourses of “civilization” that were increasingly put under strain by the world wars in Europe.²⁴ Following the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, which was led and organized not by African Americans but by leaders of independence movements in Africa and the Caribbean, the perception of African American vanguardism in the global black freedom struggle faded.²⁵ This trend only accelerated as African nations won their independence in the 1950s and 1960s. A frequently related anecdote from the independence celebrations in Ghana in 1957 encapsulates the eastward migration of the perceived leading edge of Pan-African liberation. Vice President Richard Nixon, as the possibly apocryphal story goes,

²² On the diverse cultural and intellectual effects of the Great Migration in a single city, see Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007); on the political impact, see Keneshia N. Grant, *The Great Migration and the Democratic Party: Black Voters and the Realignment of American Politics in the 20th Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020); on migrations from the Caribbean as a component part of the Great Migration, and one that had significant effects on the development of black political ideologies, see Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998).

²³ Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

²⁴ Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, ed. Kenneth King (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Michael Adas, “Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology,” *Journal of World History* 15, no. 1 (March 2004): 31–63.

²⁵ An incisive account of the importance of the Manchester Congress for African American internationalism is found in John James Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 37–74.

turned to a group of bystanders attending the festivities and asked, “How does it feel to be free?,” to which they responded, “We wouldn’t know. We’re from Alabama.”²⁶

As this anecdote suggests, changing perceptions of who was in the vanguard in the march toward global black freedom influenced African American thinkers to look to decolonization not as a process they might shape but as a guide to follow. This shift in the polarities of diasporic politics happened quickly—much more quickly than most African American intellectuals, even as late as 1945, expected. Further, as the U.S. black population became increasingly northern and urban, the system of legal segregation maintained through racial terror in the Jim Crow South lost its place as the primary target of many black Americans who deployed colonial comparisons in political argument. By the middle of the 1960s, as international debates about the definition of colonialism shifted toward an emphasis on relations of economic dependency, the black politics of colonial comparison in the U.S. developed a distinctly urbanized character. For example, the insistence by Black Power activists James and Grace Lee Boggs that “the city is the black man’s land” was intertwined with their own visions of the internal colony, as invocations of colonialism became intertwined with Black Power politics of community control and metropolitan restructuring.²⁷

The colony was not the only evocative term of comparison in black politics to gain currency in the 1960s and 1970s. Descriptions of the black “ghetto”—itself a metaphor—as prison, as urban plantation, and even as concentration camp proliferated, sometimes emanating from the same thinkers who employed the colonial analogy.²⁸ All of these metaphors signaled a

²⁶ Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 5.

²⁷ James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs, “The City Is the Black Man’s Land,” *Monthly Review* 17, no. 11 (April 1966), reprinted in James Boggs, *Racism and the Class Struggle: Further Pages from a Black Worker’s Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 39–50.

²⁸ Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Daniel B. Schwartz, *Ghetto: The History of a Word* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); Mitchell Duneier,

rejection of the “creedal narrative” of American society, according to which African Americans were gradually attaining the liberal freedoms that had always been immanent in the country’s founding documents and ideals.²⁹ Highlighting continuities or similarities between the condition of the formally free black population and that of people subjected to institutions of forced confinement, forced labor, or genocidal violence buttressed the insistence of many black activists that the end of *de jure* segregation and disfranchisement represented only one of the goals of the black freedom movement. At the same time, each of these metaphors had more specific resonances. For example, the rhetoric of ghettos as prisons (or, in the striking words of Malcolm X, the proclamation that “that’s what America means—prison”) formed a crucial part of black nationalist and black radical organizing against the burgeoning carceral state in the 1960s, linking structures of urban inequality with the state’s repressive apparatus.³⁰

Each of these metaphors deserves careful consideration, and several receive sustained attention in other studies.³¹ Within this semantic field, though, the colonial analogy was distinctive for several reasons. More than other metaphors of confinement and oppression, the colonial analogy emerged out of contestations over the meaning of ongoing international events, contestations that included not only Black Power activists but figures much closer to the centers of state power. The colonial analogy also uniquely stimulated debate about what, exactly, rendered the comparison valid or politically useful. Whereas predictable fault lines emerged

Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016); Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁹ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Volume I and Volume II (New York: Harper, 1944); Aziz Rana, “Colonialism and Constitutional Memory,” *UC Irvine Law Review* 5, no. 2 (June 2015): 263–88.

³⁰ Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots,” in *Malcolm X Speaks*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 3–18; Berger, *Captive Nation*, 49–90; Garrett Felber, *Those Who Know Don’t Say: The Nation of Islam, the Black Freedom Movement, and the Carceral State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

³¹ Berger, *Captive Nation*; Schwartz, *Ghetto*; Duneier, *Ghetto*.

around the question of *whether* the black ghettos of American cities *really were* commensurable to prisons, concentration camps, or colonies, the colonial analogy prompted deeper discussions of its analytic purchase and strategic utility. Among those who employed the colonial analogy, there were substantial disagreements over *what* features of American racial hierarchy made it comparable to colonialism, and what political strategies followed from such comparisons. The uses to which the colonial analogy was put and the range of settings in which it was deployed were especially dynamic, as developments in both the decolonizing world and the black freedom struggle within the U.S. brought new issues to the fore. The rich debates the analogy engendered open a window onto the broader historical question of how Americans conceived of their relationship to the world-historical transformation of decolonization.

Beyond “Cold War America”

The decolonization of European empires in Africa and Asia in the period following the Second World War was a complex, multivalent process. Recent scholarship has challenged an earlier view of decolonization as the repeated transfer of power from a distant European sovereign to a local elite or as the modular diffusion of the European nation-state form throughout the rest of the world.³² This scholarship frequently emphasizes the contingent outcomes of processes of imperial withdrawal, the anxiety and anticipation that the prospect of independence occasioned, and the expansive political imaginaries of colonial subjects.³³ An undercurrent of such analysis

³² For examples of the earlier view, see John Plamenatz, *On Alien Rule and Self-Government* (London: Longman's, 1960); and Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).

³³ The contingency and contestation involved in the consolidation of the nation-state form in the aftermath of imperial rule is the central theme in the work of Frederick Cooper. Among others, see Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *American Historical Review*, 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1516–1545; Frederick Cooper, “Labor, Politics and the End of Empire in French Africa,” in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of

has been an emphasis on the conceptual labor involved in the process of decolonization.³⁴ As anticolonial movements began to capture state power, and as empire—the world’s oldest variety of formal state governance—came to be seen as internationally illegitimate, people struggled to define the parameters and purpose of a new world order. Did decolonization mean the transfer of political sovereignty? Did it necessitate a redrawing of borders? Did it entail a cultural campaign against ideologies of European superiority? Did it require a restructuring of the world economy? The work of posing and answering these questions, among others, generated new fields of political and social contestation on the world stage.

Historians of the United States rarely register that these fields had coordinates within the U.S. itself. Decolonization has figured in most histories of the United States in three ways: first, as an arena of Cold War conflict on which the fate of U.S. worldwide hegemony rested; second, as a moment that included the end of formal U.S. sovereignty over much of its own territorial empire; or, third, as a goal of discrete anticolonial movements abroad, to which American actors, especially black Americans, provided material and ideological support.

This dissertation argues that current understandings of the postwar United States drastically underestimate the impact of decolonization on the terms of debate in purportedly domestic struggles over racial and class inequality. A number of studies have traced how the transition from the Second World War to the Cold War reconfigured American political rhetoric around the redefined keyword of “freedom,” giving rise to defenses of capitalism as a system of

California Press, 2005), 204–30; and Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

³⁴ Margaret Kohn and Keally McBride, *Political Theories of Decolonization: Postcolonialism and the Problem of Foundations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

“free enterprise” that was counterposed to the “totalitarianism” of Communism.³⁵ In the historical literature on the twists and turns of the liberalism of the “New Deal order,” the Cold War conflict often appears as the only international dynamic that matters, both materially and ideologically.³⁶ As Cold War defense spending provided stimulus to various sectors of industrial production and helped underwrite a period of economic growth on which labor peace and corporatist coordination depended, Cold War anticommunism simultaneously placed sharp limits on socialist and social democratic political discourse and reform movements.³⁷ To the extent that decolonization plays any role in these narratives, it serves simply as a complicating factor in the Cold War, which continues to supply the master key to global politics.³⁸ Diplomatic historians of the “global Cold War” make a similar conceptual move, subordinating the autonomous issues and dynamics at the heart of decolonization to a world-spanning conflict between the United

³⁵ Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945–60* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994); 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); Lawrence B. Glickman, *Free Enterprise: An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). Although this dissertation does not exactly fit the mold of a study in “keywords” as Raymond Williams described it, it shares Williams’s emphasis on political vocabularies as representing both products of social struggle and active forces that define and delimit the scope of political possibility. See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

³⁶ The literature on the New Deal order is monumental, but see especially, Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013); Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); and Gary Gerstle, Nelson Lichtenstein, and Alice O’Connor, eds., *Beyond the New Deal Order: U.S. Politics from the Great Depression to the Great Recession* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

³⁷ James M. Cypher, “The Origins and Evolution of Military Keynesianism in the United States,” *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics* 38, no. 3 (2015): 449–76.

³⁸ Decolonization—as an independent international process—features equally peripherally in two rich and valuable edited volumes, separated by more than a decade, on cultural and intellectual developments in the “Cold War United States.” See Christian G. Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); and Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell, eds. *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

States and the Soviet Union, even while maintaining that this conflict's most consequential battles took place in the decolonizing world.³⁹

Yet decolonization consisted of a combination of locally embedded logics and widely shared dynamics that could not be attributed to or contained by the Cold War conflict—as many American thinkers at the time recognized.⁴⁰ Just as the hardening of the Cold War prompted reconsiderations of “free enterprise” that proved important for the ideological justification of American capitalism, interpretations of colonialism and decolonization provided equally important keywords to struggles over racial and class inequality in the United States. These keywords had shorter lifespans in American politics than that of “free enterprise,” but that does not diminish their importance. From the widespread image of the United States as the “first new nation” in John F. Kennedy’s foreign policy through War on Poverty policymakers’ emphasis on “indigenous leadership” to Black Power movement activists’ analysis of “internal colonialism,” decolonization shaped some of the most controversial spheres of American political argument. The development of divergent languages of colonial comparison, moreover, intensified ideological conflict by framing debates over a range of issues as reflections on the nature of American society itself.

³⁹ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Odd Arne Westad, “Exploring the Histories of the Cold War: A Pluralist Approach,” in *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War*, ed. Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017). One example of the literature on the “global Cold War” that acknowledges more clearly the autonomous dynamics of decolonization is Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper, 2018).

⁴⁰ Rupert Emerson was perhaps the foremost white intellectual in the U.S. at the time to argue that decolonization was not only relatively autonomous from the Cold War but was the more significant international development of the two. See Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). Anders Stephanson argues that John F. Kennedy, particularly in the years before he became president, envisioned the Cold War itself as merely an “aspect of the more fundamental conflict in world history between ‘imperialism’ and ‘freedom.’” See Anders Stephanson, “Senator John F. Kennedy: Anti-Imperialism and Utopian Deficit,” *Journal of American Studies* 48, no. 1 (February 2014): 1–24, quoted at 10. Both Emerson and Kennedy are discussed in chapter 3 below.

Even among historians of African American internationalism, Cold War binaries structure the dominant narrative of the midcentury decades. A prominent strand in this literature posits a narrative of declension, in which the onset of the Cold War shattered a left-liberal alliance of the 1930s and early 1940s that had made anticolonial concerns central to black activism.⁴¹ Some scholars who agree with the general shape of this argument have complicated its particulars by underscoring strains of black art, writing, and political action that persisted in unstinting radicalism, and even communism, in the Cold War wilderness.⁴² Other historians, most notably Carol Anderson, seek to counter the declensionist narrative altogether. Anderson diminishes the importance of the organized left in promoting black anticolonial concerns and highlights the relatively unheralded efforts of the NAACP to support movements against European imperial domination even after the beginning of the Cold War.⁴³

Scholars on all sides of this debate have added immeasurably to our understanding of black internationalist politics in the United States. Yet the overwhelming focus on left-liberal division under Cold War conditions leaves other important issues unaddressed. Tensions about the institutional forms that decolonization should take, the scale on which political-economic decision-making should take place, and the relationship between economic development and political self-determination coursed through black internationalist politics in the 1940s and 1950s. These tensions did not always map neatly onto Cold War divides. Chapter 1 shows how

⁴¹ Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945–1995* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

⁴² Dayo Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Mary Helen Washington, *The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Munro, *The Anticolonial Front*.

⁴³ Carol Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals: The NAACP and the Struggle for Colonial Liberation, 1941–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

debates about UN trusteeship and the institutional form of a post-imperial world order shaped African American understandings of the nature of colonialism. These debates have largely been overlooked, as the gravitational force of the Cold War has led scholars to treat the early 1940s primarily as a precursor to what would come later. Similarly, as chapter 2 demonstrates, Cold War loyalties did not always determine African Americans' engagements with the politics of international development from the late 1940s through the early 1960s. Development politics formed an essential arena in which black activists and writers on both sides of the Cold War pursued political agendas defined by a persistent fear that political independence would not bring about economic self-determination. Disagreements about whether multilateral institutions or national states presented the most promising road to economic development often occupied an important place in black internationalist politics as did the allegiances of the Cold War. In writing the history of African American internationalism in this period, then, we cannot, as historian Matthew Connelly suggests, "take off the Cold War lens" entirely, but we can move beyond a historiography that replicates its binaries.⁴⁴

If the Cold War divide stands as one pole of the literature on African American internationalism between the 1940s and the 1960s, literary and artistic culture stands as the other. From pioneering works by Brent Hayes Edwards and Kevin Gaines up to the present, the revival of scholarly interest in the global activities and imaginations of African Americans over the past two decades has taken circuits of artistic creation and moments of diasporic (mis)recognition as the principal objects of black intellectual production worthy of examination.⁴⁵ I seek to

⁴⁴ Matthew Connelly, "Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 739–69.

⁴⁵ Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana*; Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International Since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

emphasize instead the international entanglements of a tradition of intellectual production that might be called black political economy. The political economy of decolonization, as much as cultural linkages and diasporic filiation, provoked sustained reflection among black thinkers and activists, as well as consequential contestations with state actors, prominent white social scientists, and others.

In its focus on the political economy of decolonization, this dissertation further alters the dominant periodization of twentieth-century African American internationalism, revealing new connections between the moment of left-liberal anticolonial alliance in the 1930s and 1940s and the Black Power internationalism of the 1960s.⁴⁶ Such connections emerge clearly from examining black Americans' engagements with the politics of international development. As development ideology rose to prominence in U.S. foreign policy during the 1950s and early 1960s and developmental concerns became inescapable for anticolonial movements and postcolonial governments, internationally oriented African Americans adopted varying versions

⁴⁶ This dissertation thus makes a parallel argument, with regard to the periodization of black internationalism, to the scholarship that inaugurated the “long civil rights movement” framework by linking black labor organizing and legal advocacy in the 1930s and 1940s with the “heroic period” of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. On the “long civil rights movement,” see, among others, Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, “Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement,” *Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (December 1988): 786–811; Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1233–1263; Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008); and Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008). On Black Power internationalism, see especially Robin D. G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution,” *Souls* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 6–41; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002); Cynthia Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Penguin, 2011); Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Nico Slate, ed., *Black Power beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Sean L. Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

of developmentalist ideology and pursued a number of aims in development policy, both within the United States and abroad. As political scientist Dean Robinson writes, “black politics—even black nationalist politics—tends to draw upon intellectual and political currents in American society and build upon them to advance the cause of Afro-Americans.”⁴⁷ African Americans’ development politics from the 1940s to the 1960s indicate that Robinson’s claim applies equally to black *internationalist* politics. Black thinkers and activists did not simply create a “derivative discourse,” to use Partha Chatterjee’s term, that replicated dominant developmentalist ideas.⁴⁸ Rather, development politics constituted an arena in which African Americans thinkers and activists made sustained, and at times contradictory, efforts at improving the prospects of the decolonizing world for economic self-determination. These engagements formed the connective tissue linking more celebrated moments of black internationalist ferment in the 1940s and the 1960s.

The history of black internationalist thought and activism in this period further intersected with the transnational history of U.S. social policy. As a number of scholars have shown in recent years, antipoverty policy in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s was intertwined with American international development policy.⁴⁹ Social scientists construed poverty as a global condition that could be addressed in the same fashion worldwide. Differences

⁴⁷ While I do not agree with Robinson’s dismissive argument that Black Power activists simply “demanded a greater piece of the action,” his broader methodological point is well-founded. Dean E. Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 88, 89.

⁴⁸ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

⁴⁹ Sheyda Jahanbani, “‘A Different Kind of People’: The Poor at Home and Abroad, 1935–1968,” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2009); Sheyda Jahanbani, “One Global War on Poverty: The Johnson Administration Fights Poverty at Home and Abroad, 1964–1968,” in *Beyond the Cold War: Lyndon Johnson and the New Global Challenges of the 1960s*, ed. Francis J. Gavin and Mark Atwood Lawrence (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action during the American Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Molly Geidel, *Peace Corps Fantasies: How Development Shaped the Global Sixties* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Megan Black, *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

of region, religion, race, and history mattered less than the shared set of attributes captured in the concept of a “culture of poverty.” Meanwhile, the “rediscovery” of domestic poverty in the early 1960s required a redistribution of American expertise in antipoverty work, pulling many experts in the field of community development, in particular, back to the U.S. to work in the Johnson administration’s War on Poverty. Antipoverty warriors’ views of postcolonial politics permeated discussions about the design of public policy initiatives, such as the community action program, that were deployed throughout African American communities in the United States.

Although this recent work has significantly advanced our understanding of the transnational influences on American social policymakers, we do not have an adequate account of the implications of these global entanglements in the reception of and response to antipoverty policy, especially in black communities.⁵⁰ Existing scholarship on African Americans’ engagement with the War on Poverty emphasizes the ways that federal antipoverty funding enabled grassroots mobilizations in black communities.⁵¹ An intersecting literature illuminates how the War on Poverty provided the institutional scaffolding for the extension of the carceral state.⁵² Neither of these literatures fully addresses the international sources and inspirations of antipoverty policy.⁵³ Yet African Americans reckoning with the promise and perils of the War on Poverty engaged directly with the ways policymakers deployed a narrow view of decolonization

⁵⁰ Of the works that address the transnational history of the War on Poverty, Molly Geidel’s *Peace Corps Fantasies* is the most attuned to this question.

⁵¹ Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Noel A. Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); and Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964–1980* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

⁵² Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Hinton, “‘A War within Our Own Boundaries’: Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (June 2015): 100–112; and Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁵³ A notable exception is Stuart Schrader, *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

as a transfer of power to “indigenous leaders,” as they often put it, in their efforts to transform American cities. Some black thinkers and activists, drawing on black internationalist traditions, forged competing visions of metropolitan politics through their dissatisfaction with what they saw as a colonial project of indirect rule. Examining the colonial comparisons of both antipoverty policymakers and black activists engaged with the poverty program in a single frame demonstrates that 1960s social policy was more than just an arena in which expertise gained abroad was deployed at home. It was, rather, a field of struggle in which both state actors and grassroots movements forged their political aims with reference to their varied understandings of the nature and meaning of colonialism and decolonization.

A History of Comparisons

Comparison is both a foundational element of human reasoning and a value-laden, strategic, and political act. This dissertation builds on previous investigations of what historian and anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler calls the “politics of comparison,” taking as its setting the mid-twentieth-century United States.⁵⁴ Stoler’s own writings emphasize the central place that strategic comparison held in techniques of colonial governance, and the ways that colonial officials’ own comparative imaginations have haunted scholarly investigations in comparative colonial studies.⁵⁵ Related work by Michael Hanchard and Murad Idris in comparative politics and comparative political theory traces the ways that comparative schema and the hierarchies of

⁵⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (December 2001): 829–65.

⁵⁵ Stoler’s investigations of the politics of comparison have spanned a number of works, most notably, Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties”; Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, “Introduction: Refiguring Imperial Terrains,” in Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue, eds., *Imperial Formations* (Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press, 2007); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

value they create have informed those fields of inquiry.⁵⁶ I am less invested than those scholars are in the worthy project of unmasking the colonial residues in contemporary disciplinary boundaries and scholarly conventions. But this dissertation shares their orientation toward “*comparing* as an ‘active political verb,’” and it pays close attention to the “political stakes” involved in “celebrating some similarities and disavowing others.”⁵⁷ Investigating the strategies of comparison that historical actors engaged in can open a window onto their political objectives and the ideological context which helped to form those objectives. This study further follows Stoler’s injunction to attend not simply to the shifting terms of comparison, but to the “grids of intelligibility” that enabled particular comparisons to operate in particular moments.⁵⁸

This dissertation also draws inspiration from scholars who, in contrast to Stoler’s nearly exclusive focus on comparison as a strategy of rule, examine the ways that comparison has served as a strategy of resistance. As Manu Goswami writes, anticolonial internationalists in interwar South Asia developed a “vernacular politics” of comparing colonial regimes.⁵⁹ Their efforts to “establish commensurability across worlds conventionally deemed discrete and disparate” called attention to the difficult work of conceptual translation and alliance-building across imperial and linguistic borders.⁶⁰ Scholarship by Brent Hayes Edwards and Nico Slate on African American thought and activism similarly accentuates problems of conceptual and linguistic translation that have attended efforts to forge cultural community and political

⁵⁶ Michael G. Hanchard, *The Spectre of Race: How Discrimination Haunts Western Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Murad Idris, “Political Theory and the Politics of Comparison,” *Political Theory*, Online Only (December 2016): 1–20, doi: 10.1177/0090491716659812.

⁵⁷ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, xiii, 209.

⁵⁸ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 209.

⁵⁹ Manu Goswami, “Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (December 2012): 1461–1485, quoted at 1464. See also Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (New York: Verso, 1998).

⁶⁰ Goswami, “Imaginary Futures and Colonial Internationalisms,” 1464.

solidarity across national, imperial, and racial boundaries.⁶¹ While this study takes many lessons from these works, their overriding emphasis on the possibilities and challenges of building transnational alliances has left unexplored a wide range of other political aims that black thinkers and activists pursued through colonial comparison. Attempts to establish commensurability between American racial and economic inequality and the depredations of European colonial rule in Africa and Asia occupied at least as prominent a place in black politics at the *national* and *local* scales in the postwar United States.

This study also differs from previous histories of comparison by interrogating the comparative strategies of a broader range of historical actors. Presidents and diplomats, established social scientists and independent social critics, NAACP leaders and Black Power revolutionaries all populate these pages. Though these figures did not always take part in a single conversation, my decision to examine them in the same frame of analysis has several benefits. First, as I have already suggested, it enables us to register more fully the impact of global decolonization on American politics. Second, it enables the construction of a new and more accurate genealogy of concepts, such as the concept of “internal colonialism,” which has garnered popular as well as scholarly attention in recent years.⁶² Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this study aims to advance what historian N. D. B. Connolly calls a “desegregated method” by illustrating the concatenation of differently racialized spheres of political and intellectual debate.⁶³ Both by examining particular instances of interaction and by staging an overarching conversation among activists, intellectuals, and policymakers, black and white, this

⁶¹ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*; Nico Slate, “Translating Race and Caste,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24, no. 1 (March 2011): 62–79; Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

⁶² Chris Hayes, *A Colony in a Nation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017).

⁶³ N. D. B. Connolly, “Notes on A Desegregated Method: Learning from Michael Katz and Others,” *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 4 (July 2015): 584–91.

study uncovers the connected contestations over the meaning of decolonization in many domains of American life.

A multi-sided story of the politics of colonial comparison unfolds in the following five chapters. The imagination of U.S. policymakers, thinkers, and activists in this period was relentlessly comparative. Telling a comprehensive story of every effort to draw parallels between the decolonizing world and U.S. politics would thus be both unwieldy and tedious. Instead, following Ann Laura Stoler's insistence that "to compare is a *situated* political act of discernment," the narrative that follows traces lines of comparison between the U.S. and the decolonizing world through discrete political contestations over several decades, on issues ranging from the founding of the United Nations to the Johnson administration's War on Poverty.⁶⁴ Each of the conjunctures I have chosen to explore sheds light on how the political economy of the decolonizing world became fertile ground for Americans of varying political persuasions to develop new ways of thinking about racial and class inequality domestically.

Chapter 1 examines debates among leading African American activists, philanthropists, and state officials over the institutional design of the international order during the Second World War. The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, which the Phelps-Stokes Fund established in 1941 to make recommendations on U.S. policy toward Africa in the aftermath of the war, formed one important setting of these debates. Several prominent black internationalist thinkers, including Rayford Logan, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Ralph Bunche, participated in the deliberations of this committee. Through this committee, the press, and direct engagement with State Department officials, leading black activists advocated not for immediate independence but for an internationalized trusteeship system to replace mandatory and colonial rule in Africa.

⁶⁴ Stoler, *Duress*, 15. Emphasis added.

Several factors undergirded this advocacy: a view of African Americans as the vanguard of African liberation rooted in older discourses of civilization; a deep-seated realism about the U.S. policymaking process; and, perhaps most importantly, a distinctive understanding of colonialism itself.

Through these debates, Logan and Du Bois, in particular, put forth a vision of colonialism as a system of racialized economic exploitation, one that the granting of national political sovereignty alone would not solve. As U.S. officials coalesced around a narrower vision of trusteeship that left European empires largely intact, Logan and Du Bois diminished their hopes that international institutions might serve as the midwife of decolonization. Throughout these discussions, African American internationalists, State Department bureaucrats, and European officials all forged their positions on the shape of the postwar order through comparative reflections about the nature of colonialism and its relationship to racial inequality in the United States.

Chapter 2 shows how black activists translated the understanding of colonialism as a system of racialized economic exploitation, an understanding that had pervaded their wartime advocacy, into the sphere of international development politics in the early postwar years. Rayford Logan served as the leader of the NAACP's advocacy related to the Point Four program, President Truman's signature development initiative in the non-European world. Although anticommunism inflected debates about Point Four, so too did ideas about whether political economy should be governed at the national or the international scale, as Logan and some of his interlocutors embraced a vision of development as a means to engage in political-economic planning above the scale of the nation. Further, Logan's fear of what would later come to be

called neocolonialism—the persistence of economic dependency after political independence—loomed large in his attempts to influence U.S. foreign aid policymaking.

The fear of neocolonial domination after political independence also pervaded the thinking of a transnational circle of black activists who sought to intervene in development politics from different vantage points, from British colonial development policy to the development strategies of the independence movement in Ghana. The anticipation of neocolonialism defined the varied perspectives of these figures, including the social scientist St. Clair Drake and the novelist Richard Wright, on the primary initiative in Kwame Nkrumah's developmental agenda, the building of the Akosombo Dam over the Volta River. By examining black internationalist development politics in both donor and recipient nations, then, this chapter illustrates how African American internationalists on both sides of Cold War divisions perceived clearly the threat of continuing relations of colonial economic domination after the end of formal empire.

Taken together, the first two chapters trace debates about the international order that generated new reflections on how colonialism should be understood. The definition of colonialism, and the question of its relation to the history, governing structure, and racial hierarchy of the United States, took on new importance in political discourse on purportedly domestic topics in the 1960s, as chapters 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate.

Chapter 3 bridges the international and domestic spheres. Amid the rising fortunes of independence movements in Asia and Africa and a growing recognition of the strategic significance of the “new nations” to U.S. foreign policy, there emerged a new language defining the United States as the “first new nation.” The image of the U.S. as the first postcolonial state was coproduced, by politicians and diplomats seeking to win the allegiance of the decolonizing

world in Cold War struggles and by leading social scientists engaged in a reconsideration of American history and politics from the perspective of development and modernization. Central to the political language of first new nationhood was the deployment of a particular interpretation of the significance of American federalism in discussions of postcolonial politics. In response to postcolonial attempts to form federations for the purpose of securing economic independence— attempts that often drew on the example of the early United States—U.S. diplomats and social scientists argued that the American federal system spoke instead to issues of internal pluralism. Even more, promoters of the image of the United States as the “first new nation” intervened in a fervent global argument over the definition of colonialism itself. Advancing a narrow definition of colonialism as political rule by a foreign power, diplomats and modernization theorists alike contested the contemporaneous effort by decolonizing states to promulgate a broader definition of “colonialism in all its manifestations” that included economic and cultural dominance. This global debate about the scope of colonialism’s definition influenced African American intellectual life as well, providing a crucial context for the turn by some writers, especially the itinerant social critic Harold Cruse, to an analysis of American racial hierarchy as a form of internal colonialism.

If the political language of first new nationhood employed a particular reading of American history in efforts to shape postcolonial politics, a particular reading of postcolonial politics came to exercise significant influence in American debates about antipoverty policy. Chapter 4 charts a transformation in how U.S. policymakers, foundation officials, and social scientists envisioned American poverty as underdevelopment. As a cultural view of U.S. underdevelopment, undergirded by the concept of a transnational “culture of poverty,” replaced a territorial perception of U.S. underdevelopment, exemplified by the focus on area redevelopment

in the Eisenhower and Kennedy years, concepts and practices of community development programs overseas seeped into U.S. antipoverty policy. The primary innovation, a new policy apparatus known as community action, began in the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program before the Johnson administration made it the centerpiece of its War on Poverty.

This chapter breaks new ground by illustrating the origins and pathways of the belief that the cultivation of "indigenous leadership" represented the key to the success of community action programs. This belief stemmed from the engagements of the Gray Areas Program's director, Paul Ylvisaker, with the urban politics of postcolonial Calcutta. When the Johnson administration looked to Ylvisaker for help in designing the Community Action Program at the heart of the War on Poverty, his emphasis on "indigenous leadership" came to define federal antipoverty policy as well. As African American activists across the political spectrum formed community action agencies, the Ford Foundation and the Office of Economic Opportunity channeled philanthropic and federal dollars to those helmed by "indigenous leaders" that fit the model Ylvisaker had first devised in India. The discourse on "indigenous leadership" in antipoverty policy resonated in black politics, inspiring a reconsideration of urban politics in terms of colonialism. Rising criticism of "social welfare colonialism" called for greater reliance on local organizations and experts, recapitulating a central element of policymakers' emphasis on "indigenous leadership." Kenneth Clark, a black psychologist and founder of a community action agency in Harlem, was an early adopter of the language of "social welfare colonialism." As he grew more disillusioned with the prospects of community action, Clark devised a more thoroughgoing critique of urban political economy in anticolonial terms. Clark's conception of the "ghetto as colony" marked a transitional moment in the black politics of colonial comparison. The view of colonialism as a form of racialized economic exploitation, forged through

engagements in the international arena, here came to be applied to the structure of urban political economy.

Chapter 5 traces the winding path of the language of internal colonialism through the Black Power movement. Both Harold Cruse's theory of American racial hierarchy as a form of internal colonialism and Kenneth Clark's image of the ghetto as colony won numerous adherents in the Black Power movement. The relationship between each thinker and the movement as a whole was anything but straightforward. Cruse's iconoclastic temperament and generational skepticism of the militant style of younger activists distanced him from the movement, while Clark, a committed integrationist, largely denounced Black Power. Yet both thinkers left a mark on the movement's political language. Leading Black Power activists, such as Stokely Carmichael, James Forman, and James and Grace Lee Boggs, proposed a variety of meanings for the concept of the internal colony that raised questions about the language's applicability to grassroots organizing. Discussions of the analytical and strategic utility of this language increasingly orbited around issues of ethnic group pluralism and the political economy of urban development. This emphasis became apparent following the publication of Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's book *Black Power* in 1967. More conservative elements of the movement, opposed to Carmichael, recast his and Hamilton's linkage between the vocabulary of decolonization and the social-scientific language of interest-group pluralism, proclaiming an agenda of black elite empowerment under the sign of developing the resources of the "colony." Yet conservative appropriations did not have complete success. A number of writers and activists, drawing on longstanding concerns about the incomplete nature of political sovereignty without economic independence in black internationalist thought, saw parallels between the failure of postcolonial independence to bring broad-based economic gains and the situation in

American cities, as black political leaders won power amid worsening economic conditions for black Americans.

Over the course of the 1970s, even as the idea of internal colonialism gained more adherents in academic circles, colonial comparisons lost purchase in the broader realm of American political vocabulary. This occurred for two reasons. First, the increasing fragmentation of the black freedom movement made the development of a cohesive political program around the language of internal colonialism difficult. Second, as numerous postcolonial states failed to live up to their egalitarian aspirations and as forms of international hierarchy persisted in the wake of postcolonial self-determination, the allure of decolonization as a source of meaning weakened.

By the middle of the 1970s, the normative foundations of postcolonial self-determination came under sustained attack, while the hopes of a permanent shift in global power relations that decolonization had inspired diminished. U.S. policymakers continued to treat internal and external borders as part of a continuum of racialized global space, and black activists continued to pursue international aims. But the contest among divergent visions of the relation between colonialism and American racial and economic inequality largely faded from view. The power of colonial comparison waned alongside the power of the decolonizing world itself.

Chapter 1

The Paradox of Trusteeship: The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims and the Institutional Imagination of African American Internationalism

In 1941 and 1942, an interracial committee of scholars, policy experts, and missionaries met in New York City to discuss American policy toward the colonies and League of Nations mandates in Africa. Anson Phelps Stokes, the founding director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund—a leading philanthropic organization focused on African American and African education—had convened the group. Stokes thought it obvious that the United States should play a major role in shaping the postwar politics of the African continent. He also believed his fund, with its experience in missionary education, close ties to leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and connections to the State Department, was the ideal body to sway policymakers and “influenc[e] public opinion on wise lines” regarding the postwar settlement in Africa.¹

Stokes’s committee, named the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, marked a watershed moment in the history of African American internationalism. As the committee met between the fall of 1941 and the spring of 1942, it drew into its orbit a number of prominent African American intellectuals and activists, including W. E. B. Du Bois, the future State Department and UN official Ralph Bunche, and the Howard University historian Rayford Logan. This committee’s deliberations and debates, along with the report it eventually produced, present

¹ Eric S. Yellin, “The (White) Search for (Black) Order: The Phelps-Stokes Fund’s First Twenty Years, 1911–1931,” *The Historian* 65, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 319–52; Belinda H. Y. Chiu, *The One-Hundred-Year History of the Phelps-Stokes Fund as a Family Philanthropy, 1911–2011: The Oldest American Operating Foundation Serving the Educational Needs of the African Diaspora, Native Americans, and the Urban and Rural Poor* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012); Memorandum Regarding Preliminary Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

a window onto the wartime debates among internationally minded African Americans about how to curtail the abuses of ongoing colonial rule and to find a way forward for self-government in the colonies.²

The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims illustrates that leading African American internationalists not only worked as transnational activists and critics of U.S. foreign policy but also imagined themselves as prospective builders of the institutions of the postwar international order. The failure of the League of Nations to prevent a second European conflagration confirmed for most international lawyers and scholars the need for a new sort of international organization.³ Within the broad arena of anticolonial thought and advocacy, during the war the question of international institution-building became a central “problem-space” in which African American activists, scholars, and journalists concentrated their energies.⁴ Through debates focused on the structure of international institutions, African American thinkers with

² Although this committee’s report, entitled *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, has been mentioned in nearly every major work on African American internationalism in the World War II era, no scholars have thoroughly examined the workings of the committee itself. As Robert Vitalis notes, “there is no good detailed account of the work of the Africa Committee.” Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 211n23. For brief treatments of the report, see Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 110–13; Kenneth Robert Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African-American Intellectual* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 171–73; Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: An American Life* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), 106–7; Eric Porter, *The Problem of the Future World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Race Concept at Midcentury* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 108–12; Carol Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals: The NAACP and the Struggle for Colonial Liberation, 1941–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 16–18; and Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, 110–15.

³ Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York: Random House, 2006); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

⁴ David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 8. The anthropologist and postcolonial theorist David Scott defines a “problem-space” as a political and ideological conjuncture in which a particular political issue emerges as a “question demanding an answer.” Scott develops his idea of the “problem-space” in conversation with the writings of R. G. Collingwood and Quentin Skinner. Collingwood’s belief that bodies of knowledge emerge through a “logic of question and answer” was adapted by Skinner into the insight that “the history of thought should be viewed not as a series of attempts to answer a canonical set of questions, but as a sequence of episodes in which the questions as well as the answers have frequently changed.” See Quentin Skinner, “A Reply to My Critics,” in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 234.

expertise in global affairs elaborated their ideas about the path to self-determination for colonized peoples, the relation of American racism to European colonialism, and the global racial order.

Scholars who study African American internationalism in the Second World War often neglect the institutional substance of black Americans' visions of the postwar international order. Existing literature emphasizes the role that anticolonial commitments played in shaping African Americans' levels of support of the U.S. war effort, engagement with the "Double-V" campaign, rising interest in African affairs, and understandings of the threat of fascism.⁵ Further, the centrality of the Cold War in the historical literature on twentieth-century U.S. foreign relations has caused a number of scholars of black internationalism to read the early 1940s against what came after it. In that picture, the war years represented a moment of promise for a broad coalition of African American anticolonialists, one in which moderate liberals worked alongside Communist Party members, Garveyites, and others operating outside the American ideological mainstream to advocate the end of European colonial rule in Africa and elsewhere.⁶

Yet the tendency in this scholarship to assume rather than to explain the substance of black Americans' anticolonialism has left us with a limited picture. How did black intellectuals within the United States envision the path to decolonization? How did they understand the nature of colonialism, and how did they imagine its relation to their own country's systemic racial

⁵ Plummer, *Rising Wind*; Jonathan Rosenberg, *How Far the Promised Land?: World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World War to Vietnam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1936–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Vaughn Rasberry, *Race and the Totalitarian Century: Geopolitics in the Black Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁶ Literature that emphasizes the early 1940s as a moment of promise for a left-liberal coalition of black anticolonialists that the Cold War shattered includes Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); and Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). An alternative view that seeks to de-emphasize the radical left in African American anticolonial activism is provided in Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals*.

inequality? This chapter treats wartime debates about the shape of international institutions as an important site in the formation of ideas about colonialism among African American internationalists. Through a treatment of prominent black internationalists' views about postwar trusteeship planning, in particular, this chapter explores how African American thinkers understood the nature and trajectory of colonial rule, grounded their beliefs in the commonalities of anticolonial movements and black struggles at home, and imagined new institutions for the postwar world order.⁷

This chapter begins by providing the first detailed account of the internal deliberations of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims. These deliberations reveal how deeply the system of League of Nations mandates affected what Reinhart Koselleck labels the “horizons of expectation” of African Americans who sought to reconstruct global order along more anticolonial lines during the Second World War.⁸ Ralph Bunche and Rayford Logan, along with Logan's colleague at Howard University Alain Locke, all had firsthand experience observing the operation of the League of Nations mandates system in the 1920s and 1930s.⁹ The mandates system embodied a racial hierarchy based on the ideal of enlightened guardianship by a

⁷ The key characters in this story fall within the group that political scientist Robert Vitalis has named the “Howard school” of international relations thought, a designation he applies to a group of black scholars who studied and wrote about imperialism and colonialism between World War I and the 1960s, most of whom taught at Howard University and many of whom were politically active in the NAACP and other civil rights organizations. Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, 12.

⁸ The philosopher of history Reinhart Koselleck argues that all historical processes depend on the tension between actors' “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation.” Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (1979; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 255–76.

⁹ Ralph Bunche's dissertation was a comparison of the governance and economic life of the French colony of Dahomey and the mandated territory of Togo. He traveled in both areas in the 1920s, and observed the workings of the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva as part of his research for the same study. See Ralph Bunche, “French Administration in Togoland and Dahomey” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1934). Alain Locke also spent time in Geneva observing the Permanent Mandates Commission, and he delivered a report on his findings that criticized the League's failures to address forced labor and to provide genuine advancement for self-government in a report to the Foreign Policy Association, which had funded his trip. Rayford Logan participated in the Pan-African Congresses in 1921, 1923, and 1927, and he wrote widely on the topic of the mandates. His most sustained treatment of the mandates system is found in Rayford Logan, “The Operation of the Mandate System in Africa,” *Journal of Negro History* 13, no. 4 (October 1928): 423–77.

“civilized” power alongside a faith in the positive potential of the internationalization of colonial administration.¹⁰ Both of these elements constrained key African American thinkers’ horizons of expectation for the end of European colonial rule during the war.

Internationally minded black intellectuals largely rejected the ideal of trusteeship, with its embedded assumptions of racial hierarchy. Yet many African American internationalists advocated a form of international trusteeship administration as the institutional mechanism through which to pursue anticolonial claims. Rayford Logan and W. E. B. Du Bois in particular urged the transfer of sovereignty from the colonial power or mandate holder to an international body for three reasons. First, their advocacy tracked closely the rapidly developing discussions in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. Widespread destruction in Europe prompted the State Department and War Department to make preparations for a postwar order in which the military and economic power of their Western European allies looked likely to diminish significantly.¹¹ Early on in the war, policy planners in the State Department envisioned a trusteeship system that would operate under an international institution and thus diminish European influence in the colonies. As the war went on, both a concern for keeping European allies happy and a belief that the central goals of the United States—namely, a liberalized system of global trade and a globe-spanning network of military bases—could be achieved while European empires remained intact facilitated a retreat from this position.¹² From the beginning, political realism about U.S. policy

¹⁰ Antony Anghie demonstrates persuasively that the conception of civilizational hierarchy shaped the international law of the mandates system. See Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 115–195. The argument that one of the most significant effects of the League of Nations was its internationalization of issues of colonial governance is drawn from Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹¹ Patrick J. Hearden, *Architects of Globalism: Building a New World Order during World War II* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 65–92.

¹² Ebere Nwaubani, “The United States and the Liquidation of European Colonial Rule in Tropical Africa, 1941–1963,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 43, no. 3 (2003): 505–551.

priorities constrained the institutional proposals that even Du Bois, who offered perhaps the most stirring and absolute critiques of colonialism, would put forth.

Second, drawing on an established strand of thought in the Pan-African movement, Bunche, Du Bois, and Logan continued to imagine African Americans as the vanguard of African liberation.¹³ Their critique of the brutality and underdevelopment produced by colonial rule coupled with a paternalistic view of Africans as unprepared for immediate self-government. While countering a common view in Europe and the United States that envisioned colonialism as a civilizing force, these thinkers nonetheless advanced an institutional solution that countenanced a delayed independence.

Third, and crucially, an account of colonialism as a form of racialized economic exploitation undergirded their analysis. This account emphasized that the problem of colonialism consisted of not only the political rule over a territory by an alien country but the exploitation of its inhabitants for the economic benefit of the colonizing power. In this account, national independence would not prove sufficient to reverse the process of colonial underdevelopment, and would only place African nations in a position of dependency toward European and American state and corporate power. The proposals for international trusteeship by Logan and Du Bois thus derived not solely from political realism or an elitist version of Pan-Africanism but from their vision of the primary problem of colonialism itself—a vision that, as future chapters will explore, could be turned to other ends.

The internal discussions of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims reveal that Du Bois and Logan successfully advocated that the committee put forward an understanding of colonialism and a proposal for international trusteeship closer to their own. Their primary

¹³ Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1820–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

opponents in these efforts were Anson Phelps Stokes and Thomas Jesse Jones, the two most powerful officials at the Phelps-Stokes Fund. These men upheld the fund's overarching commitment that black uplift required white leadership.¹⁴ Jones, a prominent critic of the extension of higher education to African Americans, whom Carter G. Woodson argued should be "execrated and abhorred by Negroes who suffered from his career in Negro Life," was the primary author of the first draft of the committee's report—a finding recorded here for the first time.¹⁵ Jones and Stokes both hoped the report would portray colonial rule—especially the British Empire, which Stokes deeply admired—not as a vehicle for exploitation but as a potentially redeemable form of government. The committee's final report presented a restrained critique of colonialism, and its proposals for reform were moderate. Yet the degree to which it exhibited even this measured reformism reflected the influence of the committee's African American members, especially Logan and Du Bois.

After examining in detail this committee's proceedings, this chapter then traces the reception of its report, entitled *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*. This document garnered a great deal commentary in the press and in policymaking circles in both the U.S. and the United Kingdom, but its recommendations on international trusteeship failed to influence the trajectory of state policy. Finally, this chapter traces the divergent responses of Bunche, Logan, and Du Bois over the later years of the war. As the war progressed, as Bunche became more enmeshed in state policy formation, his views on the nature of colonialism and its links to American racial hierarchy moderated significantly. Meanwhile, the

¹⁴ Donald Johnson, "W.E.B. DuBois, Thomas Jesse Jones and the Struggle for Social Education, 1900–1930," *Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 71–95; Yellin, "The (White) Search for (Black) Order."

¹⁵ Carter G. Woodson, review of *Progress in Negro Status and Race Relations, 1911–1946: The Thirty-Five Year Report of the Phelps Stokes Fund*, by Anson Phelps Stokes et. al. (New York, 1948), *Journal of Negro History* 34, no. 3 (July 1949): 369.

trajectory of official thinking on trusteeship, and the ultimate shape of the UN Charter, diminished the faith of both Logan and Du Bois in the potential of a new international organization to serve as the midwife of decolonization. This disillusionment, combined with the shifting center of gravity in the Pan-African movement, opened new horizons of expectation for African American internationalism in the postwar era, pushing some African American thinkers to embrace nationalist forms of anticolonialism more fully and inaugurating different forms of engagement with the United Nations.¹⁶ At the same time, elements of the analysis of colonialism forged in the wartime moment would resonate in black politics in the years after the war.

Wartime debates about the shape of the postwar order not only occasioned the promulgation of a distinctive understanding of colonialism as a problem of racialized economic exploitation. These discussions further prompted implicit and explicit reflections on the relation of European colonial rule in Africa to racial inequality in the United States. Du Bois developed an understanding of colonialism as a global system of labor exploitation that extended to the United States' own labor regime. Alain Locke, at the same time, argued that "race relations" were necessarily international, both in the sense that they took place along international and colonial frontiers, and in the sense that domestic racial conflicts were properly the subject of international attention. American policymakers contemplated the implications of the internal racial borders of the U.S. for their plans for the postwar order. Meanwhile, British and French officials, and intellectuals sympathetic to them, developed their own politics of comparison, deploying the example of the oppression of African Americans in the United States to defend

¹⁶ John James Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

their own colonial practices and to denounce the hypocrisy of Americans' criticisms of colonial rule. The politics of colonial comparison pervaded disputes over the postwar international order.

The Phelps-Stokes Fund and the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims

On August 8, 1941, Anson Phelps Stokes, the Director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, proposed a meeting on "Africa and the Peace Conference" to be held in September at the Fund's offices in New York. The genesis for this meeting emerged from an earlier "informal gathering" of Stokes, Thomas Jesse Jones, the Educational Director of the Fund, Jackson Davis, the president of the still-surviving New York Colonization Society, and Channing Tobias, an official in the NAACP and International YMCA.¹⁷ Although the United States had not yet entered the war as a belligerent, Stokes had begun thinking about how the U.S. might shape the postwar order. He called together "a representative group of Americans to help protect the interests of the Natives in Africa in connection with the Peace Treaty which will follow the present war."¹⁸ This group met for the first time a month later, on September 8. It included twenty-two figures from the worlds of scholarship, missionary work, and advocacy, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Bunche, and Rayford Logan. At the initial meeting, the group chose as its name the Committee on Africa and Peace Aims. After the U.S. entered the war, the group renamed itself as the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims to endow its work with an added sense of

¹⁷ These were four of the most powerful members of the fund at the time. Jones, in particular, was a close friend of Stokes and exerted a significant influence on the fund's direction from the 1910s until his retirement in 1946. See Chiu, *The One-Hundred-Year History of the Phelps-Stokes Fund as a Family Philanthropy, 1911–2011*, especially 141–67.

¹⁸ Minutes of Preliminary Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, September 8, 1941, p. 1, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

urgency, though the focus of its discussions and recommendations remained on the postwar order.¹⁹

The group asserted its national perspective from the outset. Although “non-Americans, including representative Native Africans, may be consulted,” the executive committee—a group of twelve that met more frequently than the general committee, which eventually expanded to forty members—agreed with Stokes’s decision to “includ[e] only American citizens” on the committee itself.²⁰ The emphasis on restricting membership to citizens both reflected Stokes’s hope that the group might influence postwar planning agencies in the U.S. government and exuded a racist suspicion of Africans’ potential to shape their own political destiny.²¹ While the political center of gravity of the group fell substantially to the left of the center of American politics, or even the New Deal coalition, anticommunism still played a role in shaping the personnel invited. Stokes considered inviting Max Yergan, co-founder with Paul Robeson of the International Council on African Affairs (later the Council on African Affairs, or CAA), but ultimately, because Yergan had been “a fellow traveler in the days when the youth movement was rife with some of the Marxian theories,” opted not to include him.²²

Between Stokes’s initial efforts to bring the group together and the committee’s first meeting, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter. The Atlantic Charter contained eight “common principles” on which the leaders proposed to “base their hopes

¹⁹ For the name change, see: Minutes of the Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, May 23, 1942, p. 4, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²⁰ Memorandum Regarding Preliminary Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, September 8, 1941, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²¹ Minutes of Preliminary Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, September 8, 1941, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²² Anson Phelps Stokes to Claude A. Barnett, September 9, 1942, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

for a better future for the world.”²³ The third point of the charter—that the U.S. and UK would “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them”—struck those interested in the fate of the European colonies after the war as particularly important.²⁴ Whether this principle would apply only to the territories conquered by the Axis powers, or to the entire globe, including the “forcibly deprived” territories held by European powers in Africa, quickly became a subject of debate in the American and African American press.²⁵ Although Stokes’s committee did not discuss the charter at length in their first meeting on September 8, as the Executive Committee began formulate plans for the group’s eventual report, it began to frame its outline around the “Eight Points” of the Atlantic Charter.²⁶ In two all-day meetings on December 29, 1941 and January 15, 1942, a smaller Editorial Committee, consisting of Ralph Bunche, Charles Johnson, Emory Ross, as well as Stokes, Jones, and Tobias, began to write a draft of the report. These six men ratified the focus on the Atlantic Charter, voting that “the application of the Roosevelt-Churchill ‘Eight Points’ to African welfare’ should be considered the heart of the Report.”²⁷

Thomas Jesse Jones authored the first draft of the report, although the rest of the editorial committee, including Bunche, had some input. This draft presented measured recommendations for the reform and ultimate dissolution of European colonial empires.²⁸ Opening with the

²³ Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, “Atlantic Charter, August 12, 1941,” in Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 303.

²⁴ Roosevelt and Churchill, “Atlantic Charter, August 12, 1941,” 304.

²⁵ Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 25–28.

²⁶ Minutes of Meeting of the Organizing Committee of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, September 17, 1941, p. 1, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²⁷ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, February 7, 1942, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²⁸ According to the minutes in the February 7 meeting of the committee, “substantial progress had been made in preparing the report, thanks largely to the excellent preliminary work of Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, to whom the

comment that “the emergence into political consciousness of the non-white peoples of the world is a recent phenomenon of great significance,” the committee members argued that the moment felt equally “full of promise and full of possibility of danger.”²⁹ The authors claimed that the colonial powers’ intransigence and the possibility of premature independence both equally threatened African development and the creation of a stable global order. The moment called the “nations now in authority in Africa” to be “wise in helping to fit its people . . . for self-government in a modern state” and demanded of African peoples themselves that they “respond adequately” to this effort.³⁰ Repudiating ideas of biological racial difference, the first draft of the report nonetheless repeatedly emphasized the political incapacity of Africans for immediate self-rule, an emphasis that would be softened but not eliminated as the report progressed. While offering criticisms of forced labor and colonial monopolies over trade, the draft report consistently praised the British system of “indirect rule.” The first draft of the report thus presented a vision of colonial rule as a potentially redeemable system of governance rather than as a system of exploitation.

The question of African participation remained a sticking point for the committee after the first draft circulated. At their February 7, 1942 meeting, the executive committee decided to invite “Native Africans in this country especially qualified to give the Native point of view.”³¹ Two weeks later, the executive committee met with the Consul General of Liberia and several students or recent graduates of American universities from the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Sierra

Committee is mainly indebted for the outline and the preliminary draft.” Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, February 7, 1942, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

²⁹ Preliminary and Confidential Draft of Report for Members of the Executive Committee, p. 1, folder 5, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

³⁰ Preliminary and Confidential Draft of Report for Members of the Executive Committee, p. 1, folder 5, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

³¹ Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, February 7, 1942, p. 4, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

Leone, including Francis (later Kwame) Nkrumah, a student at Lincoln University in Philadelphia. While these figures endorsed the general direction of the committee, other Africans consulted offered less favorable feedback. Ernest Kalibala, a Ugandan-born sociologist teaching at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, argued that the committee's very framing of their objective—"the focussing of public attention on wise treatment of Africa and Africans"—reflected an undemocratic attitude toward Africans' participation in discussions about their future.³² Insisting that "Africa and the Africans must not only be treated wisely but must be included in the Democratic Councils to dictate the policy of treatment," Kalibala claimed that by restricting participation in the committee to Americans, who only had access to information about Africa through brief periods of travel and "colonial documents," Stokes had ensured that "[the] committee will formulate policies agreeing with the Colonial Powers and may add a few suggestions here and there."³³ Kalibala's counsel went unheeded, but his view of a direct connection between personnel and policy resonated with several members of the committee, especially Rayford Logan, who would go on to argue consistently for African—and African American—representation in the international organizations of the postwar world.

Debates about the nature and severity of colonial rule followed after the editorial committee circulated the preliminary report to the larger group. W. E. B. Du Bois, at the age of 73 the most senior and widely known black intellectual in the committee's ranks, attempted to make a critique of capitalism and commercial exploitation central to the report. He contrasted the movement toward social democracy in the United States and Europe, epitomized by the New Deal, with European policies toward the colonies, where "we are tending to repeat and

³² Ernest Kalibala to Anson Phelps Stokes, March 9, 1942, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

³³ Ernest Kalibala to Anson Phelps Stokes, March 9, 1942, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

perpetuate the errors of the worst days of capitalistic exploitation in Europe.”³⁴ Du Bois claimed that the European and American powers were placing the “strong motive of private profit . . . in the foreground of our interracial relations,” rather than “the greater objects of cultural understanding and moral uplift.”³⁵ In an argument reminiscent of J. A. Hobson’s analysis of imperialism, Du Bois claimed that commercial rapaciousness in the colonies not only harmed Africans but “frustrate[d] and nullifie[d] much of the reform effort within the more progressive lands which own and control colonies.”³⁶

Du Bois further identified economic self-determination, in particular, as his fundamental goal for the postwar order. The committee should recognize, he argued, that “the land and natural resources of Africa should be regarded as belonging primarily to the Native inhabitants, to be administered for their advancement and well being.”³⁷ His proposal that “where land has already been alienated, it should eventually be restored,” while largely ignored by Stokes and the other members of the committee, suggested a radical rejection of European settler colonialism, holding drastic implications for the settler colonies of Kenya, Algeria, and South Africa.³⁸

As the report developed, Du Bois continued to advance his criticisms of the committee’s seeming reluctance to criticize the economic impact of European colonists and American corporations on African workers. At the April 25 meeting, he presented a brief memorandum arguing that “more adequate attention should be given to the question of the responsibility of

³⁴ W. E. B. Du Bois, Memorandum for Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, November 1941, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

³⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, Memorandum for Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, November 1941, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers, 2.

³⁶ W. E. B. Du Bois, Memorandum for Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, November 1941, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers; J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967).

³⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, Memorandum for Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, November 1941, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

³⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois, Memorandum for Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, November 1941, p. 2, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

America, through its increasingly large economic investments in Africa, and that the dangers of exploitation, although dealt with in various places, was not brought out sufficiently emphatically.”³⁹ He followed up the presentation with a longer memorandum to Anson Phelps Stokes about the April draft of the report, in which he criticized its historical treatment of the slave trade, its portrayal of economics in Africa, its positive portrayal of indirect rule, and its comparative perspectives on British, French, and Belgian colonialism. On all of these topics, Du Bois felt that the committee had understated both the economic motivation of European powers’ involvement in Africa and the severity of imperialism’s impact on Africans, particularly African workers. “Thorough-going reform” could not be effective, he argued, “unless we frankly recognize the profit motive in the white invasion of Africa.”⁴⁰ The report gave too much credit to the British, in particular, for their system of indirect rule, which “was an expedient, not a plan, in its origins,” and which in any case always prioritized “trade and investment of capital” for profit over “native development.”⁴¹ If anything, the French “refusal to recognize the color bar” and the educational system set up in French colonies for indigenous elites offered a more substantial foundation on which to build a postcolonial order.⁴²

Stokes responded to these criticisms in a deferential but evasive tone. He promised to expand the report’s mentions of the Atlantic slave trade and to strengthen its discussions of the downsides of indirect rule. At the same time, on issues of American investment and on the role of the profit motive in European involvement, he stated vaguely that “due reference is being made.”⁴³ He disagreed most starkly with Du Bois’s suggestions about the draft’s treatment of

³⁹ Minutes of Meeting of The Executive Committee of the Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, April 25, 1942, p. 4, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois to Anson Phelps Stokes, April 28, 1942, p. 1, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴¹ W. E. B. Du Bois to Anson Phelps Stokes, April 28, 1942, p. 4, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴² W. E. B. Du Bois to Anson Phelps Stokes, April 28, 1942, p. 5, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴³ Anson Phelps Stokes to W. E. B. Du Bois, April 29, 1942, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

British colonial policy, as the staunchly pro-British Stokes sharply denounced Du Bois's "pretty near indiscriminate criticism of their political and educational attitude."⁴⁴ Stokes further identified the perceived a difference between what Du Bois could write as an independent scholar and what the committee, in its attempt to shape policy both in the U.S. and elsewhere, should produce, writing, "in a public document of the type that we are planning, which must secure the support of our Committee and we hope have some influence abroad, it would not, I think, be wise to indulge in such extreme criticisms as one can rightly put in a letter."⁴⁵

Despite Stokes's opposition, Du Bois succeeded in his effort to include several of his proposed changes in the final version of the report. In the opening section that provided a "balance sheet" of European involvement in Africa, the preliminary draft only mentioned the abolition of the slave trade. The final draft mentioned the establishment of the slave trade, and its ongoing impact on African economies, on the negative side of the ledger, two changes that clearly reflected Du Bois's influence.⁴⁶ He further shaped the section of the report on indirect rule. This section, almost entirely complimentary in the original draft, in its final version included the analysis that indirect rule held "significant appeal to the colonial Power" because it offered "a cheaper and more expedient method of providing for the control of native groups."⁴⁷ The final draft further included several additional "disadvantages" that indirect rule generated, in particular the "danger of the native unit of government not being given sufficient independent

⁴⁴ Anson Phelps Stokes to W. E. B. Du Bois, April 29, 1942, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴⁵ Anson Phelps Stokes to W. E. B. Du Bois, April 29, 1942, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴⁶ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, (New York: n.p., 1942), 16. For the corresponding section in the earlier draft, see: Preliminary and Confidential Draft of Report for Members of the Executive Committee, pp. 15–17, folder 5, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁴⁷ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 78.

authority.”⁴⁸ Du Bois pushed the committee toward an understanding of colonialism as a system of exploitation and antidemocratic politics much closer to his own.

The question of international trusteeship became increasingly central to the committee’s debates as it revised its report over the winter and spring of 1942. The preliminary draft endorsed the structure of national administration and international inspection and report that had defined the League’s mandate system. Several of the committee’s members—including Bunche, a member of the editorial committee who had substantial input on the original draft—held longstanding critical views of mandatory governance as merely a shield for an equally exploitative form of colonial rule. Nonetheless, the report’s initial suggestion was simply to ensure the continuation and extension of “progressive and efficient mandate control” under “national responsibility” not only for “existing mandated territories” but for “all European-controlled Colonies in Africa.”⁴⁹ While an international mandate “might well be tried in Libya, or those parts of it lost to Italy,” the thrust of the preliminary draft cut against the idea of international trusteeship.⁵⁰

A number of figures involved with the report proposed bolder steps toward removing the colonies from the direct control of European powers and placing their administration in the hands of an international body. The international relations scholar Quincy Wright, one of the committee’s outside consultants, advocated for a bolder statement of the principle of international trusteeship. Wright, one of the foremost scholars of the League of Nations mandates system, argued that “an outright cession by the present colonial, protecting, and

⁴⁸ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 78.

⁴⁹ Preliminary and Confidential Draft of Report for Members of the Executive Committee, p. 45, folder 5, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁵⁰ Preliminary and Confidential Draft of Report for Members of the Executive Committee, p. 45, folder 5, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

mandatory powers of their territories to the new League or Association of Nations” would have the “double advantage of increasing the authority and prestige of the world organization and, also, of securing a more impartial supervision or administration of the principles of the development of backward people.”⁵¹ Yet Wright allowed for the possibility that existing colonial powers might continue to administer the mandate territories as “agents of the world organization.”⁵² Alfred Zimmern, another consultant that Stokes called upon for advice, and one of the original architects of the League of Nations, opposed Wright and advised the committee to “not go too far in the matter of International Mandates.”⁵³ Zimmern claimed that the incorporation of African elites into existing systems of governance by the colonial powers had made “educated African opinion . . . very definitely unfavorable to international administration,” such that international administration would make the eventual transition to self-government harder, not easier.⁵⁴ Anson Phelps Stokes’s own position shaded more toward Zimmern’s, and he worked diligently to ensure that the committee he had commissioned should not endorse international mandate administration for all colonies and mandated areas.

Rayford Logan instigated the committee’s turn toward international trusteeship. In the May 23, 1942 meeting of the general committee, Logan argued for the complete transfer of colonies, existing League mandates, and other “dependent” territories in Africa to an international mandate administration. This idea was central to Logan’s vision of international politics and the possibilities of development and interracial cooperation in the postwar era. Other committee members, including both Jones and Stokes, wanted to keep the language of the

⁵¹ Quincy Wright to Anson Phelps Stokes, August 22, 1942, folder 3, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers. Wright had grown disenchanted with the system of national administration during the French bombardment of a Syrian nationalist uprising in the 1920s. See Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 162–68.

⁵² Quincy Wright to Anson Phelps Stokes, August 22, 1942, folder 3, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁵³ Anson Phelps Stokes to Quincy Wright, September 11, 1942, folder 3, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁵⁴ Alfred Zimmern to Anson Phelps Stokes, August 24, 1942, folder 3, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

existing draft, which provided for almost all territories to remain under the administration of the national governments of the colonial powers. Du Bois proposed a compromise. He argued that international administration should be reserved only for colonies that would have “changed hands” by the end of the war.⁵⁵ Making distinctions between the colonial holdings of the victors and the vanquished in Europe had been a staple of international politics since the First World War, as the League of Nations had placed only the territories of the Ottoman Empire and the former German colonies under mandatory control. Du Bois’s proposal recapitulated that logic, seeking only to shift the locus of sovereignty in newly conquered territories from the Allied powers to an international body. Such a system, in theory, would ensure that “conquered territory in Africa” not be “considered as spoils of war,” and thus would prevent Allied powers from using the war as a pretext to expand their colonial holdings.⁵⁶ This compromise won unanimous support from the committee. The published report incorporated the recommendation that “international administration should be introduced into those colonies—not including independent states such as Ethiopia—which have changed hands or which may change hands during the war; and that similarly such administration might well be tried in some other area or areas.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, responding to another proposal by Logan, the committee argued that “there should be native African representation on any International Mandates Commission which may be established dealing with African territory and problems.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Minutes of the Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, May 23, 1942, p. 5, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁵⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of Committee on Africa and Peace Aims, May 23, 1942, p. 5, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁵⁷ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 57.

⁵⁸ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 57.

The members of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims formulated their arguments about the future of European colonial rule in Africa in part through reflection on the relationship between American regimes of racial hierarchy and the global colonial system. Americans, the committee declared, had a legitimate special interest in the problems of colonialism in Africa because of both the country's substantial African American population and its recent overseas imperial projects. The histories of slavery, Jim Crow, and continental and overseas imperialism were transmuted into a national "experience" of navigating the problems of interracial governance. The authors acknowledged the United States' mixed record on these questions and included a subsection of the report entitled "Recognition of America's Own Shortcomings, with Evidences of Recent Improvements." The segregation and discrimination that African Americans faced appeared in the document as not only a moral and political but also a strategic problem: the report acknowledged that "the educated African is aware of the discriminations against Negroes which have existed in our democracy," making them skeptical of the possibility of a positive American influence.⁵⁹ Domestic changes were thus required to secure foreign influence, both by addressing this attitude of the "educated African" and by "stimulat[ing] those working for better African conditions" at home.⁶⁰

If the American record on African American rights appeared as a hindrance to its ability to shape African realities, the nation's overseas conquests came out in a more positive light. The expansion of U.S. sovereignty over "people of different races, including some on various stages of civilization differing greatly from our own," and the nation's supposed "considerable success in securing coöperation [*sic*] and good feeling between the different racial groups" in Hawaii and

⁵⁹ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 22.

⁶⁰ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 22.

the Philippines represented an “experience of some value” for the future governance of Africa.⁶¹ The status of the United States as a member in the club of overseas imperial nations, the committee argued, increased its standing as an arbiter of the future of colonies elsewhere in the world. At the same time, although the history of violence against Native Americans was largely absent from the report, the authors brought it to bear on their reflections of the particular difficulties of African settler colonies like South Africa: “We must realize that it is most difficult for any country which has a very large and dominant settler population to be entirely fair to the needs and rights of a primitive native population. Our historic American experience with the Indian—about which we cannot be proud—has shown this clearly.”⁶² Even in the instance of indigenous genocide, the committee portrayed the history of American policy toward its racialized subject populations as a set of lessons from which European colonial powers might learn, and a reason for Americans’ voices to be included in postwar debates.

One British journalist enlisted by Stokes to offer advice to the committee marshaled the politics of comparison to the opposite end. Basil Mathews, a British-born journalist and former publicist for the Conference of British Missionary Societies, sought to delegitimize the report’s criticisms of British colonialism and advocacy for international trusteeship. He defended the French and British colonial governments by comparing them favorably with Jim Crow rule in the U.S. South. References to the failure of colonial governments to respect the principles of “no taxation without representation” and “all men are created equal,” Mathews wrote, failed to recognize that “those ‘self-evident truths’ are not in force in Alabama or Georgia for instance.”⁶³

⁶¹ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 19.

⁶² Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 34.

⁶³ Statement from Basil Mathews, p. 2, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

In less abstract terms, the report's argument that colonial governments were "not curbing and guiding the activities of private enterprise and limiting profits" similarly presented a false picture of colonial exploitation, especially "if you struck a balance as between British Tropical Africa and the Southern States of the U.S.A."⁶⁴ Mathews further called particular attention to Liberia, an independent, black-governed state with longstanding connections to the United States. His argument that the accusations levied in the report against British and French rule for neglecting African welfare could be made even more strongly in the case of Liberia served the dual purpose of highlighting the failure of past American ventures in Africa and delegitimizing black self-rule more broadly.⁶⁵

The final report afforded substantially more respect to the political capacities of African elites and ordinary Africans for self-government than most policy discourse in the U.S. at the time, but it retained an obvious attitude of paternalism. The claims that "there are groups of Africans in every African colony of much potentiality, and capable of a larger share in government than they now have" and that "the capacities of the ordinary African are normal considering his past and present opportunities"—statements added after the report's original draft—were counteracted by a continuing belief that colonial subjects required a period of development under a less severe form of rule before they would be ready for full self-government.⁶⁶ *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint* offered a sharper critique of the exploitative nature of colonialism and proposed more significant changes to

⁶⁴ Statement from Basil Mathews, p. 2, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁶⁵ The independent states of Liberia and Ethiopia were frequently singled out in League of Nations debates on the problem of slavery and forced labor in the interwar period. Despite the persistence of forced labor practices across the African continent, including in League of Nations mandates, the League used the pretext of forced labor in Ethiopia and Liberia to provide only provisional membership in international society to both countries. See Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 52–67.

⁶⁶ Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, 40.

interwar arrangements than its early drafts suggested. Overall, however, it remained a moderate document—the product of compromise between the conservative dispositions of the committee’s philanthropic elites and the expansive visions of its more radical intellectuals.

“World War II . . . Is Not Fought for the Four Freedoms Everywhere”

The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims released its report in June 1942. Journalists and policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic saw both the committee’s formation and the release of its report as a significant watershed in postwar planning debates. The report made major news in the African American press, in particular, which highlighted above all its argument that African issues should take center stage at the peace conference that would ultimately determine the postwar settlement. Some reactions also emphasized the interracial composition of the committee, claiming not only that the views of African Americans on the postwar future of Africa should be taken into account but that the committee’s modeling of interracial cooperation provided a reason to take its recommendations seriously. Stokes, for his part, agreed. In a letter to Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University and a prominent conservative internationalist, Stokes claimed that “perhaps the most significant thing about it is that just over a quarter of the membership of the Committee was made up of Negro Americans,” and that, while “some of them may have been rather radical in the past, . . . all took a fine part in our debates with the result that we had a unanimous report.” If Du Bois and Logan could claim credit for pushing the report closer to their views, Stokes could do the same for tempering their more thoroughgoing anticolonialism.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ “Put Africa in Peace, U.S. Urged,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 27, 1942, p. 2; “Committee Suggests U.S. Protect African Interests,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, June 27, 1942, p. 14; “All-American Committee on Africa Formed,” *Chicago Defender*, June 13, 1942, p. 6; “African Problems Committee Releases Names of Members,” *Norfolk*

The report made a significant impact abroad as well, especially in diplomatic circles in the United Kingdom. In early 1943, Stokes's contact at Edinburgh House Press, the British distributor of the report, informed him that there was a "run on the Atlantic Charter volume" and requested a hundred additional copies.⁶⁸ Reactions in the British press foreshadowed the postwar primacy of the United States and took note of the report's views on British colonialism. According to the Manchester *Guardian*, the report showed the world that "colonial questions have definitely passed out of the sphere where they are domestic problems to that in which they are international," acknowledging the dwindling great-power status of the United Kingdom.⁶⁹ At the same time, *Guardian* editors imagined that the United States would serve as a vehicle for the continuation of British policy, arguing that its attempts to "shape a liberal policy for Africa" would represent a "powerful reinforcement of the measures taken or contemplated by the colonial Powers for attacking the acute problem of Africa's poverty."⁷⁰

Stokes contributed to the impression that the committee held a favorable opinion of the methods of British colonial rule in his own publicity tour following the report's release. Despite the criticisms the report had levied against British colonialism, Stokes continued to refer to it positively, even suggesting that it should continue unchanged following the end of the war. In a radio address in January 1943, he insisted—in far stronger terms than his report had used—that "it is manifestly impossible to turn over certain areas in Africa today entirely to the native population."⁷¹ Instead, he claimed, the focus of postwar planners should fall on the extension of "so-called 'indirect rule' through Native chiefs," and on "integrating Native Africans into the

Journal and Guide, June 13, 1942, p. A18. Anson Phelps Stokes to Nicholas Murray Butler, July 17, 1942, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁶⁸ W. A. Bennett to Anson Phelps Stokes, January 7, 1943, folder 1, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁶⁹ "America and Africa," *Manchester Guardian*, September 18, 1942.

⁷⁰ "America and Africa," *Manchester Guardian*, September 18, 1942.

⁷¹ "The Atlantic Charter and Africa," Broadcast by Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, Town Hall on the Air, New York, NY, United Nations Day Program, January 25, 1943, p. 3, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

central administration of every colony.”⁷² In his promotions of the report after its release, Stokes sought to minimize the impact of the more critical evaluation of British colonial rule that Du Bois and others had advanced.

Although the African American press largely celebrated the release of *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, responses in black journals of opinion were mixed. Du Bois took the unusual step of publishing his own review of the report in the journal *Phylon*, which he edited out of Atlanta University. Rehashing his disagreements with Stokes, he criticized the report’s “distinctly pro-British” orientation and claimed it failed to “stress adequately the dangers of the economic exploitation of Africa for the benefit of white nations.”⁷³ Du Bois even published in his review a statement he had originally written for the report itself, in which he condemned the report’s timidity on the question of capital investment in Africa, which was subject to few or none of the controls that it faced in Europe and America. The committee’s decision to omit this suggestion, Du Bois wrote, them “open to blame either for a lack of knowledge or a lack of courage.”⁷⁴ Despite this sharp criticism, Du Bois provided an optimistic final assessment. The report represented, in his view, “by far the best thing on the African problems which has been published in recent years.”⁷⁵

Other black thinkers saw it in a less favorable light. The most biting rebuke came from the Howard University historian Eric Williams. Offering a tongue-in-cheek recitation of the report’s recommendations of gradual turnover of governmental functions to African leaders, reductions in taxation, and improved labor conditions, Williams called attention to its failure to

⁷² “The Atlantic Charter and Africa,” Broadcast by Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, Town Hall on the Air, New York, NY, United Nations Day Program, January 25, 1943, p. 3, folder 4, box 37, Phelps-Stokes Fund Papers.

⁷³ W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Future of Africa,” *Phylon* 3, no. 4 (1942): 436–38, quoted at 436.

⁷⁴ Du Bois, “The Future of Africa,” 437.

⁷⁵ Du Bois, “The Future of Africa,” 437.

challenge what he saw as the fundamental issues of colonial rule: racial segregation and the denial of the franchise. The Trinidadian-born scholar cited his own “by-no-means-negligible acquaintance with the promises of English governments in the past” and “with the realities against which they have been broken,” suggesting that the all-American committee might have benefited from the direct participation and insight of those who had lived under British colonial rule.⁷⁶ The report’s recommendations, couched in the language of trusteeship and reform, failed to meet Williams’s standard for the “radical changes [that] must be made in the condition of the colonial peoples,” and thus represented “just another in a by now very lengthy list of mild palliatives for a desperate disease.”⁷⁷

Another line of criticism focused on the report’s reliance on the Atlantic Charter itself. Merze Tate, a scholar of international relations and the first African American woman to receive a doctoral degree from Oxford, had recently become a colleague of Logan and Williams on the Howard faculty. Tate’s review of the report described the committee’s perspective as both paternalistic and naïve. Tate identified the report with the “temporizing” attitude of “even the most liberal” representatives of European and American elite opinion, which were still in thrall to the ideas of trusteeship and the international mandate.⁷⁸ Brushing past the interracial character of the group and the significant contributions her black colleagues had made to it, Tate linked this judgment of its shortcomings to her broader proclamation that “the white man is a century behind the colored man in his thinking about civilization.”⁷⁹ Tate’s criticism, however, stemmed more from an assessment of the Atlantic Charter rooted in power politics than from a

⁷⁶ Eric Williams, “Africa and the Post-War World,” *Journal of Negro Education* 11, no. 4 (October 1942): 535.

⁷⁷ Williams, “Africa and the Post-War World,” 536.

⁷⁸ Merze Tate, “The War Aims of World War I and World War II and Their Relation to the Darker Peoples of the World,” *Journal of Negro Education* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1943): 521–32. See also Barbara D. Savage, “Professor Merze Tate: Diplomatic Historian, Cosmopolitan Woman,” in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, ed. Mia Bay et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 252–70.

⁷⁹ Tate, “War Aims,” 523.

thoroughgoing anticolonialism. The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims failed to understand that “World War II, when considered realistically, is not fought for the Four Freedoms everywhere.”⁸⁰ Instead, “it is a militarist and imperialist struggle for freedom and power—power for some at the expense of others.”⁸¹ The Atlantic Charter’s fourth point, which sought to extend “open door” trade policies to colonial territories, held more relevance to Africans, Tate argued. This plank served as a threat to European powers’ colonial monopolies and an invitation to the greater penetration of the continent by the United States. To Tate, the trade regime that would emerge from the end of the war would reshape the lives of Africans much more than would the charter’s abstract declarations of support for self-determination.

The “Tragic Joke” of the UN Charter

The promulgation and reception of *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint* took place amidst rapidly changing developments in the policy planning apparatus of the U.S. state. The State Department devoted resources to making plans for the design of a new permanent world organization to replace the League of Nations in 1941—much earlier than did the British or other Allied powers.⁸² In the early years of the war, U.S. postwar planners entertained several visions of extending and internationalizing the mandates system. One vision proposed the placement of all colonies under a strengthened mandate system administered by regional councils, with U.S. representation. Another fell along the lines of the proposals of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, for “direct international administration” of

⁸⁰ Tate, “War Aims,” 523.

⁸¹ Tate, “War Aims,” 523.

⁸² Mazower, *Governing the World*, 198–99.

current mandates.⁸³ For advocates of a world organization and international trusteeship in the Roosevelt administration, the internationalization and eventual end of colonial rule meant new and unfettered access for American goods and, potentially, American military bases.⁸⁴

By the later years of the war, however, American postwar planners determined that the U.S. could achieve these goals without international administration of British and French colonies. The incorporation of these powers, with their colonial empires largely intact, in an American-led world order would suffice.⁸⁵ Between 1943 and 1945, American officials' desire to assert the principle of national self-determination in world affairs became decoupled from the actual institutional machinery of trusteeship under the new United Nations Organization.⁸⁶ Although Roosevelt proposed an international mandate for French Indochina, by and large he rejected proposals to place British and French colonies and mandates under international administration.⁸⁷ His administration further denied the possibility of an international administration for the mandates and colonies of the Axis powers.⁸⁸ By the time of the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco conferences, where the international community decided upon the structure of the United Nations, the State Department had coalesced around the continuation of mandates only where they already existed, under the new language of trusteeship, combined with a new commitment by the imperial powers to allow an open door economic policy. At the San

⁸³ Stephen Wertheim, "Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy in World War II" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2015), 221.

⁸⁴ Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), especially 121–286; Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 347–73.

⁸⁵ Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, "The United States and the Liquidation of British Empire in Tropical Africa, 1941–1951," in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization, 1940–1960*, ed. Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 31–55; Hearden, *Architects of Globalism*, 93–118.

⁸⁶ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 231.

⁸⁷ Fred E. Pollock and Warren F. Kimball, "'In Search of Monsters to Destroy': Roosevelt and Colonialism," in Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, 1991), 127–57.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals*, 34–35.

Francisco conference, Russian and Chinese representatives pushed for a strong declaration of European powers' commitments to preparing their colonies for independence. The United States, backing the British, successfully advanced a weaker declaration, one that required colonial powers only to "develop self-government" in their dependent territories.⁸⁹

Black internationalists who had contributed to the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace aims witnessed this policy trajectory with dismay. The absence of discussion of colonial issues at the Dumbarton Oaks conference in the spring of 1944 suggested to W. E. B. Du Bois that U.S. postwar planners saw the question of colonialism as insignificant to the question of securing international peace after the war, a position that ignored his and others' insight that both world wars were in large part the consequence of imperial rivalries and competition over the labor and resources of the colonial world.⁹⁰ The neglect of colonial issues at Dumbarton Oaks influenced both Du Bois's writing, particularly his 1944 book *Color and Democracy*, and his advocacy. In particular, this neglect motivated his decision to convene a conference of people of color in Harlem in the days before the San Francisco conference of 1945. For Rayford Logan, the staunchest advocate of international trusteeship both on the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims and in the broader constellation of black internationalism during the war, the trajectory of American policy toward trusteeship at the end of the war generated a deep pessimism about the potentialities of international institutions by the end of 1945.

Divisions between Anson Phelps Stokes and some of the members of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, especially Du Bois, again came to the surface in the later years of the war. Although Stokes continued to advocate on behalf of the proposals in *The Atlantic*

⁸⁹ Hearden, *Architects of Globalism*, 117–18.

⁹⁰ Du Bois first and most powerfully made this argument in "The African Roots of War," *The Atlantic Monthly* 115 (May 1915): 707–714.

Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint within governmental circles as the war progressed, he backed away from its already weak proposals for international trusteeship as it became clear that the State Department would not support them. During the Dumbarton Oaks conference, Stokes proposed to Undersecretary of State Edward Stettinius only that an “experiment be made in one or two suitable areas of international mandate,” rather than as a policy for all colonies and mandates formerly under Axis control, as the committee had proposed.⁹¹ As Du Bois and Walter White prepared to represent the NAACP at the San Francisco conference several months later, Stokes criticized their strident assertions of the necessity for African representation at the conference and their forthright condemnation of colonialism itself. While he claimed to be “delighted” that the two of them—along with Mary McLeod Bethune, whom he did not mention—had been appointed the official consultants of the NAACP to the conference, he worried that their pre-conference statements, particularly one in which they claimed that “colonialism has caused poverty, illiteracy, and disease,” were unproductive and cast colonial rule in too harsh a light.⁹² As leading black thinkers coalesced around a vision of colonialism as systemic economic exploitation, Stokes continued to see it as a legitimate form of government, one which could have better or worse examples.

Competing understandings of the relationship between European colonial rule and American racism continued to shape debates in the later years of the war. The philosopher and literary scholar Alain Locke, a colleague of Logan’s and Bunche’s at Howard University, questioned whether the American record of segregation and discrimination would undercut the

⁹¹ Anson Phelps Stokes to Edward Stettinius, September 15, 1944, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, <<http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b104-i093>>.

⁹² Anson Phelps Stokes to Walter White, April 19, 1945, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, <<http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b108-i004>>.

ability of the United States to play a role in dismantling European imperial rule. Locke's formulation of the problem, however, was distinct. Despite self-conceptions of the United States as a progressive force in world affairs, Locke argued in a speech in Los Angeles in 1944, "at the peace table we may be labeled imperialists."⁹³ Locke suggested that American credibility would be questioned not because of the litany of overseas territories the United States controlled—territories whose numbers grew substantially over the course of the war—but because of its domestic racial frontiers. To be persuasive, American advocacy in a world body for the "abolishment of imperialism" had to include a defense against the accusation that "we have internal colonies, as well as ghettos legal and illegal, and that the empires of the world have only the external, colonial analogue of what we have at home."⁹⁴ Locke did not explain what he meant by "internal colonies," or on what criteria he judged American racial dynamics comparable to colonial ones. Given his reference to "ghettos legal and illegal" as an additional rather than a coextensive problem, it is safe to assume that Locke did not intend his idea of the "internal colony" to refer to urban areas defined by enforced segregation, concentrated poverty, and violence.⁹⁵ The Southern black belt was not his referent either. Locke had never been a supporter of the Communist Party or its proposal for "self-determination in the black belt," and, moreover, his speech aimed explicitly to correct the impression that American racism was principally a Southern problem.⁹⁶ Locke's conception of the United States' "internal colonies" thus related

⁹³ Alain Locke, "Race in the Present World Crisis," August 7, 1944, p. 3, folder 15, box 164–125, Alain LeRoy Locke Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

⁹⁴ Alain Locke, "Race in the Present World Crisis," August 7, 1944, p. 3, folder 15, box 164–125, Alain LeRoy Locke Papers.

⁹⁵ Locke's use of the word "ghetto" here is also of note, as the 1940s were a moment of transition in the word's semantic associations. Although it would not fully become associated with majority-black urban spaces of poverty until the 1960s, this shift was underway by the 1940s. See Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016).

⁹⁶ On the "black belt thesis," see Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978). On the Communist Party's attempts to organize black workers in the South in the

primarily to his perception of the cultural subordination of African Americans and other racial minorities within the United States as a whole.

Policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic similarly puzzled over the nature of American colonialism as they sought to redesign the global order. Within the State Department, Isaiah Bowman raised the question of “internal colonies” with respect to Russia. While the Soviet expansion went under a “different label” than the British Empire, Bowman insisted, “Russia is actually one of the major colonial powers; its colonies are merely internal rather than external.”⁹⁷ The fact that the Soviet Union “merely draws a line around its Empire and governs its colonies as part of a single country” made it more difficult for the U.S. to assert that principles of trusteeship and the open door should apply.⁹⁸ The Soviet Union had no more reason to agree “than it would have to ask us to subscribe to certain principles relating to the Osage Indians.”⁹⁹ As State Department officials worked under the pressures of a changing wartime situation to devise the U.S. position on trusteeship, they acknowledged that the governance of “internal colonies” might raise issues they did not want to confront.

The difficulty of constructing a universal principle of trusteeship that could reasonably apply to all colonies, internal or external, led Bowman to adopt a more pro-British position within the State Department. Leo Pasvolsky, the head of the postwar planning staff, took up the challenge that Bowman’s discussion of “internal colonies” posed. To Pasvolsky, “the test of colonial status is a test of unequal rights.”¹⁰⁰ States like the Soviet Union were “composite” states, with some inhabitants under colonial status and others under the rights of full citizenship.

period before the Second World War, see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

⁹⁷ Isaiah Bowman quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 239.

⁹⁸ Isaiah Bowman quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 239.

⁹⁹ Isaiah Bowman quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 239.

¹⁰⁰ Leo Pasvolsky quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 241.

Such “composite” states—a category which, though Pasvolsky left it unstated, would necessarily include the United States as well—could nonetheless productively participate in the construction of norms and institutions of trusteeship for “outside areas.”¹⁰¹ The State Department thus drew a sharp distinction between internal and external colonialism. The existence of the former offered no barriers to a country’s attempts to mitigate the latter.

British officials disagreed. American overseas colonies and internal racial divisions called into question, in their view, American attempts to place British colonies under trusteeship arrangements. In early 1945, Arthur Creech-Jones, a Labour Party member and Chairman of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, argued in a meeting with Ralph Bunche that proposals for international oversight of British colonies would never win over colonial subjects, because they sensed that such arrangements merely provided a smokescreen for the extension of U.S. power. The establishment of U.S. bases in the Caribbean during the war and the “fear which the West Indian peoples had of the American racial attitude” only exacerbated the problem.¹⁰² More broadly, Creech-Jones questioned the legitimacy of a trusteeship system that did not extend to the United States’ own territories, wondering whether the proposed council “would deal with the American dependencies as well as those of other countries and whether it would concern itself with the problems of the ‘fifteen million dependent peoples in the United States proper’ [meaning] the American Negro.”¹⁰³ Creech-Jones’s linkages between Jim Crow and colonial rule sought to emphasize American double standards in an attempt to preserve Europeans’ colonial prerogatives.

¹⁰¹ Leo Pasvolsky quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 241.

¹⁰² Ralph Bunche to Benjamin Gerig, January 7, 1945, pp. 1–2, folder 16, box 4, Benjamin Gerig Papers, Library of Congress. On Creech-Jones and the British Labour Party’s orientation toward the colonies, see Partha Sarathi Gupta, *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement, 1914–1964* (London: MacMillan, 1975).

¹⁰³ Ralph Bunche to Benjamin Gerig, January 7, 1945, p. 1, folder 16, box 4, Benjamin Gerig Papers.

Bunche's response to Creech-Jones exemplified the stark shift in his political perspective that the war, and his deepening participation in the state policymaking apparatus, had produced. Recruited into the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in 1941, as he served on the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, Bunche transferred to the State Department at the end of 1943. His frustrations with OSS grew over the course of the war, as his recommendations that the office needed to devise more specific plans for dealing with the British and French colonies in Africa after the end of the war went unheeded.¹⁰⁴ Although OSS opposed Bunche's transfer, Leo Pasvolosky, who wanted someone with Bunche's expertise in African affairs on his postwar planning staff, successfully recruited him to State.¹⁰⁵ Within a few months, Bunche moved to the group responsible for the State Department planning on the question of trusteeship, which Benjamin Gerig, an expert on the League of Nations mandates, headed.¹⁰⁶

Bunche's rapid move to the center of the policymaking apparatus both reflected and required an alteration in his views regarding the nature of colonialism and its relation to the U.S. racial order. In his 1936 book *A World View of Race*, Bunche had examined racial conflict as a "device" of economic elites in "world economic and political conflict."¹⁰⁷ Bunche theorized American racism as a particular instance within a global pattern of imperial rule. He recognized that "the American Negro is an exceptional case in that he has been torn away from his origins and dumped into an entirely new milieu in which he finds himself a minority group," unlike African colonial subjects, who are members of a racial majority struggling against the minority

¹⁰⁴ Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, 107–108.

¹⁰⁵ Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, 109–110.

¹⁰⁶ Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, 111.

¹⁰⁷ Ralph J. Bunche, *A World View of Race* (Washington, DC: The Associates in Negro Folk Education, 1936), 25. For further analysis of this work in the context of Bunche's evolving views on the concept of race, see Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 162–74.

rule of elite Europeans.¹⁰⁸ But he further argued that British and French colonial officials too often make the “mistake of assuming that the African and his problems are so essentially different from the problems confronting the peoples of the Western World.”¹⁰⁹ Both Africans, African Americans, the “peasants of work-men of England and France of a century ago,” and “other workers and peasants today in less advanced countries” encountered the same problems of capitalist development.¹¹⁰ By 1940, although the language of an overriding, global class conflict had dropped out of Bunche’s analysis, he continued to understand colonialism as a structure of antidemocratic rule that paralleled that which faced African Americans, arguing that “the African in Africa . . . is much like the Negro in this country with regard to democracy,” and that “his future, as ours, depends upon the preservation and extension of the democratic concepts throughout the world.”¹¹¹

By the later years of the war, however, Bunche abandoned this comparative perspective. By the time of his meeting with Arthur Creech-Jones, Bunche saw the arguments of the British official about U.S. colonial rule and Jim Crow simply as a political tactic to deflect the attention of postwar planners away from the question of placing British colonies under trusteeship. Yet his response extended beyond the immediate context to deny altogether a connection between the questions of colonial and African American freedom. In a speech at the World Affairs Council a month after his meeting with Creech-Jones, Bunche insisted that “there is utterly no connection between the two problems.”¹¹² No longer envisioning imperialism as a global system of class exploitation or antidemocratic rule, Bunche now considered the relationship solely in terms of

¹⁰⁸ Bunche, *A World View of Race*, 49.

¹⁰⁹ Bunche, *A World View of Race*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Bunche, *A World View of Race*, 63.

¹¹¹ Ralph Bunche, “Africa and the Current World Conflict,” *Negro History Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (October 1940): 13.

¹¹² Ralph Bunche, “The International Implications of Far Eastern Colonial Problems,” quoted in Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, 115.

nationalist aspiration. Here he saw a vast distance between African Americans and Africans. Translating his longstanding disapproval of cultural nationalist and economic separatist currents in U.S. black politics into a denial of their existence, he insisted that “unlike the colonial peoples, the American Negro, who is culturally American, has no nationalist and no separatist ambitions.”¹¹³ Bunche came to embrace an exceptionalist understanding of American politics as defined by the gradual extension of liberal freedoms.

In 1944, W. E. B. Du Bois took on a new post with the NAACP focused on its anticolonial efforts. This return to an organization he had helped to found but from which he had resigned ten years earlier, over a conflict with the board, reflected Du Bois’s complex positionality in the 1940s.¹¹⁴ He was, at once, a respected scholar, an elder of the civil rights movement, and, due to his recent engagements with Marxism, a figure increasingly on the edges of influential black organizations.¹¹⁵ From this position, he observed the conferences at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco where the outlines of the new order came into view. Du Bois assessed the institutional arrangements of the postwar world in his 1945 book *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace*. Written over the course of a few months in the summer and fall of 1944, during and after Dumbarton Oaks, the book represented Du Bois’s attempt to assess the possibilities for a lasting peace and for the spread of democracy after the Second World War.¹¹⁶ In *Color and Democracy*, Du Bois offered sharp criticisms of the ideal of trusteeship, while continuing to promote an internationalized system of mandatory rule as the best institutional option to bring colonialism to an end. In his most thorough consideration of the

¹¹³ Bunche, “The International Implications of Far Eastern Colonial Problems,” quoted in Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche*, 115.

¹¹⁴ David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), 497–99.

¹¹⁵ Porter, *The Problem of the Future World*, 103–44.

¹¹⁶ Gerald Horne, “Introduction,” in W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa and Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 238.

looming postwar world, Du Bois exemplified the paradoxical nature of African Americans' embrace of international trusteeship during the war.

A critique of labor exploitation lay at the center of Du Bois's assessment of colonial rule in *Color and Democracy*. His declaration that "colonies are the slums of the world" reflected his belief that the labor policies of the colonial powers produced conditions of poverty and crime.¹¹⁷ While he acknowledged that residents of colonies differed in terms of race and culture from their rulers in a way that residents of municipal slums, who "shar[ed] the blood and the culture of [their] city," did not, he nonetheless envisioned a continuum in the forms of rule enacted by metropolitan elites within Western cities and in international economic life.¹¹⁸ As he had written in his groundbreaking sociological study *The Philadelphia Negro* forty-five years earlier, "a slum is not a simple fact, it is a symptom, and . . . to know the removable causes of the Negro slums of Philadelphia requires a study that takes one far from the slum districts."¹¹⁹ Following his own advice, Du Bois looked to the labor policies of the European powers to explain the underdevelopment of the colonies.

The labor exploitation that Du Bois identified as the driving force behind colonial expansion had significant consequences for democracy, both within the West and outside of it. For one, competition over colonial territory and resources had been at the root of both European wars of the twentieth century, Du Bois argued, and the militarism and authoritarianism generated by these wars diminished the progress of democratic institutions within the West. More importantly, however, the imperial system had made political life in Europe and the United

¹¹⁷ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945) in Du Bois, *The World and Africa and Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace*, 253.

¹¹⁸ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 253.

¹¹⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 15.

States dependent on the absence of democracy elsewhere. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Du Bois predicted, the working classes of Europe and the U.S. “are going to demand certain costly social improvements from their governments” and the “temptation to recoup and balance the financial burden” of these improvements by increasing the exploitation of the colonies “is going to increase decidedly.”¹²⁰ Thus the “working people of the civilized world may thus be largely induced to put their political power behind imperialism, and democracy in Europe and America will continue to impede and nullify democracy in Asia and Africa.”¹²¹ Du Bois did not see the presence of democracy in Europe and the United States as naturally dependent on its absence elsewhere. Rather, he argued that it was the incomplete nature of democracy in Europe and the U.S. that forced these goals into a relationship of opposition. Claiming that “more important than political democracy is industrial democracy,” Du Bois commented that the disfranchisement of black workers within labor unions in the U.S. and the acceptance by European social democratic parties of differential labor standards for citizens and colonial subjects had created similar sets of antagonisms within the European and American working classes.¹²² Therefore, to Du Bois, one vector of the struggle to end colonialism must take place within the European and American polities. Only through the achievement of a racially inclusive “industrial democracy” would the economic incentive for continuing exploitation of the colonial world be diminished.

Du Bois continued to see international institutions as the other central arena in which this struggle must take place. The Dumbarton Oaks Conference of 1944, which laid the foundations for the United Nations and served as a precursor to the San Francisco Conference of 1945, not

¹²⁰ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 276.

¹²¹ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 276.

¹²² Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 300.

only failed to resolve the colonial problem but, in Du Bois's mind, exacerbated it. The Allied powers' decision to refuse direct representation to the inhabitants of colonies and mandate territories at the conference, and instead to declare the colonial rulers as the representatives of their subjects, struck Du Bois as a clear breach of the idea that the war was fought to "establish democracy as a way of life": "it is both intolerable in ethics and dangerous in statecraft to allow, for instance, 8,000,000 Belgians to represent 10,000,000 Congolese in the new international without giving these black folk any voice even to complain."¹²³ Moreover, the absence of any mention of the Mandates Commission at Dumbarton Oaks suggested to Du Bois that territory captured from Germany and Italy during the war would become "integral parts of present empires"—the exact scenario Du Bois had attempted to prevent in his work on the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims.¹²⁴ It appeared to Du Bois that attempts to form a new United Nations would not only fail in their unique "chance to come to grips with the colonial problems," but might even take a step back from the existing institutions of the League of Nations.¹²⁵

Du Bois's postwar vision continued to be influenced by the mandates system. Trusteeship, as an ideal of colonial governance, appeared bankrupt. Du Bois argued that there was "little to prove" that colonial powers aimed at the eventual independence or self-government of their colonies under any circumstances.¹²⁶ The widely hailed British policy of "Indirect Rule," he claimed, has not operated as a "school of self-government for the natives," but continued to grant the "controlling interests of industry and foreign investment" undue political sway in the colonies.¹²⁷ Du Bois, however, retained his faith in the potential of internationalization. Although

¹²³ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 249.

¹²⁴ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 251.

¹²⁵ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 251.

¹²⁶ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 263.

¹²⁷ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 264.

international administration, never as much a priority for Du Bois as it was for Logan, seemed unrealistic, his other demands derived directly from the debates that dominated the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims: representation for “all colonial peoples” at the United Nations alongside “free nations”; a reorganized mandates commission with the power to investigate and report; and the right to oral petition.¹²⁸ Although his assessment of the problem of colonialism focused on its political economy of exploitation, his proposed solutions rested on political representation and the possibility of moral suasion based on the investigations the new international body might carry out. It remained unclear how such proposals would weaken the incentives for the exploitation of colonial labor.

The disappointment that Du Bois and many of his allies felt after Dumbarton Oaks influenced his decision to organize an ambitious “international colonial conference” in Harlem several weeks before the opening of the San Francisco Conference on International Organization.¹²⁹ Sponsored by the NAACP and held at the Schomburg Library in Harlem, the goal of the conference was to produce a unified statement of the aims of colonial peoples for the new organization. Yet existing divisions between African and African American delegates over the desirability of trusteeship again came to the surface.¹³⁰ Whereas Du Bois, recapitulating his proposal from the Phelps-Stokes Fund Committee, proposed a revitalized and empowered Mandates Commission to oversee colonies that changed hands during the war, Francis Nkrumah insisted that this solution “implic[d] sell-out to the colonial powers.”¹³¹ Ultimately, Nkrumah and others pushing for independence were persuaded to accept international trusteeship as a potential

¹²⁸ Du Bois, *Color and Democracy*, 328.

¹²⁹ Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963*, 500.

¹³⁰ Marika Sherwood, “‘There Is No New Deal for the Blackman in San Francisco’: African Attempts to Influence the Founding Conference of the United Nations, April–July, 1945,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29, no. 1 (1996): 71–94.

¹³¹ Quoted in Porter, *The Problem of the Future World*, 90.

second-best option.¹³² The resolution adopted by the group called for a “colonial commission” consisting of “all permanent members of the UN Security Council, additional representatives elected by the General Assembly, and members who represent directly the several broad groups of colonial peoples” to oversee trust territories.¹³³ On the eve of the San Francisco Conference, anticolonial advocates continued to put faith in the potential for greater internationalization of trusteeship arrangements to produce decolonization at the right pace.

The trajectory of Rayford Logan’s thought over the course of the final three years of the war exemplifies the disillusionment of many black activists with the ultimate shape of postwar international institutions. Shortly after the publication of *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, Logan met with Benjamin Gerig, the State Department’s principal planner on the question of trusteeship. Gerig, a former official in the secretariat of the League of Nations and the author of an important study of the mandates system, saw trusteeship primarily as a means to break down commercial barriers and restrictive tariffs.¹³⁴ While Gerig supported Logan’s proposal to include representation for African Americans and colonial subjects on whatever replaced the Permanent Mandates Commission, he was attached to the structure and principles of the old mandates system. He pushed the subcommittee he led within the State Department towards national administration.¹³⁵

Logan left his meeting with Gerig in December of 1942 with the impression that “it is not going to be easy for the U.S. to tell Britain to get out of her colonies,” and that therefore the State Department was “leaning toward national administration.”¹³⁶ Logan’s attempt to lobby Gerig to

¹³² Rayford Logan Diary, April 11, 1945, folder 4, box 4, Rayford W. Logan Papers, Library of Congress.

¹³³ Quoted in Porter, *The Problem of the Future World*, 90.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Gerig, *The Open Door and the Mandates System: A Study of Economic Equality before and since the Establishment of the Mandates System* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930); Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 91–92.

¹³⁵ Rayford Logan Diary, May 26, 1942, November 20, 1942, and December 2, 1942, folder 7, box 3, Rayford W. Logan Papers, Library of Congress; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 183–84.

¹³⁶ Rayford Logan Diary, December 2, 1942, folder 7, box 3, Rayford W. Logan Papers, Library of Congress.

embrace the international administration of trust territories drew on a line of comparison between the Jim Crow regime in the American South and colonial governance. He argued that national administration in the mandates system replicated the problems of the federal system of the United States, where “in practically every case in which the States have been given the administration of funds provided by the national government, Negroes in the Southern states have not received equitable benefits.”¹³⁷ In the same way that federalism enabled Jim Crow, Logan argued, national administration of trust territories would enable a continuation of the most exploitative forms of colonial rule, as “the mandatory will find means of ignoring the ideals of the system and of circumventing the efforts of the supervisory body to assure those ideals.”¹³⁸

At the Harlem conference organized by Du Bois near the close of the war, Logan advanced a vision for international trusteeship containing four central elements. First, he proposed a stronger inspection power and argued the international trusteeship agency should have the ability to report on conditions within trust areas. Second was the right to oral petition. While the ability of individuals and groups to petition the League on grievances arising from mandate administration represented one of the most promising elements of the League, Logan believed that the requirement that such petitions be delivered in writing ensured that they would only ever represent the concerns of the elite and the middle class. The right to oral petition was thus connected, in Logan’s mind, to the importance of African labor interests. Third, Logan was concerned that colonized peoples have direct representation within the international trusteeship authority. Fourth and finally, Logan argued for the “open door” in “trade, investment and

¹³⁷ Rayford Logan to Benjamin Gerig, “Memorandum on a Proposed New Mandate System,” quoted in Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilmma of the African-American Intellectual*, 169.

¹³⁸ Rayford Logan to Benjamin Gerig, “Memorandum on a Proposed New Mandate System,” quoted in Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilmma of the African-American Intellectual*, 169.

development” in trusteeship territories.¹³⁹ This plank reflected Logan’s desire to end colonial monopolies in their mandated territories, which drove up the prices of consumer goods for colonial peoples. At the same time, it indicated his alignment with a major priority of American foreign policy.¹⁴⁰

Logan closed his speech at the Harlem conference by repeating his argument that international trusteeship offered the most likely way to achieve political self-determination quickly. He further endorsed the view that decolonization did not necessarily entail the establishment of independent nation-states in territories defined by colonial borders. Rather, he argued, “as soon as practicable, eventual independence, self-government, autonomy, dominion status, or first class citizenship, should be granted.”¹⁴¹ A variety of different political outcomes, from national independence, to equal status within a colonial federation, to equal citizenship within a combined metropolitan-colonial polity, seemed potentially appealing to Logan at the end of the war. This flexibility places Logan’s advocacy for international trusteeship in the context of a complex set of crosscurrents across the transnational black public sphere, as visions of regional and imperial federation and other non-national paths to decolonization circulated widely in black anticolonial circles in the 1940s.¹⁴² Logan’s wartime anticolonialism focused

¹³⁹ George S. Schuyler, “Logan Gives Plan for Colonial Trusteeship,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 14, 1945.

¹⁴⁰ On the centrality of the “open door” in postwar planning during the war, see Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*; Smith, *American Empire*; and Perry Anderson, *American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers* (London: Verso, 2015).

¹⁴¹ Schuyler, “Logan Gives Plan for Colonial Trusteeship.”

¹⁴² Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014). For Anglo-American elites’ ideas of regional and world federation, see Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). Several scholars question the viability of such federalist visions. see Samuel Moyn, “Fantasies of Federalism,” *Dissent* 62, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 145–51; and Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

more intently on reconfiguring the relation between colonizer and colonized on terms of equality than on ensuring national independence.

After urging an anticolonial audience to support delayed independence in Harlem, Logan traveled to San Francisco to observe and lobby statesmen at the Conference on International Organization. Logan had a dual role at the San Francisco Conference. Although officially he attended in his capacity as a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, unofficially he served to aid his NAACP colleagues W. E. B. Du Bois, Walter White, and Mary McLeod Bethune.¹⁴³ These three prominent leaders of the organization were brought to San Francisco in an official capacity to serve as consultant-observers to the U.S. delegation, but their suggestions were often ignored by the delegation's more conservative members, including arch-segregationist Senator Tom Connally of Texas.¹⁴⁴ Although Logan sought to help his NAACP colleagues maneuver through the conference and attempted to use his international contacts to forge connections between African American observers and official delegates of black-governed states, he saw in the conference's demographic makeup a warning sign of the postwar order's failure to take the concerns of colonial peoples seriously.¹⁴⁵ Writing in the *Courier*, he commented:

Two-thirds of the people represented at this conference are the darker peoples of the world. But nine-tenths of the delegates here are white.

One-half of the peoples represented at this conference are women. But there are hardly a dozen women among the several hundred delegates.

Most of the peoples of the world are workers. But there isn't a pair of overalls among the delegates.

The "Little Man" just isn't here.

¹⁴³ Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 139.

¹⁴⁴ Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 129–32.

¹⁴⁵ Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 139.

The “People’s Peace” will be white, male, and middle-class if the other conferences at the end of this war are similarly constituted.¹⁴⁶

Logan emphasized that a politics of representation of the underprivileged could force global bodies to consider their interests more seriously. Other black thinkers considering the international organization saw little to gain from such representation. Merze Tate, for instance, not only doubted that African American representation would be granted at San Francisco but claimed that little benefit would come from such a presence. “Between having our interests represented by one of our Negro leaders or by the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, I would choose the latter,” she proclaimed, not solely for the strategic benefit of presenting a united American front at the postwar peace conference but also because of Roosevelt’s “symbolic embodiment of the democratic ideal.”¹⁴⁷

Logan’s pessimistic response to the UN Charter resembled his commentary on the San Francisco Conference. He recognized some improvements in the “objectives” of trusteeship in comparison to the mandate system, in particular its rejection of the three-tiered system of A, B, and C mandates, with its clear racial hierarchy built into its understanding of peoples’ capacity for self-government. Even here, however, Logan saw only an ambiguous advancement. He expressed appreciation for the fact that the UN system “makes no invidious distinction between ‘white’ peoples who would soon be ready for independence and the Negro and Negroid peoples for whom independence or self-government was not specified,” but at the same time noticed “that practically all the peoples envisaged by the Charter for trust areas are Negroes or of Negro mixture.”¹⁴⁸ The other principal advance he saw came in the charter’s stated goal of ensuring

¹⁴⁶ Rayford W. Logan, “The ‘Little Man’ Just Isn’t Here,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 5, 1945.

¹⁴⁷ Merze Tate, “Problems of the Peace Settlement and the Postwar World,” n.d., p. 9, folder 15, box 219–12, Merze Tate Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

¹⁴⁸ Rayford Logan, “The System of International Trusteeship,” *Journal of Negro Education* 15, no. 3 (Summer 1946): 286.

“equal treatment in social, economic, and commercial matters,” which he interpreted as a commitment to the “open door” economic policy that he had long advocated in trust territories. This clause of the charter, Logan wrote, “makes the open door swing both ways,” repudiating the British desire for imperial preference in the trust areas.¹⁴⁹ Although Logan saw organized labor as “the best hope for a fuller life for Negroes in independent nations and in dependent areas” in the postwar world, he nonetheless identified imperial preference as a greater problem in the international political economy than the potential unfettered advance of American capital that might result from a liberalized trade system.¹⁵⁰

The improvements Logan saw in the proposed UN as compared to the League, however, were undone by the failure of the Charter to provide for any territories to be governed under an international trusteeship regime. Unlike the League of Nations Covenant, which directly placed German colonies and the former Ottoman empire under mandate administration, the UN left the decision of whether to place existing colonies under trusteeship up to the existing colonial powers. Not only did colonies and protectorates remain in the hands of colonial powers, but “the mandated areas were more and more assimilated to a colonial status.”¹⁵¹ Moreover, the composition of the Trusteeship Council only amplified the voice of the colonial powers: they occupied half the seats on the new Council, a greater proportion than they had on the League’s Permanent Mandates Commission, and their seats were permanent, while the other members of the council were to rotate every three years.¹⁵² The Charter’s vague language further frustrated Logan’s longstanding hopes that the trusteeship body would inspect and report on conditions in

¹⁴⁹ Logan, “The System of International Trusteeship,” 287.

¹⁵⁰ Rayford Logan, *The Negro and the Post-War World: A Primer* (Washington: The Minorities Publishers, 1945), 87–88.

¹⁵¹ Logan, “The System of International Trusteeship,” 291.

¹⁵² Logan, “The System of International Trusteeship,” 293.

trust territories and that it would receive oral petitions.¹⁵³ His negative prognosis for colonial people's welfare and progress toward self-determination after the war relied on the same reasoning as did his critique of the San Francisco Conference. The failure to provide for political representation of colonized peoples at the conference where the UN's structure took shape ensured these peoples' interests would not be reflected in the new institution. In the final assessment, the Charter represented a "tragic joke."¹⁵⁴

Some of Logan's criticisms of the Charter came before U.S. policymakers when Du Bois testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 11, 1945. Testifying without the approval of NAACP President Walter White, Du Bois highlighted several of the critiques Logan made in his coverage of the conference, most notably the absence of representatives from the colonial world and the weakness of the Charter's provisions for oral petition and international trusteeship.¹⁵⁵ More important than the weakness of the Trusteeship Council's mechanisms was its narrow extent, as it covered "probably less than 25 million people of the 750 million colonial people."¹⁵⁶ Du Bois quixotically argued the Senate should stake its approval of the UN Charter—which members of the State Department had been instrumental in drafting—on the creation of an additional body, an "international colonial commission . . . on which colonial peoples shall have representation; with power to investigate the facts concerning colonies and areas not under

¹⁵³ Logan was particularly critical of Ralph Bunche for failing to ensure that a clear provision enabling the Trusteeship Council to report on colonial conditions be included. Rayford Logan Diary, May 8, 1945, folder 4, box 4, Rayford W. Logan Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁵⁴ Logan used this language many times to describe the UN Charter, including in "The System of International Trusteeship," 297.

¹⁵⁵ Testimony of W. E. B. Du Bois, ca. July 11, 1945, series 1A, General Correspondence, 1877–1965, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst, <<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b108-i336>>.

¹⁵⁶ Testimony of W. E. B. Du Bois, ca. July 11, 1945, series 1A, General Correspondence, 1877–1965, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst, <<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b108-i336>>.

mandat[e].”¹⁵⁷ Only an international body with authority of some kind, whether administrative or not, over all colonies could provide the necessary means for colonialism’s eventual destruction. Ralph Bunche, in response to Du Bois’s testimony, argued that the charter’s existing provisions for inspection and report were all that was necessary to produce such an outcome, further highlighting the gap that had emerged between their positions.¹⁵⁸

An overwhelming pessimism ran through Rayford Logan’s reflections on the international order at the close of the war. While this pessimism would not keep Logan from continuing to attempt to shape the course of international institutions—he later went to work for UNESCO—his wartime vision of replacing colonial rule with enlightened international administration had come to naught. The international situation of 1945 seemed to present apocalyptic prospects. Failing to foresee the striking success that nationalist anticolonial movements would have in the years to follow, Logan declared that “the atomic bomb has rendered futile the right of revolution proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence.”¹⁵⁹ At the same time, the confluence of events in 1945—the development of nuclear weapons, the looming conflict between the U.S. and USSR, and the failure of the international community to design an institution that looked toward an anticolonial future—burst open Logan’s horizon of expectations. Logan looked toward the possibility that colonial freedom might be seized from below, even if more violently than he would prefer:

Is it too utterly fantastic to conceive that black men will one day perfect an atomic bomb? No, it is not. I can picture an international conference, not more than twenty-five years from now, in which a black delegate will rise and declare: “Gentlemen: five hundred years is long enough for any people to be held in bondage, degraded, spit upon, exploited, disfranchised, segregated, lynched. Here is the formula for a home-manufactured atomic

¹⁵⁷ Testimony of W. E. B. Du Bois, ca. July 11, 1945, series 1A, General Correspondence, 1877–1965, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst, <<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b108-i336>>.

¹⁵⁸ Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals*, 67.

¹⁵⁹ Logan, *The Negro and the Post-War World*, 88.

bomb. Give us liberty, or we will give you death.”¹⁶⁰

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The ultimate shape of the postwar trusteeship system contained elements of continuity and change from the League of Nations Mandate System it replaced. It retained the mandate system’s central mechanisms of producing annual reports and hearing petitions, but it abandoned the League’s forthright civilizational rhetoric and foregrounded the political development of the peoples of trust territories toward self-rule more directly than the League had.¹⁶¹ The Trusteeship Council’s place within the structure of the UN further made it more responsive to the will of states other than European imperial powers, as nations administering trust territories had to report to the General Assembly rather than the Security Council.¹⁶² Yet to Rayford Logan and W. E. B. Du Bois, the Trusteeship Council’s most significant and troubling similarity to the mandate system was its status as a body of mere oversight, rather than administration. The continuation of European and American administration of trust territories, combined with the failure to provide adequate representation of colonial peoples on the Council, made the new system of trusteeship at best a partial improvement on the mandate system. At worst, it represented a stopgap measure that would only briefly delay a coming global race war.¹⁶³ The dream of internationalizing colonial rule in order to end it had failed. African American

¹⁶⁰ Logan, *The Negro and the Post-War World*, 88.

¹⁶¹ Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 398–99.

¹⁶² Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 399. The United States carved out an exception to this rule for the territories it conquered in the Pacific during the Second World War, which the U.S. administered as “strategic trusts.” For this category of territory, the U.S. reported to the Security Council, where it had veto power. Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 401; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 250–53. On the greater responsiveness of the General Assembly than the Security Council to the claims of the decolonizing world, see Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 149–89.

¹⁶³ On the persistent belief in the possibility of race war, see Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, especially 121–28; and Nikhil Pal Singh, *Race and America’s Long War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), especially 35–73.

internationalists in the postwar world would have to look beyond the institutions they had endeavored so earnestly to reform.

The arguments for international trusteeship advanced in the early part of the war by Logan and Du Bois—and by the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s Committee on Africa, the War on Peace Aims to which they contributed—reflected their skepticism about the nation-state as the inevitable or desirable outcome that would follow colonial rule. Their disappointment, even as early as 1945, in the institutional design of the postwar international order caused them to question their faith in international governance as a means to mitigate colonial exploitation. Their argument that political self-determination required a certain level of economic development could lead in several different directions. It implied, on the one hand, that economic modernization, rather than political independence, should take priority in the colonial world, and that the United States, among other Western powers, might play a productive role in that process. In this way, wartime black internationalism set the stage for the postwar embrace of modernization theory—an underexamined influence on African American politics in the postwar period, as the next chapter will explore. On the other hand, the wartime focus of this group of African American internationalists on colonialism’s exploitative economic effects, and their argument that genuine political sovereignty required an end to such exploitation, prefigured more radical arguments that would surface in the postwar period. In the heat of policy debates about the details of the postwar order, Logan and Du Bois in particular suggested that external control over labor and resources, whether held by a foreign government or a multinational corporation, undermined true self-determination. The wartime writings and advocacy of black internationalists involved with the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims thus opened

space for critical assessments of informal colonialism and neocolonialism that would become central to black Americans' postwar understandings of the international system.

Chapter 2

Facing the Neocolonial Future: Black Internationalism and Development Politics from Point Four to Volta

The end of the Second World War marked a turning point in the global racial order.¹ If Nazism discredited biological ideas of race and made official doctrines of racial hierarchy ideologically suspect, efforts by European powers to hold onto their colonial empires alongside the global extension of U.S. power required the reformulation of racial common sense. The war debts, devastated economies, and exhausted populations of Western Europe raised anticolonial hopes worldwide. Intercolonial contacts through soldiering and war work spurred new organizing against empire across the globe.² The course of the war in the Pacific, especially the relative ease of Japanese conquests of European colonies, suggested to many global observers that colonized populations had no desire to fight for their colonial rulers. Meanwhile, Japanese imperialism and Japan's alliance with Hitler complicated longstanding Pan-Asianist—and African American—support for Japan as a counterbalancing force to Europe.³

Yet the war was not a simple stimulus to antiracist and anticolonial struggle. It also prompted the remaking of a new ideological regime of racial thinking based on models of development and modernization. Japanese imperialism was retroactively understood in official American circles as the aggression of a primitive people, which would be overcome through a period of tutelage under U.S. occupation.⁴ Meanwhile, portraying the U.S. and European colonial

¹ Howard Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

² Andrew Friedman, "US Empire, World War 2 and the Racialising of Labour," *Race & Class* 58, no. 4 (2017): 23–38.

³ Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

⁴ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

powers as modernizing forces in racial terms required rethinking the relationship between Nazism, colonialism, and Jim Crow. While many African Americans and many of their counterparts in the colonial world interpreted Nazism as an extreme manifestation of forms of imperial racism that predominated throughout the Euro-American West, the dominant understanding after the war proposed that Nazism was a historically unique form of evil, disconnected from other forms of racial domination.⁵ Identifying the victorious Allied powers with anti-racism similarly contested emergent analyses of European fascism as an outgrowth of imperialism.⁶ The Comintern's decision to subordinate criticisms of imperialism to the alliance against fascism during the Popular Front period unwittingly abetted this effort, even as the Soviet Union used the incontestable evidence of American and West European racism to gain support from the colonial world.⁷

This new regime of racial developmentalism emerged alongside a new focus on the economic development of the non-industrialized world by politicians, activists, and intellectuals. One of the first to predict the emergence of development as a central concern in American foreign policy was the sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox. In 1948, Cox surveyed the postwar economic landscape and concluded that the economic impoverishment of colonial and trust territories would quickly become a primary strategic problem for the United States. Born in 1901 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Cox was sent by his father to Chicago in 1919, part of a wave of Caribbean migrants that mingled with the first Great Migration of African Americans from the predominantly rural South. After receiving his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of

⁵ Penny M. Von Eschen, "Civil Rights and World War II in a Global Frame: Shape-Shifting Racial Formations and the U.S. Encounter with European and Japanese Colonialism," in *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Kevin M. Kruse and Stephen Tuck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (1955; New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001).

⁷ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 119–37.

Chicago in 1938, Cox turned his writings in a direction more in keeping with his socialist politics. He saw that the economic devastation of the war would induce the United States to take on a central role in the economic reconstruction not only of Europe but of the whole world. Acknowledging the central role of capital assistance to Europe during the war, he wrote that “the American ruling class, in its own interest, must make lend-lease permanent, even though it is disguised in the form of loans or outright gifts to ‘suffering humanity.’”⁸ In the postwar period, this assistance must flow “all over the world to strengthen the position of the various national bourgeoisies as the common people gather about them to exact an accounting of the use of their resources.” To Cox, these loans and gifts signaled a broader goal: they meant that “the United States is already fighting its own proletarian revolution on foreign battle fields.”⁹

Months after Cox made this prediction, President Harry Truman proclaimed in his 1949 inaugural address, “we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.”¹⁰ Although the direct material aid the United States could supply was “limited,” the country would contribute its “imponderable resources in technical knowledge” and would “foster capital investment in areas needing development.”¹¹ The “bold new program” Truman announced came to be known as Point Four, as it was the fourth and final foreign policy priority announced in Truman’s speech, after support for the United Nations, continued contributions to European recovery under the Marshall Plan, and an endorsement of a collective security agreement in the North Atlantic. Point Four announced that the United States would,

⁸ Oliver Cromwell Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (1948; New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959), 580.

⁹ Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race*, 580–81.

¹⁰ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman,” January 20, 1949, The American Presidency Project, <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-4>>.

¹¹ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

indeed, extend foreign aid all over the world. Cox, it seemed, was prescient, even as his interpretation of American actions was inevitably contested.

The problems that Point Four proposed to solve were not dissimilar from those that animated much black internationalist thought and activism during the Second World War. The Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace Aims, as discussed in chapter 1, had argued that the economic deprivation of colonial areas was a coequal problem as their political unfreedom. Many African American thinkers identified European imperial rule as the primary cause of this deprivation—unlike Truman, who described “hunger, misery, and despair” as only the “ancient enemies” of mankind.¹² Nonetheless, black internationalists’ argument that economic advancement was necessary in order to make possible true political self-determination seemed to align with the new administration’s emphasis on contributing to the economic growth of both independent states and colonial territories. On the other hand, many black activists and writers were also sympathetic to Cox’s warning that the methods the United States would use to rectify this deprivation would only entrench greater inequality within what Truman called the “underdeveloped areas.” The emphasis on colonial labor by figures like Du Bois and Logan throughout the wartime debates had revealed a deep suspicion of Western interventions that could exacerbate the predicament of the millions of people toiling under colonial, or newly postcolonial, rule.

In the years following the Second World War, the longstanding concerns of African American internationalists with the economic deprivation produced by colonialism were increasingly articulated with the discourse of development.¹³ The rise to prominence of

¹² “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

¹³ The link between this strand in black internationalist thought and activism and the discourse of development and modernization is an example of the kind of contingent linkage that exemplifies Stuart Hall’s understanding of “articulation.” To Hall, “an articulation is . . . the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different

development is widely acknowledged as an important aspect of the international politics of the postwar period. Recent scholarship has traced the longer history of international development, locating its origins in nineteenth-century notions of the “civilizing mission,” European colonial governance schemes, and early twentieth-century American efforts at “race development.”¹⁴ Prewar American efforts at agricultural modernization, especially the program of rural electrification undertaken by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) during the New Deal, both influenced later U.S. development policy in the decolonizing world and inspired the national development plans of numerous postcolonial leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana.¹⁵ Soviet development efforts evoked admiration from progressive American observers in the 1920s and 1930s, and after the Second World War the U.S.S.R. competed with the U.S. not only as a provider of foreign aid but as a developmental model in the postcolonial world.¹⁶ In the pivotal 1940s, European colonial governments adopted development as an official policy goal, as Britain and France responded to strikes and riots in their African colonies instigated by depression and war by seeking to reframe labor unrest as a component of a broader problem of

elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, absolute, or determined for all time.” Hall describes his “theory of articulation” as “both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects.” See Lawrence Grossberg, ed., “On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), 141–42.

¹⁴ Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); M. P. Cowen and R. W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London: Routledge, 1996); Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

development and welfare.¹⁷ Although these earlier origins call into question the idea that the “invention of development” occurred only after the Second World War, the postwar period was nonetheless marked by an increasing concern for development across the social sciences and its emergence as a major priority for U.S. foreign policymakers, UN officials, and anticolonial movements in Asia and Africa.¹⁸

The turn to development was not simply imposed by late-colonial governments, the United States, or international institutions. Development was also a language of claim-making from below. Labor unions and anticolonial activists in British- and French-controlled territories in Africa appealed to the developmental mission of the colonial powers in their attempts to win higher wages, greater political autonomy, and larger shares of the resources of their empires.¹⁹ The Asian-African conference at Bandung in 1955 contained a developmental agenda alongside its anticolonial and anti-racist one.²⁰ The predominantly Asian states in attendance emphasized that they could take on the role of providers of technical assistance to Africa, proposing an alternative to Western-led development but replicating the idea that independence in much of Africa still required a period of preparation. Although rarely discussed in comparison with the

¹⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in British and French Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Zed Books, 1997); Amy L. S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945–1965* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006); Corinna Unger, *International Development: A Postwar History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Sara Lorenzini, *Global Development: A Cold War History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019)

¹⁹ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*; Frederick Cooper, “Development, Modernization, and the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization: The Examples of British and French Africa,” in *The Ends of European Colonial Empires*, ed. Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo and António Costa Pinto (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 15–50; Mamadou Diouf, “Senegalese Development: From Mass Mobilization to Technocratic Elitism,” trans. Molly Roth and Frederick Cooper, in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Randall M. Packard and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 291–319; Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²⁰ Frank Gerits, “Bandung as the Call for a Better Development Project: U.S., British, French, and Gold Coast Perceptions of the Afro-Asian Conference (1955),” *Cold War History* 16, no. 3 (2016): 255–72.

conference's rejection of racism and "colonialism in all its manifestations," the development agenda of Bandung took highest priority in the conference's final communiqué.²¹ The prominence of proposals for South-South technical assistance and other forms of development aid in the discussions at Bandung illustrate the centrality of development language to the diplomatic projects of postcolonial states in the 1950s, even those remembered as oppositional to the dominant modes of politics in the West.

Bandung marks only one example of how, as historian David Engerman argues, "development politics" formed a new sphere of political action beginning in the late 1940s. Development politics was not defined by top-down projects of power projection, but was equally characterized by the pursuit of material interests by disadvantaged groups in the name of development.²² Development politics involved not only states but advocacy organizations, activists, and intellectuals. African American activists and thinkers were deeply involved the world of development politics from a variety of different vantage points. Through the NAACP and other organizations, black Americans sought to shape the foreign aid policy of the most powerful donor nation, the United States. Working alongside transnational anticolonial movements, moreover, black Americans engaged with colonial development policymaking in European capitals and, ultimately, played important roles in development debates in newly decolonized states.

African Americans' engagements with development politics—and with the burgeoning body of thought known as modernization theory that arose alongside it—have been subject to a

²¹ "Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference of Bandung," in *Asia-Africa Speak from Bandung*, ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (Djakarta: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1955), 161–69.

²² David Engerman, "Development Politics and the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 1 (2017): 1–19.

double occlusion in the historical literature.²³ Historical scholarship on black internationalism in the early postwar period tends to focus on the ways in which Cold War anticommunism narrowed black Americans' anticolonial ambitions or, in a more cultural vein, examines the place of Africa in the formation of new diasporic subjectivities.²⁴ Meanwhile, scholarship on modernization theory and development policy almost uniformly ignores African American activists and thinkers.²⁵ As Robert Vitalis has argued, debates about racial uplift in the first half of the twentieth century constitute a "lost world of development theory."²⁶ While Vitalis and a few others have plumbed the first half of the twentieth century for forgotten links between the world of development and African American thought and activism, the postwar story remains largely untold.²⁷ As I argue, however, examining African American engagements with development thought and policy in the years following the Second World War helps to center the political economy of the decolonizing world in narratives of Cold War black internationalism

²³ Daniel Immerwahr usefully shows that not all who sought development—meaning a rise in living standards and economic productivity—wanted the "package" of social transformations that theorists of modernization put forth. See Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). On modernization as a "package," see Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113–50.

²⁴ Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945–1995* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Carol Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals: The NAACP and the Struggle for Colonial Liberation, 1941–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

²⁵ Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Robert Vitalis, "The Lost World of Development Theory," *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (December 2016): 1158–62.

²⁷ Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*; Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa*; Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Jessica Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

and reveals subtle but important shifts in the way leading African American internationalists conceived of the relationship between economic development and national self-determination.

This chapter traces African American internationalists' engagements with development politics in three arenas: U.S. foreign aid policy in the era of Point Four; British colonial development policy; and the anticolonial movement in the Gold Coast that would come to govern newly independent Ghana in 1957. In all three of these spheres, I argue, black internationalist development politics were characterized by what I call an *anticipatory critique of neocolonialism*. From debates about U.S. foreign aid policy in the late 1940s to debates about the speed and scope of Ghanaian industrialization in the late 1950s, the possibility of colonized territories—especially those in Africa—gaining political sovereignty while remaining in a state of economic dependency loomed large in black political thought. This anticipatory critique of neocolonialism, which had animated the support for international trusteeship among some black thinkers during the Second World War, led in multiple, sometimes conflicting directions in debates about postcolonial development. On the one hand, the fear that the U.S. and European powers would continue to exploit the decolonizing world in the aftermath of formal independence presented a prime reason for suspicion of development projects that called for an influx of Western capital. On the other hand, recognition of the economic weakness of newly independent states could also point toward a desire for development aid, on the grounds that it would help build the state capacity necessary for newly independent nation-states to hold power in the international system.

Concerns about the economic viability of postcolonial societies and the prospects for undoing the legacy of colonial exploitation were shared across the Cold War divides that split the black freedom movement in the late 1940s. While anticommunist repression fractured an

impressive left-liberal alliance among black internationalists that had developed over the course of the 1930s and 1940s, figures on both sides of the Cold War split articulated their longstanding attempts to combat colonial exploitation with the new language of development politics. Moreover, although anticommunism inflected debates about policies like the Point Four Program, so too did divergent ideas of whether political economy should be governed at the national or the international scale, ideas that did not always neatly fit the categories of the Cold War. In the late 1940s, prominent black internationalists, including Rayford Logan, embraced a vision of development as a means to overcome the limitations that faced postcolonial polities attempting to engage in political-economic planning at the scale of the nation. By the late 1950s, however, the disappointments of the United States' Point Four program and the colonial development plans of European powers, combined with the rising fortunes of nationalist leaders in Africa and the Caribbean, led many black internationalists to vest their developmental hopes in projects of national state-building in the postcolonial world.

Point Four, the NAACP, and the False Promise of American Development Politics

The origins of U.S. development aid are well established ground in the historical literature on American foreign relations.²⁸ The U.S. granted economic aid in a variety of forms prior to the Second World War, and the immediate postwar years saw the massive expansion of American economic aid in the form of the Marshall Plan. Yet this assistance was geared toward reconstruction, not development, and it was geographically limited to Europe, which suggested

²⁸ Among others, see Thomas G. Paterson, "Foreign Aid under Wraps: The Point Four Program," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 56, no. 2 (Winter 1972–1973): 119–126; Sergei Y. Shenin, *The United States and the Third World: The Origins of Postwar Relations and the Point Four Program (1949–1953)* (Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 1999); Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*; Amanda Kay McVety, *Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Aid Policy in Ethiopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Stephen Macekura, "The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development," *Political Science Quarterly* 128, no. 1 (May 2013): 127–60.

to many in the Global South that the United States, despite its rhetorical commitment to anticolonialism, was placing its unparalleled economic might behind the colonial powers.²⁹ The Point Four program, announced in Truman's 1949 inaugural address, made the economic development of countries outside Europe an official priority of the U.S. government for the first time.

As Truman prepared his inaugural address after his unexpected victory in the 1948 presidential election, he hoped to make the speech, as he told one adviser, "a kind of democratic manifesto . . . addressed to the people of the world rather than the American people."³⁰ The continuation of support for the UN, the Marshall Plan, and military alliances like NATO had been discussed at length in the campaign, and Truman decided early on to make these policy positions central to the speech. But he also wanted to be able to announce a new initiative that would surprise his audience, and he directed his staff to come up with something that would fit the bill. Ultimately, a junior official in the State Department Office of Public Affairs, Benjamin Hardy, came forward with a proposal. Hardy had become enamored of technical assistance projects when he worked in Brazil for Nelson Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs from 1944 to 1946, and he saw the speech as an opportunity to make technical assistance central to U.S. foreign policy.³¹ Although Hardy's superiors in the State Department rejected proposals to include technical assistance in the inaugural address without a concrete plan in place, he brought the idea to the White House anyway, with a memorandum titled, "Use of U.S. Technological Resources as a Weapon in the Struggle with International Communism."³² Hardy's memo gained unwitting reinforcement from Walter Salant, a member of the Council of

²⁹ Paterson, "Point Four under Wraps," 119.

³⁰ Quoted in Shenin, *The United States and the Third World*, 8.

³¹ Shenin, *The United States and the Third World*, 8.

³² Paterson, "Point Four under Wraps," 121.

Economic Advisers with expertise in international economics. In December 1948, Salant told White House aide David Lloyd that the Marshall Plan would be insufficient on its own to enable European countries to buy U.S. imports. He argued that the best way to supplement European economies was to send capital to underdeveloped areas, which would enable them to purchase goods from Europe, thus further stimulating European growth and, as a consequence, American exports.³³ Amid widespread concern about a postwar recession, this argument, rooted in the emerging paradigm of growth economics, was as compelling as the Cold War arguments that drove Hardy's memo.³⁴ To the State Department's dismay, Truman and his staff embraced the proposals for technical assistance and capital export, bringing them together in a single vision of development aid. They settled on this proposal as the pivotal fourth point among his foreign policy priorities to be announced in the inaugural.

Point Four was the last item to make it into the speech and the policy plank with the least amount of support in the State Department. Yet Truman announced the new commitment to foreign aid with dramatic language. After quickly enumerating his first three proposals—support for the UN, the continuation of the Marshall Plan, and a commitment to NATO—he declared, “we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.”³⁵ Although the direct material aid the United States could supply was “limited,” the U.S. would contribute its “imponderable resources in technical knowledge” and would further “foster capital investment in areas needing development.”³⁶ These efforts would require the “cooperation of

³³ McVety, *Enlightened Aid*, 155.

³⁴ On the emergence of growth economics, see H. W. Arndt, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Growth: A Study in Contemporary Thought* (London: Longman Cheshire, 1978).

³⁵ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

³⁶ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

business, private capital, agriculture, and labor in this country,” and would, Truman hoped, “be a cooperative enterprise in which all nations work together through the United Nations and its specialized agencies whenever practicable.” Wary of the possibility that encouraging American investments in “underdeveloped” areas would simply be seen as a form of imperialism, Truman insisted that “the old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans.” Instead, U.S. development aid abroad would seek to enact the “concepts of democratic fair-dealing” Truman hoped to instantiate at home.³⁷

In spite of its prominent placement in the inaugural address, Point Four did not jump to the front of the policy agenda. The State Department tried to keep the program “under wraps,” while the White House soon signaled that it was a low priority for them as well, failing even to make a request for Point Four legislation in time for Congress to consider it before adjourning for the year.³⁸ Truman’s initial request of \$45 million was a frankly paltry sum for “two-thirds of the world,” especially in comparison with the \$342 million for the reconstruction of occupied Germany, or the \$2.25 billion provided for the Marshall Plan.³⁹ Yet when Congress finally considered the program in the 1950 session, legislators, especially House Republicans, focused on reducing the appropriation. Ultimately, the Point Four program was written into law as Title IV of the Foreign Economic Assistance Act of 1950, authorizing \$35 million for the technical assistance program, a compromise between the \$45 million Truman originally suggested and the \$25 million passed in the House version of the bill.⁴⁰ Advancing an ideology of self-help in areas newly defined as “underdeveloped,” officials emphasized that the program would rely not on government funding but on private investment, philanthropy, and international organizations to

³⁷ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

³⁸ Paterson, “Foreign Aid Under Wraps,” 122.

³⁹ Paterson, “Foreign Aid Under Wraps,” 122.

⁴⁰ Shenin, *The United States and the Third World*, 64.

finance development projects.⁴¹ The “bold new program” of Truman’s speech was, in material terms, not particularly bold—nor, in its resemblance to smaller, existing programs like the Institute for Inter-American Affairs, particularly new.⁴² But what began as Truman’s hope for a surprising idea had become bureaucratic reality, with the act establishing the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) within the State Department to administer technical assistance to what would soon become thirty-five nations and territories.

By the time of the 1952 election, development aid to territories beyond Europe was a well-established element of U.S. foreign policy, although a number of events had tied it more closely and directly to the Cold War. The State Department, following the articulation of a Cold War strategy of massive military buildup in NSC-68, and partially in response to the Soviet nuclear tests in 1949 and, especially, the Korean War that began in 1950, sought to align foreign aid with U.S. military priorities.⁴³ The Mutual Security Act of 1951 both expanded the foreign aid budget—from \$35 million to \$211 million—and asserted that such aid should be directed toward helping countries “develop their resources in the interest of their security and independence and the national interest of the United States.”⁴⁴ While Eisenhower opposed Point Four in the 1952 campaign, and some opposition to the program remained among Republican opponents of both foreign aid and the military buildup, by the time the Eisenhower administration took office the place of foreign economic assistance in the U.S. foreign policy arsenal was secure.⁴⁵ While the institutional home of foreign aid shifted throughout the 1950s—from the narrowly defined TCA to the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), which had

⁴¹ Macekura, “The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development,” 143.

⁴² Macekura, “The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development,” 131–38.

⁴³ Curt Cardwell, *NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁴ Mutual Security Act of 1951, Pub. L. 82-165, 65 Stat. 373 (1951), 373.

⁴⁵ Shenin, *The United States and the Third World*, 102.

responsibility for both military and economic assistance, and eventually into the Agency for International Development in 1961—developmentalist thinking only increased in importance in American debates about the future of colonial and postcolonial societies.

The ideological impact of Point Four was more significant than its material effects. As historian Stephen Macekura argues, Point Four “gave institutional expression to a protean ideology of international development” within the federal government.⁴⁶ It further generated a potent language of claim-making and opened up a new sphere of political advocacy for civil society groups and international activists. Among African Americans, the first reactions to the Point Four proposal were surprisingly positive. After the inclusion of a civil rights plank in the Democratic Party’s platform in 1948 helped garner a level of black support for Truman that proved decisive in his victory, the absence of any mention of civil rights in his inaugural address might have been cause for concern.⁴⁷ The black press, however, largely embraced the speech. They linked Point Four both to the national party’s newfound support for civil rights and to the employment prospects of black Americans amid postwar reconversion.⁴⁸ The NAACP, meanwhile, agreed to support the proposal and sought to play an active role in the shaping of a still-unfinished policy. To lead their advocacy efforts on the program, the NAACP turned to Rayford Logan, whom the organization had hired as its foreign affairs consultant in 1948.

Many of the concerns that Logan had brought to the center of black internationalist attention during the Second World War inflected the NAACP’s priorities on Point Four. Logan’s beliefs in the importance of personnel, his emphasis on protections for colonial labor, and his

⁴⁶ Macekura, “The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development,” 130.

⁴⁷ Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), 88–129.

⁴⁸ “The President’s World Program,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 29, 1949, p. 14; “Our Opinions: The Inaugural Address,” *Chicago Defender*, February 5, 1949, p. 6.

desire to see representation of both trust territories and formal colonies in decision-making processes represented points of commonality between Logan's wartime advocacy and the NAACP's engagements with development politics in the early Cold War. Logan began to advance these priorities at the Conference on National Organizations on American Foreign Policy in March 1949, two months after Truman's inaugural address.⁴⁹ This conference also included Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State Willard Thorp, and the future Secretary of State Dean Rusk, as well as numerous representatives from organized labor, business, and civil society organizations.

Logan's message for these administration officials reflected the priorities he had carried over from the war. First, questions of personnel remained as central to his vision of development programs as they had been to his unrealized hopes for the UN. He urged that "extreme care should be exercised in the selection of the personnel who would [be] sent out," in order to avoid the program getting "bogged down because of the superior attitude of many Americans toward the people of the country they were supposed to be helping."⁵⁰ Even better, in Logan's mind, would be for the United States to train local experts rather than to send in its own technicians. Beyond personnel, Logan brought up another issue that he had long considered of primary importance: specific protections for colonial labor in the formulation of development programs. Envisioning economic development not solely as the more efficient exploitation of resources but as the building of institutions to ensure improved labor practices, Logan argued that union organizers and labor leaders were among the most important groups of people the United States

⁴⁹ For an account of the NAACP's advocacy related to Point Four that stresses the organization's anticolonialism but does not engage deeply with opposition to the policy or with the politics of development more broadly, see Anderson, *Bourgeois Radicals*, 268–82.

⁵⁰ Rayford Logan to Walter White, March 21, 1949, "Logan, Rayford, 1948–49" folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP, Library of Congress.

could send as part of its proposed program of “technical assistance.” Logan proposed that “since the economic improvement of these areas required the creation and development of strong indigenous trade unions, members of organized labor be sent out for the express purpose of achieving this end.”⁵¹

The NAACP’s emphasis on labor ran counter to the policy’s trajectory within the administration. Shortly after introducing Point Four, Truman made clear that private capital, not public expenditures, would have to fund the bulk of the program. Business leaders strongly opposed any public funding for development aid, fearing that it would add to their tax burden. They cast public spending on development as an extension to the international sphere of a New Deal state they already opposed at home. Although some capitalists embraced the prospect of new sources of natural resources and labor that Point Four promised, most were hesitant about placing investment capital toward development projects.⁵² Concerns about the nationalization of property, labor legislation in recipient countries, and foreign exchange restrictions ran through business leaders’ conceptions of the investment climate of the “underdeveloped areas.”⁵³ Even investment guarantees by the United States’ Export-Import Bank, which were added to the program in 1951, did little to stimulate private capital.⁵⁴ The response of American business was lukewarm at best to Point Four, even without an emphasis on labor protections; with it, the support of business would have been out of the question. Even American labor unions, amid the anticommunist pressures of the early Cold War, were less inclined to advocate strongly for labor protections and the building of labor unions in the developing world as central features of the

⁵¹ Rayford Logan to Walter White, March 21, 1949, “Logan, Rayford, 1948–49” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

⁵² “Point IV,” *Fortune* (February, 1950), 89–96, 177–82.

⁵³ Paterson, “Foreign Aid under Wraps,” 123–24.

⁵⁴ Paterson, “Foreign Aid under Wraps,” 123–24.

American development project. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), under the pressure of the Second Red Scare and immediately following its expulsion of eleven Communist-led unions, argued that anticommunism was the primary reason for the program's importance. Far from incorporating a message of support for labor in developing countries, CIO publications argued that Point Four could be "good business because it creates markets for our products."⁵⁵ The postwar diminution of labor internationalism meant that labor protections and organizing assistance for workers in underdeveloped areas went unmentioned in the CIO's national commentary on Point Four. Alongside the hesitancy of business to support Point Four in any form, this position left Logan and the NAACP with few allies in their effort to make colonial labor a focus of the program.⁵⁶

The third issue Logan made central to the NAACP's advocacy on Point Four also reflected a longstanding principle of his vision of world order, namely, his emphasis on representation for the inhabitants of both mandated and colonized territories in the institutions of global governance. He emphasized that the divide between formally independent nations and areas still under colonial rule posed a problem for Point Four's stated intention to offer technical assistance across the "underdeveloped" world. Because "independent underdeveloped regions are [...] free to request aid and capital investment," whereas "the dependent underdeveloped areas, obviously, may receive help and private capital only if the possessing countries make the request," the continuation of European sovereignty had the potential to entrench new forms of

⁵⁵ Congress of Industrial Organizations, Department of Education and Research, "Point 4: Helping People to Help Themselves," *Economic Outlook* 12, no. 11 (November 1951): 81–88. Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998); Robert W. Cherny, William Issel, and Kiernan Walsh Taylor, eds., *American Labor and the Cold War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

⁵⁶ George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Victor I. Silverman, *Imagining Internationalism in American and British Labor, 1939–49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

inequality between colonized and independent nations in the “underdeveloped” world.⁵⁷ Still hesitant about national independence, however, Logan went on to argue that the best solution to this problem was the granting of associate membership for dependent areas in the specialized agencies of the UN—UNESCO, the WHO, and the ILO—which were taking on development projects themselves. For associate membership to have a meaningful effect on the economic fortunes of the colonized, Logan argued, the majority of the delegates must be from the indigenous populations. Otherwise, colonial powers would simply be gaining greater power in international bodies through their colonies. Logan’s goal of gaining representation for the colonized in international institutions was thus translated into the world of postwar development politics. If true political sovereignty still depended on economic development, greater political representation in international society offered a means of achieving both aims.

Logan’s combination of a wariness of immediate national independence alongside a condemnation of European colonial rule reflected a broader set of hopes that the NAACP and some of its interlocutors invested in development politics. The positive potential they saw in Point Four was closely linked to their vision of U.S.-led development as a means to internationalize political-economic governance in the postwar world. In this understanding, development aid, though provided by wealthier nations to poorer ones, was imagined as the property of the world as a whole.

A variety of liberal and social-democratic interest groups articulated versions of this vision at a conference on Point Four in October 1949 hosted by the Post-War World Council. Founded by Socialist Party presidential candidate Norman Thomas as the Keep America Out of War Committee, this organization was renamed following Pearl Harbor and operated until

⁵⁷ Rayford W. Logan, “Bold New Program or Old Imperialism? Truman’s ‘Point Four’ an Enigma,” *Socialist Call*, May 13, 1949.

Thomas fell into ill health in 1967, focusing its energies on nuclear disarmament, anti-discrimination campaigns, and peace activism.⁵⁸ Their conference on Point Four brought together numerous important figures from activist and lobbying organizations on both sides of the Cold War divide. Among its fifty-one participants were ACLU director Roger Baldwin, peace activist Lenore Marshall, and pacifist and labor organizer A. J. Muste, along with staunch Cold Warriors Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Karl Wittfogel. Logan attended as the representative for the NAACP. Also among the attendees was Harold Isaacs, then an associate editor of *Newsweek*, who would later become a member of the MIT's Center for International Studies—an important home of modernization theory—and a controversial white interlocutor for black Americans' understandings of decolonization and relation to the African continent.⁵⁹

A number of the attendees posed the continuation of colonialism and the rise of anticolonial nationalism as equivalent problems for international development. James Warburg, a banker and former adviser to Franklin Roosevelt, articulated this perspective in the conference's opening address.⁶⁰ If the uneven political status in the “developing” world, ranging from trusteeship arrangements to dependencies to outright colonies, posed bureaucratic challenges to development, anticolonial nationalism posed the potentially greater problem of “making international or regional planning acceptable to the peoples and governments of countries in which newly acquired independence makes nationalism the predominant sentiment.”⁶¹ To

⁵⁸ Raymond F. Gregory, *Norman Thomas: The Great Dissenter* (New York: Algora, 2008), 227–36.

⁵⁹ Rayford W. Logan to Roy Wilkins, October 31, 1949, “Logan, Rayford, 1948–49” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

⁶⁰ Warburg was also a member of the United World Federalists (UWF), and the world federalist impulse was strong among the members of Thomas's organization. Stringfellow Barr, another member of the Postwar World Council's coordinating committee, both served on the University of Chicago's Committee to Frame a World Constitution and directed an organization called the Foundation for World Government, which funded the publication of eight pamphlets in support of Point Four, including Harold Isaacs' *Two-Thirds of the World*. For more on the UWF and the Chicago Committee, see Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*, 168–208.

⁶¹ James Warburg, “The ‘Point Four’ Program: Paper Presented before Post War World Council,” October 29, 1949, “Point IV Program” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

Warburg, the “newly acquired” nationalism among the peoples of the “underdeveloped areas” stood not as an ideology that could promote development, but as an obstacle to be overcome.⁶²

Even the more stridently anticolonial Isaacs argued that anticolonial *nationalism* was a dead end, particularly on the economic front. The scope of the problem of underdevelopment, combined with the economic interdependence of the postwar world, made the “old framework of mutually jealous national sovereignties” untenable, just as it rendered laissez-faire economics obsolete.⁶³ “It is a cruel paradox,” Isaacs argued, “for the emergent peoples of Asia and Africa that nationalism is triumphing when nationalism, as such, is bankrupt; each is setting out to build a new national political economy when national political economy, as such, is a major obstacle in the way of human growth.”⁶⁴ Political economy must be organized at an international scale, with the input of the decolonizing world and the expertise of American technicians. Anticolonial nationalism was understandable and likely unavoidable, in Isaacs’s eyes, but the scope and scale of underdevelopment required that nationalism be transcended and sovereignty be placed, ultimately, in the international sphere. “The colonies becoming nations must become at once more than nations,” he claimed, “or else be thrust back upon themselves and be doomed to frustration that will produce monstrosities greater even than the Russian police state.”⁶⁵ Isaacs, a former Trotskyite and supporter of the Communist faction in the Chinese civil war when he lived in China during the 1930s, revealed not only his turn toward an anticommunist posture amidst the pressures of the Cold War but also his vision of a post-national future.⁶⁶ Without an attempt

⁶² Warburg, “The ‘Point Four’ Program,” October 29, 1949, “Point IV Program” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

⁶³ Harold Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World: Problems of a New Approach to the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Institute, 1950), 40.

⁶⁴ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 45.

⁶⁵ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 48.

⁶⁶ Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Revised Edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951); Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics*, 145–48.

to become “more than nations,” the decolonizing world would fail to realize the promise development politics held.

The vision of U.S. development aid as a means to achieve an internationalized political economy differed substantially from the contemporaneous effort of what historian Quinn Slobodian labels the “Geneva School of neoliberalism” to use international organizations to protect capital from the democratic will of various nations.⁶⁷ Whereas those figures, including Friedrich Hayek and Gottfried Haberler, sought to place global economic management in the hands of international organizations in order to “encase” the rights of capital from democratic decision-making, the international economic order imagined by those who invested such hopes in Point Four was welfarist in nature, with redistributive mechanisms and strong protections for the rights of labor.⁶⁸

To Isaacs, for example, not only were nationalism and laissez-faire capitalism both obsolete, they were ideologically entwined. Liberal capitalism arose alongside the nation-state form in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth, both the interdependence of the world and the scope of the problem of underdevelopment—a problem affecting “two-thirds of the world”—demanded the creation of what Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal would later term a “welfare world.”⁶⁹ “Our real political affinities abroad,” Isaacs wrote, “lie with those who, like most of us, go along with the general idea of the welfare state dedicated to the broadest possible welfare for the largest possible number.”⁷⁰ This belief influenced his identification of more concrete problems with the Point Four program as it stood. Truman’s emphasis on private capital as the

⁶⁷ Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 7–13.

⁶⁸ Slobodian, *Globalists*, 13.

⁶⁹ Gunnar Myrdal, *Rich Lands and Poor: The Road to World Prosperity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958). For a sustained analysis of Myrdal’s version of this idea, see Samuel Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 89–118.

⁷⁰ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 58.

predominant source of development funding, which only became more pronounced after opposition to the program arose in Congress, would generate suspicions in the countries for which aid was intended, not only because of their Western sources, but because of the profit motive. Leaders of newly independent states “want to attract foreign capital and at the same time they want to protect themselves from it,” and, Isaacs thought, “they are right on both counts.”⁷¹ The only solution was internationally directed, publicly controlled development aid.

A striking feature of the hopes invested in Point Four by the attendees of the Post-War World Council conference was their belief that American development aid had the potential to transcend the nation’s Cold War policy footing. This belief was sharply at odds with the framing of Point Four by policymakers themselves: Benjamin Hardy’s original memorandum proposing the program was titled “Use of U.S. Technological Resources as a Weapon in the Struggle with International Communism,” and Truman often linked the plan to the growing conflict with the Soviet Union. Some liberals, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., embraced technical assistance for precisely this reason, seeing it as “a weapon which, if properly employed, might outbid all the social ruthlessness of the Communists for support of the people of Asia.”⁷²

Yet most of the circle around the Post-War World Council believed the turn to development might cut against the single-minded focus on the emerging conflict with the Soviet Union. James Warburg argued that Point Four could only succeed if it augured a broader shift in American foreign policy away from the “negative aim of stopping Soviet, or Communist, expansion.”⁷³ While nodding to the Cold War language of Soviet threat, Warburg emphasized

⁷¹ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 40.

⁷² Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (1949; New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 233.

⁷³ Warburg, “The ‘Point Four’ Program,” October 29, 1949, “Point IV Program” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

that “other factors contribute to the sad state of world affairs—factors which have nothing to do with the nature or intentions of the Soviet Union and which would exist if the Communist Manifesto had never been written.”⁷⁴ The economic crisis of postwar Europe and the ongoing breakdown of colonial empires were the larger forces restructuring world order. Isaacs elaborated the attempt to frame Point Four as both more important than the Cold War and at least potentially untainted by it. “Even if there were no Communist Russia, no Cold War,” Isaacs claimed, “we would still have to wrestle with the problems of the underdeveloped countries, of raising the standard of living of two-thirds of the world, of re-shaping the globe out of the ruins of Western empire.”⁷⁵ The way forward was not to vest the developmental hopes of Point Four in a broader Cold War project. Rather, Isaacs innocently imagined, the way to begin solving the problem of underdevelopment was “to get together with a lot of other people and go to work with them as if there were no Cold War at all.”⁷⁶

Rayford Logan, too, saw development politics as a potential means to overcoming the divisions of the Cold War both domestically and internationally. Where he diverged from many of his interlocutors in the development debate was in his justification for supporting a vision of development as a means to internationalize economic governance. While some in the circle of advocacy organizations who mobilized around Point Four imagined that development politics might signify a first step toward federated world government, Logan’s support for Point Four was more closely tied to his fear that colonial territories would not be able to sustain self-government without sufficient economic development. These concerns, which ran along similar lines as those he had emphasized as a member of the Committee on Africa, the War, and Peace

⁷⁴ Warburg, “The ‘Point Four’ Program,” October 29, 1949, “Point IV Program” folder, General Office Files, Papers of the NAACP.

⁷⁵ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 62.

⁷⁶ Isaacs, *Two-Thirds of the World*, 64.

Aims, emphasized the dangers that would face new states with weak economies in the international system, eschewing claims that cultural deprivation had rendered a people “unprepared” for self-government. Logan’s vision for U.S.-led development assistance was thus tied to his longstanding ideas regarding the impossibility of true political sovereignty without economic self-determination.⁷⁷

Black internationalists on the other side of the Cold War divide, however, turned this argument back on the Point Four program itself. Some of these arguments came from the Council on African Affairs (CAA), an organization founded by Paul Robeson and Max Yergan that stood at the leading edge of African American anticolonial advocacy throughout the 1940s.⁷⁸ Anticommunist pressures near the end of the decade caused rifts within the organization. Yergan departed the CAA in 1948, turning away from Communism and embracing wholeheartedly American Cold War priorities.⁷⁹ Logan, who had joined the board of CAA in 1944 to “show that as a Liberal [he] could not be frightened by red-baiting,” also left the organization in support of Yergan, although he consistently refused to denounce Robeson or other black Americans who held affiliations with the organized left.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the CAA skewered Logan’s advocacy for Point Four in their publication *New Africa*, arguing that their former member had put his weight behind a policy that promised nothing but the further extension of colonial economic arrangements under the auspices of American, rather than European, capital.⁸¹ In a speech before the American-Soviet Friendship Committee at Rockland Palace in Harlem several years later, the increasingly Soviet-aligned W. E. B. Du Bois made the same argument. Du Bois described Point

⁷⁷ Rayford W. Logan, “Bold New Program or Old Imperialism? Truman’s ‘Point Four’ an Enigma.”

⁷⁸ Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 17–21.

⁷⁹ Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 115–16; David H. Anthony, *Max Yergan: Race Man, Internationalist, Cold Warrior* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).

⁸⁰ Rayford Logan Diary, November 16, 1947, folder 4, box 4, Rayford W. Logan Papers, Library of Congress; Janken, *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African-American Intellectual*, 192.

⁸¹ “Point Four Realities in Africa,” *New Africa*, Volume 9 (July–August 1949), p. 9.

Four as “an effort to furnish capital and technique to backward countries if the owners of capital are assured traditional power and high profit from low wages and cheap land.”⁸² If Logan and the NAACP hoped U.S. development aid could serve as a means to protect against neocolonial incursions once independence arrived, many black internationalists on the left saw the aid itself as representing just such an incursion.

By 1952, with little progress toward independence on most of the African continent, some African Americans thought that Logan’s fears about what would happen if colonial powers controlled the technical assistance provided to their “dependent underdeveloped areas” were being realized. Horace Cayton, a sociologist and international affairs columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, turned his attention to this failing of the Point Four program. Contrary to Truman’s proclamation that “the old imperialism, exploiting for foreign profit, has no place in our plans,” Cayton saw many of the United States’ foreign investments a close resemblance.⁸³ Cayton focused in particular on investments in territories that remained under colonial control, like the British protectorate of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo.⁸⁴ Drawing on reporting conducted by the British Africanist historian Basil Davidson, Cayton claimed that “technical assistance” made its way into the uranium trade, where U.S. investments through a British holding company wound up in the hands of the Belgian state-run company Union Minière de Haut Katanga. By placing American investments and technical assistance in the hands of colonial governments, and by failing to provide opportunities for input from colonial subjects themselves, the United States ensured that its developmental missions would reinforce rather

⁸² W. E. B. Du Bois, “Do We Want Peace with the Soviet Union?” March 26, 1953, Series 2: Speeches, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst, <<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b203-i027>>

⁸³ “Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman.”

⁸⁴ Basil Davidson, “Cashing in on Old Imperialisms,” *The Nation*, September 13, 1952.

than challenge European powers' political control across Africa. As Cayton wrote, echoing Logan's fears from the beginning of the Point Four program, the continued control of development assistance by colonial powers meant that "it will be very easy for the Belgians or the French or the English to convince this country that it is better for them to rule and that to encourage movements toward self-government on the part of the Africans would be a mistake."⁸⁵ Davidson's verdict, meanwhile, was that "by sheer force of capital [the United States] will find itself the main support, not of a new deal for Africa, but of continuing exploitation."⁸⁶ Those who hoped U.S.-led development aid might point toward a welfare world and might smooth the way to independence, Cayton and Davidson argued, underestimated the ease with which American capital could make peace with arrangements of formal colonial rule.

Debates about Point Four established the question of whether Western capital was a means to avoid the neocolonial trap or the quickest way to fall into it as a crucial fault line among African Americans internationalists and their white interlocutors across a wide swathe of left and liberal opinion. Yet this question looked different depending on one's vantage point, and whether one engaged with development politics from the perspective of donor nations, such as the United States, or from the perspective of potential recipients. For Logan and the NAACP, the appeal of Western development aid rested in its potential to point the way toward the international governance of political economy, especially in colonial and postcolonial territories, with ample input from colonial subjects themselves. For their critics within the United States, these were false hopes to invest in a project that only served to benefit Western interests and, indeed, could easily entrench continuing colonial rule. Black internationalists working abroad,

⁸⁵ Horace Cayton, "We Are Tied, With Cords of Gold, Into British Imperialism Because of Uranium," *Pittsburgh Courier*, September 20, 1952, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Cayton, "We Are Tied, With Cords of Gold, Into British Imperialism Because of Uranium."

however, approached the question of Western capital—and the arena of development politics more broadly—with a different set of priorities. Examining these engagements with British colonial development policy, the Gold Coast independence movement, and, subsequently, the independent government of Ghana, illuminates a vision of development politics centered not on the establishment of international governance of political-economic planning but on the building of economic capacity in national states.

St. Clair Drake, the Padmore Circle, and Late Colonial Development in Britain

In the 1940s, the British government adopted development as a new justification for empire amid the accelerating attacks on imperialism on the world stage, passing a series of Colonial Welfare and Development Acts that provided public funds for development projects in the colonies and announced, for the first time, that economic growth and rising living standards in colonial territories constituted an explicit mission of imperialism.⁸⁷ At the same time, the British capital was home to a transnational circle of black anticolonial activists from Africa and the Caribbean that debated the path of the colonial world to economic development as they organized movements for colonial reform and independence.⁸⁸ One member of this circle was the African American social anthropologist St. Clair Drake, who arrived in Britain in 1946. A scholar and activist whose career bridged several countries and generations, Drake's international connections, and his views of the historical relationship and political obligations linking African-

⁸⁷ Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007), 207–53; Tiyaambe Zeleza, “The Political Economy of British Colonial Development and Welfare in Africa,” *Transafrican Journal of History* 14 (1985): 139–161. The French government embarked on a parallel effort in the 1940s. See Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 277–321.

⁸⁸ Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

descended people across the globe, would influence both the intellectual frameworks and the concrete strategies of important civil rights and Black Power organizations in the 1960s, as we will see in chapter 5. Drake's writings, Pan-African organizing, and service to two states—as, first, an informal adviser to Kwame Nkrumah and, later, a leader of a training program for Peace Corps volunteers in the United States—provide a window on a different side of the connections between African American internationalism and development politics between the Second World War and the early 1960s.

Born in 1911, John Gibbs St. Clair Drake was the son of a father from Barbados and a mother from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. His parents met when Drake's father was a student at Virginia Theological Seminary in Lynchburg. His family—the product of the forced migration of the slave trade and the post-Emancipation migration of Africans from the Caribbean—was among the six million African Americans who moved north during the Great Migration, eventually settling in Pittsburgh. Both the religious radicalism of Southern Baptist preaching and the global black consciousness of the 1920s were among Drake's earliest influences, as his father organized with Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association in the 1920s.⁸⁹ After his parents' divorce in 1924, Drake returned South, eventually enrolling at the historically black Hampton University, where he participated in student strikes and gained his first exposure to the social sciences, conducting research on tenant farming with anthropologist Allison Davis, an important figure in the emerging caste-and-class school of race relations scholarship.⁹⁰ Continuing his political activities throughout the 1930s as an organizer with the American

⁸⁹ Kevin Gaines, "Scholar-Activist St. Clair Drake and Transatlantic World of Black Activism," in *The Other Special Relationship: Race, Rights, and Riots in Britain and the United States*, ed. Robin D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 77.

⁹⁰ Andrew Rosa, "The Routes and Roots of 'Imperium in Imperio': St. Clair Drake, the Formative Years," *American Studies* 52, no. 1 (2012): 49–75. On Davis, see David A. Varel, *The Lost Black Scholar: Resurrecting Allison Davis in American Social Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Friends Service Committee's "Peace Caravans," which traveled around the South advancing the Quaker position on non-violence, Drake moved to Chicago in 1937 to study for his doctorate in anthropology.⁹¹ At Chicago, Drake studied with Lloyd Warner, another leading member of the caste-and-class school, and Robert Redfield, an anthropologist who both influenced and departed from the paradigm of modernization theory that was soon to overtake the American social sciences.

Both the caste-and-class ideas of Davis and Warner and the "alternative" modernization theory of Redfield had significant influences on how Drake viewed the questions of racial inequality, economic development, and social transformation.⁹² According to the classic statement of the caste-and-class school's perspective, a brief article Warner wrote in 1936 in *The American Journal of Sociology*, the American South was defined by a unique accommodation between two competing forms of stratification. A system of "caste" stratification that prohibited intermarriage between black and white southerners and made impossible any mobility from the group marked as inferior into the group marked as superior coexisted alongside a system of class stratification within each group.⁹³ The use of the term "caste" to describe this system of stark racial subordination illustrated the absence of any biological foundation for racial differences, but it also reflected a misleading and thin understanding of the Indian social system to which it made reference.⁹⁴ Although Warner argued that the social and economic progress of African Americans since Emancipation meant that stratification between the caste marked as white and

⁹¹ Andrew Rosa, "'To Make a Better World Tomorrow': St. Clair Drake and the Quakers of Pendle Hill," *Race & Class* 54, no. 1 (2012): 67–90.

⁹² Nicole Sackley, "Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization during the Cold War," *Modern Intellectual History* 9, no. 3 (2012): 565–95.

⁹³ W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 4 (September 1936): 234–37.

⁹⁴ Daniel Immerwahr, "Caste or Colony? Indianizing Race in the United States," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 2 (August 2007): 275–301; Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

that marked as black was no longer complete, the continuing existence of a caste hierarchy distorted class relations and particularly “skewed” the “social position of the upper-class Negro.”⁹⁵ The class position of prosperous African Americans, Warner argued, would lead them to expect social advantages that the caste system continued to deny them.

The caste-and-class school was the dominant sociological paradigm for understanding American race relations in the mid-1940s. Gunnar Myrdal, in the monumental study *An American Dilemma*, both relied heavily on the framing of southern racial hierarchy in terms of caste and claimed that the existence of an egalitarian “American Creed” ensured that the caste system would ultimately be superseded. The sharpest criticisms of the caste-and-class school at the time came from a group of black sociologists who trained at the University of Chicago around the same time as Drake, most notably E. Franklin Frazier and Oliver Cromwell Cox. Frazier argued that the analogy with caste was “essentially static,” underestimating the ways popular pressures contested the system of racial hierarchy and defenders of the status quo had to actively work to protect it.⁹⁶ While the language of caste sought to denaturalize racial hierarchy, it falsely portrayed a system of coercion and oppression as a stable tradition. Cox was even more critical. Cox saw racism as a product of capitalism and imperialist conquest, and he considered the caste-and-class school’s arguments, which understood racial hierarchy as semi-permanent features of human affairs, obfuscations of the material interests propping up Jim Crow.⁹⁷

The ideas of Redfield, Warner, and critics of the caste-and-class school such as Cox all influenced Drake’s writings during the 1940s. While studying for his doctorate, Drake co-wrote with Horace Cayton *Black Metropolis*, a magisterial social anthropology of African Americans

⁹⁵ Warner, “American Caste and Class,” 237.

⁹⁶ E. Franklin Frazier, “Sociological Theory and Race Relations,” *American Sociological Review* 12, no. 3 (June 1947): 265–71.

⁹⁷ Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race*, 489–508.

in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago. Although the book began as a three-person project including Drake, Cayton, and Lloyd Warner, Drake drafted the majority of the book's chapters, with Cayton providing criticism and editing. After a dispute, Cayton ultimately insisted that Warner had not contributed enough to the book to merit credit as an author.⁹⁸ Described at the time of its publication as “a ‘Middletown’ of Negro life in America,” *Black Metropolis* resembled Robert and Helen Lynd's study not only in its attempt to bring the methods of cultural anthropology to bear on an American urban community but in its abiding concern with class formation and inequality.⁹⁹

The crucial determinants of social life in Bronzeville, according to Drake and Cayton, were the “job ceiling” and the “color line.”¹⁰⁰ These two institutions circumscribed any progress African Americans could make in climbing the social hierarchy. The dynamics of labor exploitation, class formation, and worker mobilization characteristic of class societies operated within a circumscribed sphere, as neither capital nor labor could effectively transgress the strict lines of separation in employment and housing in search of higher profits or higher wages. Drake and Cayton thus took an insight of the caste-and-class school—the existence of two distinct class structures for white and black Americans—and illustrated how it depended on material factors that were consciously maintained and frequently contested.

The pace of anticolonial revolts altered the lives of both Drake and Cayton. As Drake would later observe, he and Cayton “had planned to do a *Black Metropolis Revisited* in 1955, ten years after the original publication, as the Lynds had done with *Middletown*,” but “by that time I

⁹⁸ Horace Cayton to W. Lloyd Warner, January 10, 1944, folder 29, box 5, St. Clair Drake Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

⁹⁹ *Boston Globe*, November 29, 1945, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰ St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (1945; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 99–128, 214–263.

was in Africa documenting the West African anti-colonial revolution and Cayton was an observer of these events at the UN in New York.”¹⁰¹ Cayton, as the UN correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier* for two decades, would write some of the most influential analyses of world affairs in the black press, ranging from his critical examination of Point Four to his reportage on the Algerian War. Drake, on the other hand, became involved in anticolonial movements firsthand while still a student at the University of Chicago. After the publication of *Black Metropolis*, Drake moved overseas, where he continued to join academic research with political activism. In his dissertation, a social anthropology of a community of African, Caribbean, and Arab sailors in the Tiger Bay area of Cardiff, Drake drew heavily from the structural-functionalism of Talcott Parsons—widely regarded as the primary intellectual influence on modernization theory in the United States—in his understanding of racial ideologies and systems of racial hierarchy.¹⁰²

By the early 1950s, Drake’s analysis of the global racial order contained elements that aligned with Cold War liberalism alongside sharp criticisms of the continuing influence of the imperial system. Although he repeated the conventional wisdom that the U.S. was “impelled, whether it desired the rôle or not, to assume leadership in international affairs,” he retained a belief in the structuring role of imperialism in world affairs and a commitment to understanding racism as the byproduct of European global expansion at odds with the growing view of racism as rooted in individual, psychological prejudices.¹⁰³ Drake’s writings, connections with anticolonial activists in London, and feuds with the State Department about their refusal of visas

¹⁰¹ St. Clair Drake to Horace Mann Bond, January 6, 1980, folder 19, box 5, St. Clair Drake Papers.

¹⁰² St. Clair Drake, “Value Systems, Social Structure, and Race Relations in the British Isles,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1954).

¹⁰³ St. Clair Drake, “The International Implications of Race Relations,” *Journal of Negro Education* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1951): 261–78, quoted at 264; Leah Gordon, *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

to Kenyan students, made him wonder if he was “persona non grata” with either the State Department or the British Colonial Office.¹⁰⁴ Citing Oliver Cromwell Cox approvingly, Drake argued that “race relations began as one aspect of the overseas expansion of Europe which involved the African slave trade and colonial imperialism” and that “ideologies of racism arose to sanction ‘white supremacy.’”¹⁰⁵ In spite of the global scope of processes of racial formation, the prospects of what Drake called “Pan-Movements” were limited, as they were easily “weakened by the counterforces of tribalism and nationalism, and cultural differences,” making them operational “only in localized race relations situations” like the joint African and Indian actions against the Malan government in South Africa.¹⁰⁶

Drake’s writings also indexed the growing disillusionment of many African Americans with both the United Nations as a vehicle for challenging racial discrimination at home and their diminishing faith in broad movements of internationalist unity. During the war, Logan, Du Bois, and Bunche had focused on the institutional design of the UN because they envisioned the body as a potential supra-national force that could override the imperial prerogatives of Western nations. By the early 1950s, Drake understood the organization’s primary role as a symbolic and developmental one. Though he cited both the NAACP’s *An Appeal to the World* and the Civil Rights Congress’s *We Charge Genocide* as examples of the body’s ability to serve as a “forum where matters involving racial discrimination can be aired,” he had little hope that it would ever provide a true counterweight to the national and subnational exercises of sovereignty that maintained Jim Crow in the United States.¹⁰⁷ However, the UN could still serve to promote the

¹⁰⁴ St. Clair Drake to E. Franklin Frazier, January 1, 1952, folder 2, box 131-9, E. Franklin Frazier Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. On Drake’s advocacy for Kenyan students in the U.S., see Jerry Gershonhorn, “St. Clair Drake, Pan-Africanism, African Studies, and the Politics of Knowledge,” *Journal of African American History* 98, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 422–33.

¹⁰⁵ Drake, “The International Implications of Race Relations,” 278.

¹⁰⁶ Drake, “The International Implications of Race Relations,” 275.

¹⁰⁷ Drake, “The International Implications of Race Relations,” 277.

interests of the decolonizing world, not by overriding the sovereignty of Western states but by enhancing it for Afro-Asian ones. As more African and Asian states gained national independence, the place of these states as formally equal actors within the UN would help to normalize the equal status of people of color on the world stage. This vision of “indirect and informal” influence, which would occur through “conditioning” European and American populations to accept Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans as equally “mature world citizens” was paired with a view of the UN as a developmental actor, “contributing [. . .] toward that rise in living standards which is necessary for breaking ‘the vicious circle.’”¹⁰⁸ Drake’s perspective on the relationship between political sovereignty and economic development here marked a shift from the dominant understanding of the relation between development and self-determination among African American internationalists that had endured through the Second World War. Rather than seeing development as a precondition of sovereignty, Drake envisioned development and national independence as two coeval parts of the changing global racial order.

While in Britain conducting research for his dissertation, Drake became part of a transnational circle of anticolonial thinkers and activists centered around the Trinidadian George Padmore. A Marxist who resigned from the Third International in 1933, Padmore became involved in Pan-Africanist politics in the 1930s, founding, with C. L. R. James, the International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFE), and, later, the International African Service Bureau (IASB). Around the same time as the publication of Drake’s *Black Metropolis*, Padmore organized the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, along with his friend Kwame Nkrumah, whom he had met at the historically black Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁸ Drake, “The International Implications of Race Relations,” 278.

Manchester marked a shift in the center of gravity of Pan-African activity. Unlike previous conferences, which were organized largely by African Americans and oriented toward colonial reform, the Manchester meeting was driven by Africans themselves and articulated a push for outright independence. Labor unions and student groups made up of colonial subjects living in European metropolises were the strongest voices at the conference, and W. E. B. Du Bois and the journalist and CIO organizer Henry Lee Moon were the only two African Americans to attend the meeting.¹⁰⁹ The resolutions passed at Manchester also served as a partial rebuke to the conference organized by Du Bois in Harlem a few months earlier, where Nkrumah and others had been forced to accede to his American counterparts' decision to advocate for a reformed trusteeship system as a necessary step on the way to independence. In their "Declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers and Intellectuals," the delegates proclaimed that "the struggle for political power by Colonial and subject peoples is the first step towards, and the necessary prerequisite to, complete social, economic and political emancipation," while their resolution on West Africa specifically disowned "the claims of 'partnership', 'trusteeship', 'guardianship', and the 'mandate system,'" which "do not serve the political wishes of the people of West Africa."¹¹⁰ If economic power was necessary for substantive political independence, the delegates argued, political freedom was a requirement of achieving that power.

The Manchester Pan-African Congress thus signaled a broader shift in anticolonial activities after 1945, as many anticolonial movements set their sights on the national state as the vehicle of their aspirations. Although movements to reform imperial space on terms of greater equality continued apace throughout the 1940s and 1950s, more and more anticolonial

¹⁰⁹ Munro, *The Anticolonial Front*, 71.

¹¹⁰ "Declaration to the Colonial Workers, Farmers, and Intellectuals," in *History of the Pan-African Congress: Colonial and Coloured Unity, A Program of Action*, ed. George Padmore, Second Edition (London: Hammersmith, 1963), 6; "Congress Resolutions. West Africa," in *History of the Pan-African Congress*, 55.

organizations, including Nkrumah's United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), foregrounded national self-government in their political stances.¹¹¹ The growing identification of anticolonialists' aspirations with the national space—even if, as the Manchester delegates declared, national independence was merely an intermediate station on the way to “inevitable world unity and federation”—influenced the approach of Padmore, Nkrumah, and their circle to the world of development politics.¹¹²

The postwar outlook for colonial development was a matter of significant debate among this transatlantic group of London black radicals. There were several reasons to be hopeful about the plans for colonial development within the government itself. The first was a matter of personnel. The St. Lucian economist W. Arthur Lewis, who maintained ties with the IASB in the 1930s and would go on to serve as Nkrumah's economic adviser, began working in the British Colonial Office in 1938. Although Padmore would soon clash with Lewis, initially he saw some cause for optimism in Lewis's rise through the ranks of the economics profession. When Lewis was appointed a lecturer at the London School of Economics, the journal of the IASB published a front-page report hopefully imagining that the news might prompt a reconsideration of racist attitudes: “If there still remain persons so ignorant as to believe that the peoples of African descent in the West Indies ‘cannot stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world’, their belief will suffer the shock which it deserves” from learning of Lewis's new position.¹¹³ Moreover, Lewis's writings and advocacy with the League of Coloured Peoples—a more moderate group of largely Caribbean intellectuals and activists in London than the IASB—argued vigorously for sweeping colonial reform. By 1943, Lewis was named

¹¹¹ Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*; Jeffrey Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017).

¹¹² “The Challenge to Colonial Powers,” in *History of the Pan-African Congress*, 5.

¹¹³ “Editorial,” *International African Opinion* (August 1938), p. 1.

secretary of the Colonial Economic Advisory Committee (CEAC), which brought together conservative and social-democratic economists along with representatives of business and labor to discuss plans for colonial development. In one of his first reports for the CEAC, Lewis articulated themes that would be central to his economic thought in the postwar years, arguing that, in most colonies, agricultural growth should take precedence over industrialization.¹¹⁴ In a preview of his position in later debates about Gold Coast development, Lewis claimed in the 1943 report that the Colonial Office would need to recruit large amounts of foreign—probably American—capital to achieve its development goals.¹¹⁵

In addition to the place of W. Arthur Lewis on the CEAC, the appointment of Arthur Creech-Jones to the position of secretary of state for the colonies in the Labour government that swept to power in 1945 raised some expectations in anticolonial circles for the potential of the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund. Creech-Jones was a prominent voice for the developmentalist mission of empire within the Labour Party. He was also one of very few British elites who had some familiarity with the world of transnational black politics, as he had been an early patron of the IASB in the 1930s.¹¹⁶ As discussed in chapter 1, he debated Ralph Bunche about the placement of British colonies under international trusteeship during the war. During the war, in a parliamentary debate about colonial development, he introduced the term “decolonization” to British politics.¹¹⁷ Arguing that “the resources of the Colonies are their own,” Creech-Jones framed decolonization as a process to be led by the metropole: “We have acknowledged the paramountcy of [the Colonies’] interests, yet on us falls the responsibility of

¹¹⁴ Robert L. Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 63–64.

¹¹⁵ Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, 63.

¹¹⁶ Matera, *Black London*, 84.

¹¹⁷ Stuart Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization,” *Past and Present* 230 (February 2016): 227–60.

rapidly creating the conditions under which the people can stand on their own feet, of associating them with other areas for economic and political needs, and of moving on to their own decolonisation both in status and in stature.”¹¹⁸ As historian Stuart Ward has noted, this definition of decolonization as a process directed by the colonial government became the dominant interpretation until the 1960s.¹¹⁹ While Creech-Jones thus assigned little political agency to the subjects of British imperial rule, his familiarity with anticolonial circles in London and his foregrounding of the economic interests of the colonies themselves made him appear at least as a potential ally in the Labour Party for the advancement of anticolonial goals.

These appointments were coupled with an increased financial commitment to the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund in the second Colonial Welfare and Development Act, passed in 1945. While the first act had appropriated only five million pounds per year, the second act increased the financing of the fund to 120 million pounds per year. This massive expansion reflected not only the anticipation of greater financial flexibility for the government as it looked toward peacetime, but also the increasing need to justify the empire to its subjects in the face of increasing unrest by workers and returning soldiers. As the Colonial Welfare and Development Acts took their final shape, however, it became clear that the question of political reform was to be repeatedly deferred, while development was to be ensconced within an effort to rehabilitate rather than to end formal colonialism. The refusal of the Labour Party to do more than gesture weakly at eventual self-governance or a more egalitarian Commonwealth as part of their plans for colonial development only intensified the conviction of Drake, Padmore, and their circle in London that political autonomy was a precondition for, rather than a consequence of, economic growth and attendant social transformation. Padmore stressed this argument in his book *How*

¹¹⁸ *Hansard*, 5th ser. (Commons), Vol. 382, cols. 934–35, August 4, 1942.

¹¹⁹ Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization.”

Russia Transformed Her Colonial Empire, completed amid the development debates of 1945.¹²⁰ Offering some qualified praise for Creech-Jones, who “has so often championed the Colonial peoples in Parliament and exposed their grievances, while under no particular obligation to do so,” Padmore vehemently criticized the way “the colonial theoreticians of the Labour Party fall back upon the Development and Welfare Act to correct the economic and social ills of the colonies.”¹²¹ Development amounted to nothing more than “more intensive exploitation of the natural resources and labour power of the Colonial territories” within an imperial political structure.¹²² Portraying the Soviet Union as both a multinational state and a successful example of development—contrary to its depiction as an empire in both U.S. and UK elite opinion—Padmore emphasized that self-determination was the only way to reverse the economic “backwardness” that all empires enforced on their hinterlands.¹²³

Given this emphasis, it was logical that Padmore’s circle increasingly focused their activities on Nkrumah’s movement for self-government in the Gold Coast in the years following the war. Although the Pan-African ideal still animated the thinking of Padmore, Drake, and Nkrumah, all three began to emphasize the necessity of building national states from which to embark on regional and continental projects.¹²⁴ Many in Padmore’s circle in London wound up in Nkrumah’s Ghana. Lewis, although never as committed a Pan-Africanist as the others, became

¹²⁰ Although, as Carol Polsgrove notes, Padmore had written much of this book by 1941, he did not find a publisher until 1946, and numerous additions were made in 1945, reflecting on the course of the war and the San Francisco Conference. Carol Polsgrove, *Ending British Rule in Africa: Writers in a Common Cause* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2009), 62–65.

¹²¹ George Padmore, *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire: A Challenge to the Imperialist Powers* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1946), 171, 173.

¹²² Padmore, *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire*, 173.

¹²³ Padmore’s book opened with an analysis of the economy of Tsarist Russia, which, as he described it, “followed the by no means unique principle of keeping the colonial areas backward, using them only to provide raw materials for the industries of the European section of the Empire.” Padmore, *How Russia Transformed her Colonial Empire*, 25.

¹²⁴ On the relationship between nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Nkrumah’s political thought, see Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 107–41.

one of Nkrumah's economic advisers in the early 1950s. Drake, after spending a year in Liberia, won a grant from the Ford Foundation to conduct research in Ghana in 1954. In his time there he served as an informal adviser to Nkrumah and, ultimately, became head of the sociology department at the University of Ghana. Padmore, meanwhile, maintained his close relationship with Nkrumah until his death in 1961.

From London to Accra: Debating Development in Decolonizing Ghana

Social unrest in the colonies reinforced the growing conception that colonial underdevelopment constituted a reason not for continued tutelage but for political autonomy. This applied in particular to the 1948 Accra riots, which began when former soldiers marched on the seat of the colonial government to demand their unpaid pensions. After police fired on the former soldiers, killing three of them, rioting broke out across the city. This unrest quickly became linked to a longstanding grievance about the inflated prices that colonial subjects in the Gold Coast had to pay for imported goods from Europe. It was not only anticolonial activists who identified the failure of the colonial state to improve social and economic conditions—a failure that was increasingly articulated in developmentalist terms—as a major reason for the unrest.¹²⁵ The colonial government's Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast cited “the feeling that the Government had not formulated any plans for the future of industry and agriculture, and that, indeed, it was lukewarm about any development apart from production for export” as one of the causes of the riots.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 248–60.

¹²⁶ Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, “Report on the Riots of 1948,” in *The Ghana Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Kwasi Konadu and Clifford C. Campbell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 261.

The 1948 riots represented a turning point in the movement for Ghana's independence. In the aftermath, the government arrested Nkrumah and five other leading members of the UGCC. Following the release of the commission's report, the British government agreed to reform the Gold Coast's constitution to create a legislative assembly with an African majority, to be elected by residents of the colony. These elections were the first to be held with universal suffrage in colonial Africa. As the elections approached, Nkrumah, still imprisoned, broke away from the UGCC, whose social base consisted largely of the professional class, and founded the Convention People's Party (CPP). The CPP's mass support was based in urban market women, young people attracted to the party's emphasis on education, and farmers opposed to the colonial government's agricultural policies, especially its forced eradication of cocoa in certain regions.¹²⁷ Capitalizing on discontent with the UGCC's gradualist approach in the aftermath of the 1948 riots, the CPP further demanded immediate self-government in the Gold Coast. In the first legislative elections, held in 1951, the CPP won 34 of the 38 elected seats. The CPP followed this resounding victory by winning majorities—albeit smaller ones—in the 1954 and 1956 elections. Nkrumah's increasingly urgent demands for immediate independence and the clear and repeated endorsement of his party by Gold Coast voters, combined with a shift in British official thinking toward acceptance of an inevitable power transfer, led ultimately to the independence of Ghana on March 6, 1957.

As Nkrumah and the CPP pushed toward independence, the question of postcolonial economic development was debated in a new frame. No longer agitating for more generous development policies from a colonial government within an imperial structure, Nkrumah and his supporters—including African Americans like Drake—began to understand development aid as a

¹²⁷ Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 52–60.

means to bolster the position of Ghana in the international sphere after eventual independence.¹²⁸ Debates about the relative priority of industry or agriculture, the trade-offs between social welfare and modernization, and the desirability of foreign investment capital proliferated. At the center of these debates was a single proposal: Nkrumah's Volta River Project. Nkrumah imagined the Akosombo Dam across the Volta River as the centerpiece of his vision for a modern and independent Ghana.¹²⁹ Like many development projects across the decolonizing world, Nkrumah's plan for Volta drew inspiration from both the American TVA and Soviet electrification projects of previous decades.¹³⁰ The plan's origins, however, dated back to the First World War. British economists and colonial officials had been interested in building a dam over the Volta River to generate electrical power for the production of aluminum from the bauxite that was mined in the colony. After the Second World War, the Labour government conducted an extensive survey of the electricity-generating potential of such a dam.¹³¹ Throughout the lead-up to independence, the questions of how the dam would be constructed, who would control the revenues it produced, and how and whether it would support other industrial development in the colony generated significant debate among policymakers and the public in Britain, the Gold Coast, and worldwide.¹³²

The debates about Volta among Nkrumah, his advisers, and African Americans invested in the Ghanaian independence movement revealed once again the centrality of concerns about continuing economic domination after political independence to black internationalists'

¹²⁸ Jemima Pierre, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*.

¹²⁹ Stephan F. Miescher, "'Nkrumah's Baby': The Akosombo Dam and the Dream of Development in Ghana, 1952–1966," *Water History* 6, no. 4 (2014): 341–66.

¹³⁰ Thomas J. Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 1 (January 1984): 61–80.

¹³¹ Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, 194–95.

¹³² Miescher, "'Nkrumah's Baby,'" 344–49.

engagement with development politics. These concerns operated on several levels. The question of whether foreign capital was necessary to fund such an ambitious development project were raised alongside the more fundamental question of whether “high-modernist,” industrial schemes such as Volta offered the best way to raise the living standards of ordinary Ghanaians.¹³³ These questions in turn reflected the general orientation of this transnational circle of black intellectuals toward various versions of modernization theory, from Lewis’s brand of development economics to Drake’s more sociological vision of the modernization process.

The question of foreign capital divided W. Arthur Lewis and George Padmore as they advised Nkrumah on Ghana’s developmental path. Ironically, though, both figures opposed Nkrumah’s vision for Volta. Padmore feared the political impact of the large amounts of foreign investment capital that such a project would likely require. Padmore argued that the Volta project would enable the British to retain concrete control over the Gold Coast economy as the territory moved toward independence. Both foreign capital and technical experts were cause for concern, Padmore told Nkrumah, as “what the British are trying to do is to establish an economic stranglehold in your country, so that you will remain bound hand and foot to them even when you get dominion status.”¹³⁴ Although Lewis favored agricultural modernization alongside the protection of light industry for domestic production, rather than large-scale, capital-intensive industrial projects like the Volta dam, he argued that Padmore’s misgivings about foreign capital were misguided. The dearth of investment capital and technical expertise in the Gold Coast outweighed Padmore’s political considerations. “In my opinion,” he wrote to Padmore, “what is

¹³³ The foundational critical analysis of “high-modernist” development projects is found in James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹³⁴ George Padmore to Kwame Nkrumah, November 22, 1951, folder 13, box 154-41, Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.

important is not how much a firm takes out of a country but how much it puts in and how much it leaves there.”¹³⁵ Padmore made the mistake of focusing too much on the “size of the profits carried out” rather than “the size of the wealth created and left to the people of the country.”¹³⁶ Echoing his recommendations to the Colonial Office during the war, Lewis maintained that foreign capital would be necessary to finance any development project, whether of the scale of Volta or not.

Hired by Nkrumah as an economic adviser under the auspices of the UN after the 1951 elections that swept the CPP to power, Lewis reiterated his belief in the importance of foreign capital to Gold Coast development in his *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, even as he outlined a developmental vision at odds with Nkrumah’s. He argued that the only way to stimulate industrial growth in Ghana was through a modernization of agricultural techniques, particularly in food production. Whereas improved productivity in Ghana’s primary export crop of cocoa would only serve to depress prices, Lewis argued, increased productivity in food production would enable farmers to escape conditions of subsistence and begin to consume industrialized goods. Rising productivity in agriculture would make possible a transfer of the labor force from agriculture to industry without sacrificing overall food production. Against those who posed agricultural development as an alternative to industrialization, Lewis proclaimed that “the truth is that industrialization . . . can make little progress unless agriculture is progressing vigorously at the same time, to provide both the market for industry, and industry’s labor supply.”¹³⁷ The effort to increase agricultural productivity should be coupled

¹³⁵ W. Arthur Lewis to George Padmore, April 16, 1952, box 9, W. Arthur Lewis Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

¹³⁶ W. Arthur Lewis to George Padmore, April 16, 1952, box 9, W. Arthur Lewis Papers.

¹³⁷ W. A. Lewis, *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast* (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1953), 2.

with an effort “to improve the public services” which “will reduce the cost of manufacturing . . . and will thus automatically attract new industries, without the government having to offer special favours.”¹³⁸

Although these recommendations cast a critical eye on the Volta dam, Lewis nonetheless argued that countries like Ghana should welcome foreign capital for its development projects. He recognized that “foreign capital is unpopular in all countries which are or have been in colonial status,” but, operating under a classical model of economic rationality, he insisted that domestic and foreign sources of private capital would respond to the same incentives for investment.¹³⁹ Using nearly identical language as he had in his letter to Padmore, Lewis maintained in his report that “from the point of view of economic development what matters with [foreign] profits is not how large they are, but how much goes out of the country.”¹⁴⁰ Moreover, if the alternative to accepting foreign investment was devoting more of the tax revenues of the Gold Coast government to industrial development than to public services, Lewis argued that the Gold Coast might as well “postpone industrialization rather than divert money to it from these more urgent purposes.”¹⁴¹ Nkrumah’s measured response to the report illustrated a willingness to adapt his economic advice to his own political purposes. Despite Lewis’s opposition to the Volta project, his arguments buttressed the idea that the Gold Coast should seek out and willingly accept foreign aid and investment for whatever development strategy it decided to pursue.

Lewis’s writings in the 1950s resembled those of social scientists in other disciplines, such as St. Clair Drake, who were engaged with the emerging body of modernization theory. Drake and Lewis first met in the Gold Coast in 1954; despite their shared connections to

¹³⁸ Lewis, *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, 22.

¹³⁹ Lewis, *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, 8.

¹⁴⁰ Lewis, *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, 9.

¹⁴¹ Lewis, *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, 9.

Padmore, they had never crossed paths in London. At their first meeting, they debated the impact of Talcott Parsons on social science. Lewis accused Parsons of dressing up conventional wisdom in theoretical jargon, while Drake, who had just submitted a dissertation on race relations in the British Isles that drew on Parsons' functionalism extensively, defended him.¹⁴² Despite Lewis's distaste for Parsons, however, he shared a faith with many of the scholars and policymakers Parsons influenced that development aid and technical assistance, properly planned and applied, could catalyze a general process of social transformation in the colonial world.¹⁴³

This perspective was apparent as early as Lewis's commentary on mass education in a memo for the Colonial Office in 1948. Unlike the leadership of the Colonial Office, which dutifully emphasized the importance of educating its subjects in preparation for self-government, Lewis argued that many more resources needed to be put toward education in new techniques for agricultural cultivation, sanitation, medicine, and more. Acknowledging the part imperialism played in creating colonial underdevelopment less forcefully than Drake and Padmore, Lewis insisted that poverty in the colonies was so great because "peoples have not learnt how to master their environments."¹⁴⁴ A "mass attack on colonial conditions" must involve "mass employment of the partially qualified."¹⁴⁵ Although he often used technical language in his recommendations to both British and Gold Coast policymakers, Lewis evinced the grandiose aspirations of the modernizer.

Both the specific debates about the place of foreign capital in Gold Coast development and the broader social-scientific conversation around modernization theory occurring in black

¹⁴² Interview with W. Arthur Lewis, September 12, 1954, folder 24, box 67, St. Clair Drake Papers; Drake, "Value Systems, Social Structure, and Race Relations in the British Isles."

¹⁴³ On Parsons's influence on modernization theory and international development politics in the U.S., see Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, 72–112.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, 69.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, 69.

internationalist circles also framed the travel writings and political analysis of novelist Richard Wright when he visited the Gold Coast in 1953. Although Kevin Gaines rightly acknowledges the “autobiographical dimension to Wright’s affinity for the idea of modernization” that emerged from his understanding of “his own intellectual development in terms of a migration from tradition to modernity,” his full-throated advocacy of a program of modernization in the Gold Coast also emerged from this wider intellectual context.¹⁴⁶ Wright knew Drake from their time in Chicago, and his introduction to Drake and Cayton’s *Black Metropolis* placed that work in the context of the global transformations of World War II. Their sociological examination of black life in Chicago, according to Wright, illuminated that “the problem of the world’s dispossessed exists with great urgency, and the problem of the Negro in America is a phase of this general problem, containing and telescoping the longings in the lives of a billion colored subject colonial people into a symbol.”¹⁴⁷ His controversial account of his travels in the Gold Coast, published in 1954 under the title *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos*, has long faced criticism for the hostility it evinced toward African traditions and its critical view of the lives and culture of the Gold Coast’s indigenous inhabitants.¹⁴⁸ This work was part of a broader turn in Wright’s career toward questions of decolonization, development, and Third World solidarity. As in his account of the Asian-African Conference at Bandung in 1955, in *Black Power* Wright expressed surprise at the continued power of religion in the Third World and envisioned

¹⁴⁶ Kevin Gaines, “Revisiting Richard Wright in Ghana: Black Radicalism and the Dialectics of Diaspora,” *Social Text* 67, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 75–101, quoted at 82. The best account of the links between Wright’s writings and modernization theory is found in Vaughn Rasberry, *Race and the Totalitarian Century*, 305–54.

¹⁴⁷ Richard Wright, “Introduction,” in Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, lxvii.

¹⁴⁸ Contemporaneous critiques by Léopold Senghor and Camara Laye are discussed in Michel Fabre, *The World of Richard Wright* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 209–11.

movements for decolonization as vectors for the historical forces of secularization and industrialization that would birth a world order no longer predicated on racial domination.¹⁴⁹

Wright's argument in *Black Power* that Nkrumah and the CPP should seek to modernize the total structure of African life stemmed from a fear of the continuation of colonial-style relations after formal independence. This motivation placed him firmly on Padmore's side of the debate over foreign capital. (The two thinkers nonetheless diverged on whether Ghana's decolonization had the potential to shift the balance of world power; Padmore objected to the title of Wright's account, suggesting he change it to *Black Freedom*, because, as he wrote, "what power will they ever have in this atomic age."¹⁵⁰) In the final section of *Black Power*, an open letter addressed to Nkrumah, Wright claimed that borrowing money from the West might "industrialize your people in a cash-and-carry system" but would ultimately lead only "from tribal to industrial slavery, for tied to Western money is Western control, Western ideas."¹⁵¹ Using more dramatic language, he warned: "Beware of a Volta Project built by foreign money. Build your own Volta, and build it out of the sheer lives and bodies of your people! With but limited outside aid, your people can rebuild your society with their bare hands."¹⁵² The idea of building an industrial, economically independent society through the "lives and bodies" of its people conjured images of authoritarianism and even, perhaps, forced labor, but in Wright's mind such a project required the wholesale transformation of the daily lives of the Gold Coast's inhabitants.

¹⁴⁹ Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (New York: World Press, 1956). For a treatment of Wright as a thinker deeply engaged with the condition of modernity and its constitutive element of racial domination, see Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 416–40.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Polsgrove, *Ending British Rule in Africa*, 136.

¹⁵¹ Richard Wright, *Black Power*, in *Black Power: Three Books from Exile: Black Power, The Color Curtain, and White Man, Listen!* (1954; New York, Harper Collins, 2010), 414.

¹⁵² Wright, *Black Power*, 418.

Wright's infamous decree that "AFRICAN LIFE MUST BE MILITARIZED" reflected such a belief.¹⁵³ Echoing the pragmatist philosopher William James's invocation of a "moral equivalent of war," Wright translated James's call for a revitalization of a service ethic among early twentieth-century American youth into the context of midcentury decolonization and development.¹⁵⁴ Wright wanted this process to be directed "not for war, but for peace; not for destruction, but for service; not for aggression, but for production; not for despotism, but to free minds from mumbo-jumbo."¹⁵⁵ Such a wrenching transformation, Wright believed, was both philosophically and politically necessary. It would force the residents of the Gold Coast, in the existential terms of much of Wright's writing at the time, to "face what men, all men everywhere, must face"—a modern condition that Europeans, by forcing African economies into a state of dependency "because they feared disrupting their own profits," had prevented Africans from experiencing.¹⁵⁶ Politically, establishing the "military form of life" of a regimented, planned, industrial society could "free you, to a large extent, from begging for money from the West, and the degrading conditions attached to such money."¹⁵⁷ Wright saw the modernization of the psyche—through the painful abandonment of traditional culture—as the necessary adjunct of the overcoming of political and economic dependency.

Wright continued to translate the political-economic discourse surrounding neocolonialism into the language of existential dread in other writings from exile in the mid-1950s. In his essay "The Psychological Reaction of Oppressed Peoples," Wright diagnosed elites of the decolonizing world with what he called a "Post-Mortem Terror."¹⁵⁸ This "terror in

¹⁵³ Wright, *Black Power*, 415.

¹⁵⁴ William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War" (1910), in *Essays in Religion and Morality*, ed. Frederick Burkhardt, et. al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 162–74.

¹⁵⁵ Wright, *Black Power*, 415.

¹⁵⁶ Wright, *Black Power*, 415.

¹⁵⁷ Wright, *Black Power*, 517.

¹⁵⁸ Wright, "The Psychological Reaction of Oppressed Peoples," in *Black Power: Three Books from Exile*, 683.

freedom,” as he defined it, constituted “a state of mind of newly freed colonial peoples who feel that they will be resubjugated.”¹⁵⁹ While Western observers misread this state of fear as a childlike desire for colonial rule to return, in Wright’s account it reflected the opposite: “Their unrest stems from a fear that the white man will come back.”¹⁶⁰ Wright thus connected his prescriptions for economic development, even at the expense of social upheaval, to a psychological discourse of overcoming the specific “terror in freedom” of postcolonial modernity in order to enter into the generalized condition of anxiety that faced the modern world as a whole.

As Nkrumah and the CPP pushed ahead with the Volta River project, making it the centerpiece of their vision of a modernized, independent Ghana, his circle of advisers and observers had mixed reactions. Lewis, although opposed to the vision of development through rapid industrialization that Volta signified, continued to advise Nkrumah on the project through independence. After a sharp drop in the world price of aluminum in the mid-1950s caused British and Canadian backers to drop out, and as Nkrumah sought a new deal to finance the dam with a mix of public financing and private funding from the U.S. company Kaiser Industries, Lewis resigned, arguing that the dam’s benefits to Ghana’s development would not be worth the public expenditure Nkrumah now seemed committed to providing.¹⁶¹ Padmore, too, did not see Volta as the ideal means to bring to life his dream of African socialism, and he continually warned of the dangers of subjecting Ghana to the influence of Western capital. Yet he remained allied with Nkrumah, pouring his energy into projects like the 1958 All-African Peoples’ Conference

¹⁵⁹ Wright, “The Psychological Reaction of Oppressed Peoples,” 683.

¹⁶⁰ Wright, “The Psychological Reaction of Oppressed Peoples,” 683.

¹⁶¹ Miescher, “Nkrumah’s Baby,” 355. Tignor, *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*, 72–76.

(AAPC) that aimed to realize Pan-African unity.¹⁶² Drake, still a committed supporter of Pan-Africanism, nonetheless sensed a growing conflict in the minds of some Ghanaians between the ideal of a continental federation and the urgency of national development. After a lecture Padmore delivered in the fall of 1958 at the University of Ghana, where Drake was teaching at the time, Drake observed that students' responses "revealed clearly that they have no interest in the Conference and feel that Ghana's time and money should be spent on internal development."¹⁶³ If Wright and Padmore had envisioned development as part of a broader program of gaining independence from the West, Drake suggested, the more prosaic motivations of Ghana's citizens for higher-wage employment, wider access to electricity, and greater social mobility deserved equal attention in assessments of the progress of Volta.

St. Clair Drake returned to the United States in 1961 after serving for three years as head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Ghana. At home, he continued to operate as a conduit between Nkrumah and both his African American supporters in the United States and official organs of the American government. Drake urged policymakers to understand the cultural significance of Ghana to African Americans. When it was revealed that Nkrumah would make a stop in Chicago on his first visit to the United States as head of state in 1958, he encouraged the State Department to reach out to the "Negro community of some 800,000 people in Chicago, many of whom feel a bit toward African states as the Irish do toward Eire and the Jews toward Israel."¹⁶⁴ Drake further sought to build support for U.S. funding for Volta among black Americans. In a letter to fellow black social scientist E. Franklin Frazier, he not only

¹⁶² Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter 8.

¹⁶³ Quoted in James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below*, 181.

¹⁶⁴ St. Clair Drake to Director, West African Section, Department of State, June 6, 1958, folder 41, box 70, St. Clair Drake Papers.

emphasized Ghanaians' "warmth toward Negro Americans" but sought to downplay the project's direct connection to Nkrumah, whose crackdown on opposition forces made him a more controversial figure in the United States than he had been before independence.¹⁶⁵ Drake argued that a project like the Volta dam could have longstanding effects for Africans "even after the present generation of leaders has passed."¹⁶⁶ He insisted that Nkrumah "means it when he says he doesn't want Communist imperialism in Africa any more than Western imperialism, and that when he talks of 'African socialism' it is really a mixed-economy, welfare state which he has in mind."¹⁶⁷ His outreach further aimed to build a coalition of "a very broad segment of inter-racial liberal opinion" in support of American aid for Volta, but "with no Communist or near-Communist signatories."¹⁶⁸ Although Drake had been considered a fellow traveler of the Communist Party in the 1940s, his recognition of the way Cold War geopolitics shaped the possibilities of Ghana's development delimited the extent and content of his appeal.¹⁶⁹

Drake's engagement with Ghanaian development politics after his departure from the country was not limited to his efforts to build African American support for the Volta project. He also became involved with the Peace Corps, the signature developmental initiative of the administration of John F. Kennedy, who launched the "decade of development" at the UN with a highly publicized speech in January 1961. Drake trained American volunteers who were headed to Ghana in the first year of the program. Working alongside David Apter, a leading modernization theorist and co-founder of the University of Chicago's Committee on the

¹⁶⁵ St. Clair Drake to E. Franklin Frazier, November 28, 1961, folder 2, box 131-9, E. Franklin Frazier Papers.

¹⁶⁶ St. Clair Drake to E. Franklin Frazier, November 28, 1961, folder 2, box 131-9, E. Franklin Frazier Papers.

¹⁶⁷ St. Clair Drake to E. Franklin Frazier, November 28, 1961, folder 2, box 131-9, E. Franklin Frazier Papers.

¹⁶⁸ St. Clair Drake to E. Franklin Frazier, November 28, 1961, folder 2, box 131-9, E. Franklin Frazier Papers.

¹⁶⁹ As Drake later claimed in a 1979 letter reflecting on the writing of *Black Metropolis*, "It was generally assumed that I was a 'fellow traveler' and that Cayton was not, a fact that Richard Wright, by 1944, was warning Cayton to keep in mind and not to let what Dick considered Stalinism to influence the tone of the book." St. Clair Drake to Ron Bailey, June 8, 1979, folder 1, box 4, St. Clair Drake Papers.

Comparative Study of New Nations, Drake developed curricula and taught in the eight-week summer program.

Volunteers were largely assigned to be secondary and vocational schoolteachers. They not only received teacher training and some rudimentary Twi instruction from Twi-speaking Ghanaians, but also took classes in American Studies, International Studies, and the contemporary politics of Ghana.¹⁷⁰ George Carter, Country Director for the Peace Corps in Ghana, thought that these courses held much greater relevance than the supposedly practical training in educational methods: “We are persuaded that any time spent on practice teaching, classroom psychology and other such relics is time less well spent than on subjects such as the history of Ashanti and CPP, the role of a one party system in the new African republics and the limits of American foreign policy in Africa. These are the kinds of problems which the volunteers will have to wrestle with.”¹⁷¹ In his own teaching on these subjects, Drake argued that the political independence of Ghana was only a small part of the ongoing social transformation of the country. In his notes for the orientation of new volunteers, he wrote that one of the “basic facts” about the Ghanaian education system that “it would be well to always keep in mind” was “that a social revolution is underway in Ghana—a vast, thoroughgoing revolution—and the whole educational system is being profoundly affected by that revolution. The political shift from colonial status to sovereignty was only one aspect of this process of change.”¹⁷² Using language that spoke both to the radical hopes Drake invested in decolonization and the modernization theory that animated the Peace Corps’s mission, Drake’s message to volunteers

¹⁷⁰ Rosemary George to St. Clair Drake, September 7, 1962, folder 1, box 79, St. Clair Drake Papers.

¹⁷¹ George Carter to David Apter, March 14, 1961, folder 1, box 79, St. Clair Drake Papers.

¹⁷² Notes, folder 23, box 66, St. Clair Drake Papers.

exemplified the deep linkages between black internationalism and development politics in the early Cold War.

* * *

By the early 1960s, the vision of development politics as an arena that might place more decision-making power over political-economic issues in international hands had been superseded by a vision that sought development as a means to build the capacity of nation-states in the decolonizing world. While Nkrumah and his supporters continued to advance various forms of Pan-African federation, as will be discussed in the next chapter, these proposals for a supranational political organization to combat the threat of neocolonial domination presupposed the building blocks of independent nation-states, each pursuing their own paths of development. Far from considering nationalism as a dead end in the world of development politics, as Harold Isaacs had suggested in the late 1940s, by the late 1950s black internationalists on both sides of the Atlantic saw it as the necessary starting point for gaining any real bargaining power within that world.

From Truman's Point Four program to Nkrumah's Volta River project, African American thinkers and activists who delved into the world of development politics in the early Cold War saw clearly the threat of a world where the economic domination of the colonial order outlived the end of formal empire. Their attempts to prevent such an outcome led some, such as Rayford Logan and St. Clair Drake, to embrace foreign aid from the West as a potential source of countervailing economic power. Others, such as Richard Wright, saw such aid as the very vehicle through which the neocolonial order would be established. Divisions on this issue, moreover, did not always align neatly with Cold War. To be sure, African Americans on the left largely opposed the Point Four program as a smokescreen for the pursuit of American capitalists'

interests in the Third World, but some responded positively to the pursuit of development aid from Western-allied nations by postcolonial leaders themselves. Even Shirley Graham Du Bois, a staunch defender of the Soviet Union, who became the director of Ghana Television after emigrating there in 1960, led efforts to gain technical assistance from Japan, whose state-sponsored television companies had been based on American models and funded by the United States.¹⁷³ From the late 1940s to the early 1960s, then, black internationalism in both its liberal and radical variants constituted an ideological formation intertwined with, rather than external to, the modernization theory then emerging as a dominant paradigm in social-scientific and policy discourse. As the next chapter will explore, even as many black internationalists contributed prescriptions for the modernization of the decolonizing world, they departed strongly from the way most white social scientists and policymakers who embraced modernization theory defined colonialism and its relation to the history and present reality of the United States. Finally, as chapters 4 and 5 show, African Americans' efforts to grapple with the "postcolonial predicament" of political sovereignty without economic self-determination deeply influenced their understandings of race and poverty within the United States in the 1960s.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Rasberry, *Race and the Totalitarian Century*, 258–62. Graham Du Bois justified the pursuit of aid from Japan in terms that referred back to earlier discourses of Afro-Asian solidarity that elevated Japan as a countervailing power to the West.

¹⁷⁴ Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 15.

Chapter 3

First New Nation or Internal Colony? Modernization Theorists, Black Intellectuals, and the Politics of Colonial Comparison in the Kennedy Years

On a Sunday in June 1959, in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, Senator John F. Kennedy rose to address the annual banquet of the second annual meeting of the American Society for African Culture (AMSAC), an organization founded to promote cultural exchanges between African American writers and artists and their counterparts in Africa and across the diaspora.¹ Kennedy, who had recently been appointed chairman of the Subcommittee on African Affairs in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spent much of his speech highlighting the potential of U.S. development aid to contribute to economic growth on the African continent. At several moments in his speech, however, Kennedy referred to the American Revolution as a precursor and an exemplar for the decolonizing nations in Africa. Quoting Thomas Paine’s view of liberty radiating outward from the Thirteen Colonies—“From a small spark kindled in America, a flame has arisen not to be extinguished”—Kennedy insisted, “that very flame is today lighting what was once called ‘the Dark Continent.’”²

At the same conference a day earlier, two African American writers engaged in a heated debate over the proper way to understand the relationship between the history of the United States and the decolonization of Africa.³ J. Saunders Redding and Harold Cruse, both participants on the panel entitled “Negro Literature—African,” came to sharply different

¹ A version of this chapter was published as Sam Klug, “First New Nation or Internal Colony? Modernization Theorists, Black Intellectuals, and the Politics of Colonial Comparison in the Kennedy Years,” in *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 19–33.

² John F. Kennedy, “The United States and Africa: A New Policy for a New Era,” in *Summary Report: Second Annual Conference* (New York: American Society of African Culture, 1959), 8.

³ Lawrence P. Jackson, *The Indignant Generation: A Narrative History of African American Writers and Critics, 1934–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 467–69.

conclusions. Whereas Cruse saw in African independence movements a sign that African Americans should shift their goals from integration to cultural “rebirth,” Redding countered that African Americans, unlike the “new nations” on the continent, “are not a *people* in Cruse’s sense of the word” and that seeing their situation as analogous to that of the decolonizing world would only “cut American Negroes off” from their American heritage.⁴ Redding and Cruse debated the status of African American literary culture and the direction of African American politics in terms not only of a shared culture across the African diaspora—a culture AMSAC was invested in actively building—but of a shared history of colonial oppression.

Kennedy’s speech and the debate between Cruse and Redding open a window onto a crucial feature of the political culture of the postwar United States, one that is obscured when their ideas are cordoned off from each other in our historical imagination.⁵ Kennedy’s invocation of Thomas Paine in a speech primarily dedicated to American foreign aid policy in Africa reflected a widely held view of the United States as the “first new nation”—the first national community to emerge from colonial rule to the status of independent statehood. This idea, articulated by social scientists as well as policymakers and politicians, has long been acknowledged as an important element of modernization theory and the period in American foreign policy, particularly under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, it helped to define.

⁴ J. Saunders Redding, “Negro Writing in America,” *The New Leader* (May 1960): 8.

⁵ Despite increasing interest in African American intellectual history in recent years, other U.S. historians have not, for the most part, incorporated the innovations of the growing field into their dominant narratives of American history. The best example of the recent upsurge in interest in black intellectual history is the emergence of the African American Intellectual History Society and its blog, *Black Perspectives*. See also the following edited volumes: Adolph Reed, Jr. and Kenneth W. Warren, eds., *Renewing Black Intellectual History: The Ideological and Material Foundations of African American Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, eds., *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Keisha N. Blain, Christopher Cameron, and Ashley D. Farmer, eds., *New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018). A brief but compelling attempt to link policy discourse on the decolonizing world with the ideas of anticolonial thinkers in this period can be found in Vaughn Rasberry, “JFK and the Global Anticolonial Movement,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John F. Kennedy*, ed. Andrew Hoberek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 118–33.

The debate between Cruse and Redding, meanwhile, marked a flashpoint in the decades-long debate—one that would take on new importance in the 1960s—over how African Americans should understand the relationship between their own intellectual and political movements and those of the decolonizing world. Seen together, these two moments at the AMSAC conference in June 1959 highlight the increasing relevance of debates about the nature and meaning of colonialism to American politics and intellectual life in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the 1940s, as was discussed in chapter 1, comparisons between American racial hierarchy and European colonial rule suffused debates about the international order and the newly founded UN. Beginning in the late 1950s the relationship between American history and governance and European colonialism became central to domestic political discourse. By tracing these discussions across the realms of the social sciences, the U.S. foreign policy apparatus, and black political thought, we can better appreciate the role decolonization played in the ideological development of both American liberalism and the black freedom movement in the 1960s.

The debate over the image of the United States as the first new nation coincided with and was reinforced by John F. Kennedy's rise through American politics to the presidency. Although Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had claimed that the U.S. held "natural sympathy" for the decolonizing world because of its own experience as "the first colony in modern times to have won independence," and although others in both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations made similar references, the image of the United States as a political model for the decolonizing world resonated particularly strongly with the cultural and political climate of Kennedy's Washington.⁶ Sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, author of an influential work of sociology entitled *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and*

⁶ John Foster Dulles, "International Unity," *Department of State Bulletin* 30, no. 782 (June 1954): 936.

Comparative Perspective (1963), later described his work as the product of “those bygone almost bucolic days of the New Frontier.”⁷ Lipset’s association between the discourse of the first new nation and that of the new frontier suggests a close relationship between the “imperialist nostalgia,” in anthropologist Renato Rosaldo’s words, of Kennedy’s principal slogan and the portrayal of the United States as a natural ally of the decolonizing world.⁸ The discourse of the first new nation served important purposes in Cold War liberalism, as policymakers sought to portray the United States as preternaturally aligned with anticolonialism—regardless of actual U.S. policy—while seeking to steer anticolonial movements away from an alignment with the Soviet Union.⁹

Kennedy himself, particularly in his years in the Senate, distinguished himself in national politics as an advocate for anticolonial causes.¹⁰ He often condemned the U.S. posture of overarching support for British and French policies in their colonies by invoking an image of a postcolonial United States. As he put it in a speech critical of the Eisenhower administration’s approach to the decolonizing world in 1956, the “home of the Declaration of Independence” had “appeared in the eyes of millions of key uncommitted people to have abandoned our proud traditions of self-determination and independence.”¹¹ This criticism reached its zenith in his speech on Algeria on the Senate floor in 1957. This speech not only denied the official French

⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (1963; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), v.

⁸ Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

⁹ Two useful overviews of Kennedy’s foreign policy toward the decolonizing world are Robert B. Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ Theresa Romahn, “Colonialism and the Campaign Trail: On Kennedy’s Algerian Speech and His Bid for the 1960 Democratic Nomination,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 1–23.

¹¹ “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council Luncheon at the Biltmore Hotel on September 21, 1956,” box 895, Speeches and the Press, Series 12, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/los-angeles-ca-world-affairs-council-19560921>>

line that the Algerian conflict represented a matter internal to France but also decried the Eisenhower administration's "retreat" from the "principles of independence and anti-colonialism."¹² Kennedy's focus on what historian Anders Stephanson calls the "utopian deficit" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1950s derived from his belief that a sense of the postcolonial heritage of the United States had failed to install itself adequately in Asian and African imaginations.¹³ As Kennedy put it in another speech, with questionable veracity, "every African nationalist 20 or 25 or 30 years ago quoted Thomas Jefferson," whereas now they "quote Marx."¹⁴

Those who used the language of first new nationhood did more than simply seek to win friends in the Cold War, however. The language expressed a distinctive historical imagination of the American Revolution and of early American history.¹⁵ Attempts to market the United States as a model for the decolonizing world relied on a historical imaginary of the American Revolution as straightforwardly anticolonial, which systematically marginalized indigenous peoples' experiences and relationship to the American state.¹⁶ Further, in line with a dominant

¹² "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy in the Senate, Washington, D.C., July 2, 1957," box 784, Legislation, Series 09, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy, <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-states-senate-imperialism-19570702>>

¹³ Anders Stephanson, "Senator John F. Kennedy: Anti-Imperialism and Utopian Deficit," *Journal of American Studies* 48, no. 1 (February 2014): 1–24.

¹⁴ "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy at State Capitol, Albany, New York, September 29, 1960," box 912, Speeches and the Press, Series 12, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, Papers of John J. Kennedy, <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/albany-ny-19600929>>

¹⁵ This language provides an example of how historical narratives, both in the work of professional historians and in a general historical consciousness, contribute to imperial modes of self-understanding and structure policymakers' views of what is plausible, what is desirable, and what accords with national interest and national identity. For an examination of the impact of historical narratives on the imperial imagination in the context of the British Empire, see Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), especially 119–47.

¹⁶ A useful examination of anti-imperialism in American history is found in Ian Tyrrell and Jay Sexton, eds., *Empire's Twin: U.S. Anti-Imperialism from the Founding Era to the Age of Terrorism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015). On the marginalization of indigenous peoples from dominant narratives in American political thought, see David Myer Temin, "Custer's Sins: Vine Deloria Jr. and the Settler-Colonial Politics of Civic Inclusion," *Political Theory* 46, no. 3 (June 2018): 357–79.

strand of historical scholarship, these efforts envisioned the American Revolution as a political revolution without a corresponding social revolution.¹⁷

While other scholars have explored the portrayal of the American Revolution as a model for anticolonial revolts, this chapter emphasizes, first, the ways that the first new nation discourse sought to shape postcolonial politics.¹⁸ American elites in both official and unofficial capacities promoted the federal system of the United States as a promising model for decolonizing states. As political theorist Adom Getachew has shown, politicians and scholars from a variety of locations in what Paul Gilroy has termed the “Black Atlantic” similarly embraced the first new nation analogy in their own federalist projects, although they often saw in federation a solution to a different problem than most American social scientists did.¹⁹

Second, this chapter explores the ways that the first new nation discourse intervened in an ongoing global conversation about the definition of colonialism, which had emerged by the late 1950s and early 1960s as one of the most contested terms in international politics. Prominent social scientists and Kennedy administration policymakers invested in the idea of the United States as an example of decolonization put forth a narrow definition of colonialism as a system of political rule by a foreign power. They defined colonialism more narrowly than did the new states themselves. Led by a cohort of new nations in Africa and Asia, the UN General Assembly in 1960 passed a resolution denouncing “colonialism in all its manifestations” and asserting the right of nations to “freely dispose of their natural wealth without prejudice to any obligations

¹⁷ See, for example, Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955).

¹⁸ Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011). On adaptations of the American revolutionary heritage by twentieth century anticolonialists, see David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

arising out of international economic co-operation.”²⁰ The question of just what “colonialism in all its manifestations” meant was of substantial importance in the Cold War. American policymakers insisted on a stark distinction between formal political rule and continuing relations of economic dependence after decolonization, while simultaneously portraying Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe as a form of colonialism worthy of condemnation from the Third World.

Finally, this chapter will show how these debates over how to define colonialism took on a new importance among African Americans in the early 1960s and stimulated an important turn in black politics. Harold Cruse was the most influential among a number of black intellectuals in the United States who developed a new vocabulary of “internal colonialism” to describe American racial hierarchy in this period. Although this concept took on greater political importance in the latter half of the 1960s and early 1970s, as following chapters will detail, one of its proximate intellectual sources was located in the early 1960s. In contrast to the policymakers and intellectuals who promoted the image of the United States as the first new nation, those who imagined African Americans as an internal colony embraced a broad definition of colonialism that included cultural domination, spatial segregation, and racialized economic inequality, rejecting a definition that focused solely on political sovereignty.

Two political languages, then, arose in the late 1950s and early 1960s as competing ways of reckoning with the relationship of the United States to global decolonization: one depicted the United States as the first new nation, the other portrayed it as a principal site of internal colonialism. For many Americans, from white social scientists and Kennedy administration

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,” December 14, 1960 <<http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>>, accessed March 5, 2018.

officials to black activists and intellectuals, the relationship between American history and governance and the global system of colonialism became central to the political culture of the Kennedy era. The development of a vocabulary of internal colonialism, furthermore, reflected the beginnings of an important shift in black political thought and helped set the stage for the much more contentious politics of colonial comparison in the Black Power era.

Federalism and Pluralism in the New Nations

Ideas about constitutional design, national sovereignty, and civic values pervaded the first new nation discourse. Leading modernization theorists were divided on the relative primacy of economic growth, political structures, and cultural values in the transition to what they saw as modern society, and American elites both inside and outside government saw the relationship between formal institutions and cultural values as the key to the establishment of stable polities in postcolonial societies. The relationship was particularly important to Seymour Martin Lipset, whose book *The First New Nation* was the most sustained and prominent attempt to elaborate the relevance of the political structure of the early United States—and not just its revolutionary heritage—to the decolonizing world.

Lipset grew up in New York and graduated from City College in 1943. After he was rejected by the Selective Service for nearsightedness, Lipset entered the graduate program in sociology at Columbia University, where he studied with Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld.²¹ Like many intellectuals in New York of his generation, Lipset was a Trotskyite in his youth, but his exposure to German sociologist Robert Michels's *Political Parties* (1911) influenced his gradual abandonment of Marxist politics. Michels argued that there was an “iron law of

²¹ For information on Lipset's early career and influences, see Seymour Martin Lipset, “Steady Work: An Academic Memoir,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 22 (1996): 1–27.

oligarchy”: that the internal structure of all parties and organizations, regardless of their ideological orientation, would be oligarchical.²² Lipset’s early scholarship was driven by the questions that Michels’s work raised, as well as the perennial question of why socialism had not succeeded in the United States. His first two books focused on the internal democracy of trade unions and the comparative development of socialism in the United States and Canada.²³ By the late 1950s, he had built a reputation as an expert in the sociology of both political parties and the organizations of civil society.

After moving to the University of California at Berkeley in 1956, Lipset began to consider the question of political modernization, chairing a group of social scientists devoted to investigating the Third World. In his own recounting, his new interest in the decolonizing world grew out of a longstanding interest in the comparative political analysis of socialism. As he put it, his “concern for the failure of social democracy or the conditions for the success of socialism was in a sense transmuted into analyses of the transition to democracy in comparative perspective.”²⁴ Lipset’s 1960 book *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics* offered a first attempt to understand the conditions for political development in the decolonizing world.²⁵ In the closing chapter of *Political Man*, Lipset suggested that, if the ideological conflicts that had defined modern politics in the United States and Europe had been transfigured into a narrower contest over the management of mixed-economy welfare states, this state of affairs did not render ideology meaningless. The nations of the North Atlantic were not facing the “end of

²² Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (1915; repr., New York: The Free Press, 1968).

²³ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, A Study in Political Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* (New York: The Free Press, 1956).

²⁴ Lipset, “Steady Work,” 14.

²⁵ Lipset, “Steady Work,” 14. In short order, *Political Man* became the standard U.S. text in political sociology, and eventually it was translated into twenty languages.

ideology,” as some of Lipset’s interlocutors suggested, but rather its migration from the arena of domestic politics to the “larger political struggle in the world as a whole with its marginal constituencies, the underdeveloped states.”²⁶ While acknowledging that the nations of the North Atlantic should align with “radicals, probably socialists” in the decolonizing world in order to keep the “new nations” in the West’s Cold War camp, Lipset did not think the role of Western thinkers should be limited to picking sides.²⁷ Rather, he argued, analyses like his own, which sought “to clarify the operation of Western democracy in the mid-twentieth century,” might “contribute to the political battle in Asia and Africa.”²⁸ Rejecting a narrowly technocratic view of social science, Lipset saw the wholesale analysis of social and political development as a heroic task in the struggle for democracy in the global Cold War.

In the early 1960s, Lipset’s engagement with the decolonizing world grew. As a member of the program committee for the 1962 World Congress of Sociology, Lipset contributed to the decision to make “development” the focus of the conference, in keeping with efforts by both the United Nations and Kennedy to brand the 1960s the “decade of development.”²⁹ In the world of modernization and development theory, Lipset was a joiner, not a pioneer. Yet he believed that his expertise in the history of political parties and trade unions in the United States could be reframed in the terms of development and modernization that were sweeping his fields of sociology and political science. As he reflected at the 1962 conference, “perhaps the first new nation can contribute more than money to the latter-day ones; perhaps its development can show how revolutionary, equalitarian and populist values become incorporated into a stable

²⁶ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 415. For the paradigmatic statement of the “end of ideology” thesis, see Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).

²⁷ Lipset *Political Man*, 416.

²⁸ Lipset *Political Man*, 417.

²⁹ Lipset, “Steady Work,” 15.

nonauthoritarian polity.”³⁰ Insisting on the relevance of sweeping, historical comparison as complementary to narrow, technical analysis, Lipset further claimed that it ought to produce an appreciation of the scale of the challenges facing the decolonizing world. He took aim at those policymakers and intellectuals who “view[ed] with impatience the internal turmoil of new nations,” insisting that “a backward glance into our own past should destroy the notion that we proceeded easily toward the establishment of democratic political institutions.”³¹ Lipset argued that postcolonial states faced problems similar to those facing the early United States, from economic weakness and the absence of a unifying central authority to the divisions of a pluralistic society. All of these problems, Lipset argued, the United States had overcome only through a slow process of institutional development over the course of the early republic.

While Lipset claimed that the political institutions of the United States could serve as a model for the decolonizing world, he also suggested reasons why the new nations of the twentieth century might have difficulty achieving the same level of stability as the United States. These reasons, according to Lipset, were rooted less in an unequal international political economy than in cultural values. Like many modernization theorists, Lipset was influenced by Talcott Parsons’s emphasis on “value-orientations” as causal forces in social change.³² Expanding his account from the congress in his book *The First New Nation*, he argued that the “key values” of the United States, which “stem from our revolutionary origins,” are the values of “equality and achievement.”³³ The cultural emphasis in Lipset’s approach ultimately left little

³⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, “The United States – The First New Nation,” *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, Washington, D.C., 2–8 September, 1962*, Volume 3 (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1964), 308.

³¹ Lipset, “The United States – The First New Nation,” 309.

³² On the extensive influence of Parsons on modernization theory, see Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, 72–112.

³³ Lipset, *The First New Nation*, 2.

that appeared directly transferable from the experience of the early United States to the decolonizing world, where such values, in Lipset's mind, were not as well established.³⁴

Yet Lipset was not entirely pessimistic. If he perceived the "value-orientations" of postcolonial societies as incompatible with the full complement of American institutions, he envisioned federalism as a potentially transferable institutional form. He shared this belief with elements of the state policymaking apparatus, notably the State Department's Benjamin Gerig. Gerig had served in the mandates section of the League of Nations in the 1930s, and, as discussed in chapter 1, became the State Department's primary planner on questions of trusteeship during the Second World War. As one of the State Department's leading experts on colonialism and trusteeship, he worked after the war at the UN Trusteeship Council and eventually became director of the State Department's Office of Dependent Area Affairs.³⁵ Gerig insisted not only that the revolutionary birth of the United States was a "natural" source of the nation's contemporary policy, but that its early history, up to and including its civil war, further offered a lesson for "new states" about the dangers of secession and fragmentation.³⁶ A "federal system which balances a large degree of autonomy with effective centralized government," Gerig claimed, could offer regions that might otherwise seek their own states a degree of self-determination short of national independence.³⁷

³⁴ As Nils Gilman notes, Lipset's pessimism about the transferability of U.S. institutions to the postcolonial world led him to turn to economic growth as the crucial factor that might inspire new "value-orientations" See Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, 62. On the ways in which modernization theory reified views of Euro-American culture as coherent, unique, and superior, see J. M. Blaut, "The Theory of Cultural Racism," *Antipode* 24, no. 4 (October 1992): 289–99.

³⁵ Very little scholarship exists on Gerig as an individual. A useful source for basic information about his career is Gerlof D. Homan, "Orie Benjamin Gerig: Mennonite Rebel, Peace Activist, International Civil Servant, and American Diplomat, 1894–1976," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* (1999): 751–82.

³⁶ Benjamin Gerig, "United States Attitude on the Colonial Question," p. 1, folder 25, box 1, Benjamin Gerig Papers.

³⁷ Benjamin Gerig, "United States Attitude on the Colonial Question," p. 2, folder 25, box 1, Benjamin Gerig Papers.

Whereas Gerig saw federalism as a way to provide a kind of autonomy without nationhood to groups that challenged a new state's authority, Lipset imagined other advantages. Federalism, to him, offered a way of managing racial and ethnic pluralism by creating a cross-cutting source of division. Democracy was only sustainable, in Lipset's mind, if social differences of class, race, religion, and language were not the only, or even the primary, sources of citizens' allegiances and political mobilizations. "Democracy needs cleavage within linguistic or religious groups, not between them. But where such divisions do not exist, federalism seems to serve democracy well."³⁸ Federalism was a means of producing difference along a new axis, in order to ensure that other social differences did not determine the political alignments in a new polity.³⁹

Some anticolonial leaders in Africa and the Caribbean embraced the idea that the federal system of the United States could serve as a useful model for the decolonizing world, but they often took from the American experience very different lessons than American academics and policymakers hoped. Both Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, and Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, looked to the federal system of the early United States as an example in their own attempts to build postcolonial federations among newly independent states in West Africa and the Caribbean. For Nkrumah and Williams, the federal system of the United States was not only an intellectual interest but an inspiration for concrete projects of federation in the decolonizing world.⁴⁰

³⁸ Lipset, *Political Man*, 92.

³⁹ Political development theorist William Nisbet Chambers, another figure who promoted the image of the United States as the "first new nation," argued that the two-party system played a similar role, as the two large, national parties served "to contain the forces of pluralism" and to "set a pattern for a responsible opposition." William Nisbet Chambers, *Political Parties in a New Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 14.

⁴⁰ The following discussion draws on Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 110–21.

In 1956, after years of anticolonial struggle, Caribbean political leaders agreed with the British colonial office to establish provisions for a West Indian Federation that would rule independently over ten British colonies beginning in January 1958. This short-lived federation disbanded in 1961 in large part due to disputes between Williams, who sought a more centralized federal state, and Jamaican Prime Minister Norman Manley, who insisted on greater national autonomy within the federal structure.⁴¹ Williams's arguments for the federation, both before its creation and during its existence, often relied on his understanding of the federalism of the early United States. The decision of the colonies to unite in 1776, in Williams's reading, enabled them to overcome their peripheral economic status in relation to their former colonial power, a lesson that remained relevant to the anticolonial movements of the mid-twentieth century: "The colonies were condemned to an agricultural specialization, as they still are today in so many parts of the world, except where the necessities of modern production require the refining of oil and the mining of gold."⁴² Federation, in this account, offered a way for colonies to build greater power in the international political economy.

Across the Atlantic, Nkrumah and Ahmed Sékou Touré, the President of Guinea, formed the Union of African States in 1958, after Guinea became the only French colony to vote against joining the reorganized French Community in a referendum organized by Charles de Gaulle.⁴³ Mali, another former French colony, joined the federation in 1960. The Ghana-Guinea-Mali union had limited power and no formal administrative body, but it represented a practical step toward Nkrumah's overarching political goal: greater political unification on the African continent for the sake of staving off continued economic domination of newly independent

⁴¹ Jason Parker, *Brother's Keeper: The United States, Race and Empire in the British Caribbean, 1937–1962* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 140–60.

⁴² Quoted in Getachew, *Worldmaking against Empire*, 111.

⁴³ On the French Community referendum, see Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*, 310–24.

states. Although this federation also disbanded, in 1963, Nkrumah continued to assert the necessity of such a political union. In his book *Africa Must Unite*, published in the same year, he drew an analogy between the economic conditions of contemporary Africa and the British colonies in North America in the eighteenth century. In both places and times, he claimed, “local industry was deliberately discouraged” by Great Britain, which sought to maintain its position as the industrial workhouse to which its colonial possessions supplied raw materials.⁴⁴ Ghanaian writer Tetteh Amakwata, in the state-run journal *Voice of Africa*, explored the connection provocatively. In the 1770s, the “internal peace” of the American colonies was “threatened by external imperialism.”⁴⁵ Drawing on the title of Nkrumah’s book, Amakwata argued that through the experience of defying British attempts to assert political and economic control, “the American States saw that they could not survive by living separately and managing their own affairs independently. America Must Unite.”⁴⁶ The federal system that brought together the American colonies into a single political and economic unit was attractive as a model for a state seeking to overcome the problem of holding formal, political sovereignty while remaining economically dependent on one’s former colonial rulers.

Postcolonial leaders thus shared with some U.S. policymakers and intellectuals the belief that American federalism was a useful and potentially transferable model for the constitutional design of newly independent states. Nkrumah’s and Williams’s embrace of this element of the first new nation discourse, however, reflected an understanding of the definition of colonialism and of the central problems facing the decolonizing world that diverged sharply from the priorities of their American counterparts. Both figures discounted the salience of internal

⁴⁴ Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (London: Heinemann, 1963), 27.

⁴⁵ Tetteh Amakwata, “America Must Remember Her Past,” *Voice of Africa*, November–December 1965, 8.

⁴⁶ Amakwata, “America Must Remember Her Past,” 9.

pluralism, whether within their own states or in the regions they sought to unify politically through federations. Rather, both Nkrumah and Williams turned to federation for external reasons: to strengthen the economic and political positions of their states in an international society that was defined by hierarchy even after formal decolonization.⁴⁷ If postcolonial elites agreed with U.S. thinkers and policymakers that the federal system established by the “first new nation” was something to emulate, they saw different possibilities in the political form. Federation was an answer not to the problem of pluralism, but to the problem of neocolonialism—a form of imperial domination that implicated the “first new nation” itself.⁴⁸

“In All Its Manifestations”: Defining Colonialism amid the End of Empires

Debates about the applicability of American political institutions to newly independent states were intertwined with contestations over the meaning of colonialism at the height of decolonization. The scope of what should and should not be labeled “colonial” was a matter not only of academic interest but of intense political concern in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Conflicts over the meaning of colonialism in this period were paralleled by the rising popularity and shifting meanings of the term “decolonization.” As historians Todd Shepard and Stuart Ward have shown, many European elites began to portray decolonization as an irresistible, world-historical force in order to deflect blame for the loss of their colonial empires.⁴⁹ Ward further

⁴⁷ Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 120–21.

⁴⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas, Nelson, and Sons, Ltd., 1965).

⁴⁹ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), especially chapter 2; and Stuart Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization,” *Past and Present*, no. 230 (February 2016): 227–60. Ward also intriguingly suggests that Frantz Fanon’s embrace of the term “decolonization” in *The Wretched of the Earth*—after he had, in earlier writings, identified it with a “European-inspired programme of incremental change designed to absorb the pressures of anti-colonialism at a minimal cost to metropolitan influence and prestige”—prompted a radical shift in the word’s associations. Ward, “The European Provenance of Decolonization,” 254.

claims that many anticolonial actors in the colonies were long suspicious of the term “decolonization,” as it suggested a process directed from the metropole. At the same time, anticolonial thinkers and statesmen were invested in constructing their own definitions of colonialism as they worked to dismantle it.

At the Bandung conference in 1955, twenty-nine Asian and African states declared themselves against “colonialism in all its manifestations,” a phrase that was repeated in the UN General Assembly’s Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in December 1960.⁵⁰ The phrase captured well several ambiguities of the moment. “All its manifestations” could include both formal Soviet rule in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and continuing forms of political and economic influence short of formal rule by the United States and its Cold War allies in newly independent states.⁵¹ Even before 1960, which saw seventeen countries gain independence in Africa alone, American diplomats had identified the lexicon of empire as an arena in which U.S. foreign policy goals were at stake. State Department official Francis T. Williamson noted that decolonization presented a “semantic” problem for the United States and sought a new language that might “avoid [. . .] the emotionalism and partisanship surrounding the word ‘anti-colonial.’”⁵² While some figures joined Williamson in objecting to the term colonialism altogether, more common among liberal intellectuals and Kennedy administration policymakers was a narrow definition of colonialism, which they understood as a strictly political system that had the unfortunate but largely unintended effects of producing

⁵⁰ “Final Communique of the Asian-African Conference,” in Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference*, 82; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,” December 14, 1960 <<http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>>, accessed March 5, 2018.

⁵¹ On the U.S. diplomatic effort to influence the Third World to see Soviet expansion as a form of colonialism, see Jason Parker, “Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era,” *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 5 (November 2006): 867–92.

⁵² Francis T. Williamson, review of *The Idea of Colonialism*, ed. Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry W. Hazard, *American Historical Review* 64, no. 2 (January 1959): 336.

racial and cultural hierarchies. The image of the United States as the first new nation proved useful to this ideological project.

The writings of Rupert Emerson, the foremost expert on decolonization among U.S. political scientists, were representative of American elites' understanding of colonialism as defined fundamentally by alien political rule and only incidentally by international hierarchy or racial domination. Emerson had studied with British Fabian socialist Harold Laski at the London School of Economics in the interwar period and served in both the Foreign Economic Administration and the Department of State in the 1940s.⁵³ Prior to the late 1950s, his area of scholarly focus was Southeast Asia. Emerson combined sympathy for the movements for independence in Asia and Africa with an admiration for the European nationalists of the nineteenth century, for whom “the virtue of nationalism lay at least as much in the belief that it would be a bridge to the brotherhood of man as in the calculation of the benefits it would bring to the particular nation concerned.”⁵⁴ Influenced by Laski's conception of pluralism, he hoped that anticolonial nationalism would ultimately be tempered into a liberal internationalism and a plural world government.⁵⁵

In order to make such a transition possible, Emerson thought it particularly important to decouple the problem of colonialism as alien rule from the problem of racial hierarchy. Emerson recognized that contests over the meaning of colonialism would become increasingly salient as it became delegitimized and as newly independent nations gained a greater voice on the world stage. He sought to defend a narrow definition: “It is idle to think that the well-established

⁵³ I would like to thank Thomas Meaney for sharing an unpublished paper on Emerson, which provided essential information about his early career.

⁵⁴ Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 387.

⁵⁵ For more on Laski's influence on transatlantic debates about international institutions, see Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*, chapter 8.

category of colonies [. . .] can be merged with the other comparable evils of mankind.”⁵⁶ Instead, he defined colonialism as “the establishment and maintenance for an extended time of rule over an alien people which is separate from and subordinate to the ruling power.”⁵⁷ Postcolonial rulers and citizens were more likely to be seduced by the dangerous elements of nationalism when they identified their former rulers with ideologies of racial superiority and practices of racial discrimination, and they were more likely to overreach in their criticisms of capitalism and “the West” when they identified both with a project of asserting and protecting a global system of white supremacy.⁵⁸ For this reason, Emerson was sharply critical of the white minority regimes in the settler colonies of Kenya, Algeria, the Rhodesias, and South Africa, which, he argued, lent credence to these dangerous linkages. Although he emphasized that “an African nationalism which seeks to get its own back through an expropriation and expulsion of Europeans on the Indonesian model would lead to painful consequences for all concerned,” Emerson nonetheless eagerly anticipated the end of the political domination of white minorities in those states.⁵⁹ Even in his support for majority rule in settler colonies, however, Emerson rendered the problem of white settlers as the leading edge of the problem of racial and ethnic pluralism in postcolonial states. White settlers posed a problem, Emerson argued, because their existence revealed “the lack of that national homogeneity which any simple version of self-determination presupposes,” not because their privileges represented an extreme manifestation of the racial logic underlying the entire colonial project.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Emerson, *From Empire to Nation*, 310.

⁵⁷ Rupert Emerson, “Colonialism,” Rupert Emerson Papers, box 1, Harvard University Archives.

⁵⁸ Emerson, *From Empire to Nation*, 370, 382.

⁵⁹ Rupert Emerson, “The Character of American Interests in Africa,” in *The United States and Africa*, ed. Walter Goldschmidt (New York: The American Assembly, 1958).

⁶⁰ Emerson, *From Empire to Nation*, 341. Lorenzo Veracini emphasizes the ambiguity in how settler colonies were imagined in relation to other forms of colonial rule amid the anticolonial uprisings of the 1960s, arguing that “settler colonialism was seen as fundamentally characterised by an inherent ambivalence, an ambivalence that required that settler colonial phenomena be considered simultaneously *part of* and *distinct from* colonialism at large.” See

Many African American journalists and intellectuals agreed with Emerson that European settler colonies in Africa were particularly volatile examples of colonialism's potential for racial violence, although they interpreted the relationship between the settler colonies and other forms of colonial rule differently. Several events in 1960—the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa and Charles de Gaulle's rejection of a ceasefire in Algeria above all—brought this concern to the forefront of black intellectual life. St. Clair Drake identified the settler colonies as crucial test cases for the United States in the Cold War struggle for Third World loyalties: "If South Africa and the other settler areas are sought after to join into military bastions for the West, all the African people will be turning away from the West in revulsion."⁶¹ Similarly, Drake's former coauthor Horace Cayton, then serving as foreign affairs correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, turned the attention of his weekly column to Algeria for months on end in 1960, highlighting the potential danger *pied noir* "extremists" posed to the possibility of a peace settlement centered around Algerian independence.⁶² To these figures, however, the settler colonies were primarily instructive as acute demonstrations of the racial logic and the potential for racial violence embedded in the colonial project writ large. Moreover, the settler colonies in Africa exemplified the continuities between the colonial system now deemed anachronistic in world governance and the racial order of the United States itself, where the ideological language of the first new nation presented an image of the country as both prototypically modern and structurally and ideologically aligned with the decolonizing world.

Lorenzo Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism': Career of a Concept," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 313–33, quoted at 320.

⁶¹ St. Clair Drake, "Why Ghana's Nkrumah Supports Lumumba In Congo," *New Journal and Guide*, October 15, 1960, 19.

⁶² Horace Cayton, "World At Large," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 13, March 5, and March 26, 1960.

Although Emerson's *From Empire to Nation* was written for academic audiences, some readers saw in it an approach to the decolonizing world that policymakers should follow. Modernization theorist David Apter, an expert on the politics of Ghana, proclaimed that "it ought to be a guidebook for a new frontiersman."⁶³ While Emerson's channels of policy influence were never quite so direct as Apter hoped, his analytical treatment of colonialism and racism as only incidentally linked ultimately came to support the public diplomacy of the Kennedy administration. The common understanding in the decolonizing world of colonialism and racism as inherently tied together posed a problem for U.S. policymakers, who insisted that Soviet control over Eastern Europe was the more severe and pressing instance of colonialism than European control over Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

John F. Kennedy himself acknowledged links between domestic racial inequality and global imperialism in his discussions of civil rights. He regularly brought up his interest and experience in African affairs and his sympathy for anticolonial movements in his attempts to win the support of African American voters during the 1960 campaign.⁶⁴ In the sphere of foreign policy, on the other hand, he and his advisers often sought to disavow the connection between European colonial rule and the U.S. racial order. Even in his famous speech about the Algerian war on the Senate floor in 1957, which helped him build a reputation as a friend to the decolonizing world, he reserved some of his strongest expressions of concern that "Western

⁶³ David E. Apter, Review of Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation*, *The Journal of Politics* 23, no. 3 (August 1961): 590–91.

⁶⁴ James H. Meriwether, "'Worth a Lot of Negro Votes': Black Voters, Africa, and the 1960 Presidential Campaign," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 3 (December 2008): 737–63. See also Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 155–57.

imperialism” was viewed as a more significant problem than “Soviet imperialism” in the eyes of much of the world.⁶⁵

As president, Kennedy pursued a policy of engagement with newly independent nations that were non-aligned in the Cold War. This approach involved a reformulation in U.S. foreign policy away from the posture of deference to European powers in their colonial conflicts that had characterized the Eisenhower administration.⁶⁶ Other elements of this policy of engagement, however, were deeply in the ongoing global debates surrounding the definition of colonialism. Kennedy’s expansions of foreign aid packages to the Third World (which moved well beyond what was first authorized under Truman’s Point Four program), including significant commitments for police assistance designed to quell rebellious activity, raised new accusations of American neocolonialism.⁶⁷ Finally, Kennedy’s foreign policy also relied to a significant degree on presidential diplomacy. Kennedy met personally with many heads of state from the postcolonial world during his tenure, and in some cases successfully built amicable relationships with them.⁶⁸ In these encounters, in particular, the notion that deep commonalities connected the colonial order Kennedy seemed at pains to reject and the racial order of the United States posed a problem for the Kennedy administration’s Cold War strategy.

G. Mennen Williams, Kennedy’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, noted this issue after making three trips to the African continent in the first year of the administration.

⁶⁵ “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy in the Senate, Washington, D.C., July 2, 1957,” box 784, Legislation, Series 09, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy, <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-states-senate-imperialism-19570702>>

⁶⁶ Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson and the Nonaligned World*, 94–134.

⁶⁷ On the differences between Kennedy’s and Truman’s foreign aid policies, see McVety, *Enlightened Aid*, 161–94; on police assistance, see Schrader, *Badges without Borders*, 79–112.

⁶⁸ Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy’s Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Vanni Pettinà, “Whose Revolution? López Mateos, Kennedy’s Mexican Visit, and the Alliance for Progress,” in *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy* ed. Cyrus Schayegh (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 168–82.

Williams had been chosen for his position in part because of his support for civil rights at home and his popularity among black voters in his home state of Michigan. Once inside the administration, he aligned with Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles in seeking to make Africa a more central concern of U.S. foreign policy.⁶⁹ Williams simultaneously worked to make the administration take Jim Crow more seriously as an impediment to their foreign policy agenda and sought to convince African Americans that they must separate the issues of colonialism and racism in order to see the threat of Soviet imperialism clearly. “Colonialism, for many Africans, doesn’t mean domination of one people by another, but the domination of black men by white men,” he claimed in a speech at the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity in Chicago: “Such definitions distort and obscure our whole fight for freedom and our struggle against communism.”⁷⁰ Williams’s appeal, later published in *Negro Digest*, urged African Americans to view colonialism in a narrowly political light in an effort to secure their loyalty to American foreign policy in the Cold War. As it came in the midst of a speech calling for “racial peace” at home, however, his entreaty betrayed a deeper anxiety about the separability of domestic and foreign spheres of racial governance.⁷¹ Indeed, Williams delivered his speech at a moment when African Americans were rethinking the nature and meaning of colonialism themselves.

African Americans and the Scope of Colonialism

Between the late 1950s and the middle of the 1960s, many black intellectuals began envisioning the relationship between decolonization and the black freedom struggle in a new way. In the late

⁶⁹ Thomas J. Noer, *Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 247.

⁷⁰ G. Mennen Williams, “Why Racial Peace is Imperative,” *Negro Digest* 11, no. 12 (October 1962): 30.

⁷¹ On the ongoing conceptual and practical slippage between “internal” and “external” racial frontiers, see, especially, Nikhil Pal Singh, *Race and America’s Long War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017); and Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

1950s, the relationship was primarily debated in terms of exemplarity and inspiration. Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed this view in a sermon delivered after his return from the independence ceremonies in Ghana in 1957. The anticolonial movement there, in his estimation, served as an example from which black Americans might draw inspiration, strategic lessons, and philosophical reinforcement in their parallel, but conceptually distinct, struggle for freedom.⁷² By the middle of the 1960s, however, an increasing number of black intellectuals—including, on occasion, King—began to describe American racism as a form of colonialism. This shift had several crucial effects. First, it provided a new way for black thinkers and activists to call into question the self-image of the United States as a liberal democracy by associating it not with the vanguard of newly independent nation-states but with the recently discredited form of rule these states had thrown off. Second, it portrayed the struggles of African Americans in the United States and those of colonized peoples in Africa and Asia as part of the same global movement, offering civil rights and Black Power groups who sought to build material connections across borders a new language of transnational solidarity not reliant on older notions of the “darker world.” Third, it presented a novel social theory of the origins and operation of racial hierarchy in the United States. The remainder of this chapter explores the beginnings of the shift by some African American intellectuals and activists toward an understanding of their status in the United States as a form of colonial status, and it illuminates how this shift operated in part as a response to the competing way of thinking represented in the first new nation discourse. Finally, it suggests that these debates in the Kennedy era conditioned the more contentious politics of

⁷² Martin Luther King, Jr., “‘The Birth of a New Nation,’ Sermon Delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church,” April 7, 1957, in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume IV: Symbol of the Movement, January 1957–December 1958*, ed. Clayborne Carson et. al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 155–67.

colonial comparison that accompanied the rise of the Black Power movement in the latter half of the decade, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

The emergence of civil rights as a problem for Cold War foreign policy and the recognition that decolonization would play a transformative role in reshaping American racial politics were not simultaneous events.⁷³ Harold Isaacs, who was by the late 1950s associated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies, a leading center for modernization theory, observed this asynchrony. In his influential book *The New World of Negro Americans*, Isaacs commented that, when he began his research in 1957, "it had become common [. . .] to hear about the effect of American race problems on American standing in the world, but much less common to give heed to the reverse effect, that is, the way in which changes in the world were forcing changes in the American society."⁷⁴ By the time of the book's publication in 1963, the "reverse effect" had become equally important. The Pan-Africanist scholar and activist John Henrik Clarke located the moment of transition precisely, at least for his own experience. The protests by African Americans at the United Nations in February, 1961, after the assassination of Congolese President Patrice Lumumba, marked the moment when "the plight of the Africans still fighting to throw off the yoke of colonialism and the plight of the Afro-Americans, still waiting for a rich, strong and boastful nation to redeem the promise of freedom and citizenship became one and the same."⁷⁵ The precepts of modernization theory filtered into Clarke's understanding of the relationship between African Americans and Africans as well. Both groups, in his mind, faced the dual challenge of restoring their cultures to a place of

⁷³ The classic exploration of the emergence of civil rights as a concern for Cold War foreign policymakers is Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2000; repr., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁷⁴ Harold R. Isaacs, *The New World of Negro Americans* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), x.

⁷⁵ John Henrik Clarke, "The New Afro-American Nationalism," *Freedomways* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1961): 285.

respect and admiration after centuries of Euro-American cultural hegemony while simultaneously adjusting these cultures to the industrialized world.⁷⁶ Africans were “looking back and reevaluating the worth of old African ways of life, while concurrently looking forward to the building of modern and industrialized African states,” a dualism that was “basically the same” for African Americans.⁷⁷ The “new Afro-American nationalists” in organizations such as the Nation of Islam and the New Alajo Party in Harlem “feel that the Afro-American constitutes what is tantamount to an exploited colony within a sovereign nation.”⁷⁸ Clarke’s argument and phraseology reflected a growing sense among African Americans that decolonization offered not only an inspiring example but a new framework for understanding American society.

Although the phrases “domestic colonialism” and “internal colonialism” had been used before, they would become keywords of black political thought only in the 1960s. In a speech during the Second World War, as mentioned in chapter 1, the philosopher Alain Locke argued that the United States’ attempts to lead the postwar peace settlement would be complicated by the fact that “we have internal colonies, as well as ghettos legal and illegal, and [. . .] the empires of the world have only the external, colonial analogue of what we have at home.”⁷⁹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the phrase began to spread more widely, popping up in discussions of racial inequality globally. Leo Marquard, a white South African liberal and president of Johannesburg’s influential Institute of Race Relations, in 1957 described apartheid as a system of

⁷⁶ Chapter 2 examines in greater detail the largely overlooked relationship between modernization theory and African American political thought in this period. See also Robert Vitalis, “The Lost World of Development Theory,” *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (December 2016): 1158–62.

⁷⁷ Clarke, “The New Afro-American Nationalism,” 291.

⁷⁸ Clarke, “The New Afro-American Nationalism,” 293, 295.

⁷⁹ Alain Locke, “Race in the Present World Crisis,” August 7, 1944, p. 3, folder 15, box 164–125, Alain LeRoy Locke Papers, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.

“internal colonialism” due to its political subjugation of the country’s black majority.⁸⁰ In the same year, the conservative African American journalist George Schuyler described African Americans as “an internal colony yearning for freedom and integration (but not autonomy) and wielding considerable political power in the USA.”⁸¹ The Senegalese poet and politician Léopold Sédar Senghor used the term when describing the danger of replacing formal colonial rule with tyrannical self-government. “What good is our independence,” he asked, “if it is only to imitate European totalitarianism, to replace external colonialism by domestic colonialism?”⁸² The phrase “internal colonialism” thus facilitated the articulation of ideas about spatial segregation, unequal citizenship, authoritarian rule after independence, and minority group power. Colonialism encompassed more than alien rule in each instance, even if the language of internal colonialism operated more as a fluid signifier than a fixed concept.

Internal or domestic colonialism emerged as a keyword in discussions of American racial hierarchy in the early 1960s largely through the writings of Harold Cruse. Cruse was born in 1916 in Petersburg, Virginia, and moved in his teenage years to New York, first to Queens and then to Harlem.⁸³ Drafted into the army at age 25 in 1941, he served in Africa and Italy for the duration of the war. According to Cruse’s autobiographical reflections, a personal experience serving in North Africa initially opened his eyes to the global dimensions of racial formation. After landing in Oran, Algeria, two Arab women stopped Cruse and a friend on the street and asked if they were Arabs. Cruse told them that they were not Arabs, but rather Americans. The

⁸⁰ Leo Marquard, *South Africa’s Colonial Policy: Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Council of the South African Institute of Race Relations in the Hiddingh Hall, Cape Town, on January 16, 1957* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1957).

⁸¹ George Schuyler, “Views and Reviews,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 23, 1957.

⁸² Léopold Sédar Senghor, *On African Socialism*, trans. Mercer Cook (1961; repr., New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 87.

⁸³ Van Gosse, “More than Just a Politician: Notes on the Life and Times of Harold Cruse,” in *Harold Cruse’s The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered*, ed. Jerry G. Watts (New York: Routledge, 2004), 19.

women “insisted that we were Arab *but didn’t know it because our fathers had been stolen from Africa many years ago.*”⁸⁴ This incident, in Cruse’s recollection, opened his eyes to his “ingrained provincialism about America.”⁸⁵ Whether exaggerated or not, this anecdote provoked Cruse to reconsider the national identity of African Americans in light of the global history of colonialism and the slave trade.

After the war, Cruse, a budding writer, became involved with the Communist Party in New York. In addition to writing plays, stories, and essays, he earned his living writing for the *Daily Worker* for several years in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The novelist and critic Julian Mayfield, a younger member of the New York left at that time, would later describe Cruse as an “up-and-coming Marxist theoretician” in this period.⁸⁶ For reasons both political and personal, which remain not entirely well-explained, Cruse broke from the Communist Party in 1952.⁸⁷ As for so many writers in the Cold War U.S., this split had a defining influence on Cruse’s politics.⁸⁸ Cruse spent much of the 1950s in Greenwich Village, moving between periods of unemployment and jobs in retail and service work while writing scripts for plays and musicals, nearly all of which went unproduced. Although the difficulties he faced in finding success as a black playwright would go on to influence his later advocacy of greater black control over the means of cultural production, for much of the decade, political concerns appeared marginal in his writing.⁸⁹ Still, Cruse’s departure from the Communist Party developed into a thoroughgoing animosity toward black Americans who made common cause with it. By the middle of the

⁸⁴ Harold Cruse, “Les Noirs et L’idée de la Révolte,” in *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: William Morrow, 1967), 171. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁵ Cruse, “Les Noirs et L’idée de la Révolte,” 171.

⁸⁶ Julian Mayfield, “Crisis or Crusade?” *Negro Digest* 17, no. 8 (June 1968): 14.

⁸⁷ Cruse himself emphasized his fight for greater recognition of black nationalism within the Party, although Van Gosse, the scholar who has written most on the biographical details of Cruse’s life, suggests that this account may elide other factors. See Gosse, “More than Just a Politician,” 20. No full-length biography of Cruse yet exists.

⁸⁸ Gosse, “More than Just a Politician,” 19.

⁸⁹ Gosse, “More than Just a Politician,” 21–22.

1950s, he was calling on black intellectuals to abandon their “sacred cows,” particularly “those loud and wrong voices from the leftwing who have gotten themselves so tied up with the white folks’ version of Marxism and the Negro Question that they can’t think straight on Negro affairs anymore.”⁹⁰

After the frustrations of his commercially unsuccessful playwrighting efforts in the 1950s, Cruse shifted his focus to writing essays of political and social criticism. His elaboration of domestic colonialism as a framework for understanding the American racial order developed out of this turn to criticism. It also emerged from a period of intensifying international engagement between 1957 and 1960. Briefly, Cruse became affiliated with the American Society for American Culture, which was established in 1958 as the U.S. arm of the Society for African Culture in Paris. After his departure from the Communist Party, Cruse “transferred [his] cultural loyalties in th[e] direction” of AMSAC, and he warned the AMSAC staff to avoid collaborations with Communists, who, Cruse claimed, were “too aggressive to be allowed to wield influence behind the scenes with no opposition.”⁹¹ Cruse wrote an essay entitled “An Afro-American’s Cultural Views,” for *Présence Africaine*, the official journal of the Society for African Culture in Paris.⁹² Here, he articulated an early version of an argument that would pervade his writing throughout the 1960s: that African Americans needed to develop a cultural front to place

⁹⁰ Harold Cruse to *The Amsterdam News*, February 5, 1956, folder 6, box 2, Harold Cruse Papers, Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.

⁹¹ Harold Cruse to James T. Harris, Executive Secretary of AMSAC, folder 6, box 2, Harold Cruse Papers. Given AMSAC’s covert funding from the CIA through the Congress for Cultural Freedom, such a warning was surely unnecessary, but it exhibited the degree to which Cruse believed that black organizations must disassociate from the organized left. See Mary Helen Washington, *The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 249–52.

⁹² *Présence Africaine*, founded by the Senegalese writer Alioune Diop, was a principal organ for writers associated with the Négritude literary movement, and was the central publication for writing on African and African American culture and politics in France. See V. Y. Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947–1987* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Négritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

alongside their political struggle, and that the integrationist outlooks of civil rights leaders were preventing such a development.⁹³

Cruse's argument relied on his explicit comparison of African Americans with nations struggling against formal colonialism, a reference that both spoke to the audience of *Présence Africaine* and indicated Cruse's own developing thinking on colonial affairs. Cruse insisted that, although "when one thinks of the liberation of oppressed peoples one assumes a rebirth and a flowering of that people's native 'culture'," in the American case, "there has been no cultural upsurge commensurate with our stepped up struggle for political and social equality."⁹⁴ Cruse's explanation for this supposed failing reflected the influence of E. Franklin Frazier, the Howard University sociologist whose critical examination of the black middle class in his book *Black Bourgeoisie* was published earlier in 1957. Cruse made a parallel argument to Frazier's critique of black leaders for abandoning what he saw as an internally coherent black vernacular culture. Cruse emphasized Harlem and the cities of the North as the geographical center of the "Afro-American traditions in a group sense," rather than the rural South, which had occupied Frazier's attention.⁹⁵ The reaction of certain black leaders to anticolonial struggles indicated, to Cruse, their failure to understand the problems black Americans faced. For instance, the response of Martin Luther King, Jr., to Egypt's independence struggle, in which he associated the "new order of freedom and justice" that emerged from the fall of colonialism with a "promised land of cultural integration," exemplified the problem.⁹⁶ To Cruse, the emphasis on "*cultural*

⁹³ Merve Fejzula demonstrates the importance of the literary-cultural philosophy of Négritude, most often associated with Francophone intellectuals of Africa and the Caribbean, to Cruse's development of this argument. See Merve Fejzula, "Negritude and Black Cultural Citizenship across Senegal, Nigeria, and the United States, 1945–66," (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2019), 137–39, 154–57.

⁹⁴ Cruse, "An Afro-American's Cultural Views," *Présence Africaine* 17 (December 1957–January 1958): 31, 34.

⁹⁵ E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957); Cruse, "An Afro-American's Cultural Views," 35.

⁹⁶ Martin Luther King, Jr., "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," *Phylon Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1957): 26.

integration” misrepresented the nature of colonial revolt and indicated that “it is we Afro-Americans who are out of step with the rest of the colonial world.”⁹⁷

The view that black American cultural politics should take its cues from anticolonial struggle generated friction within AMSAC. The year after the publication of “An Afro-American’s Cultural Views,” Cruse shared the stage with J. Saunders Redding at the Second Annual AMSAC Conference in New York.⁹⁸ Redding attacked Cruse’s essay, proclaiming that black Americans, unlike the “new nations” on the continent, “are not a *people* in Cruse’s sense of the word.”⁹⁹ Seeing their situation as analogous to that of the decolonizing world would only “cut American Negroes off” from their American heritage.¹⁰⁰ Redding’s full response, published a year after the conference in the *New Leader*, insisted that Cruse’s attempt “not only to link but to equate the American Negro’s struggle for full citizenship with the African Negro’s struggle for political independence as the ultimate goal of race nationalism” was a sign of his “total blindness to the truth.”¹⁰¹ This conflict with Redding pushed Cruse to break with AMSAC entirely. But it only inspired him further to pursue his attempt to envision black American culture in a colonial frame.¹⁰²

In July 1960, two months after Redding’s *New Leader* essay was published, Cruse traveled to Cuba with a delegation of black writers under the auspices of the Fair Play to Cuba Committee (FPCC). Richard Gibson, a journalist working for CBS and president of the New York chapter of the FPCC, organized this group, which included Robert F. Williams, LeRoi

⁹⁷ Cruse, “An Afro-American’s Cultural Views,” 40.

⁹⁸ Jackson, *The Indignant Generation*, 467–69.

⁹⁹ J. Saunders Redding, “Negro Writing in America,” *The New Leader* (May 1960): 8.

¹⁰⁰ Redding, “Negro Writing in America,” 8.

¹⁰¹ Redding, “Negro Writing in America,” 8.

¹⁰² Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 21.

Jones (later Amiri Baraka), John Henrik Clarke, and Julian Mayfield.¹⁰³ Two months later, Cruse helped organize the grand reception for Fidel Castro at the Theresa Hotel in Harlem.¹⁰⁴ Although sympathetic to Castro, Cruse's Cuban engagements did not motivate him toward more overt political activity.¹⁰⁵ Rather, these experiences prompted him to think differently about the relation between Third World nationalism, revolutionary ideologies of the West, and the place of African Americans within the U.S. social system.

In several essays following his departure from the AMSAC fold and his trip to Cuba, Cruse elaborated his vision of the relationship between African Americans and the decolonizing world. The image of the United States as the first new nation featured prominently in Cruse's work as a foil for his developing understanding of African Americans as subjects of a regime of domestic colonialism. In the midst of decolonization, even the revolutionary traditions of the West had lost their force, as "the Americanism of 1776 becomes an expression of a frightening reactionary military might in 1960," while "the symbol of French liberty of 1798 becomes the barrier to national independence in the hills of Algeria."¹⁰⁶ Far from serving as an inspiration to the decolonizing world, the American Revolution and the early history of the United States were, to the world of the early 1960s, symbols of the exhaustion of the revolutionary traditions of the West as a whole.

Beyond his rejection of the anticolonial self-image of the United States, Cruse elaborated an understanding of American racial hierarchy as parallel to the colonial system. While he

¹⁰³ Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America, and the Making of a New Left* (New York: Verso, 1993), 147.

¹⁰⁴ Young, *Soul Power*, 8–9.

¹⁰⁵ This response differentiated Cruse from two of the younger members of the FPCC delegation, Robert F. Williams and LeRoi Jones, both of whom sought to adapt the tactics and strategies of the Cuban Revolution to the U.S. black freedom struggle directly. On this divergence, see Young, *Soul Power*, 18–53. Cruse was nine years older than Williams and eighteen years older than Jones, who was only 25 at the time of this trip to Cuba. The importance of this generational difference is noted in Gosse, "More than Just a Politician," 20.

¹⁰⁶ Harold Cruse, "Cuba and the North American Negro," p. 43, folder 1, box 4, Harold Cruse Papers.

claimed that the United States was “never a ‘colonial’ power . . . in the strictest sense of the word”—ignoring both the nation’s history as a settler empire and its territorial holdings in the Caribbean, Pacific, and elsewhere—Cruse suggested that “the nature of economic, cultural and political exploitation common to the Negro experience in the U.S. differs from pure colonialism only in that the Negro maintains a formal kind of halfway citizenship within the nation’s geographical boundaries.”¹⁰⁷ Cruse went further in his 1962 essay, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” which he published in the fledgling New Left journal *Studies on the Left*. There, Cruse contended that decolonization demanded a complete realignment in the way that African Americans should conceive of their status within the United States. He rejected the frameworks of analysis promoted by both the Marxist left and the civil rights leadership. “The Negro,” Cruse wrote, was not simply an exploited worker or a second-class citizen of American democracy but rather “the subject of domestic colonialism.”¹⁰⁸ This status reflected the connected histories of the slave trade and European colonial expansion, which meant that “from the beginning, the American Negro has existed as a colonial being.”¹⁰⁹ Even after Emancipation, in Cruse’s narrative, African Americans only attained the status of “semi-dependent[s],” not recognized as “an integral part of the American nation.”¹¹⁰

Scholars have largely considered Cruse’s arguments in “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American” in relation to his evolving thinking about race, Marxism, and cultural nationalism, which will be further discussed in chapter 5.¹¹¹ Less often remarked upon is the

¹⁰⁷ Harold Cruse, “Negro Nationalism’s New Wave,” in *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 69. On the underappreciated importance of the territorial empire of the United States, see Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019).

¹⁰⁸ Harold Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” in *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 74.

¹⁰⁹ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 76.

¹¹⁰ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 76, 77.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Young, *Soul Power*, 18–53; Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders*, 3–41; Joseph, *Waiting ‘Til the Midnight Hour*, 30–31; Nikhil Pal Singh, “Negro Exceptionalism: The Antinomies of Harold Cruse,” in *Harold Cruse’s The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered*, 73–91.

essay's conception of colonialism itself. Cruse's broad conception of colonialism intervened in a global discourse about the scope and nature of colonial rule that reached a peak of intensity at the moment of his writing.¹¹² Although he described his views as contrary to the analyses offered by the Marxist left, Cruse's formulation was clearly influenced by the endorsement of "self-determination in the black belt" by the Communist Party of his youth.¹¹³ Detached from any particular territory and looking beyond the questions of political sovereignty and alien rule, Cruse's conception of domestic colonialism depicted colonial status as one of legal subordination and, more importantly for him, of cultural degradation and racialized forms of economic exploitation. Cruse's language both reflected and contributed to the ongoing, international debate over the semantics of colonialism during the period of decolonization. At the same time that Kennedy administration officials such as G. Mennen Williams were invested in narrowing the term's meaning in order to gain African American support for the United States' Cold War efforts, Cruse sought to widen it. Inflected by his experiences in Cuba and his interpretations of nationalist movements in Africa, Cruse's embrace of the language of colonialism primarily derived from his domestic political leanings. His dissatisfaction with prevailing political strategies and his hopes to reorient black politics away from what he saw as a narrow goal of desegregation, more than a deep engagement with anticolonial struggles, inspired his initial articulation of the idea of domestic colonialism.¹¹⁴

¹¹² This argument runs counter to Frederick Cooper's claim that "colonialism . . . was an object of attack in the 1950s and 1960s, but not an object of careful examination," by illuminating the intellectual content and definitional contestations that occurred within the framework of such attacks. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 33.

¹¹³ Harvey Klehr and William Tompson, "Self-Determination in the Black Belt: Origins of a Communist Policy," *Labor History* 30, no. 3 (1989): 354–66.

¹¹⁴ Cruse's acerbic critiques of his opponents often overshadowed his positive political vision, which will receive more attention in chapter 5. Ultimately, he came to represent a politics that resembled what Michael Dawson labels "community nationalism," with a particular emphasis on the need for black control over the institutions of culture and mass media. See Michael Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

Cruse's writings were not the only efforts by African Americans in the early 1960s to reframe the black freedom struggle in the terms of decolonization. Two other men who traveled with Cruse in Cuba in 1960, Robert F. Williams and LeRoi Jones, also articulated influential visions of black politics and black art modeled on anticolonial struggles.¹¹⁵ As John Henrik Clarke noted, several other black nationalist groups began to develop programs premised on the idea of internal colonialism. Even so, the direct influence of Cruse's "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American" should not be understated. The San Francisco-based Afro-American Association, a study group that included future Black Panther Party founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, read and debated Cruse's work. Max Stanford (later Muhammad Ahmad) of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) cited it as a significant influence on his politics.¹¹⁶ Most strikingly, Malcolm X was so taken with the article that he began to carry *Studies on the Left* in the bookstore of his Harlem mosque.¹¹⁷ Both Cruse's particular writings and the broader intellectual milieu of which they were a part turned the idea of internal colonialism into a touchstone of black politics in the years to come. If the semantics of colonialism were largely the concern of diplomatic officials like Francis T. Williamson and G. Mennen Williams at the start of the 1960s, black politics brought them to the center of national debate by the middle of the decade.

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¹¹⁵ Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Young, *Soul Power*.

¹¹⁶ Donna Jean Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 71–96; Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960–1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2008).

¹¹⁷ Cedric Johnson, "Between Revolution and the Racial Ghetto: Harold Cruse and Harry Haywood Debate Class Struggle and the 'Negro Question', 1962–8," *Historical Materialism* 24, no. 1 (2016): 12–13; Gosse, "More than Just a Politician," 26–7.

John F. Kennedy's time at the center of national politics, from his 1957 speech on Algeria as a senator to his support for proxy wars in Vietnam and Laos as president, made the decolonizing world a more visible concern in U.S. foreign policy, even as it had already emerged as the central object of strategic concern by the middle of the 1950s.¹¹⁸ But foreign policy was not the only sphere in which questions raised by the accelerating pace of global decolonization impinged on American public life in this era. From modernization theorists to black intellectuals to Kennedy himself, Americans in the late 1950s and early 1960s were deeply concerned with the relationships among global colonial rule, American history, and contemporary American society. Charting the paths of the political languages they developed to understand these relationships, from the image of the United States as the first new nation to analyses of American regimes of internal colonialism, helps to illuminate the transformations decolonization wrought in American political culture. As the 1960s progressed, these transformations would become even more apparent, as competing understandings of decolonization and its relevance to U.S. domestic politics ran through national debates on the War on Poverty and the Black Power movement.

¹¹⁸ Robert J. McMahon, "How the Periphery Became the Center: The Cold War, the Third World, and the Transformation in US Strategic Thinking," in *Foreign Policy at the Periphery: The Shifting Margins of US International Relations since World War II*, ed. Bevan Sewell, et. al. (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2017).

Chapter 4

From Indigenous Leadership to Social Work Colonialism: Community Action and Colonial Comparisons in the War on Poverty

The same year Seymour Martin Lipset suggested that the “first new nation can contribute more than money to the latter-day ones,” another American writer suggested that the contributions might run in the other direction.¹ The socialist journalist Michael Harrington observed that within the United States there existed an “underdeveloped nation.”² This “underdeveloped nation” did not “suffer the extreme privation of the peasants of Asia or the tribesmen of Africa,” but “the mechanism of the misery is similar.”³ The poor in the United States, whose plight Harrington sought to bring to greater public consciousness, “are beyond history, beyond progress, sunk in a paralyzing, maiming routine.”⁴ The “new nations” had an advantage over the United States in their ability to address this poverty, however. Because “poverty is so general and so extreme . . . every resource, every policy, is measured by its effect on the lowest and most impoverished,” whereas in the United States, “because so many are enjoying a decent standard of life, there are indifference and blindness to the plight of the poor.”⁵ Harrington’s faith that the eradication of poverty in the decolonizing states “becomes a national purpose that penetrates to every village and motivates a historic transformation” reflected a more positive attitude toward the developmental aspirations of decolonizing states than some Kennedy-era thinkers shared, as

¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, “The United States – The First New Nation,” *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, Washington, D.C., 2–8 September, 1962*, Volume 3 (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1964), 308.

² Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962; repr., New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 158.

³ Harrington, *The Other America*, 158.

⁴ Harrington, *The Other America*, 158.

⁵ Harrington, *The Other America*, 158–59.

the previous chapter demonstrates.⁶ But his vision of the United States as characterized by internal problems of underdevelopment extended well beyond the democratic socialist left. This view suffused the rising consciousness of the problem of poverty among liberal social scientists, foundation officials, and policymakers.

Debates about the nature of American underdevelopment, its parallels in the decolonizing world, and potential ways to address it pervaded American political discourse in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The imaginary of the United States as internally underdeveloped existed side by side with the conception of the United States as the “first new nation” that served as a model for the decolonizing world and the *telos* of the modernization process. Although the recognition of internal underdevelopment could challenge American justifications for interventions in decolonizing states, it could also reinforce them. Both the historical status of having been the “first new nation” and the ongoing experience in governing internally underdeveloped populations represented assets for U.S. policymakers intent on enacting the nation’s global agenda, and both were deployed regularly.⁷ This varied arsenal of colonial comparisons enabled strategic flexibility for state actors and their allies in public discourse who insisted on the special capacity and responsibility of the United States to influence the trajectory of the decolonizing world. Yet these two images coexisted uneasily. As problems of racial and economic inequality in northern cities came to the center of national attention in the middle of the 1960s, the idea that the United States could serve uncomplicatedly as a model for the newly independent countries of the Third World became less plausible, while underdevelopment in the midst of the United States seemed more obvious than ever.

⁶ Harrington, *The Other America*, 158.

⁷ Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action during the American Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 6–11.

How internal underdevelopment was understood, moreover, shifted between the middle of the 1950s and the middle of the 1960s. In 1955, when the Eisenhower administration proposed a domestic Point Four program, policymakers understood American underdevelopment as a territorial problem. Contained in small pockets amid a general affluence, underdevelopment represented the outcome of technological shifts and out-migration of working-age adults that left certain areas of the country behind, particularly older industrial cores in the Northeast and rural areas in Appalachia and the Midwest.⁸ National efforts to address the problem of “depressed areas” promoted capital investments, incentives for business formation and expansion, technical assistance for the development of local economic plans, and worker retraining. Both major political parties sought to be identified with “area redevelopment,” as this program came to be known, but legislation stalled in the Eisenhower years. Although economic issues were a fairly low priority for John F. Kennedy during his 1960 presidential campaign, he embraced area redevelopment in his platform, and after his election the Area Redevelopment Act was the first bill passed in the Senate in 1961.⁹

A distinct, if complementary, understanding of American poverty as a problem of cultural underdevelopment was emerging in the same period. In this view, the poor were culturally unsuited for life in modern, capitalist, urban societies. This perspective called for a different set of remedies, focused not on increasing employment opportunities in depressed areas but on changing the behavior of poor people. Although such culturally “maladjusted” populations were imagined to be concentrated in particular territories—rural areas of Appalachia and the black ghettos of northern cities most of all—their poverty was understood to be a feature of the people

⁸ Alice O’Connor, “Modernization and the Rural Poor: Some Lessons from History,” in *Rural Poverty in America*, ed. Cynthia M. Duncan (New York: Auburn House, 1992), 215–33.

⁹ Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 18, 100–102.

themselves, rather than the outcome of shifting regional labor markets or a spatial mismatch between jobs and workers. As many contemporary scholars have noted, such understandings of a “culture of poverty” were widespread in the early 1960s, among socialists such as Harrington as well as liberal social policymakers.¹⁰

These ideas undergirded the rise of a new policy instrument, known as community action, for combating poverty. Community action programs, which, as historian Daniel Immerwahr shows, were modeled on U.S. community development programs overseas, sought to identify and provide resources to local agencies that would decide which local problems to solve and how to solve them.¹¹ Through the involvement of “local people,” as administrators sometimes put it, community development would promote a new set of behaviors and attitudes and aid in the process of cultural adjustment.¹² Advanced first by the Ford Foundation’s Gray Areas program and John F. Kennedy’s President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency (PCJD) in the early 1960s, community action was incorporated as a central component of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. If the international model for area redevelopment was Point Four, for community action it was the Peace Corps—a fact made manifest in the appointment of Peace Corps director Sargent Shriver to lead the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964.

The language of internal underdevelopment, in both its territorial and its cultural variants, represented poverty as a lack of integration into the modern capitalist economy and its

¹⁰ Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); James T. Patterson, *America’s Struggle against Poverty, 1900–1994* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Robin Marie Averbeck, *Liberalism Is Not Enough: Race and Poverty in Postwar Political Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

¹¹ Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹² Sargent Shriver, “Two Years of the Peace Corps,” *Foreign Affairs* 41, no. 4 (July 1963): 694–707.

characteristic modes of social organization. This language reflected what cultural historian Christina Klein calls the “global imaginary of integration” that Cold War elites promoted in an effort to tie together the non-communist world through economic agreements, military alliances, and cultural connections.¹³ Moreover, as the analogies to Point Four and the Peace Corps suggest, and as contemporary scholars Alyosha Goldstein and Sheyda Jahanbani demonstrate, American policymakers and antipoverty campaigners in the 1960s began for the first time to understand poverty as a singular, global condition, one that included both the underdeveloped countries of the decolonizing world and underdeveloped communities in the United States.¹⁴ In so doing, prominent thinkers about poverty regularly referred to “the poor” in America not only as a distinctive social group but as outside the bounds of the true body politic.¹⁵

This chapter argues that state and foundation officials came to see the development of what they often called “indigenous leadership” as the most important factor in the success of community action projects. Examining the origins of the Ford Foundation’s Gray Areas program, which served as the primary model for the Community Action Program in the War on Poverty, this chapter shows that, while community action encouraged widespread participation by poor

¹³ Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 19–60.

¹⁴ Goldstein, *Poverty in Common*; Sheyda Jahanbani, “‘A Different Kind of People’: The Poor at Home and Abroad, 1935–1968,” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2009); Sheyda Jahanbani, “One Global War on Poverty: The Johnson Administration Fights Poverty at Home and Abroad, 1964–1968,” in *Beyond the Cold War: Lyndon Johnson and the New Global Challenges of the 1960s*, ed. Francis J. Gavin and Mark Atwood Lawrence (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Recent scholarship on mass incarceration identifies this moment as a turning point in the building of the modern carceral state, suggesting that this representation had a material basis as well. As poor Americans were portrayed as outside the frame of ordinary political life, they were also being physically relocated to the prison system in increasing numbers. See Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Hinton, “‘A War within Our Own Boundaries’: Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (June 2015): 100–112; Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). On the international circuits of policing and carceral knowledge that contributed to this shift, see Stuart Schrader, *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

people themselves, foundation officials and policymakers emphasized that this participation had to be mediated through leaders whose political stances and tactics were acceptable to those disbursing antipoverty funds. By emphasizing the reasons why philanthropists and state actors considered “indigenous leadership” the most important factor in community development, this account differs from recent scholarship that focuses on the role of the middle-class volunteer as the “catalyst” of community change.¹⁶ In the eyes of Paul Ylvisaker, director of the Ford Foundation’s Public Affairs Program and architect of the Gray Areas program, “indigenous leaders” needed to have a credible connection to potentially rebellious elements in the community—preferably gained through militant activities in the past—combined with a suspicion of contentious politics in the present. Ylvisaker’s conception of “indigenous leadership” derived in large part from his understanding of the politics of the postcolonial world, which he formed during a brief stint in 1961 on a Ford Foundation project in India. The search for “indigenous leadership,” in both the Ford Foundation and the Johnson administration, sought to transform community action into a form of brokerage politics. The identification of acceptable leaders was seen as the best means of ensuring the integration of “underdeveloped communities” into modern American society on terms that would maintain political stability.

Debates about the role of “indigenous leadership” in antipoverty efforts extended beyond the realms of the federal government and large philanthropies, bringing activists and social critics into a shared community of discourse with state and foundation officials. Community organizers, such as Saul Alinsky of the Industrial Areas Foundation and later the Woodlawn

¹⁶ Jahanbani, “A Different Kind of People;” Molly Geidel, *Peace Corps Fantasies: How Development Shaped the Global Sixties* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Sargent Shriver described the Peace Corps volunteer as a “catalyst” in Sargent Shriver, “Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Ohio State Bar Association, May 15, 1964,” Akron, Ohio, box 21, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

Organization in Chicago, debated with Ford Foundation officials and War on Poverty administrators about the characteristics of “indigenous leadership” required to make community organizations successful. In black politics, moreover, the discourse surrounding “indigenous leadership” in antipoverty policy became the initial site of an anticolonial critique of urban political economy. As literary scholar Erica Edwards argues, black politics since Reconstruction has been characterized by “a simultaneous investment in and critique of charismatic leadership.”¹⁷ Decolonization and the civil rights movement lent greater urgency to the ongoing debate over the desirability and inevitability of a politics of leadership. In this context, the increased emphasis in social policy on the identification and promotion of a certain type of community leadership generated a mix of reactions. The practices of social welfare agencies came under fire as forms of “social welfare colonialism,” a phrase first adopted in a protest of a New York City decision to fund a social service agency from outside Harlem to conduct anti-delinquency work there. This chapter closes with an analysis of the community action work and writings of Harlem-based psychologist Kenneth Clark. Clark extended the critique of “social welfare colonialism” into a more thoroughgoing analysis of how American urban political economy replicated, on the scale of the city, the racialized exploitation that characterized colonial rule. The ghetto-as-colony thesis, as I will discuss in chapter 5, became a central element in the political thought of the Black Power movement in the second half of the 1960s. This chapter shows how this language first emerged in debates about community action and “indigenous leadership” in the context of antipoverty policy in the early 1960s.

¹⁷ Erica R. Edwards, *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xiii.

Territories and Cultures of Poverty

As was discussed in chapter 2, the Point Four program inaugurated by President Truman had limited material impact, but it set the terms for a wide range of efforts to respond to “underdevelopment” both at home and abroad. In the first years of the program’s activities, activists and policymakers began looking to Point Four as a model for addressing domestic poverty. In 1951, D’Arcy McNickle, a founding member of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), described a proposal to address Indian impoverishment through the return of some tribal lands and the provision of technical and financial assistance to tribal governments as “a domestic Point 4 Program.”¹⁸ As Congress adopted a policy of termination and moved to end federal recognition of Indian tribes—as well as the federal aid that accompanied such recognition—both the NCAI and the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) called for continued tribal autonomy and federal assistance as elements of a “domestic Point Four.”¹⁹ In opposing this policy, advocates of American Indian sovereignty framed their demands as a natural extension of the popular aid program that appeared to reflect the United States’ best ideals in foreign policy.

Nor were they alone. United Steelworkers President Philip Murray portrayed his union’s demand for a guaranteed annual income as a call for a “domestic Point Four program for backward, or under-developed areas of American economic stability,” appealing, in a reflection of the embrace of U.S. foreign policy goals by organized labor’s leadership in the early years of the Cold War, to the “solid and justifiable sense of satisfaction from the pioneering efforts of our

¹⁸ Goldstein, *Poverty in Common*, 83–84. Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2008), 8.

¹⁹ Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*, chapter 1.

government to help our less fortunate neighbors overseas.”²⁰ Both of these calls for a domestic Point Four ascribed a distinctly territorial dimension to American poverty. Whether poverty was located in Indian reservations or other “under-developed areas of American economic stability,” and whether the solutions proposed involved a national wage floor or targeted federal aid, American underdevelopment was imagined as a regional problem.

A similar vision of regional underdevelopment pervaded economic thinking within the government in the 1950s. The Bureau of Employment Security (BES) in the Department of Labor began to keep track of “major labor areas with substantial labor surplus” in 1955, as part of an effort to understand regional patterns of structural unemployment.²¹ These figures defined “substantial labor surplus” as an unemployment rate of six percent or higher. In 1960, the BES started to label a subset of these areas as characterized by “substantial and persistent” unemployment. A region qualified as having “substantial and persistent” unemployment if its unemployment rate was at least fifty percent higher than the national average for three of the previous four calendar years, seventy-five percent higher for two of the previous three years, or one hundred percent higher for one of the previous two years.²² While the absolute number of these areas varied with the growth (or lack thereof) of the national economy—reaching peaks in the middle of the 1958 and 1961 recessions—the purpose of collecting this data was to identify regions still mired in high rates of unemployment even as the U.S. economy as a whole was growing. The regional outlook was in keeping with the growing emphasis among economists on structural unemployment. As Gunnar Myrdal wrote in *Challenge to Affluence*, the coexistence of



²⁰ “Steelworkers Ask Minimum Annual Wage,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 1952. On the turn away from labor internationalism in the late 1940s, see George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and Victor Silverman, *Imagining Internationalism in American and British Labor, 1839–49* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

²¹ “Congress Enacts Area Redevelopment Bill,” in *CQ Almanac 1961*, 17th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1961), 247–56, <<http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal61-1373049>>

²² Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-27, 75 Stat. 47 (1961), 2.

high unemployment with “overfull employment in important sectors of the labor market” generated the need for more targeted interventions than the pursuit of national GDP growth.²³

MAJOR LABOR AREAS WITH SUBSTANTIAL LABOR SURPLUS

July '55	July '56	July '57	July '58	July '59	July '60	Sept. '60	April '61	July '61	Sept. '61	Oct. '61
31	23	24	89	46	42	42	101	88	72	68
										
out of 149 areas						out of 150 areas				

*Comparable figures for 1950-55 not available.

Figure 1 – Bureau of Employment Statistics

This growing consensus on the nature of U.S. underdevelopment also included Arthur F. Burns, chairman of Eisenhower’s Council on Economic Advisers, who proposed a program of targeted domestic technical assistance explicitly modeled on Point Four. Unlike the international version, which acknowledged underdevelopment as the condition of the majority of the world’s population, Burns’s proposal imagined American poverty as contained in small areas amid a general affluence. As part of Eisenhower’s legislative agenda beginning in 1955, the proposal for a “domestic Point Four” identified “small pockets of depression” based on the new metrics of the BES, and Eisenhower endorsed it as a means of “extending the good times” to every section of the country.²⁴

In the same year, Democratic Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois introduced the first bill to address area redevelopment, primarily through an infusion of capital, via low-interest federal loans to promote industrial and agricultural expansion, and tax incentives for businesses to locate

²³ Gunnar Myrdal, *Challenge to Affluence* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962), 23.

²⁴ “Eisenhower Backs ‘Point 4’ Project for Parts of U.S.,” *New York Times*, October 24, 1955; “Ike Approves Advisers’ Wider Prosperity Plan,” *Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 25, 1955.

in underdeveloped areas. Douglas's proposal also provided for technical assistance in the formation of regional development plans and funding for public works projects.²⁵ Despite its similarities to Burns's "domestic Point Four," Douglas's bill was opposed by the Eisenhower administration and blocked by the House.²⁶ Four times between 1956 and 1960, the Senate passed a version of Douglas's bill. The bill failed to pass the House twice, and twice Eisenhower vetoed it.²⁷

In the 1960 presidential campaign, both parties embraced area redevelopment as a campaign issue, with each party blaming the other for the lack of progress in passing legislation. Kennedy, in particular, envisioned area redevelopment as a central part of his campaign's broader emphasis on poverty and underdevelopment both at home and abroad.²⁸ Immediately after his election, Kennedy assigned Douglas to chair a task force on area redevelopment, and Democratic leadership in the Senate embraced the issue as its top priority, assigning the designation of S. 1 to yet another version of Douglas's bill. Within the first four months of his administration, Kennedy signed the Area Redevelopment Act, a four-year program authorizing \$300 million in treasury loans for businesses to undertake factory construction, land redevelopment, and capital upgrades, as well as an additional \$75 million in federal grants for public facilities, in designated "redevelopment areas."²⁹ To qualify as a "redevelopment area," a region needed to meet the threshold for "substantial and persistent unemployment" set by the BES.³⁰ Even under those requirements, however, as historian Alice O'Connor notes, the Area

²⁵ Sar A. Levitan, *Federal Aid to Depressed Areas: An Evaluation of the Area Redevelopment Administration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964), 4–9.

²⁶ Levitan, *Federal Aid to Depressed Areas*, 9.

²⁷ Levitan, *Federal Aid to Depressed Areas*, 1–17.

²⁸ As historian Sheyda Jahanbani puts it, Kennedy was "the first president whose worldview had been fundamentally shaped by the development project." Jahanbani, "A Different Kind of People," 205.

²⁹ Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-27, 75 Stat. 47 (1961), 2.

³⁰ Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-27, 75 Stat. 47 (1961), 2.

Redevelopment Administration (ARA) “designated many more areas eligible for assistance than its limited funds could possibly reach.”³¹ The bill’s effects were similarly limited by economic conditions. The bill passed just as the 1961 recession hit, when most businesses were seeking to cut rather than expand their workforces. Further, as unemployment rose nationwide, businesses that were hiring could find what additional labor they might need in places less remote than the “depressed areas” where the federal government was attempting to stimulate job growth.

Economists and politicians who supported area redevelopment presented a picture of American poverty as analogous to the underdevelopment of the decolonizing world, but the policy derived only minimal inspiration from the extensive social-scientific research on the decolonizing world that blossomed under the rubrics of area studies and modernization theory in the 1950s and early 1960s.³² Expanded funding from governmental sources and major philanthropies, especially the Rockefeller Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, and, increasingly, the Ford Foundation, buttressed this rapid expansion.³³ A different understanding of the

³¹ O’Connor, “Modernization and the Rural Poor,” 229.

³² On area studies, see especially Osamah F. Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); and Fabio Lanza, *The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism, and Asian Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). On modernization theory, in a crowded and growing field, see especially Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Joel Isaac, *Working Knowledge: Making the Human Sciences from Parsons to Kuhn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Mark Solovey and Hamilton Cravens, eds., *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy, and Human Nature* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Nicole Sackley, “Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization during the Cold War,” *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012): 565–95; Nicole Sackley, “Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 37 (2013): 749–78.

³³ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013); David H. Price, *Cold War Anthropology: The CIA, the Pentagon, and the Growth of Dual Use Anthropology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

persistence of “pockets” of poverty in the United States emerged in more direct conversation with this social-scientific focus on the “underdeveloped” world. This understanding focused on the culture and psychology of people living in poverty, identifying patterns of behavior and social life as the defining features of American underdevelopment and the proximate causes of its perpetuation. The cultural explanation of American underdevelopment also portrayed poverty as largely confined to “pockets” amid a general affluence. But it argued that these “pockets” were defined not by the decline of regional industries but by the cultural “maladjustment” of their residents to modern society and its demands.³⁴ Longstanding research programs of anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists on the cultural values and social behaviors of “primitive” societies not only gained new public support in the context of the Cold War and decolonization but influenced the views of a wide range of political commentators and social scientists involved in the so-called “rediscovery” of domestic poverty.³⁵ The view that impoverished Americans were enmeshed in underdeveloped cultures similar to those of “primitive” societies around the world reinforced the notion that fighting poverty required changing the attitudes of the poor by offering them opportunities to shape their own fates.

The idea that poor people around the world shared cultural characteristics that contributed to their economic plight came to be known as the culture of poverty thesis. Its author was the anthropologist Oscar Lewis. Before the late 1950s, Lewis was best-known for his ethnographic study of Tepoztlán, the site of University of Chicago anthropologist Robert Redfield’s first book, in which Lewis criticized Redfield’s romanticized portrayal of the Mexican town.³⁶ Where

³⁴ On “maladjustment” as a keyword of U.S. debates about urban poverty in this period, see Sonia Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 1–3, 22–23.

³⁵ Jahanbani, ““A Different Kind of People,”” 147.

³⁶ Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlán Restudied* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951); Robert Redfield, *Tepoztlán, A Mexican Village: A Study in Folk Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

Redfield found social harmony largely untouched by modernity, Lewis saw disorganization and conflict exacerbated by modernization. After spending time in India evaluating its pioneering national community development program, Lewis returned to North America, shifting his research agenda from small towns to cities.³⁷ In two studies, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1958), and *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (1961), Lewis established the culture of poverty as a lasting, influential, and notoriously slippery concept. Although Lewis argued that material factors created the conditions of poverty, he emphasized that poor people suffered from a shared set of cultural and psychological ailments that perpetuated it. These ailments included fatalism, a sense of helplessness, present-orientation, and alienation.

How widely these traits were shared across the world's poor was not always clear, even in Lewis's own writings. At times, he argued that the term could not be applied to the "two-thirds of the world's population who live in the underdeveloped countries," because there poverty was the norm rather than the exception, and thus its psychological and cultural impact was diminished.³⁸ Instead, the culture of poverty was "a subculture of the Western social order" that emerged as "an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society."³⁹ In this rendering, the "culture of poverty" was a mentality forged in the specific crucible of Western, capitalist modernity. Often, however, he posited the "culture of poverty" as a universal concept. Insisting that the culture of poverty transcended racial, national, regional, religious, and rural-urban differences, Lewis argued that

³⁷ Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 134.

³⁸ Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," *Scientific American* 215, no. 4 (October 1966): 21.

³⁹ Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty," 21.

poor people in the West and the Third World shared a similar set of character traits and psychological responses to their problems.⁴⁰

Those who adapted Lewis's "culture of poverty" thesis over the course of the 1960s rarely acknowledged this ambiguity. Those who did acknowledge it, including Michael Harrington, resolved it in favor of the universalist interpretation. Harrington, the former editor of the *Catholic Worker*, had abandoned the religious left for the Independent Socialist League, a small, Trotskyist organization led by Max Shachtman.⁴¹ A gifted writer and longtime contributor to the *Village Voice*, Harrington helped to popularize Lewis's concept of the "culture of poverty" in *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*, which was released in 1962. Harrington argued that when poverty was seen as a general condition, as it was in the decolonizing world, it was easier to focus social and political action on the problem of poverty and to judge policies based on their effects on the impoverished. If the relative affluence of the United States contributed to the invisibility of the American poor, however, the cultural traits of the "underdeveloped nation" within American borders were remarkably similar to those of the inhabitants of underdeveloped nations across the world: "Like the Asian peasant, the impoverished American tends to see life as a fate, an endless cycle from which there is no deliverance."⁴² With poverty defined as a totalizing culture, the remedies for it must go beyond the provision of social services, employment, or income guarantees. Rather, "any attempt to abolish poverty in the United States must seek to destroy the pessimism and fatalism that flourish in the other America."⁴³ Harrington agreed with the proponents of area redevelopment that

⁴⁰ Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sánchez: Autobiography of a Mexican Family* (1961; New York: Vintage, 2011), xxxvi–xliii.

⁴¹ Maurice Isserman, *The Other American: The Life of Michael Harrington* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000), 140–74.

⁴² Harrington, *The Other America*, 161.

⁴³ Harrington, *The Other America*, 166.

American underdevelopment was located in territorial “pockets,” from urban and rural slums to declining industrial regions. Yet the tools of area redevelopment—capital investment, working retraining, and so forth—were far from sufficient to achieve what he had in mind: a “comprehensive” campaign against poverty with the goal of “establishing new communities, of substituting a human environment for the inhuman one that now exists.”⁴⁴ In a similar fashion as the modernization theorists who imagined the thoroughgoing reconstruction of the societies of the decolonizing world as a precondition for their economic success, Harrington thought that only a total transformation of underdeveloped communities within the United States would enable their escape from poverty.

Harrington’s *The Other America* was a major intellectual influence on the rediscovery of poverty at the highest levels of American politics in the early 1960s. An extended review of the book by Dwight MacDonal in the *New Yorker*, historians argue, made its arguments known to John F. Kennedy.⁴⁵ Along with John Kenneth Galbraith’s *The Affluent Society* (1958) and a series of articles on rural Kentucky in the *Herald Tribune*, *The Other America* contributed to the increasing prominence of domestic poverty in elite discourse in the years leading up to Lyndon Johnson’s declaration of an “unconditional war on poverty.”⁴⁶ As policymakers turned their attention to domestic poverty with greater urgency, they embraced Harrington’s image of the American poor as culturally underdeveloped in similar ways as their counterparts in the decolonizing world. Even more than the comparison between underdeveloped regions of the U.S. and underdeveloped countries, which reinforced the idea that a “domestic Point Four” might be

⁴⁴ Harrington, *The Other America*, 168.

⁴⁵ Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 82.

⁴⁶ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958); Lyndon Johnson, Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, January 8, 1964, The American Presidency Project, <<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/annual-message-the-congress-the-state-the-union-25>>

necessary, the universalizing language of the culture of poverty lent credence to the notion that the same tools the U.S. used to fight underdevelopment abroad might be used at home. The tools of community development, or community action, as its domestic iteration came to be known, seemed particularly transferable.

Community Action and the Search for Indigenous Leadership

The animating principle of community action was that local communities, although they might share a similar “culture of poverty,” were the best arbiters of their own particular needs. The way to fight poverty, therefore, was to involve the people of these communities in identifying their most urgent priorities and addressing them. Different communities might have different priorities. One might need a day care center; another might need urgent street repairs. Such decisions should be made by the people who lived in poor communities. Encouraging and channeling their participation, as much as providing financing and expertise to the projects they devised, was the task of the government and philanthropic actors. Poor Americans would not only gain material benefits from these projects. Through their very participation in activities that helped their communities, poor people would come to see that they were neither helpless nor fated to the lives they led. Community action, it was imagined, would catalyze a rejection of the “culture of poverty.”

The Ford Foundation was the first adopter of community action strategies, incubating ideas that would play an influential role in the Johnson administration’s War on Poverty. The Ford Foundation fashioned its central domestic policy initiative, the Gray Areas Program, around a participatory approach to urban problems.⁴⁷ Within the federal government, community action

⁴⁷ Alice O’Connor, “Community Action, Urban Reform, and the Fight against Poverty,” *Journal of Urban History* 22, no. 4 (July 1996): 586–625.

gained a hearing in the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency (PCJD), which was established in response to an explosion of publicity surrounding youth crime and led by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.⁴⁸ After John F. Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson formed a task force, headed by Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver, to draft the antipoverty legislation that would eventually become the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). As this group debated a variety of proposals, they coalesced around community action as a central strategy, drawing from the experiences and ideas of the PCJD and, especially, the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas program. In the process, they marginalized other approaches to fighting poverty, especially those that relied on direct job creation by the federal government, which Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz advocated strongly throughout the policy planning process.⁴⁹ The Community Action Program received more funding than any other single element of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, garnering \$300 million of the \$800 million in total that went to the newly created Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).⁵⁰ Community action agencies across the country were able to apply for this funding, and in the first years of the program the OEO financed hundreds of such agencies, at times under the auspices of existing local government and at times apart from those structures.⁵¹

As historians have shown in recent years, both the intellectual underpinnings of community action and its remarkable rise in popularity owed a great deal to American international development policies. From the 1930s through the 1960s, advocates of community development sought to fight Third World poverty by stimulating the participation of individuals

⁴⁸ Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 107–19.

⁴⁹ Judith Russell, *Economics, Bureaucracy, and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Michael Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty: An Oral History* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 89–103.

⁵⁰ Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 148.

⁵¹ A discussion of policymakers' views of the relationship between community action agencies and local governments is found in Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty*, 73–79.

and existing communal networks to identify and address their own needs. This approach coexisted uneasily alongside modernization theorists' emphasis on rapid economic growth and industrialization, but both approaches held influence in U.S. development circles. American experts on community development—many of whom got their start in agricultural development in the New Deal—shaped the establishment of a national community development program in independent India and contributed to American counterinsurgency efforts in the Philippines and Vietnam.⁵² Extensive links existed between community developers and the architects of community action, in both the Ford Foundation and the White House antipoverty task force.

The Peace Corps was the crucial site of intersection within the federal government. John F. Kennedy's signature new agency achieved enormous popularity in the liberal imagination, representing in popular and academic discourse an underrated weapon in the Cold War, proof of enduring American benevolence, and an opportunity for young Americans to rejuvenate the national culture by leaving behind the lives of "organization men" for the frontier-like challenges that awaited them abroad.⁵³ Conceptually and operationally, the Peace Corps was, at heart, a community development agency. Volunteers were asked to support projects chosen by the local communities to which they were assigned. Whether or not Lyndon Johnson intended that such a community-based approach would take center stage in his own War on Poverty, his appointment of Shriver to lead his antipoverty task force and, later on, the OEO itself, while still retaining his responsibilities at the Peace Corps, ensured that it would. Shriver's vision that Peace Corps volunteers—usually middle-class, well-educated, and white—might serve as "catalysts" for broader transformations in the expectations and social norms in the communities they served was

⁵² Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*; Stuart Schrader, "To Secure the Global Great Society: Participation in Pacification," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 225–53.

⁵³ Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love*, 22–23, 58.

repatriated through programs like Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), another program that began under the auspices of the War on Poverty.⁵⁴

In the minds of foundation officials and policymakers, the catalytic potential of volunteers paled in comparison to the importance of finding and empowering the right kind of leaders within the target communities themselves. “Indigenous leadership,” as it was often called, became an essential keyword of Great Society liberalism through the struggles over the direction of community action programs. The structure of community action enabled a wide range of groups, including many with radical political affiliations, to pursue foundation and governmental support for their agendas. Increasingly aggressive surveillance and policing strategies served as a primary means for the state to manage this subversive potential.⁵⁵ For the civilian officials who designed and oversaw community action programs, however, the empowerment of alternative “indigenous leaders” offered a way to channel the participatory energies community action sought to unleash in ways that would foreclose the possibility of insurgent politics before they emerged.

The language of “indigenous leadership” provides another example of the prevalence of colonial comparisons in 1960s liberal statecraft, one that often accompanied the description of American poverty as a form of underdevelopment. Although references to “indigenous leadership” sometimes meant simply that leaders were socially connected to the communities in which they worked, they carried the freight of imperial history as well. References to indigeneity masked the settler foundations of the United States, and the continued existence of American Indians, by casting indigeneity as a quality to which all Americans potentially had access.⁵⁶ At

⁵⁴ Jahanbani, “One Global War on Poverty.”

⁵⁵ Schrader, *Badges without Borders*.

⁵⁶ On the relationship between American Indian movements and the new forms of government inaugurated by community action, see Goldstein, *Poverty in Common*.

the same time, the designation of poor communities as generative of a separate category of “indigenous leaders” extended the linkage between poverty and foreignness. It cast the policy analyst, foundation official, and OEO bureaucrat in the role of the colonial administrator, dispensing largesse and conducting governance through the mechanisms of indirect rule. Further, policymakers drew from their direct experiences in the decolonizing world as they searched for the right kind of “indigenous leadership” at home. More than the fresh-faced volunteer, the respected “indigenous leader” occupied center stage in the drama of community action.

The Ford Foundation’s Gray Areas program offers the clearest example of the importance of “indigenous leadership” in leading liberals’ understanding of the problem of poverty. The driving force behind the Gray Areas program was Paul Ylvisaker, a political scientist hired by the Ford Foundation to run its Public Affairs program in 1955. Ylvisaker was born in Minnesota to a Norwegian-American family and graduated from Mankato State Teachers College in 1942. A beneficiary of the expansion of elite higher education in the immediate postwar years, Ylvisaker attended Harvard for a master’s degree in public administration and earned a doctorate in government in 1948. He taught constitutional law and public administration at Swarthmore College and served briefly in the reform administration of Mayor Joseph S. Clark in Philadelphia before joining Ford. Ylvisaker was quick to engage with the emerging paradigm of pluralism in American political science. He assigned Robert Dahl’s and Charles Lindblom’s *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* in his Swarthmore class on the British welfare state in the fall of 1953, the same year the book was published.⁵⁷ In Philadelphia, where Mayor Clark portrayed his regime as a modern, technocratic upgrade in a city long governed by a patronage machine,

⁵⁷ Syllabus for Political Science 18: The British Welfare State, Fall 1953, box 3, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers, Harvard University Archives.

Ylvisaker encapsulated the administration's spirit of expertise and optimism.⁵⁸ Ylvisaker approached urban renewal, industrial decline, suburbanization, and rural-to-urban migration through a wide lens that saw the metropolis as an interdependent system. Early in the 1950s, he helped turn Philadelphia into a nationally recognized model of modern approaches to urban administration.⁵⁹ After less than three years in government, he was hired in 1955 by the Ford Foundation to run their newly established Public Affairs program. Over the course of the late 1950s, Ylvisaker transformed Public Affairs into the primary agency in the Ford Foundation dealing with domestic policy, especially issues of urban development and poverty.⁶⁰

As historian Karen Ferguson observes, Ylvisaker's views on urban policy shifted over the course of his first few years in charge of Public Affairs. Ylvisaker's writings and speeches in the late 1950s blamed white flight, often in bold and forthright language, for what was coming to be known as the urban crisis. He condemned white residents' "search for homogeneity" for its effects on both desegregation efforts and urban economies.⁶¹ White flight exacerbated the problems in the "growing range of deteriorated real estate between central business district and suburb."⁶² Ylvisaker designated these regions as "gray areas" to signify both their geographical locations between central business districts and suburbs and their "shabby" infrastructure.⁶³ In previous generations, these regions had served the ends of "transition and aspiration and self-improvement—for the immigrant from abroad, for the rural uprooted, for a wide assortment of

⁵⁸ Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 13–14.

⁵⁹ Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 52.

⁶⁰ Ferguson, *Top Down*, 51.

⁶¹ Paul N. Ylvisaker, "Metropolitan Government—For What?" (1958), in *Conscience & Community: The Legacy of Paul Ylvisaker*, ed. Virginia M. Esposito (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 86.

⁶² Ylvisaker, "Metropolitan Government—For What?," 86.

⁶³ Paul N. Ylvisaker, "The Deserted City" (1959), in *Conscience & Community*, 95.

human beings who are at the bottom rung of their life's ambitions."⁶⁴ Now, they were becoming blighted and stagnant, in large part because suburban homeowners were "blocking the suburban exit" for new migrants to the city.⁶⁵ The declining fortunes of the "gray areas" could be ascribed to the "sin of segregation, not only of color but also of class, of taste, of way of life."⁶⁶

By 1961, however, Ylvisaker's conception of "gray areas" had shifted. Rather than viewing the destiny of the "gray area" as bound up with the central business district and the suburb, Ylvisaker now traced the problems of the "gray area" to its residents. Softening his portrayal of white flight, he argued that the color barrier was "being eroded by the undercurrent of class and taste differentiation which flows beneath it," while noting that "Negroes no less than whites aspire to the system of self-determined segregation which the suburb at heart represents."⁶⁷ As he worked to develop the Ford Foundation's urban policy program in these years, he later recalled, the primary issue occupying his attention was the "people problems" of the "vast migration to the central city," which he defined as neither a problem of "bricks and mortar" nor of the "power structure."⁶⁸ In particular, he believed, the "new black" migrants had "pulled out from the old black coalition," threatening to destabilize the brokerage politics of many cities in the north.⁶⁹ This focus on rural-to-urban migrants—especially African American ones—as the source of urban problems became a leading rationale behind the Gray Areas program.

⁶⁴ Ylvisaker, "The Deserted City," 96.

⁶⁵ Ylvisaker, "The Deserted City," 96.

⁶⁶ Ylvisaker, "The Deserted City," 102.

⁶⁷ Paul N. Ylvisaker, "Diversity and the Public Interest: Two Cases in Metropolitan Decision-Making," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 27 (1961), 108.

⁶⁸ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, p. 19, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records, Rockefeller Archive Center.

⁶⁹ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, p. 19, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records.

Ylvisaker's experience with development planning in India prompted his emphasis on "indigenous leadership." As he worked to develop the Gray Areas program, Ylvisaker was sent to Calcutta as part of a team of Ford Foundation consultants.⁷⁰ The Foundation, which had earlier played a role in community development planning in Delhi, viewed Calcutta as an extreme case of the stress that rural-to-urban migration could place on all cities, including those in the United States.⁷¹ Foundation officials hoped to "make possible full exploitation of the Calcutta 'laboratory' as a case example for students of urban problems of the relation of rapid urbanization to development (and vice-versa)."⁷² Thus they sent Ylvisaker, whose portfolio as director of Public Affairs was almost entirely domestic, to India for the project's opening.

Ylvisaker spent ten days in India, traveling first to Delhi and then to Calcutta with Edward Echeverria, an urban planner. They worked closely with Douglas Ensminger, the Ford Foundation's leading representative on the ground in India.⁷³ Although the urban planning tasks they envisioned were unremarkable, such as building a bridge and clearing land for future development, Ylvisaker was taken aback by the political environment. He took the rare step of writing directly to Ford Foundation President Henry Heald as soon as he left India, requesting quick approval for the foundation's continued involvement. In a revealing statement of his evolving views of urban planning, he contended that the challenge facing Calcutta was "exactly the same as any urban problem—99% a matter of politics, and we'd be living in a fool's paradise

⁷⁰ Daniel Immerwahr discusses Ylvisaker's Calcutta experience as one of the many instances of overseas community development programs' impact on community action at home, but he does not examine Ylvisaker's time there in detail, nor does he pursue the line of argument about "indigenous leadership" I advance here. See Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 144–46. Other scholars have ignored Ylvisaker's work in Calcutta altogether. Karen Ferguson, for instance, cites Ylvisaker's 1973 reference to urban gray areas as "the nation's 'Calcutta'" to illuminate how he "pathologized [rural-urban] migration," but she does not acknowledge the influence of his direct experience in the Indian city. Ferguson, *Top Down*, 58.

⁷¹ Request for Foundation-Administered Action No. 0D-801G, February 17, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁷² Request for Foundation-Administered Action No. 0D-801G, February 17, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁷³ Request for Foundation-Administered Action No. 0D-801G, February 17, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

if we presumed otherwise.”⁷⁴ The political nature of the task was no reason for the foundation to keep its distance, in Ylvisaker’s mind. To do so would mean “admitting philanthropic and democratic defeat.”⁷⁵

The political challenge was this: the Communist Party of India held twenty-four of twenty-seven seats on the municipal corporation council. From Ylvisaker’s perspective, it stood as an obstacle to both the foundation’s immediate aims in the city and the broader agenda of its Overseas Development program, which aimed at diminishing communist influence in the Third World. The bulwark against complete communist control was Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of the state government of West Bengal. Roy was a British-educated medical doctor who had once been Mohandas Gandhi’s personal physician. A prominent figure in Congress Party politics, he had served as mayor of Calcutta in the 1930s and as Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1948 onward.⁷⁶ Roy made an immediate impression on Ylvisaker, who described him as “shrewd as hell,” a “master politician,” and, in his request to Heald for quick approval of the foundation’s involvement, someone “against whom Churchill at his mightiest looks feeble.”⁷⁷ Roy’s past experience in the Indian independence movement counted as a positive asset to the foundation. His credibility in laying claim to his country’s anticolonial traditions would only help him in his battle with the communists. Ylvisaker recognized that the foundation could help

⁷⁴ Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁷⁵ Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁷⁶ Nitish Sengupta, *Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2002).

⁷⁷ Paul Ylvisaker to Robert Culbertson, March 19, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers; Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers. The positive comparison of an Indian nationalist official, especially one in Bengal, to Winston Churchill held a certain irony born of the ignorance of the history of imperialism characteristic of American elites. Churchill’s colonial policies during the Second World War, especially a “scorched earth” policy of destroying rice crops that was intended to deny the Japanese army access to food if it were to invade Bengal from its outpost in Burma, was a leading cause of a famine that killed somewhere between a million and a half and three million people in the region. See Janam Mukherjee, *Hungry Bengal: War, Famine and the End of Empire* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2015).

Roy “win” in his battle for control in the city.⁷⁸ Ford would serve, in Ylvisaker’s vision, as Roy’s “passport to the big money” and as a “foil in his public relations” that would allow him, when challenged by local opposition, to say, “my experts agree with me.”⁷⁹

Both Ylvisaker and Ensminger agreed that supporting Roy should be the immediate focus of the foundation’s involvement, which meant “raising Echeverria’s sights from professional city planning to politics and strategy.”⁸⁰ Achieving the foundation’s long-term objectives in Calcutta’s economic development required the short-term political success of Roy. Thus even projects that city planner Echeverria was “dubious” of, such as a proposal to fill 55,000 acres of land to the south of the city for the construction of housing for new migrants, were worthy of support.⁸¹ Roy was the key to the foundation’s success in Calcutta, above all else—even the judgments of Ford’s own experts. He represented the model of “indigenous leadership” that Ylvisaker would soon try to replicate in cities across the United States through the Gray Areas program.⁸²

Ylvisaker envisioned the Gray Areas program as a means for the holistic transformation of the communities between the central business district and wealthy suburbs that he had identified as both cause and epicenter of the urban crisis. As such, Gray Areas attempted to join together projects of educational reform, vocational training, and housing development with efforts to facilitate access to city services.⁸³ Rather than seek to coordinate across existing municipal agencies, Ylvisaker devised the independent community action agency, which he

⁷⁸ Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁷⁹ Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁸⁰ Paul Ylvisaker to Henry Heald, March 24, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁸¹ Paul Ylvisaker to Robert Culbertson, March 19, 1961, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁸² Ananya Roy, Stuart Schrader, and Emma Shaw Crane show how the territorial imagination of “gray areas” was linked to fears of insurgency in the decolonizing world and of violent uprisings in U.S. cities. in originated in the context of Cold War foreign policy. See Ananya Roy, Stuart Schrader, and Emma Shaw Crane, “‘The Anti-Poverty Hoax’: Development, Pacification, and the Making of Community in the Global 1960s,” *Cities* 44 (2015): 139–45.

⁸³ O’Connor, “Community Action, Urban Reform, and the Fight against Poverty,” 595–96.

described as a “new instrumentality” in the history of urban policy.⁸⁴ Ylvisaker believed that these independent agencies, through both their separation from municipal bureaucracies and their ability to work on multiple issues at once, had a unique capacity to enable the adjustment of new migrants to the modern city. Four cities—Boston, Philadelphia, Oakland, and New Haven—along with the state of North Carolina were chosen as the initial sites for the demonstration of community action programs.

An emphasis on the identification and development of “indigenous leadership” was essential to the programs from the very beginning. In Oakland, foundation officials sought to work with the Bay Area Urban League to “develop a parallel program of leadership identification and training in the Negro community,” which would be “aimed at inactive members of the middle class as well as those potential leaders to be found in the in-migrant group.”⁸⁵ Community action would become associated with bottom-up participation by the poor themselves, in much commentary at the time and historical scholarship since.⁸⁶ At its origin in the Gray Areas program, however, community action had as much to do with finding the right people to direct such participation from the top.

⁸⁴ Paul Ylvisaker, “Community Action: A Response to Some Unfinished Business” (1963), in *Conscience & Community*, 24.

⁸⁵ Henry Saltzman, Specifics of Oakland Program, December 5, 1961, Ford Foundation – Gray Areas – 1963 (July–December) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁸⁶ The exemplary commentary at the time that interpreted community action in this way is Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action and the War on Poverty* (New York: The Free Press, 1969). Moynihan believed that this aspect of community action was an irresponsible mistake. Many contemporary scholars share his empirical assessment that community action was designed straightforwardly to provide avenues for greater direct political participation by the poor, even as they oppose his political assessment and see instead radical democratic potential in the ideological origins and organizational forms of community action. In this vein, see Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Noel A. Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Community Action Programs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); and Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964–1980* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

Shortly after the establishment of Gray Areas, Ylvisaker gave a speech at an urban planning conference in Indianapolis that exemplified the prominent place the question of “indigenous leadership” occupied in his thought. He reiterated his longstanding belief that cities and suburbs could not be treated in isolation from each other, but the sharp condemnation of white suburbs that characterized his thinking a few years earlier had been blunted. Instead, he defined the American metropolis as a continuous “system” for the attraction and assimilation of largely working-class migrants—“once the Scotch, the Irish, the Jews, the Italians, now the Negroes, the Puerto Ricans, the mountain Whites, the Mexicans, and the American Indians”—which turned “third-class newcomers into first-class citizens.”⁸⁷ This system worked relatively well, but its main problem was inefficiency, driven by the fact that the process took, in Ylvisaker’s estimation, three generations on average.⁸⁸ Seeking to attach his agenda to the obsession with national goal-setting characteristic of New Frontier liberalism, Ylvisaker mused that urban planners might make their collective aim “to do in one generation for the urban newcomer what until now has taken three.”⁸⁹ He acknowledged that his approach, which reframed basic ideas of Chicago-school sociology in the language of “systems analysis” that was rapidly entering the world of urban planning, might strike observers as “mechanistic.”⁹⁰ Yet because “a social system can’t be perfected by clever manipulators,” he maintained, “the problem we regard as the toughest to lick—and we see no easy answers—is that of generating

⁸⁷ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen’s Conference on Community Planning, Indianapolis, IN, January 11, 1963, p. 3, p. 5, folder 28, box 27, Office Files of Wilson McNeil Lowry, Ford Foundation Records. Excerpts from this speech are published as Paul N. Ylvisaker, “Community Action: A Response to Some Unfinished Business” (1963), in *Conscience & Community*, 12–24.

⁸⁸ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen’s Conference on Community Planning, p. 5.

⁸⁹ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen’s Conference on Community Planning, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen’s Conference on Community Planning, p. 6. On “systems analysis” and its path from the military-industrial complex into antipoverty policy, see Jennifer S. Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

indigenous leadership (we're still looking for a down-to-earth definition of that elusive term) and the spirit of self-help."⁹¹ Finding the right "indigenous leaders" was not only important to the success of community action. It was the key that would unlock the entire urban crisis.

But who were the right leaders? The sheer variety of urban communities, with "political and social organization ranging from the closed country club to the open door, with leadership ranging from the greatest statesmanship to the basest demagoguery," ensured that "urban social change will express itself in diverse, often militant form."⁹² If militancy often frightened foundation officials, Ylvisaker argued that it could serve a useful purpose. After all, he reasoned, "American independence, too, came by fiery patriots as well as by cool-headed generals and far-sighted diplomats."⁹³ Although both elements were necessary, there was no doubt in his mind which needed to win out in the end: "One supplemented the other; one without the other was ineffective; but at one stage, the first had to give way to the second to avoid the negation of every hope by permanent civil war."⁹⁴ The outlines of the anticolonial revolutionary turned anticommunist bulwark B. C. Roy are visible in this description. Imagining a continuum that spanned the American Revolution, anti- and postcolonial politics in the twentieth century, and the U.S. urban crisis, Ylvisaker depicted the tempering of militancy as a necessary ingredient in the "indigenous leadership" he prized.

The sharpest conflict in the early years of the Gray Areas program reinforced the foundation's emphasis on finding and empowering some "indigenous leaders" and seeking to weaken others. In Philadelphia, one of the first cities chosen for a Gray Areas demonstration project, the Ford Foundation became embroiled in a growing conflict between the president of

⁹¹ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen's Conference on Community Planning, p. 6.

⁹² Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen's Conference on Community Planning, p. 6.

⁹³ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen's Conference on Community Planning, p. 6.

⁹⁴ Address by Paul N. Ylvisaker at the 1963 Citizen's Conference on Community Planning, p. 6.

the city's NAACP chapter, Cecil Moore, and the pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Reverend Leon Sullivan. The two figures worked together in the late 1950s, as Sullivan recruited Moore, a veteran of the Second World War and a civil rights lawyer, to work for the local Citizens Committee Against Juvenile Delinquency.⁹⁵ In 1963, Moore was elected president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP, in part on the strength of his populist appeal and his willingness to engage in the confrontational tactics of boycotts and pickets that the NAACP tended to avoid.

Shortly after his election, Moore organized protests of the new community action agency established by the Ford Foundation, the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement (PCCA). Moore criticized the agency for “conduct[ing] an expensive but meaningless survey” while it “has brought forth no practical proposals.”⁹⁶ Further, although the PCCA was “demanding and accepting tax exempt provision under the guise of benefiting the greater masses of Negro people in North Philadelphia,” Moore claimed, “none of those benefits are conferred upon the group other than those of the high salaries which are being paid to the director.”⁹⁷ This was “tantamount to fraud,” in Moore’s opinion, and only exacerbated the “undesirable status quo among Negroes.”⁹⁸ Moore similarly understood that the foundation’s fortunes were linked to the company that gave it its name. “Since your foundation is a large shareholder of Ford Motor Company,” he warned in a telegram to foundation officials that he would “be compelled to take direct action against your dealers and outlets in this area” if they did not withdraw their support for the PCCA.⁹⁹ Although, as historian Matthew Countryman notes, Moore was unable to

⁹⁵ Countryman, *Up South*, 85–86.

⁹⁶ Cecil Moore telegram to Ford Foundation, January 6, 1964, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁹⁷ Cecil Moore telegram to Ford Foundation, January 6, 1964, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁹⁸ Cecil Moore telegram to Ford Foundation, January 6, 1964, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

⁹⁹ Cecil Moore telegram to Ford Foundation, January 6, 1964, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

mobilize a sustained mass protest among black Philadelphians against the PCCA, Ford Foundation officials treated Moore's threat of organizing a Ford boycott as a problem that had the potential to derail the entire Gray Areas program.¹⁰⁰

Ylvisaker saw the solution in the elevation of an alternative “indigenous leader” who could challenge Moore and his confrontational politics. While Ylvisaker blamed Moore for the negative responses to the PCCA in the black community, he hoped that “middle-ground Negro leadership—as represented by the Reverend Leon Sullivan, for example” would embrace the Ford Foundation's projects if they saw that “more than talk and tokenism are involved.”¹⁰¹ Sullivan, who several years earlier had led “don't buy where you can't work” campaigns that encouraged black Philadelphians to boycott local businesses that refused to hire black workers, had turned away from direct action and toward educational solutions to the problem of employment discrimination by 1963.¹⁰² He opened the Operations Industrialization Center (OIC), which sought to provide industrial job training to unemployed and underemployed black Philadelphians, in a building that was once a city jail, in January 1964. Sullivan's history of militancy made some Ford Foundation officials wary, as did his organization's attempts to circumvent existing vocational training schools in the city and his initial reluctance to work with the PCCA.¹⁰³ But others at the foundation, including Ylvisaker, held a different view. They

¹⁰⁰ Countryman, *Up South*, 129.

¹⁰¹ Paul Ylvisaker to Clifford Campbell, Christopher Riley, and Henry Saltzman, December 4, 1963, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

¹⁰² Leon H. Sullivan, *Build, Brother, Build* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith, 1969). Sullivan's career is beginning to be treated by scholars as a prime example of how demands for black empowerment centered on entrepreneurship and job training came to supplant more radical demands for economic justice. See Stephanie Dyer, “Progress Plaza: Leon Sullivan, Zion Investment Associates, and Black Power in a Philadelphia Shopping Center,” in *The Economic Civil Rights Movement: African Americans and the Struggle for Economic Power*, ed. Michael Ezra (New York: Routledge, 2013); and, especially, Jessica Ann Levy, “Black Power, Inc.: Corporatizing Anti-Racist Struggles in the U.S. and Sub-Saharan Africa,” (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2019).

¹⁰³ Michael Harris to Edward J. Meade, Interoffice Memo, December 18, 1963; Edward J. Meade to Paul Ylvisaker, Interoffice Memo, December 19, 1963; Ford Foundation – Gray Areas – 1964 (January–June) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

believed that Sullivan's efforts to work with sections of the black community that foundation officials referred to as "the unemployed, the unemployables, the drop-outs, and others who have . . . inadequate motivation to achieve" made him Ford's best hope to counteract Moore's influence.¹⁰⁴ Ylvisaker described Sullivan approvingly as "certainly the most constructive and one of the most powerful (and militant) of Philadelphia's Negro leaders," and he recast Sullivan's initial discomfort at working with Ford as an admirable sign of his "pride and determination not to let this become just another job-training program for rather than by Negroes."¹⁰⁵ Sullivan's past militancy was an asset, just as B. C. Roy's had been in Calcutta, in the foundation's effort to ward off a challenge from more radical corners of Philadelphia politics.

In what he later called a "Machiavellian act," Ylvisaker orchestrated a meeting between Sullivan and the Ford Foundation trustees in an attempt to win their support for funding the OIC.¹⁰⁶ He arranged what seemed to be a chance encounter between Sullivan and Ford Foundation just as a trustees' meeting was ending. According to Ylvisaker's later recollection, Sullivan "from six feet six . . . looked down at Henry Ford [II] and [John J.] McCloy and all these guys" and "had the . . . trustees around him like the Sermon on the Mount in a few seconds."¹⁰⁷ Henry Ford II was so taken with Sullivan that he asked, in a revealing statement of elite philanthropy's vision of black Americans, "My God, how do we manufacture more of you?," to which Sullivan supposedly replied, "By giving me some money."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Christopher F. Edley to Paul Ylvisaker, Interoffice Memo, January 2, 1964, Ford Foundation – Gray Areas – 1964 (January–June) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Grant Payment to Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement, Ford Foundation – Gray Areas – 1964 (January–June) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, p. 49, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records. See also Ferguson, *Top Down*, 62–63.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, pp. 49–50, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, p. 49, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records.

After this meeting, Ylvisaker encountered little resistance in gaining the support of his Ford Foundation superiors for Sullivan's organization.¹⁰⁹ The foundation authorized an initial grant of \$201,200 for Sullivan's OIC.¹¹⁰ If Calcutta's B. C. Roy was the model of "indigenous leadership" that Ylvisaker hoped Sullivan would equal, Sullivan became the Foundation's model for the rest of the United States. Yet the foundation quickly found that it was unable to "manufacture" more Sullivans, a failure that would only grow more concerning as the pace of urban uprisings increased after 1965.¹¹¹ After the Watts uprising in August 1965, Ylvisaker suggested that the absence of "indigenous leadership" was a primary reason for the unrest. He noted the difficulty of "find[ing] a leader who can combine the indigenous qualities of Sullivan with the 'expert stuff' of [Mitchell] Sviridoff," an urban policy expert and director of the Gray Areas-sponsored community action agency in New Haven, lamenting, "we can't find anybody in Watts or all of Los Angeles to match these two men."¹¹²

The policymakers in the Johnson administration who made community action a central component of the War on Poverty not only relied on the example of the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas program. They also embraced Ylvisaker's ideas about the importance of "indigenous leadership." Ylvisaker was personally involved in the Task Force from a very early stage, and he was considered for the job of second-in-command at the OEO.¹¹³ Task Force members debated the form community action would take as much as they argued over its place in the overall War

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Paul Ylvisaker by Charles T. Morrissey, 27 September 1973, p. 50, folder 227, box 40, Oral History Project (FA618), Ford Foundation Records.

¹¹⁰ Paul Ylvisaker to Norman W. MacLeod, February 28, 1964, Ford Foundation – Gray Areas – 1964 (January–June) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

¹¹¹ Peter B. Levy, *The Great Uprising: Race Riots in Urban America during the 1960s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 9.

¹¹² "Ford Foundation Official Lauds City Poverty War, But Sees Changes Ahead," *New Haven Journal-Courier*, Thursday, March 17, 1966.

¹¹³ Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty*, 18–19, 62, 96; Charles L. Schultze, Memorandum for Bill Moyers, January 30, 1964, Staff: White House Correspondence, 1963–1965 folder, box 41, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

on Poverty. Sargent Shriver, among others, continued to believe that the identification of “indigenous leadership” would contain the potentially radical implications of the provision of the EOA that called for the “maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served.”¹¹⁴ In Shriver’s ideal vision, community action agencies would be “composed of distinguished people at the local level: private businessmen, private philanthropy people, poor people, and government people.”¹¹⁵ Class divisions were meant to be minimized in the community action agency: “Ours was not the poor community versus the rich community, or the business community versus the labor community.”¹¹⁶ It was through the identification of “indigenous leadership” that the centrifugal energies of community action be redirected toward a politics of consensus.

Leon Sullivan’s Operations Industrialization Center, Inc. exemplified the type of agency, and the type of leadership, that the Johnson administration embraced.¹¹⁷ After gaining the support of the Ford Foundation, the OIC quickly became a favorite object of federal funding, receiving over two million dollars from the Department of Labor and the OEO by the middle of 1965 and growing even more rapidly after that.¹¹⁸ By 1967, the OEO was providing \$2.7 million per year in funding for the Philadelphia OIC, and the first eight branches established outside of Philadelphia relied on funding from three federal agencies.¹¹⁹ Sullivan credited the early support

¹¹⁴ Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Pub. L. 88-452, 78 Stat. 508 (1964), 516.

¹¹⁵ Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty*, 74.

¹¹⁷ Historians who have uncovered the democratic and redistributive demands of groups that were funded through community action, including early welfare rights organizations, have rarely considered how much more support groups like Sullivan’s received. See, for example, Orleck and Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty*.

¹¹⁸ On the OIC’s rapid growth, see Sullivan, *Build, Brother, Build*, 108–131.

¹¹⁹ Tersh Boasberg to Joseph A. Califano, Jr., June 28, 1967, Staff: White House Correspondence, May–Dec 1967 folder, box 41, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

of Ylvisaker, in particular, for enabling his organization's initial survival and extraordinary growth.¹²⁰

Sullivan was careful to present his organization's purpose in consensual terms, drawing a contrast between the OIC and the community action agencies that were, by 1966, being accused of provoking popular challenges to urban power structures. In testimony before a Senate committee hearing on urban problems, Sullivan stressed in particular the benefits of the OIC's job training programs to private industry and to state and city taxpayers, rather than to the poor themselves. "Industry," he proclaimed, was the OIC's "closest friend," and the OIC served as the "Vestibule of Industry."¹²¹ Moreover, the program, in Sullivan's accounting, "added six million dollars a year in new purchasing power to the Philadelphia economy" and saved "a million dollars a year in tax revenue that otherwise would have to go to the people on the relief rolls."¹²² Testifying at the same time that calls for Congress to roll back the War on Poverty because of its associations with the urban uprisings were growing louder, Sullivan presented his brand of "indigenous leadership" as the alternative to the unrest the Senators feared.¹²³ "Either this leadership can be supported and new hope given to the depressed peoples in our urban areas everywhere," Sullivan argued, or "the potentially explosive forces within the community [will] set our people toward other paths of violence and mass disorder."¹²⁴ If some community action agencies had indeed become vehicles for the poor to challenge the hierarchies of their cities, Sullivan's provided a vision of community action as a new form of elite brokerage politics.

¹²⁰ Leon Sullivan to Henry Heald, June 25, 1965, Ford Foundation – Personal (1964–1965) folder, box 5, Paul N. Ylvisaker Papers.

¹²¹ Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Testimony before Senate Hearing on Urban Problems, December 12, 1966, p. 10, box 53, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

¹²² Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Testimony before Senate Hearing on Urban Problems, December 12, 1966, p. 7, box 53, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

¹²³ Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 269–73.

¹²⁴ Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Testimony before Senate Hearing on Urban Problems, December 12, 1966, p. 22, box 53, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

Black Politics and the Critique of Social Welfare Colonialism

The first sustained attempt by African American thinkers to understand urban politics in terms of colonialism grew out of this swirling debate about community action and “indigenous leadership.” The rising significance of “indigenous leadership” in discussions of poverty reinforced a longstanding tendency in American political discourse to understand black politics not as a struggle among competing interests, class formations, and ideologies, but as an arena of racial representation, in which a leader or set of leaders spoke for an undifferentiated African American populace.¹²⁵ A prominent 1960 examination of black politics in the urban North, James Q. Wilson’s *Negro Politics: The Search for Leadership*, exemplified this view. Wilson’s book was one of the few texts by a white political scientist to take black politics as its central subject since Harold Gosnell’s *Negro Politicians* (1935).¹²⁶ He assumed that the best way to understand black politics was through a comparison of the leadership styles of two notable black politicians, William Dawson of Chicago and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York.¹²⁷

This tendency to understand black politics in terms of a bifurcation between “leaders” and “the community” crossed racial as well as political lines. Among black thinkers, questions of leadership structured debates about the character and trajectory of the civil rights movement, at times with explicit reference to decolonization. This discussion reached new levels of intensity after the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the rise to national prominence of Martin Luther King,

¹²⁵ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Manning Marable, *Black Leadership* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Adolph Reed, Jr., *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); and Edwards, *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership*.

¹²⁶ On Gosnell and the place of black politics in American political science before the Second World War, see Jessica Blatt, *Race and the Making of American Political Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), especially 134–35.

¹²⁷ James Q. Wilson, *Negro Politics: The Search for Leadership* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960).

Jr. One “participant-observer” of the boycott, Lawrence Dunbar (L. D.) Reddick, described King as a “bourgeois leader of the masses” in his 1959 biography, *Crusader without Violence*.¹²⁸ Privately, he described the minister as a charismatic leader much like Kwame Nkrumah and other statesmen of the decolonizing world.¹²⁹ The organizer and intellectual Ella Baker, famously, split with King and the SCLC in part because of her frustration with what she saw as an overreliance on charismatic, male leadership in the organization. Her split with the SCLC precipitated her attempt to develop an alternative brand of civil rights leadership in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), where she sought to bring young people and the rural poor into positions of self-conscious leadership within the broader movement.¹³⁰ Movement politics thus shaped the contours of debate on the question of black leadership in the early 1960s.

Policymakers, intellectuals, and activists adapted this longstanding, contested tradition of understanding black politics as the representation of the “community” by its “leaders” to the new politics of community action.¹³¹ If Leon Sullivan embraced the designation of “indigenous

¹²⁸ Lawrence Dunbar Reddick, *Crusader without Violence: A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper, 1959), 233; L. D. Reddick, “More about *Crusader without Violence*: Author’s Rebuttal,” *Phylon* 21, no. 2 (1960): 202–203.

¹²⁹ L. D. Reddick to St. Clair Drake, July 25, 1958, folder 31, box 8, St. Clair Drake Papers.

¹³⁰ Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 170–208, 273–298.

¹³¹ Daniel Immerwahr sees the rise in incidence of discussions of the “black community” in the mid- to late 1960s as a semantic and intellectual innovation that emerged as a result of efforts to apply the techniques of overseas community development to the poor within the United States. Although there is a connection between the two, Immerwahr drastically overstates his case when he writes that the phrase “black community” was “hardly ever used before 1960 and in constant use thereafter.” While Immerwahr cites the Google Ngram for the phrase “black community” as evidence for the non-existence of the concept before the 1960s and its rapid ascent thereafter, the trend he observes has much more to do with the increased use of the word “black” as a racial identifier than with a truly novel understanding of the “black community” as a collective subject. The Ngram for the phrase “Negro community” reveals that the formulation was in use beginning in the 1920s, and was fairly widespread by the 1940s. See Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 159, 236n120. Prominent sociological studies that relied on an idea of a “Negro community” in the earlier era include Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*; Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York: Viking Press, 1939); and Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (1941; repr., Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009). A Google Ngram for the two phrases can be found at: <https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=black+community%2C+Negro+community&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cblack%20community%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CNegro%20community%3B%2Cc0>.

leader” bestowed upon him by the Ford Foundation, other African Americans bristled at the way antipoverty agencies selected and empowered local intermediaries. According to some, this process placed government and philanthropic agencies in the role of the colonial state, seeking to govern the American metropolis through mechanisms of indirect rule. The terms of this colonial comparison evolved over the course of the early 1960s. The nascent critique of “social welfare colonialism” often reinforced the emphasis on “indigenous leadership” in antipoverty policy, even as it opened the door to more thoroughgoing challenges to metropolitan political economy.

The critique of “social welfare colonialism” originated in a dispute in Harlem involving the funding of anti-delinquency programs. Manhattan’s Lower East Side was home to the most prominent experimental program designed to combat juvenile delinquency in the country, called Mobilization for Youth (MFY). Mobilization For Youth was founded by Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward in 1959 as an experiment to test the “opportunity theory” of delinquency the two criminologists were developing at the time. Ohlin and Cloward argued in their *Delinquency and Opportunity* (1960) that a society that encouraged high ambitions and provided few opportunities to satisfy them bred the conditions for youth crime and the development of gangs, and their theory gained significant attention in both law enforcement agencies and antipoverty policymaking circles.¹³² Partially inspired by the growing prominence of Ohlin and Cloward’s Mobilization for Youth, a group of local organizations in Harlem sought to attract city resources for their own anti-delinquency proposal. Among those organizations was the Northside Child Development Center, which had been founded by psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark in 1946. Northside originally provided only clinical services, including psychological therapy and

¹³² Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward, *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs* (1960; repr., Florence, KY: Routledge, 2000); Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 109–111; Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 20, 36–40.

diagnostic testing, but over the course of the 1950s the Clarks expanded its offerings to include nutritional and educational programming.¹³³ While Kenneth Clark taught at City College, Mamie Clark ran the day-to-day operations of Northside.¹³⁴ The clinical approach of Northside reflected the Clarks' skepticism both of orthodox Freudianism, with its emphasis on the ultimate and universal influence of the parent-child relationship and the internal roots of individual mental disorders, and of the increasing medicalization of psychiatry in the postwar United States.¹³⁵ Rather, the Clarks emphasized the social sources of psychological health and the influence of racism, in particular, on the psychological development of black youths in Harlem.¹³⁶ This attitude influenced their efforts to involve social workers in Northside's activities and the organization's turn to advocacy on health and education issues in the city. The Clarks, in conjunction with other local reformers, thus sought to develop a program that resembled Mobilization for Youth in Harlem.

In May 1961, when the New York City Youth Board announced a \$94,000 plan to establish a "psychiatric unit" that would monitor "high delinquency areas" in Harlem that summer, neither Northside nor other agencies operating in the neighborhood were consulted.¹³⁷ The youth board's far-fetched plan involved sending psychiatrists, social workers, and an anthropologist to attempt to identify gang members, approach them on the street, and either provide immediate psychiatric assistance or convince them to begin sustained treatment. Youth Board Commissioner Ralph Whelan, according to the *New York Times*, embraced the proposal

¹³³ Ben Keppel, *The Work of Democracy: Ralph Bunche, Kenneth B. Clark, Lorraine Hansberry, and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 144–47.

¹³⁴ Daniel Matlin, *On the Corner: African American Intellectuals and the Urban Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 44.

¹³⁵ Matlin, *On the Corner*, 44.

¹³⁶ Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 98.

¹³⁷ "Psychiatric Unit to Watch Gangs," *New York Times*, May 15, 1961.

“because of the reluctance of the youngsters to go to established mental health centers and . . . because the conventional forms of help had not always been effective.”¹³⁸ Beyond the program design itself, which the *Amsterdam News* editorial board ridiculed as “snatching [juvenile delinquents] off the streets and forcing them on some white psychiatrist’s couch,” the city government faced criticism for its decision to contract with the Jewish Board of Guardians, rather than an organization in Harlem, to carry out the project.¹³⁹

A group of Harlem ministers and directors of neighborhood organizations, including Kenneth Clark, came together under the auspices of the Harlem Neighborhoods Association (HANA) to protest the lack of consultation with local agencies. In a letter to Whelan, they cited the emerging consensus in community action circles that “one cannot reasonably hope for a community program of this type to be successful if it is imposed upon a community from ‘above.’”¹⁴⁰ The city’s choice to pay an outside organization for services that overlapped with the mission of several local organizations “could indeed be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to weaken the existing agencies in the community.”¹⁴¹ The city’s handling of the process, as Clark and his colleagues put it, was “an example of the ‘lady bountiful’ approach to the problem of the people of the community” and “a form of social welfare colonialism.”¹⁴² Reverend Eugene Callender, another signatory of the letter, repeated the charge of “social welfare colonialism” in the pulpit of the Church of the Master on 122nd St. and Morningside Avenue.¹⁴³ This phrase updated a longstanding criticism of social work practices as out of touch and counterproductive

¹³⁸ “Psychiatric Unit to Watch Gangs,” *New York Times*, May 15, 1961.

¹³⁹ “Who’s Delinquent?” *Amsterdam News*, Editorial, May 20, 1961.

¹⁴⁰ Letter to Commissioner Ralph W. Whelan, New York City Youth Board, May 23, 1961, folder 4, box 49, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁴¹ Letter to Commissioner Ralph W. Whelan, New York City Youth Board, May 23, 1961, folder 4, box 49, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

¹⁴² Letter to Commissioner Ralph W. Whelan, New York City Youth Board, May 23, 1961, folder 4, box 49, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

¹⁴³ “Pastor Hits Youth Board’s New Proposal,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 24, 1961.

for the era of decolonization, associating the city government not with the extractive and violent elements of colonial rule but with its ideology of a civilizing mission. The opposition by Harlem residents forced city officials to abandon their plan

Notably, in applying the label of colonialism, Clark and his colleagues did not question the youth board's plan at its roots, but rather sought to delegitimize their reliance on white experts from outside Harlem. In spite of some misgivings about the specific design of the youth board's program, HANA shared a belief in the value of psychiatric interventions in the lives of young people classified as juvenile delinquents. A principal danger of the city's decision, they argued, was that it "threaten[ed] to undo much of the public confidence in the psychiatric approach to troubled and disturbed children and youth."¹⁴⁴

The controversy stimulated greater interest in developing anti-delinquency programs in Harlem.¹⁴⁵ Mamie and Kenneth Clark met with leaders of other voluntary agencies throughout the summer of 1961, drawing up a proposal for a new organization that would provide a greater range of services than Northside.¹⁴⁶ Out of these conversations came the idea for Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU). Aware of the support for Mobilization for Youth in the Kennedy administration, the Clarks sought the advice of James Jones, a black sociologist who worked alongside Cloward at MFY, in the planning process.¹⁴⁷ HARYOU won a planning grant of \$230,000 from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and an additional grant of \$100,000 from the city government.¹⁴⁸ David Hackett, the executive director of the PCJD, was

¹⁴⁴ Letter to Commissioner Ralph W. Whelan, New York City Youth Board, May 23, 1961, folder 4, box 49, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

¹⁴⁵ "After Mounting Protests, Youth Bd. Promises Study on Gang Study," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1961.

¹⁴⁶ The Reminiscences of Kenneth B. Clark, April 7, 1976, pp. 150–52, Oral History Collection of Columbia University in the City of New York, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/nny/clarkk/transcripts/clarkk_1_4_150.html>

¹⁴⁷ The Reminiscences of Kenneth B. Clark, April 7, 1976, p. 153.

¹⁴⁸ "A New Agency Works in Harlem," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 13, 1962. Matlin, *On the Corner*, 45.

involved in the formation and early operations of HARYOU, and the organization was discussed in the Johnson administration's Task Force on Poverty.¹⁴⁹ HARYOU's emergence out of the frustration of Harlem reformers with the Youth Board's approach exemplified the common ground between activists' critiques of "social welfare colonialism" and the emphasis among policymakers on "indigenous leadership."

Several years after the Youth Board controversy, a bestselling book brought the charge of "social welfare colonialism" into the national consciousness. Written by the journalist Charles Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (1964) captured a rising tide of discontent with philanthropic practices. Silberman, who grew up in New York and taught economics at Columbia University and City College, joined the staff of *Fortune* magazine in 1953, where he covered urban policy and education during the 1950s and early 1960s. In *Crisis in Black and White*, Silberman framed his commentary in the terms of "indigenous leadership" on which both foundation officials and their critics relied. Failures of social policy directed at African Americans, Silberman concluded, often resulted from the narrow band of black leaders that policymakers consulted. "Businessmen and civic leaders must realize that when they talk only to the eight or ten most prosperous or most socially polished Negroes in town, they are not really talking to the Negroes at all," which meant that they could be "badly misled as to the temper and desires of the Negro community."¹⁵⁰ In Silberman's mind, "nothing rankles Negroes quite so much as the 'power structure's' habit of choosing the Negro 'leaders' whom it wants to reward or with whom it wants to deal."¹⁵¹ He singled out Paul Ylvisaker and the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas program for criticism along these lines, even though Silberman's own research had been

¹⁴⁹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 409–12; Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty*, 18–19.

¹⁵⁰ Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 197–98.

¹⁵¹ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 196.

partially funded by a grant from the foundation, which hoped it would bring positive publicity to Gray Areas.¹⁵² Silberman cited the foundation's treatment of NAACP leader Cecil Moore in Philadelphia as a particularly egregious example. The foundation's actions there had not only run counter to the best practices of community action but had actually inflamed the very sentiments they hoped to counter. Even "middle-class Negroes who regarded Moore as a dangerous rabble-rouser," he argued, "felt constrained in this instance to support him out of resentment as this example of white welfare colonialism."¹⁵³ Throughout the final chapter of *Crisis in Black and White*, entitled, "The Revolt against 'Welfare Colonialism,'" Silberman used the language of colonialism to emphasize the "self-defeating" nature of liberal social reform efforts.¹⁵⁴

Silberman contrasted his appraisal of the efforts to cultivate "indigenous leadership" by Ylvisaker with an enthusiastic endorsement of the work of Saul Alinsky and The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) among African Americans in Chicago. TWO was the latest organizing vehicle founded by Alinsky, who began his career in the 1930s under the tutelage of CIO President John L. Lewis and in the 1940s founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which he directed using his distinctive principles of community organization.¹⁵⁵ Alinsky's approach to organizing focused on building power by uniting residents of a neighborhood around modest, immediate demands, and using the collective power of these groups—made manifest through petitions, boycotts, or direct action—to extract concessions from local elites. Deeply suspicious of communist and socialist ideologies, Alinsky argued that the practical-minded organizer who

¹⁵² Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy*, 198n23.

¹⁵³ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 354.

¹⁵⁴ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 354.

¹⁵⁵ On Alinsky's relationship with Lewis, see Sanford Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky—His Life and Legacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 99–101, 218–22.

could bring people together around reasonable demands and help them understand their own power was the key to social change.¹⁵⁶

Despite their differences in tactics, Woodlawn and the Gray Areas program shared a focus on the development of “indigenous leadership,” which had been a part of Alinsky’s theories of organizing since the 1940s.¹⁵⁷ In both conceptions, the development of “indigenous leadership” required a stimulus from the outside, because “indigenous leaders of the slum area are not in touch with each other; . . . they lack the skills needed to keep a large organization running; and in most cases it has never occurred to any of them to lead a mass organization.”¹⁵⁸ The difference, Silberman concluded, was that Woodlawn could effectively provide this external impetus, but organizations that would win the support of Ylvisaker and the Ford Foundation could not.¹⁵⁹

Silberman explored this divergence with reference to competing understandings of the American claim to be the “first new nation.” Political conflicts in the American metropolis, Ylvisaker had argued, were exacerbated by the fact that cities lacked the shared political purpose exemplified by the preamble of the U.S. Constitution.¹⁶⁰ As Silberman pointed out, though, that document was the “result of a controversial revolution fought with whatever means were at hand,” and to cite it in a lament of the contentious politics of contemporary cities was an act of

¹⁵⁶ On Alinsky’s hostility to leftist ideologies, see Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (1971; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 8–10.

¹⁵⁷ Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 87–98; and Vijay Phulwani, “The Poor Man’s Machiavelli: Saul Alinsky and the Morality of Power,” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 4 (November 2016): 863–75.

¹⁵⁸ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 325.

¹⁵⁹ Famously, The Woodlawn Organization would go on to win a \$1 million grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1967 to organize young people connected to the Blackstone Rangers and East Side Disciples gangs, which drew the ire of conservative critics of the War on Poverty. See Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ Ylvisaker, “Metropolitan Government—For What?” (1958), in *Conscience and Community*, 85–93.

bad faith.¹⁶¹ This misreading, moreover, was symptomatic: “As Saul Alinsky suggests sarcastically, none of the Founding Fathers would have merited a grant from the Ford Foundation.”¹⁶² Competing understandings of the American Revolution thus not only affected American foreign policy, but also inflected debates about community action in U.S. cities—territories that were themselves increasingly analogized to the decolonizing world.

The form of “indigenous leadership” that Alinsky favored differed in significant ways from what policymakers preferred. For Alinsky, the willingness to engage in disruptive action in order to win concessions from city elites was not a mark against a leader, but a requirement. Nonetheless, his ideal vision of an “indigenous leader” shared important elements with Ylvisaker’s, most importantly the ability to coordinate disparate groups within a community and a close, organic connection to the most disempowered populations. Silberman’s portrayal of a complete divergence between the Gray Areas program and the work of Woodlawn disguised important similarities in their philosophies and overlooked the close ties between the foundation and community action agencies that resembled Woodlawn across the country. When Alinsky wrote to Ylvisaker after the publication of *Crisis in Black and White* suggesting that the Foundation must have been unhappy to have funded a work that cast the Gray Areas programs in such a negative light, he, too, overlooked the ways that Silberman’s book endorsed the premises underlying the Foundation’s view of community action.¹⁶³ It was precisely the perception that Ford had been successful at identifying and developing a class of leaders close to the grassroots that made Gray Areas such an attractive model for the policymakers who developed the OEO.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Silberman, 355.

¹⁶² Silberman, 355.

¹⁶³ Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy*, 198n23.

¹⁶⁴ Charles L. Schultze, Memorandum for Bill Moyers, January 30, 1964, Staff: White House Correspondence, 1963–1965 folder, box 41, R. Sargent Shriver Personal Papers.

Those leveling the charge of “social welfare colonialism” thus had more in common with the policy and foundation officials seeking to identify “indigenous leadership” in their efforts to fight poverty than either group liked to admit. Both Silberman and those involved with the Harlem Neighborhood Association shared an underlying faith that a version of community action, implemented through the right leaders, represented the best means of addressing urban poverty and juvenile delinquency. Like the policymakers and foundation officials who devised community action, they believed that the unequal distribution of power in the American metropolis could be overcome through the elevation of a certain brand of leadership.

If much of *Crisis in Black and White* extended a criticism of social policy and philanthropy through the language of colonialism, one rarely noted passage presented a quite different way of linking the political economy of postcolonial states with that of the American metropolis. This comparison focused not on philanthropic efforts but on the structure of the labor market. In spite of some progress made since the Second World War, firms continued to justify ongoing employment discrimination against African Americans in industrial occupations on the grounds that these workers were less qualified and required a greater investment of on-the-job training.¹⁶⁵ Yet, Silberman noted, such a narrow view of efficiency ignored the fact that “it will be considerably cheaper for business to subsidize Negro employment for a time than to pay it out in welfare—or in the cost to the community of racial violence.”¹⁶⁶ American companies that “operate in the underdeveloped nations” had to learn a parallel lesson, “since employing native workers may be the price of staying in the country for any length of time.”¹⁶⁷ Silberman cited the petroleum giant ARAMCO as an example of the prudent attitude business leaders could adopt

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Sugrue, “Affirmative Action from Below: Civil Rights, the Building Trades, and the Politics of Racial Equality in the Urban North, 1945–1969,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (June 2004): 145–73.

¹⁶⁶ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 246.

¹⁶⁷ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 246.

when put under pressure to do so. Although the company “used to import virtually its entire labor force from the United States” since “it seemed ‘obvious’ that illiterate Saudi peasants could never cope with the complex technology of oil drilling and transportation,” once they were “faced with the long-range danger of expropriation” they “discovered that Saudis could be taught after all.”¹⁶⁸ Abolishing the job ceiling and paying for education and job training, Silberman suggested, offered a way for American business to avoid the dire consequences of insurgent action by racialized workers at home and abroad, whether in the form of nationalization or riots. This passage suggested lines of comparison between postcolonial states and U.S. urban poverty well outside the more common analyses of the “culture of poverty” and “indigenous leadership.” The economic assertiveness of postcolonial states here offered potentially salutary lessons for those seeking to address domestic inequality.¹⁶⁹

Crisis in Black and White spent ten weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, bringing the phrase “social welfare colonialism” into the mainstream of American commentary.¹⁷⁰ Almost simultaneously, Kenneth Clark was developing a broader application of the language of colonialism to the urban crisis. In the 1964 HARYOU report *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequence of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change* and the 1965 book *Dark Ghetto*, Clark developed an analysis of the ghetto-as-colony that, as the next chapter will explore, would deeply influence the Black Power movement—which Clark himself opposed. Clark’s analysis of the ghetto-as-colony applied the label of colonialism to the structure of urban political economy,

¹⁶⁸ Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White*, 246–47. Silberman did not mention that Arab workers at ARAMCO oil camps faced a regime of racial discrimination modeled directly on Jim Crow, as they were forced into substandard, segregated housing and paid significantly less than their American counterparts. See Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso, 2009), especially 88–120.

¹⁶⁹ On the growing economic assertiveness of postcolonial states in international society, see Christopher R. W. Dietrich, *Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹⁷⁰ “Best Seller List,” *New York Times*, October 4, 1964, BR8.

rather than the actions or attitudes of particular agencies. His transition from a critique of “social welfare colonialism” to the ghetto-as-colony thesis marked his growing ambivalence about the premises as well as the practices of liberal antipoverty policy, an attitude that the second half of the 1960s only reinforced.

Clark’s first discussion of the political economy of the Harlem ghetto in colonial terms came in the HARYOU report *Youth in the Ghetto*. Spanning 600 pages and authored primarily by Clark, *Youth in the Ghetto* aimed to provide a comprehensive social survey of Central Harlem, defined as the area between “110th Street on the south; Third Avenue on the east; the Harlem River on the northeast; and the parks bordering St. Nicholas, Morningside, and Manhattan Avenues on the west.”¹⁷¹ HARYOU employed over two hundred young people as research associates, who compiled the document alongside adult consultants and research directors.¹⁷² The report combined a statistical portrait of stark differentials in economic, educational, and health indicators between Harlem and the rest of the city with a “blueprint for change” centered on a particular vision of community action.

Although HARYOU attracted the eye of policymakers, its original orientation had more of an activist bent than the agencies that became the darlings of both the Ford Foundation and the Johnson administration, such as Leon Sullivan’s Operations Industrialization Center. As historian Daniel Matlin persuasively argues, Clark’s psychological ideas, which emphasized the therapeutic benefits of social action by the disempowered members of a community, made *Youth in the Ghetto* more of an activist document than a plan for the technocratic administration of social services by local elites.¹⁷³ *Youth in the Ghetto* suggested that HARYOU’s community

¹⁷¹ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, *Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change* (New York: HARYOU, 1964), 97.

¹⁷² Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, *Youth in the Ghetto*, 88–93.

¹⁷³ Matlin, *On the Corner*, 89–93.

action wing would work alongside groups such as SNCC, CORE, and the Community Council on Housing—an organization headed by legendary Harlem housing activist and Communist Jesse Gray, which had organized successful rent strikes in 1963—in order to “insur[e] the participation of Harlem’s young people in programs of social action and social protest.”¹⁷⁴ Clark thus expected that grassroots civil rights protest would comprise one part of HARYOU’s version of community action.

The embryonic analysis of the ghetto as colony offered in *Youth in the Ghetto* suggested that the difficulties faced by reform agencies in Harlem resulted from the broader structure of metropolitan political economy. As the introduction to the report put it:

Ghettos in contemporary America may be defined primarily in terms of racial and color-determined restrictions on freedom of choice and freedom of movement. Ghettos are the consequence of the imposition of external power and the institutionalization of powerlessness. In this respect, they are in fact social, political, educational, and—above all—economic colonies. Those confined within ghetto walls are subject peoples. They are victims of the greed, cruelty, insensitivity, guilt, and fear of their masters.¹⁷⁵

This colonial position diminished the capacity of grassroots organizations, including HARYOU itself, to survive and to alter the conditions of the neighborhood: “the precarious plight of social agencies in Harlem reflects not only the general predicament of the community, its pattern of powerlessness, but also the specific fact that Harlem is an economic, business, and industrial colony of New York City.”¹⁷⁶ Clark’s analysis here posed HARYOU’s vision of community action as analogous to a struggle for decolonization. At the same time, by insisting that Harlem’s problems were inseparable from the political economy of the city writ large, Clark suggested that community-level politics were insufficient. Further, although Clark did not state his definition of colonialism outright, it clearly referred to something other than political sovereignty over a

¹⁷⁴ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, *Youth in the Ghetto*, 580–81.

¹⁷⁵ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, *Youth in the Ghetto*, 10.

¹⁷⁶ Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, *Youth in the Ghetto*, 76.

distant people and something different from what the label of “social welfare colonialism” implied. Rather, the economic exploitation of a racialized, territorially defined population, which had been at the center of more internationally minded black thinkers’ understandings of colonialism for decades, constituted Clark’s understanding of the colonial relationship between the Harlem ghetto and the broader metropolis. In his protest of the Youth Board decision two years earlier, Clark and his allies employed the colonial analogy to emphasize paternalism; here, he used it to illuminate a pattern of exploitation.

The HARYOU report was circulated among policymakers in New York and Washington. As previously noted, it influenced discussions in the Johnson administration about the War on Poverty. The dense, 600-page document had little chance of reaching a wider readership. Clark hoped he could turn its insights into a book that would do exactly that. Further, HARYOU’s activities did not go as he hoped. Shortly after the establishment of the agency, Harlem’s congressman, Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., worked to bring the independent organization under his control. First, he orchestrated the creation of a second community action agency, called Associated Community Teams (ACT), which also won a grant from the President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency.¹⁷⁷ Then, Powell proposed a merger between the two organizations. Clark vehemently opposed the merger, fearing that it would make HARYOU beholden to Powell’s political interests. In Clark’s mind, the goal of HARYOU was to build up an independent base of power from which Harlem residents could agitate for change, whereas Powell hoped only to reinforce their dependency on him in order to ensure his continued reelection.¹⁷⁸ Policymakers in Washington, however, largely supported Powell, in part because his position in Congress gave him leverage over antipoverty legislation. The merger between

¹⁷⁷ Matlin, *On the Corner*, 104.

¹⁷⁸ Matlin, *On the Corner*, 104.

HARYOU and ACT went through with the support of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and the PCJD, and Clark was left off the board of the newly formed HARYOU-ACT.¹⁷⁹ He resigned in July 1964, only a few months after the release of *Youth in the Ghetto*.¹⁸⁰

After leaving the organization he helped found, Clark turned toward revising *Youth in the Ghetto* for public consumption. The book he produced, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (1965), combined social-scientific analysis based on the HARYOU project with Clark's personal reflections as a resident of Harlem for over forty years. Released in the aftermath of the Harlem riots, *Dark Ghetto*, as Daniel Matlin notes, was one of several books printed in 1965 by prominent New York publishers that sought to capitalize on growing nationwide interest in the subject of black urban life, and the book reached wide audiences.¹⁸¹ Although much of the analysis in *Dark Ghetto*, and even large sections of the text, were drawn from *Youth in the Ghetto*, the two documents contained important differences and served different purposes for their author. Clark wanted *Youth in the Ghetto* to serve as the authoritative report on conditions in Harlem. *Dark Ghetto*, meanwhile, was "no report at all, but rather the anguished cry of its author," even if it was a "cry" still "controlled in part by the concepts and language of social science."¹⁸² Clark hoped to bring expert analysis and literary skill to dramatize the problems of the American ghetto for what he saw as a largely apathetic public audience.

Dark Ghetto opened with the same evocative description of the ghetto-as-colony originally included in the introduction to *Youth in the Ghetto*. British philosopher Bertrand Russell highlighted this point in an extended blurb that was printed on the book's front cover.

¹⁷⁹ Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy*, 109–114.

¹⁸⁰ Kenneth Clark to Arthur Logan, July 28, 1964, folder 6, box 49, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

¹⁸¹ Daniel Matlin reports that the book "sold just under 38,000 copies in its hardback edition and a further 136,000 following a reissue as a paperback in 1967." It was also partially serialized in the *New York Post*. Matlin, *On the Corner*, 43.

¹⁸² Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), xx.

“The Negro in America enjoys what can only be described as colonial status,” Russell wrote, arguing, more stridently than the author himself, that Clark’s analysis confirmed “the necessity of radical, even revolutionary action.”¹⁸³ Clark did not go so far as to endorse revolution, although the way he substantiated the colonial analogy with an account of social conditions in Harlem would inspire others to argue that his analysis pointed in that direction. His analysis of labor, capital investment, and housing in the third chapter of *Dark Ghetto* provided the strongest support for his description of American ghettos as “above all—economic colonies.” Segregation and employment discrimination meant that residents of the ghetto either worked elsewhere or were forced to work in low-wage jobs. The ghetto’s housing stock was dilapidated and deteriorating; its schools were substandard and underfunded; and, crucially, most of its businesses were owned by outsiders, who took their profits out of the neighborhood. Clark saw this last factor as the main reason that the ghetto could only be understood in relation to the surrounding metropolis. Absentee ownership left the ghetto with a lack of investment capital and a surplus of businesses geared toward low-quality consumer goods. Federal highway construction and racially discriminatory federal mortgage underwriting further ensured that “the suburbs drain the economy of the city—through subsidized transportation, housing development, and the like.”¹⁸⁴

Clark’s analysis was among the first to link the language of colonialism with the territorially specific space of the black ghetto. The Communist Party’s call for self-determination in the black belt identified the clearest connections to colonialism in the plantation society of the post-Emancipation U.S. South. Harold Cruse and other writers in the early 1960s, as shown in

¹⁸³ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, Front Cover; Bertrand Russell, “Statement on *Dark Ghetto*,” folder 4, box 184, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

¹⁸⁴ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 29.

the previous chapter, deployed a colonial analogy to emphasize the cultural domination and economic exploitation that characterized the American racial hierarchy on a national scale. In contrast, Clark's ghetto-as-colony thesis emphasized that metropolitan political economy was emerging as the central arena of racial domination in American life.

Clark's description of the relations between ghetto and metropolis in colonial terms was accompanied by a greater ambivalence about the possibilities of community action than he had exhibited in previous writings. His conflict with Powell and his departure from HARYOU-ACT diminished his faith in the independent community organization as an effective social actor. Powell's ability to muster political support in Washington for his takeover of the agency suggested to Clark that the same forces that made the ghetto a "colony" presented overwhelming obstacles to successful mobilization from within its walls. In a subtle repudiation of his belief in community action that animated so much of the HARYOU report, Clark now insisted that "the dark ghetto is not a viable community."¹⁸⁵ The assumption that the development of "indigenous leadership" could transform ghetto conditions similarly struck Clark as false. "Negro leaders can no longer control the pace of change in America," he wrote, and "in fact they are no longer, if they ever were, literally *leaders*."¹⁸⁶ This was a consequence, Clark argued, of the "successful movement of democracy in America and throughout the world," which turned the leadership class through which liberal antipoverty policy sought to work into "mere interpreters or executives."¹⁸⁷ Examining the strategies on offer in the civil rights movement, from the "strategy of accommodation" to the "strategy of law and maneuver" to the "strategy of direct encounter," Clark concluded bleakly that these strategies held only limited promise. "If racism has so

¹⁸⁵ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 27.

¹⁸⁶ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 213.

¹⁸⁷ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 213.

corroded the American society” that white Americans felt no identification with black ghetto residents, “then no strategy or combination of strategies can transform the ghetto and save the society.”¹⁸⁸ Community action might play some role in the sought-after transformation, but the notion that it could be at the center of a “blueprint for change,” as Clark had described it in *Youth in the Ghetto*, no longer seemed viable.

By the late 1960s, Clark rejected community action entirely. Clark and Jeannette Hopkins, his editor at Harper & Row for *Dark Ghetto*, jointly wrote a stinging critique of the way community action had been incorporated into the War on Poverty. Their book, *A Relevant War against Poverty* (1968), focused on the turn by Congress and the administration away from the “maximum feasible participation” mandate. Clark and Hopkins leveled criticisms, informed by Clark’s experience with HARYOU, at the way that community action agencies had been subsumed by existing local political machines.¹⁸⁹ A year later, in a speech titled “Problems of the Ghetto,” Clark disparaged not only the implementation of community action but its underlying ideals as well. No longer a promising means to build up “indigenous leadership” and local sources of power that could put pressure on urban political machines, the emphasis on community action in the War on Poverty represented an abdication of responsibility by those who truly held power over the ghetto. Clark argued that the “maximum feasible participation” mandate of the EOA “ask[ed] the victims of America’s social and racial cruelty to assume the primary responsibility for overcoming the manifestations of this cruelty.”¹⁹⁰ In his observation, “the victims of the ghetto are not in themselves able to overcome the burdens and problems of

¹⁸⁸ Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 222.

¹⁸⁹ Kenneth Clark and Jeannette Hopkins, *A Relevant War on Poverty: A Study of Community Action Programs and Observable Social Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 133–60.

¹⁹⁰ Kenneth B. Clark, “Problems of the Ghetto,” p. 12, folder 1, box 162, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

the ghetto.”¹⁹¹ Clark’s ambivalence about the possibilities of community action in the middle of the 1960s had turned into outright rejection. He no longer believed that participatory politics within the boundaries of American liberalism could bring about internal decolonization.

* * *

By the time Clark delivered his “Problems of the Ghetto” address, the ghetto-as-colony thesis had traveled far from the debates about antipoverty policy, community action, and “indigenous leadership” from which it emerged. Influenced by a longstanding tradition of thinking about the nature and meaning of colonialism and its connections to American society, intellectuals and activists associated with Black Power embraced elements of both Harold Cruse’s recasting of American racial hierarchy as a form of internal colonialism and Kenneth Clark’s image of the ghetto as colony. A committed integrationist, Clark’s distaste for black nationalism made him a consistent opponent of the Black Power movement and frequent target of criticism by those associated with it. Yet his analysis of the colonial relationship between the black ghetto and the American metropolis profoundly influenced many Black Power thinkers whose political positions he abhorred. As the next chapter will explore, this particular colonial comparison became embroiled in the central struggles of the Black Power era.

¹⁹¹ Kenneth B. Clark, “Problems of the Ghetto,” p. 12, folder 1, box 162, Kenneth Bancroft Clark Papers.

Chapter 5

Contesting the Colonial Analogy: Pluralism and Political Economy in the Black Power Era

Black Power brought the politics of colonial comparison to the center of national debate. The Black Power movement, as scholars have long noted, drew strength from the example and momentum of decolonization abroad, which reached its peak in the early 1960s.¹ The year 1960 alone saw the independence of seventeen African nations. Although African Americans had long considered how black politics in the United States related to anticolonial movements abroad, the wave of decolonization in the early 1960s, combined with the rising intensity of civil rights activism and a renascent black nationalist current in the United States, brought new urgency to the question. At the moment of the ascendancy of the Third World in the United Nations, many African Americans saw a budding power bloc that could bring American racial inequality in the United States to the forefront of international concern. Further, as African American activists and intellectuals observed more and more of the Third World achieve a measure of self-determination, they approached decolonization as a lens through which they could better understand the black freedom struggle at home.

The turn to decolonization as a framework for understanding American society was not unique to African Americans in the 1960s. As the previous two chapters have shown, policymakers, politicians, and thinkers across the political spectrum turned to comparisons with the decolonizing world both to influence the policies and the constitutional orders of postcolonial states and to frame social policy initiatives at home. These efforts elevated the question of the

¹ Peniel E. Joseph, "Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement," in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights–Black Power Era*, ed. Peniel E. Joseph (New York: Routledge, 2006): 14–15.

relationship between the global system of colonialism and the political order of the United States to a newly prominent place in domestic political culture, which set the stage, in part, for the story this chapter tells. Moreover, from the late 1960s through the 1970s, activism and intellectual production by indigenous peoples, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans—some of which engaged directly with African American discourses of internal colonization—increasingly presented an image of the United States as a colonial power exercising illegitimate and exploitative authority over racialized peoples residing within its borders.²

The spread of the concept of internal colonialism in the 1960s among African Americans emerged from two proximate sources. To writers and activists such as Harold Cruse, James Boggs, and Grace Lee Boggs, the colonial analogy offered a more authentic critique of the place of African Americans in American and global capitalism than the store of concepts available in Western Marxist theory. In the same period, as the previous chapter illustrated, liberal psychologist Kenneth Clark adopted the language of colonialism to analyze the problems of the postwar “second ghetto” and to proclaim the incompatibility of residential segregation and concentrated poverty with the dominant image of the United States as a liberal democracy.³

² On indigenous activism, see Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008). On the shared resonance of land claims across indigenous and black activism in a slightly later period than this chapter covers, see Dan Berger and Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, “‘The Struggle Is for Land!’ Race, Territory, and National Liberation,” in *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2010), 57–76. On the connections between Puerto Rican and African American activism, see Sonia Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). For the parallel story of the idea of internal colonialism in Chicano thought and activism, see Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979); Ramón A. Gutiérrez, “Internal Colonialism: An American Theory of Race,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1, no. 2 (2004): 281–95.

³ A number of scholars have examined the policies that created and maintained the “second ghetto” and have argued that the struggle against these policies drove much of the civil rights movement in the North. See, among others, Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jeanne F. Theoharis and Komoyi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton:

In the middle of the 1960s, thanks in part to the unexpected reach of Cruse’s writing and the social-scientific legitimacy bestowed by Clark’s usage, the language of internal colonialism proliferated. Between 1965 and 1967, the colonial analogy played a prominent role in debates about the strategic direction and ideological definition of the black freedom movement. In the period after the legislative victories of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a wide range of black activists and thinkers—some, but not all, of whom identified with the protean call for Black Power—argued that the black freedom movement needed to develop a new conceptual register. As Brandon Terry notes, this “felt need for more adequate metaphors to characterize those *structural* and *cultural* dimensions of the racial order,” dimensions that were not captured in the vocabularies of “prejudice,” “discrimination,” or “second-class citizenship,” motivated many writers and activists to turn to the language of colonialism and decolonization.⁴ Leading activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), such as James Forman and Stokely Carmichael, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), such as Jack O’Dell, turned to the colonial analogy in their attempts to formulate a new ideological framework and strategic direction for the black freedom struggle as a whole.

Debates surrounding the analytical purchase and strategic usefulness of the language of internal colonialism increasingly centered on questions of ethnic group pluralism and the political economy of urban development after the publication of Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton’s *Black Power* in 1967. Carmichael and Hamilton invoked the language of internal colonialism to criticize the paradigms of pluralist political science, while simultaneously arguing

Princeton University Press, 2005); Keaanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

⁴ Brandon M. Terry, “Requiem for a Dream: The Problem-Space of Black Power,” in *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 313–14.

that the pluralist paradigm and the colonial analogy were compatible. This linkage, I argue, proved a turning point in the career of the concept of internal colonialism. A deep antinomy existed between the image of urban politics as a balancing act of the interests of ethnic groups holding relatively (or at least potentially) equal amounts of power and the understanding of systematic exploitation implied by previous uses of the colonial analogy. This tension pervaded *Black Power*, as Carmichael and Hamilton suggested that African Americans might simply enter into the pluralistic contest for power and indicated that broader changes to metropolitan political economy were required.

The linkage between the idea that African Americans constituted an internal colony and the assumptions of pluralist political thought made the colonial analogy available for a wider range of political actors. As a result, and as urban uprisings brought the political economy of racism to the center of national debate, the language of internal colonialism garnered a brief moment of national political resonance. Politicians from Walter Mondale to Richard Nixon sought to adopt the colonial analogy to support their own programs for urban development, illustrating the “semantic drift” of the concept since its origins among writers and activists on the black left in the early 1960s.⁵

The fragmentation of the black freedom movement in the final years of the 1960s instigated several reconsiderations of the language of the internal colony. For some, the rise to power of black political leaders in cities like Newark, Cleveland, and Detroit amidst the failure of the civil rights and Black Power movements to achieve broad-based economic redistribution offered evidence of the continuing relevance of the decolonizing world to issues of American

⁵ Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (1977; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 40; Anton Jäger, “The Semantic Drift: Images of Populism in Post-War American Historiography and Their Relevance for (European) Political Science,” *Constellations* 24 (2017): 310–23.

political economy. The writer and activist Robert L. Allen reformulated the colonial analogy around the concept of “domestic neocolonialism,” drawing on Kwame Nkrumah’s 1965 book *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*.⁶ At the same time, concerns about the analytical clarity and strategic usefulness of the colonial analogy, combined with reevaluations of the place of colonial rule in the international system, led a number of black activists to abandon internal colonialism as a descriptor of American racial hierarchy. Further, the associations between the colonial analogy and programs of black elite empowerment enabled by the analogy’s semantic drift prompted some of its former proponents on the black left to disavow the concept. By the middle of the 1970s, even as the concept of internal colonialism gained more adherents in U.S. academic life, its exhaustion as a language of movement politics became evident to many observers.

This chapter focuses on how activists and writers invoked the language of internal colonialism to analyze the *political economy* of racial inequality in the United States. It is important to note, however, that this language served other significant purposes in black thought and activism as well. First, a burgeoning, international discourse on the *psychological* consequences of colonialism deeply influenced the intellectual life of the Black Power movement. In particular, the emphasis in the writings of Martinique-born psychiatrist and anticolonial revolutionary Frantz Fanon on the “inferiority complex” produced by colonial racism resonated with various segments of the Black Power movement.⁷ This vision of a shared “inferiority complex” affecting African Americans and colonial subjects around the world

⁶ Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (1969; repr., Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992), 2; Kwame Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas, Nelson, and Sons, Ltd., 1965).

⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 73.

prompted some in the movement, such as Amiri Baraka, to identify the therapeutic potential of actions that would cultivate a sense of black pride, from artistic production to violent rebellion.⁸

Second, the question of *cultural degradation* pointed to further similarities between the colonial project and the American racial order. Racist depictions of black culture in the United States in both popular culture and scholarly writing constituted an important part of the broader vision of a global cultural hierarchy that had long justified European colonial rule. The rising fortunes of movements for decolonization in Asia and Africa after the Second World War provided additional ballast to longstanding challenges to these notions of European cultural superiority. A language of cultural decolonization thus pervaded African American thought and activism in the 1960s and 1970s. Writers, activists, educators, and artists invoked the language of decolonization to support a wide range of cultural nationalist activities and agendas, from greater levels of black control over the industries of cultural production, to the adoption of African modes of personal appearance and dress, to curricular reform at all levels of education.⁹

Third, the colonial analogy deeply influenced understandings of *violence* in the Black Power movement. The recasting of the quotidian acts of state violence inflicted by police in African American communities as part of a global continuum of imperial warfare occupied a particularly central place in the political imaginary of the Black Panther Party. As historian Sean Malloy writes, the Panthers propagated an “anticolonial vernacular” for understanding the links between policing at home and warfare abroad through black urban communities in the late 1960s

⁸ Matlin, *On the Corner*, 100. For a competing view, which argues that Black Power activists rejected Fanon’s notion of an “inferiority complex” as part of their broader rejection of “damage imagery” in social-scientific depictions of black life, see Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880–1996* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 172.

⁹ Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

and early 1970s.¹⁰ Moreover, several Black Power organizations, including the Panthers, that countenanced violent resistance to white supremacy often justified this position by arguing that the movement for black liberation in the United States must adapt the strategies of movements for liberation from colonial rule in Africa and Asia. Unsurprisingly, the use of the colonial analogy in justifications of violent resistance generated extensive critical commentary from state actors and a range of intellectuals at the time. Hannah Arendt, famously, condemned the embrace of the philosophy of Frantz Fanon by some African American activists because she believed it elevated and aestheticized violence.¹¹ The connections between the language of internal colonialism and the question of violence in the Black Power movement often occupies the most prominent place in historical examinations of the concept, often to the exclusion of its other entailments and implications.¹²

These invocations of internal colonialism in discussions of psychology, culture, and both state and insurgent violence cannot, in the final analysis, be divorced from the concept's uses in debates about national and metropolitan political economy. Nonetheless, a more tailored narrative focused on questions of political economy carries several advantages. First, it illustrates how African American thinkers and activists responded to intellectual and political developments in the decolonizing world itself. As I discuss below, developing theorizations of the persistence of economic dependency after political independence by both Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah found a ready audience among African American thinkers and activists, as these ideas resonated with a longstanding concern of African American internationalism

¹⁰ Sean Malloy, *Out of Oakland: Black Panther Party Internationalism during the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 70–106. These links form the subject of Schrader, *Badges without Borders*.

¹¹ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1969).

¹² As historians of the Black Power movement have long noted, exploring the post-1965 history of the black freedom struggle solely through the lens of violence, whether deployed by the state or by insurgent groups, obscures critical issues. For one of many examples, see Peniel E. Joseph, “The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 751–76.

discussed throughout this study.¹³ Second, a focus on political economy enables a consideration of the intersections and divergences of Black Power thought and prominent currents in the social sciences, as ethnic pluralism and the place of African American communities in the political economy of the postwar metropolis became prominent subjects of social-scientific debate. Third, analyzing the shifting meanings of internal colonialism on the ground of metropolitan political economy reveals growing fissures among advocates of Black Power over the movement's relationship to midcentury racial liberalism and Fordist capitalism.

Often dismissed as an inappropriate analogy or an irrelevant rhetorical device, the invocation of the internal colony instead indexed important shifts in the black freedom movement. As the preceding chapters have shown, this political language emerged from a longer history of colonial comparisons that ranged across the midcentury decades. Tracing the language of internal colonialism across the Black Power era demonstrates the impact of decolonization on the politics of racial and economic inequality in the postwar United States.

Decolonization and the Revolutionary Subject

Harold Cruse's theorization of American racism as a form of domestic colonialism in his essay "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," already discussed in chapter 3 in relation to global debates about the scope of colonialism, also resonated with an ongoing reconsideration of revolutionary subjectivity on the U.S. left. Sociologist C. Wright Mills claimed famously, in his "Letter to the New Left" of 1960, that the belief that the industrial working classes of

¹³ Plotting some of these coordinates of the reception of Fanon's thought in the U.S., in particular, serves a similar purpose for the Black Power movement in the mid-1960s as Max Elbaum's discussion of how Third World Marxism influenced student radicals and the New Communist Movement on issues that went far beyond the question of violence between 1968 and 1973. See Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002).

advanced capitalist societies represented the preeminent agent of social change represented a “labor metaphysic” that “is now quite unrealistic.”¹⁴ Mills, whom Cruse admired and whose work he cited regularly, articulated a widespread conviction. The decline of industrial labor militancy since its height in the 1930s and 1940s and the perceived integration of trade unions into the corporatist structure of the American state, writers across the developing New Left argued, demanded that social movements and social critics alike identify a new social basis for wide-ranging social transformation.¹⁵

For Cruse, the spark of the Cuban Revolution had revealed the underlying weakness of the U.S. left’s theory of revolutionary change. American Marxists “were unable to foresee it, and indeed opposed Castro until the last minute.”¹⁶ Their failure “to work out a meaningful approach to revolutionary nationalism has special significance for the American Negro,” precisely because African Americans were subject to a regime of “domestic colonialism.”¹⁷ To Cruse, “the Negro *is* the American problem of underdevelopment,” because, “like the peoples of the underdeveloped countries, the Negro suffers in varying degree from “hunger, illiteracy, disease [...] urban and semi-urban slums, cultural starvation, and the psychological reactions to being ruled over by others not of his kind.”¹⁸ This domestic underdevelopment called not for a program of state intervention along the lines of a domestic Point Four program or an importation of community development practices, as liberal antipoverty policymakers believed. Rather, it presented a challenge to the agendas of the organized left. The “realities of the ‘underdeveloped’

¹⁴ C. Wright Mills, “Letter to the New Left,” *New Left Review* 1, no. 5 (September–October 1960): 22.

¹⁵ Kevin Mattson, *Intellectuals in Action: The Origins of the New Left and Radical Liberalism, 1945–1970* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 74. For reactions to the Cuban Revolution on the U.S. left, see Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America, and the Making of a New Left* (New York: Verso, 1993); and Rafael Rojas, *Fighting over Fidel: The New York Intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution*, trans. Carl Good (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

¹⁷ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 74.

¹⁸ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 74, 75–76. Emphasis added.

world” suggested that the “revolutionary initiative has passed to the colonial world, and in the United States is passing to the Negro, while Western Marxists theorize, temporize, and debate.”¹⁹ Like many figures in the developing New Left, Cruse identified a shift in the source of radical energy. Rather than in students or youth, he located its new sources among colonized peoples at home and abroad.

This shift called for a new approach toward black nationalism by both the American left and black intellectuals. The parallels between black nationalism in the United States and nationalist movements in the colonial world dated back, he argued, to Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, which reflected “revolutionary nationalism being expressed in the very heart of Western capitalism.”²⁰ The Communist Party failed to devise a successful strategy of engagement with Garveyism, in Cruse’s mind. Its policy of “self-determination in the Black Belt,” which derived explicitly from Harry Haywood’s respect for the power of Garvey’s movement, was an attempt to promulgate a “national question without nationalism.”²¹ Garvey’s adoption of elements of the economic philosophy of Booker T. Washington, moreover, simply “paralleled the bourgeois origins of the colonial revolutions then in their initial stages in Africa and Asia,” something that denunciations of Washington by Marxist scholars such as Herbert Aptheker failed to recognize.²²

Even as he ridiculed the efforts by Aptheker and others to “see Negroes in history as black proletarian ‘prototypes’ and forerunners of the ‘black workers’ who will participate in the

¹⁹ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 75. “Western Marxists” operates as a broader category for Cruse than it later would for Perry Anderson, who classified heterodox Marxist intellectuals in continental Europe, from Antonio Gramsci to the Frankfurt School to Louis Althusser, as a distinctive tendency of “Western Marxism.” Cruse, instead, used the term to refer to American and European writers aligned with Soviet-aligned Communist parties as well as those who split with the Soviet regime. See Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976).

²⁰ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 78.

²¹ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 78.

²² Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 86.

proletarian revolution,” he similarly had little sympathy for the black writer who “resorts to talking like a revolutionary, championing revolutionary nationalism and its social dynamism in the underdeveloped world.”²³ Because of their own detachment from the black working class, black intellectuals could only “make shallow propaganda” out of the colonial revolution, unless they were willing to “take a nationalistic stand in American politics—which [they are] loath to do.”²⁴ Although Cruse was himself loath to offer a full-throated defense of black nationalism, he argued that the left must accept its “validity,” for it drew from the same well as did the anti-imperialist consciousness on display in Asia, Africa, or Latin America—even as it lagged behind the revolutionary nationalism on display in those places.²⁵ The existence of widespread black nationalist opinion, whatever its faults or merits, was a social fact. If, as Cruse believed, “the Negro [was] the only potentially revolutionary force in the United States today,” then the path forward for any revolutionary movement in the U.S. had to run through black nationalism.

Cruse criticized the American left’s approach to black nationalism in stinging and unequivocal terms, yet he advanced a deeply ambiguous economic philosophy of his own. His discussion of the concept of domestic colonialism illuminates this ambiguity. In contrast to his understanding of the economic vision of Garveyism as a variety of anticolonial nationalism, he argued that “the would-be Negro bourgeoisie in the United States confronted unique difficulties quite unlike those experienced by the young bourgeoisie in colonial situations.”²⁶ Cruse observed that African Americans could not premise their economic advancement on a process of imperial withdrawal that would enable the redirection of rents, profits, and patronage into the hands of the

²³ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 88, 91.

²⁴ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 91.

²⁵ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 94. As discussed in chapter 3, Cruse’s argument that African Americans lagged behind their counterparts in the Third World is made most explicitly in “Negro Nationalism’s New Wave,” in *Rebellion or Revolution?*, 68–73.

²⁶ Cruse, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American,” 82.

colonized. Further, in an argument that drew explicitly on E. Franklin Frazier's *Black Bourgeoisie*, white control over the so-called "Negro market" meant that the black middle class "derive[d] its income from whatever 'integrated' occupational advantages it has achieved."²⁷ This predicament not only drove a wedge between middle-class and working-class African Americans but turned those who "thriv[ed] off the crumbs of integration" into a "de-racialized" and "decultured" class, unable to fulfill the historic role of a national bourgeoisie in the colonial world.²⁸

The "sense of a need for economic self-sufficiency," meanwhile, led to the growth of nationalist ideology among black workers.²⁹ Slogans such as "Buy Black" reflected an ambition for "economic control over the segregated Negro community."³⁰ Cruse thus devised an exaggerated division between integration and nationalism as the ideological consequence of the divergent interests of the black working and middle classes.³¹ Still, he refused to endorse the program of winning "economic control over the segregated Negro community" that he saw attracting numerous followers among the black working class.³² Cruse's analysis of "domestic colonialism" in "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American" bequeathed a new theory of the revolutionary subject without a clear vision of the political economy of black America. As we will see later on in this chapter, the developments of the decade would inspire him to promulgate such a vision—even as he abandoned his internationalist leanings.

Cruse authored his analysis of "domestic colonialism" long after his departure from the organizations of the American left. For two other important exponents of the colonial analogy,

²⁷ Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 90.

²⁸ Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 90.

²⁹ Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 91.

³⁰ Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 91.

³¹ Singh, *Black Is a Country*, 185.

³² Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 91.

James and Grace Lee Boggs, decolonization directly prompted their turn away from an explicitly Marxist organization. Both figures adopted the language of colonialism and decolonization in the early 1960s out of a belief in the insufficiency of existing theories of political and economic change to capture the character of capitalism's impact on African Americans. James Boggs, an autoworker at the Chrysler-Jefferson plant in Detroit, became an influential commentator on economics and urban politics for the nascent Black Power movement.³³ Grace Lee Boggs, a Chinese-American scholar and co-founder, along with C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya, of the Johnson-Forest Tendency within the Troksyite Socialist Workers' Party, shifted her own activism toward the black freedom movement after her move to Detroit.³⁴ In 1950, the Johnson-Forest Tendency broke from the Workers' Party altogether, keeping its small organization intact and renaming themselves Correspondence. A few years later, this small organization fragmented as well.

Decolonization was a major factor in inducing the split between James and Grace Lee Boggs and other members of the Correspondence organization, including C. L. R. James. Beginning in 1956, in the aftermath of the Asian-African Conference at Bandung and with the Hungarian revolt and Suez Crisis pointing to the instability of both the British empire and Soviet rule in Eastern Europe, the Boggses argued against C. L. R. James's push for the organization to identify Hungary as the most promising site of revolt. The belief in working-class self-activity as the heart of any revolutionary movement had been central to this group ever since the earliest days of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, and, to James, the Hungarian Revolution offered a

³³ On James Boggs's intellectual development within the labor movement and the black freedom movement, see Stephen M. Ward, *In Love and Struggle: The Revolutionary Lives of James and Grace Lee Boggs* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2016), especially 37–59.

³⁴ Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (1998; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 117–41.

validation of their central ideas and a model which American workers might seize upon.³⁵ James Boggs countered by appealing to his own experiences in Detroit's auto plants. The predominantly African American workers he toiled alongside, he argued, did not identify with the Hungarian Revolution to nearly the same degree as they did the anticolonial revolts. He further disputed James's emphasis on the Hungarian uprising by pointing out that the Suez Crisis illustrated that Third World nationalism held extraordinary economic implications for the countries of the Euro-American West.³⁶ Using arguments drawn from his own experiences as well as an analysis of international political economy, Boggs urged the Detroit-based organization to turn its international attention to decolonization.

Like Cruse, Boggs doubted the prospects for social revolution in the industrial working classes of the developed world. Beginning with his 1963 work "The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook"—which first appeared in a special double issue of the independent socialist magazine *Monthly Review* and was published as a paperback later that year—James Boggs questioned the identification of Western industrial workers as a potentially revolutionary force.³⁷ The combination of decolonization abroad and automation at home instigated this reflection. Beginning in the late 1940s, Big Three automobile manufacturers in Detroit had introduced new automated processes in car production.³⁸ Automated assembly lines in engine production and stamping, in particular, provided a means for employers to assert greater authority over production processes and weaken unions' control of the shop floor. Job losses that resulted from automation in Detroit auto plants in the decade and a half after the

³⁵ C. L. R. James, Grace Lee Boggs, and Cornelius Castoriadis, *Facing Reality* (Detroit: Correspondence Publishing Company, 1958).

³⁶ Ward, *In Love and Struggle*, 198–205.

³⁷ James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963).

³⁸ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 130–38.

Second World War had reconfigured the Boggses' social world. At the Ford River Rouge plant alone, employment fell from 85,000 in 1945 to only 30,000 in 1960.³⁹ Detroit's black communities felt the effects of automation particularly acutely, as black unemployment outstripped white unemployment substantially, and as those who remained in industrial employment were forced to work in the lowest-paying and most dangerous positions.⁴⁰

For James Boggs, these developments diminished the power of the industrial labor movement—of which he was a part—not only at the point of production but in the broader American society.⁴¹ At the same time, the fact that “the emerging nations of Asia and Africa, which have all these years been dominated by a little corner of the globe known as Western Civilization, are clashing with that civilization” called for a rethinking of the “basic philosophy” of radicals within the United States.⁴² Although Boggs did not use the terms of “domestic colonialism” or “internal colonialism” in *The American Revolution*, his analysis shared with Cruse's a sense of decolonization as a world-historical challenge to even the revolutionary political traditions in the West and a belief that the potential of the industrial workforce of the developed world to serve as the primary agent of social transformation had been exhausted.

Automation and decolonization, moreover, had a deeper relationship in Boggs's thought. They did not simply represent contemporaneous forces driving the displacement of the industrial working class as the paradigmatic revolutionary subject. The prospect of increasing automation, and the unemployment it threatened, augured a widespread alienation of black workers from the Fordist social compact of the midcentury United States. Such alienation, Boggs wrote, held the

³⁹ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 132.

⁴⁰ Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit?: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 36–37.

⁴¹ Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 33–41.

⁴² Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 42.

potential to parallel the alienation colonial subjects felt from their own regimes. The predominantly young, black workers most vulnerable to automation might become “outsiders,” whose relation to U.S. society Boggs analogized to the relation of the colonized to their colonial ruler: “Being workless, they are also stateless. They have grown up like a colonial people who no longer feel any allegiance to the old imperial power and are each day searching for new means to overthrow it.”⁴³ Boggs thus rooted the colonial analogy much more clearly than Cruse did in an analysis of a contemporary political-economic transformation—the early signs of a decline in industrial manufacturing as the centerpiece of the U.S. economy. Both Cruse’s and Boggs’s work, however, exemplified a primary meaning the budding language of domestic colonialism held in the early 1960s—as an indication of a new subject of revolutionary social transformation.

The Proliferation of the Colonial Analogy

As discussed in chapter 3, Cruse’s early formulations of “domestic colonialism” as a theory of American racism emerged in dialogue with broader currents of national and global discourse. Yet, in the early 1960s, the uptake of the concept remained largely confined to intellectuals with ties to various strands of the American left, and small, underground organizations, such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), which had exposure to Cruse’s writings. In the middle of the decade, that changed. The language of internal colonialism spread rapidly across the landscape of the black freedom movement between 1965 and 1967.

The felt need of many black activists and writers for a new conceptual register that might guide the movement as it appeared to enter a new phase provided the most significant reason for

⁴³ Boggs, *The American Revolution*, 52.

this proliferation.⁴⁴ Although scholars of the “long civil rights movement” rightly emphasize the continuities between the “heroic period” of the movement between the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the passage of the Civil and Voting Rights Acts and what followed, the shifting aims, alliances, and vocabularies of black activism deserve close attention. The legislative victories of 1964 and 1965, the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, James Meredith’s “March against Fear” from Memphis to Jackson, the spread of urban unrest and police violence in northern cities, and the ongoing challenge of confronting inequalities in employment, education, and housing left many African Americans wondering what direction the movement would take. This conjuncture led a number of writers and activists—many but not all of whom came to be associated with Black Power—to identify the greatest question facing black Americans as a conceptual one. What ideas and vocabularies would best serve the continuing struggle for equality and democracy? In this ideological project, black-led journals and magazines, such as *Freedomways* and *Liberator*, as well as the revitalized *Negro Digest*, often provided the stage on which programmatic and definitional debates played out.⁴⁵ At the same time, leading activists from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) sought to redefine the scope and focus of the freedom movement in a changed political context.

⁴⁴ The subjective experience of the period from 1965 to 1967 as a turning point that required new conceptualizations of the black freedom struggle is apparent in several biographies of major civil rights leaders. See Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 276–307; Peniel E. Joseph, *Stokely: A Life* (New York: Basic, 2014), 87–211; and Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 330–56.

⁴⁵ Ian Rocksborough-Smith, “‘Filling the Gap’: Intergenerational Black Radicalism and the Popular Front Ideals of *Freedomways* Magazine’s Early Years, (1961–1965),” *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 31, no. 1 (January 2007): 7–42; Tinson, *Radical Intellect*; Jonathan Fenderson, *Building the Black Arts Movement: Hoyt Fuller and the Cultural Politics of the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

The publication of Frantz Fanon's writings in the United States spurred on the embrace of vocabularies of colonialism and decolonization to fill this perceived conceptual void. The first English translation of *Les Damnés de la Terre* was published in France by Présence Africaine in 1963, two years after Fanon died of leukemia, with the title *The Damned*. Its more famous English-language title—*The Wretched of the Earth*—was adopted with the 1963 American publication by Grove Press. Between 1965 and 1968, Fanon's other three books—*A Dying Colonialism*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *Black Skin, White Masks*—were published in the U.S., all by Grove or Monthly Review Press. In short order, the writings of this Martinique-born psychiatrist, revolutionary, and theorist of decolonization became a touchstone in the search for new concepts in the U.S. black freedom movement.

For his part, Fanon wrote that his analyses of colonialism and decolonization, born out of his experiences in the Algerian liberation movement, had wide application throughout Africa and Asia, but he denied their direct applicability to struggles against racism in the United States. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he wrote, “the Negroes of Chicago only resemble the Nigerians or the Tanganyikans in so far as they were all defined in relation to the whites. But once the first comparisons had been made and subjective feelings were assuaged, the American Negroes realized that the objective problems were fundamentally heterogeneous.”⁴⁶ Taking as his primary point of reference interracial campaigns for civil rights and anti-discrimination measures, he argued that the American movement for black freedom had “very little in common with the heroic fight of the Angolan people against the detestable Portuguese colonialism.”⁴⁷ But many of Fanon's first American readers thought differently.

⁴⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 216.

⁴⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 216.

Grove Press played a central role in mediating the spread of Fanon's work in the United States, especially for white audiences. Run by the eccentric New York publisher Barney Rosset, Grove built its reputation on publishing avant-garde, modernist literature. Rosset took pride in Grove's publications of the latest European existentialist literature, as well as literature frequently banned in the U.S. for its sexual content, such as novels by D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. Publishing *The Wretched of the Earth*—which came, of course, with the stirring endorsement and infamous preface of Jean-Paul Sartre—inaugurated Rosset's list of black radical texts. The press would later release editions of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and works by both Julius Lester and Amiri Baraka. When Grove first published Fanon's work in 1965, at an early stage in its turn to more overtly political releases, the press thus incorporated Fanon into an evolving canon of aesthetic radicalism, linking it to the existential rebellion of Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett more than to the anticolonial revolution of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN).⁴⁸

Small-circulation magazines of the New Left and the emergent counterculture were among the first publications to print excerpts of Fanon's writings. These publications often framed Fanon's work as a privileged window onto the worldviews of black militants, rather than as a potential inspiration to black activists' own evolving ideas. The magazine *Streets*, a shoestring operation published in New York's East Village, printed their own translation of "Racism and Culture," Fanon's address from the 1956 Conference of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris, in the middle of 1965, nearly two years before this address was released in English as part of *Toward the African Revolution*.⁴⁹ The San Francisco-based *Ramparts*, which originated as

⁴⁸ Loren Glass, *Counterculture Colophon: Grove Press, the Evergreen Review, and the Incorporation of the Avant-Garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 145–72.

⁴⁹ Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture," *Streets* 1, no. 2 (May–June 1965): 5–12; Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 29–44.

a liberal Catholic publication but would become an important magazine of the New Left in the Bay Area, represented another of the earliest publications to excerpt Fanon's writings in the U.S. The editor of *Ramparts*, Ralph Gleason, advertised Fanon to his predominantly white readership in two ways. First, he posed Fanon's writings as a sociology of black revolt, capable of explaining the attitudes of figures such as Malcolm X and Amiri Baraka. Notably, Gleason also argued that Fanon's depictions of colonial violence and the Manichaeian nature of colonial society had relevance in the United States precisely because Americans did not think of their country as a colonial power.⁵⁰ Gleason thus framed Fanon's writings to the readers of *Ramparts* as casting a spotlight on issues of race and empire to which the white left was perceived to too often ignore.

The initial reception of Fanon in African American letters put the anticolonial revolutionary to different uses. Between 1965 and 1967, black writers often turned to Fanon's work for a new vocabulary in debates about the strategic direction and ideological development of the freedom movement. James Boggs employed Fanon's work in the context of intra-movement struggles in a review commissioned by *Streets* editor Maro Riofrancos, which ultimately went unpublished, as *Streets* shut down before the review could run.⁵¹ The Detroit-based organizer employed Fanon's ideas in service of a critique of the integrationist thrust of the "leaders of the civil rights movement," who "are still begging for entrance into the system."⁵² Boggs identified Fanon's book as not simply a sociology of revolution but the "first scientific philosophy" of the revolt of the "colonized, semi-colonized, and enslaved peoples all over the

⁵⁰ Ralph Gleason, "An Introduction to Frantz Fanon," *Ramparts* (March 1966), 36–7.

⁵¹ Maro Riofrancos to James Boggs, June 3, 1965, folder 2, box 2, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; James Boggs to Maro Riofrancos, June 6, 1965, folder 2, box 2, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

⁵² James Boggs, Review of Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Edition of *The Damned*), n.d., p. 1, folder 9, box 1, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

world.”⁵³ A symposium in the periodical *Negro Digest* in October 1966 on “Negro Rights and the American Future” further exemplified how black activists employed Fanon’s writings in their search for a resolution to the ideological confusion of the moment. Several of the young, mostly male, organizers and writers canvassed in this forum invoked the example of Fanon in their reflections on “how—and even whether—Negroes will achieve full and unqualified rights of citizenship in their own country.”⁵⁴ As the symposium revealed, from poet Rolland Snellings to social worker Barbara Crosby to Stokely Carmichael himself, the language of unqualified citizenship that the magazine’s editors interrogated was largely set aside, in favor of references to survival, autonomy, and the protean slogan of Black Power.⁵⁵

Boggs’s unpublished review of *The Wretched of the Earth* also highlighted Fanon’s theory of economic underdevelopment, which remains an underappreciated aspect of the uptake of Fanon’s ideas by leading black radicals in the United States. Unlike most reviewers in the United States, Boggs evinced a familiarity with the English-language edition first published in France, entitled *The Damned*.⁵⁶ The title change, Boggs argued, reflected a dangerous domestication of Fanon’s ideas by his American publisher. Unlike the word “damned,” which connoted an active process of being cast out and condemned by a superior power, the word “wretched” merely suggested a passive condition of abjection. This substitution allowed readers to “evade facing the historical fact that the underdevelopment of [Third World] countries is the result of the over-barbarism in the developed countries.”⁵⁷ As indicated in his famous assertion that “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World,” Fanon theorized a causal relationship

⁵³ James Boggs, Review of Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Edition of *The Damned*), n.d., p. 1, folder 9, box 1, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

⁵⁴ “Editor’s Note: Negro Rights and the American Future,” *Negro Digest* 15, no. 12 (October 1966): 18.

⁵⁵ “Symposium: Negro Rights and the American Future,” *Negro Digest* 15, no. 12 (October 1966): 18–23, 57–82.

⁵⁶ James Boggs to Maro Riofrancos, June 6, 1965, folder 2, box 2, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

⁵⁷ James Boggs, Review of Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Edition of *The Damned*), n.d., p. 1, folder 9, box 1, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

between economic development in the Euro-American West and underdevelopment in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁵⁸ This claim not only resonated with an emergent set of arguments by a cosmopolitan group of thinkers, including most notably the German-American sociologist Andre Gunder Frank and the Egyptian-French economist Samir Amin, who accounted for Third World underdevelopment by its integration into the currents of global capitalism, rather than its supposed isolation from them.⁵⁹ It also echoed a long line of African American internationalist thinking that defined the problem of the colonial project in terms of racialized economic exploitation. Fanon's insistence that political independence did not signify the horizon of decolonization struggles—that, because of the legacy of underdevelopment, “colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories”—would come to play a larger role in black Americans' invocations of his work later in the decade, as I will discuss below.⁶⁰ But the economic aspects of Fanon's thought resonated with activists such as Boggs, whose ideas already tended toward global analyses of capitalism's uneven dynamics, as early as 1965.

Prominent figures in the southern freedom movement also turned to Fanon and the language of decolonization in an effort to clear away the ideological fog of the middle of the decade. James Forman, executive secretary of SNCC from 1961 to 1966, drove the organization to adopt the language of internal colonialism as it grappled with the new landscape of black politics. Fanon so influenced Forman's perspective that he would later begin work on Fanon's biography and attempt to establish a Frantz Fanon Institute to propagate the thinker's ideas in the

⁵⁸ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 102.

⁵⁹ Andre Gunder Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment,” *Monthly Review* 18, no. 4 (September 1966): 17–31; Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

⁶⁰ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 101.

United States.⁶¹ Although SNCC had lost much of the vigor of its Southern organizing efforts by the middle of the 1960s, it remained a prominent reference point in national discussions of the direction of the black freedom movement. SNCC's turn, under Forman's influence, toward envisioning its activism as part of a struggle for internal decolonization provided one prominent indication of the increased importance of the colonial analogy in organizing and activist circles after 1965.

Forman's connections to Pan-African intellectual currents and his early interest in international affairs had shaped SNCC's orientation toward global problems since the organization's founding in 1960. As a student at Roosevelt University in Chicago in the 1950s, Forman met and studied with St. Clair Drake, who inspired him to pursue graduate education in African Studies at Boston University.⁶² While Forman complained that the Boston University program exhibited overt support for U.S. Cold War policies, in keeping with the broader orientation of area studies programs nationwide, his experience of studying African politics in the midst of the Little Rock school desegregation battle had a lasting influence on his politics.⁶³ As Forman recounted in his autobiography, in the fall of 1957 and the spring of 1958, "Every time I read about some pass law or some restriction on the rights of blacks in South Africa, the

⁶¹ Forman briefly discussed his plans to write a Fanon biography in his own autobiography. See James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (1972; Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1997), 531–32. Forman's intermittent efforts to establish a Frantz Fanon Institute have received no scholarly attention, but they occupied a significant amount of his time and attention between the summer of 1968 and the fall of 1970. See Diary Entry, August 26, 1968, folder 10, box 82, James Forman Papers, Library of Congress; James Forman to Josie Fanon, August 27, 1968, folder 10, box 82, James Forman Papers; James Forman to St. Clair Drake, January 28, 1969, folder 1, box 7, James Forman Papers; Articles of Incorporation of Franz Fanon Institute, October 1970, folder 8, box 82, James Forman Papers.

⁶² Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 83–84. See also Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the Launching of Black Power, 1960–1965," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 4 (Autumn 2007): 467–490.

⁶³ A concise account of Cold War African Studies that focuses on the field's connections to major philanthropies can be found in Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie & Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 149–79.

more I thought about home—the South.”⁶⁴ Forman took from his brief foray into Cold War African studies a sense of the parallels between the governing structures of South African apartheid, European colonialism on the African continent more broadly, and the Jim Crow system in the U.S. South.

In the early years of SNCC’s existence, Forman led the group’s organizing efforts abroad. He coordinated attempts to organize a protest by visiting African students of American racial discrimination at the United Nations in 1963, and, with John Lewis, he organized a trip to Guinea in 1964, where SNCC members were official guests of President Sékou Touré.⁶⁵ Lewis and Donald Harris extended this trip to Liberia, Ghana, newly independent Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia), and finally to Egypt, returning with a proposal to set up an “African Bureau” within SNCC.⁶⁶

The adoption of the language of decolonization as a central piece of SNCC’s conceptual repertoire, however, began only after the organization’s contentious election of Stokely Carmichael as chair in the spring of 1966 and the group’s new self-definition as a Black Power organization. Internal conflicts in SNCC, the dissipation of its organizing energy, and the sharp reduction in its volunteer numbers by the mid-1960s instigated a new effort to make direct connections to movements on the African continent.⁶⁷ At SNCC’s May 1967 meeting, Forman was named Director of International Affairs, after which he traveled to Lusaka, Zambia to represent SNCC at the UN-sponsored International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination, and Colonialism in Southern Africa.⁶⁸ Forman and Howard Moore, Jr., delivered

⁶⁴ Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 103.

⁶⁵ Wilkins, “The Making of Black Internationalists,” 477–9.

⁶⁶ Wilkins, “The Making of Black Internationalists,” 480–7.

⁶⁷ On the organizational and personal conflicts within SNCC, see Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), especially 215–64.

⁶⁸ Carson, *In Struggle*, 266.

SNCC's "position paper" for the occasion, entitled "The Indivisible Struggle Against Racism, Colonialism, and Apartheid," which they had prepared with the help of Forman's old mentor, St. Clair Drake.⁶⁹

While this trip, and Forman's new organizational role, bespoke SNCC's desire to emphasize its international connections, it also reflected the organization's changing understanding of its own work against racial oppression in the United States. After reiterating SNCC's stances against apartheid and the Vietnam War and highlighting its active efforts to engage with the Asian-African bloc at the United Nations, Forman and Moore punctuated their speech with an assertion of SNCC's organizational adoption of the colonial analogy: "We also come to assert that we consider ourselves and other black people in the United States a colonized people; a colony within the United States in many ways similar to colonies outside the boundaries of the United States and other European nations."⁷⁰ Although Forman and Moore did not explore in what ways this similarity operated, their vision of a shared history of colonization reflected SNCC's shifting self-image after its endorsement of Black Power. Forman and Moore closed their "position paper" with a series of recommendations, most of which urged the "full and immediate implementation" of UN General Assembly resolutions.⁷¹ Though the position paper imagined SNCC as a component in a global coalition, however, it left unanswered the question of how this new identity might reinforce and revive SNCC's weakening organizing presence in the U.S. South.⁷²

⁶⁹ Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, 483.

⁷⁰ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "The Indivisible Struggle against Racism, Apartheid and Colonialism," p. 6, folder 2, box 21, James Forman Papers.

⁷¹ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "The Indivisible Struggle against Racism, Apartheid and Colonialism," pp. 10–11, folder 2, box 21, James Forman Papers.

⁷² Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 363–90.

Another veteran of the southern freedom movement who saw in the language of colonialism a promising new conceptual framework after the legislative battles of 1964 and 1965 was Jack O'Dell. A veteran of the labor movement and the Popular Front left, O'Dell began his involvement with the civil rights movement through the National Maritime Union (NMU) and the Communist Party in the 1930s and 1940s.⁷³ O'Dell left the CPUSA in the late 1950s, as he grew more involved with voter registration organizing efforts for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), although he never repudiated his involvement with the Party. A close associate of Martin Luther King, Jr., O'Dell resigned from SCLC in 1962 after the FBI, which had surveilled O'Dell for decades, leaked information about his Communist past to the southern press in an effort to weaken SCLC.

The national security state's effort to discredit O'Dell, part of a systematic attempt to weaken the influence of the left on the civil rights movement, pushed O'Dell out of a leading organizing role in the SCLC.⁷⁴ But it did not push him out of the movement altogether. After his resignation, O'Dell became associate managing editor of the journal *Freedomways*, where he would devote his energy toward what he later termed "the intellectual life of the movement."⁷⁵ O'Dell's writings in *Freedomways*, where he authored unsigned editorials in addition to dozens of articles under his own name, consisted of commentaries on day-to-day politics and movement strategy as well as theoretical and historical analyses of the broad contours of African American politics and history.

⁷³ John Munro, "Imperial Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement in the Early Cold War," *History Workshop Journal* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 52–75.

⁷⁴ Munro, "Imperial Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement in the Early Cold War."

⁷⁵ Quoted in Nikhil Pal Singh, "'Learn Your Horn': Jack O'Dell and the Long Civil Rights Movement," in *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell*, ed. Nikhil Pal Singh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 30.

O'Dell first argued for an understanding of American racism as analogous to colonialism in a 1964 essay entitled "Foundations of Racism in American Life." The essay consisted of a consideration of the outsized influence of the forms of white supremacy dominant in the South on national politics, from 1776 up to the Goldwater campaign of 1964. O'Dell argued that the construction of a racial state in the late nineteenth century—a process that included the overthrow of Reconstruction, the intellectual ascent of the "Teutonic Origins theory" of American political development, and imperial conquests in the Pacific and Caribbean—constituted a political-economic formation on a continuum with both European colonialism and fascism.⁷⁶ His characterization of Jim Crow as "of a colonialist-fascist type" reflected the continuing influence of the Popular Front black left on movement activists of the 1960s.⁷⁷ Crucially, O'Dell argued that the segregationist racial order benefited, rather than hindered, American economic development in this period. The Jim Crow system "served a functional role in the economic development of this nation that was similar, in all respects, to the role of colonialism in the development of Western Europe."⁷⁸ In this account, the combination of racial disfranchisement, segregation, and racial violence, along with their legitimating discourses in popular culture and intellectual life, enabled the rapid growth of the American capitalist economy between the 1870s and 1920s by guaranteeing the continued existence of an exploited and territorially confined agricultural labor force. O'Dell did not articulate the implications of his colonial comparison for black politics in "Foundations of Racism in American Life." The contemporary thrust of the essay aimed primarily at explaining the rise of Goldwater's brand of

⁷⁶ J.H. O'Dell, "Foundations of Racism in American Life," *Freedomways* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 530.

⁷⁷ O'Dell, "Foundations of Racism in American Life," 532; Rocksborough-Smith, "'Filling the Gap': Intergenerational Black Radicalism and the Popular Front Ideals of *Freedomways* Magazine's Early Years, (1961–1965)."

⁷⁸ O'Dell, "Foundations of Racism in American Life," 532.

revanchist conservatism in the Republican Party of 1964. Shortly thereafter, however, O'Dell would turn to the language of colonialism in a reevaluation of the premises of the black freedom movement.

In a two-part essay in *Freedomways* published in late 1966 and early 1967, O'Dell elaborated his analysis of colonialism as a framework for thinking about the history and institutional structures of racial domination in the United States. O'Dell rejected on the one hand the notion that colonialism could *only* be termed a mere analogy for forms of racial oppression in the United States, just as he rejected on the other that African Americans and colonial subjects could be united through the “bonds of color.”⁷⁹ Rather, he argued that the social structure of the United States represented a variety of colonialism, and that its historical development was one iteration of a global process of European expansion for which racism was the “chief ideology.”⁸⁰ In the first essay, he identified the use of racial slavery as a means for capital accumulation as a central mechanism of colonial rule, and he examined the end of Reconstruction in its “world context” of European imperial impositions.⁸¹ Noting the concurrence between the withdrawal of federal troops from the U.S. South in 1877 and the “scramble for Africa” of the 1870s and 1880s, O'Dell identified how the post-Reconstruction South and colonial Africa shared four structural conditions: a “monopoly on land ownership by the few”; regimes of forced labor; racialized restrictions on the franchise, such as the Poll Tax; and the establishment of systems of residential segregation.⁸² These historical developments suggested not simply a parallel between African and African American experiences, but rather a shared structure of domination.

⁷⁹ J. H. O'Dell, “Colonialism and the Negro American Experience,” *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 296.

⁸⁰ O'Dell, “Colonialism and the Negro American Experience,” 297.

⁸¹ O'Dell, “Colonialism and the Negro American Experience,” 301.

⁸² O'Dell, “Colonialism and the Negro American Experience,” 303.

O'Dell thus proposed an understanding of colonialism that rested not on control over territory or on alien political sovereignty but on the "institutional mechanisms of colonial domination."⁸³ Anticipating criticisms of the colonial analogy that assumed its economic implications pointed toward black separatism, O'Dell acknowledged that "there is obviously no separate colonial economy under which Negro Americans live."⁸⁴ Yet the relegation of most black workers to the "agricultural and industrial labor force of the highly developed United States economy" and the persistence of employment discrimination even after the passage of civil rights laws produced a "kind of 'under-development' similar in essence (though perhaps somewhat less severe in degree) to that suffered by other peoples in Asia, Africa, or Latin America."⁸⁵ Further, in an overt attempt to link the southern freedom struggle in which SCLC had played such a prominent role with accelerating activism in the north, O'Dell emphasized that the mechanisms of colonial rule affected African Americans both north and south, both urban and rural. These mechanisms, he proclaimed, "serve to unite Harlem and Alabama; the colonized in the squalid ghettos and on the plantations across the country."⁸⁶ Strategically, if Forman linked the language of internal colonialism to his efforts to build support for African Americans abroad, O'Dell argued that the adoption of this language enabled a greater recognition of the overarching unity of struggles for black equality across the country and in diverse arenas of public life.

The associations drawn between colonial rule and urban politics that emerged out of black thinkers' engagements with antipoverty policy, as discussed in the preceding chapter, provided another source for the proliferation of the colonial analogy. The mass popularity and critical acclaim of Kenneth Clark's *Dark Ghetto*, in particular, placed an imprimatur of social-

⁸³ J. H. O'Dell, "A Special Variety of Colonialism," *Freedomways* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 8.

⁸⁴ O'Dell, "A Special Variety of Colonialism," 9.

⁸⁵ O'Dell, "A Special Variety of Colonialism," 9.

⁸⁶ O'Dell, "A Special Variety of Colonialism," 11–12.

scientific respectability on the analogy between ghetto and colony. Clark pointed to an interconnected set of factors, from housing segregation to the refusal of private firms to reinvest profits locally, that ensured black urban neighborhoods remained impoverished while turning them into sources of profit for broader metropolitan areas. Whereas some figures, such as Forman and O'Dell, queried whether concepts of colonialism could guide the black freedom movement on the national and global scales, other influential activists, such as Stokely Carmichael, turned to the analysis of the ghetto as colony to recast the political economy of the American metropolis in colonial terms.

Pluralism and Colonialism in the American Metropolis

The vision of urban politics as analogous with colonialism developed in a relation of proximity and tension with the theory of political pluralism then dominant in American political science. In the early years of the Cold War, leading scholars across the social sciences had turned away from an understanding of democracy as a process of popular participation—including frequent mass mobilization through the labor movement and other civil society organizations—in a policymaking process imagined as an ongoing experiment.⁸⁷ Prominent voices across the social sciences grew suspicious of popular politics, embracing an understanding of totalitarianism that linked fascism and communism and portrayed both as outgrowths of mass politics unchecked by elite supervision.⁸⁸ Within political science, the “Yale school” of political pluralism recast American democracy as a carefully balanced but ultimately effective system of elite

⁸⁷ Edward Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1973); John G. Gunnell, *The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of American Vocation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁸⁸ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, Expanded Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 521.

negotiation.⁸⁹ Aiming to counter the analysis of C. Wright Mills, who argued that an intersecting “power elite” of military leaders, politicians, businessmen, and even labor leaders set the political priorities of the United States, pluralists insisted that power was scattered widely across social groups.⁹⁰ In a foundational text of pluralist political science, Robert Dahl’s *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956), Dahl defined this system as “polyarchal democracy,” building on the definition of “polyarchy” Dahl and Charles Lindblom had coined several years earlier. In Dahl and Lindblom’s formulation, “polyarchy” represented a way of solving the “First Problem of Politics,” “the antique and ever recurring problem of how citizens can keep their rulers from becoming tyrants,” by forcing “leaders” to “win their control by competing for the support of non-leaders.”⁹¹ Dahl presented “polyarchal democracy” as both empirically more accurate than descriptions of American government as a system of majority rule and as normatively superior to visions of democracy that stressed popular participation and mass mobilization.⁹²

It was not only this overarching vision of a decentralized power structure of competing interest groups that shaped the trajectory of the language of internal colonialism. More specifically, the application of this theory of politics to the world of ethnically heterogeneous municipalities appealed to black thinkers seeking to translate the colonial analogy into programs of action. Robert Dahl’s celebrated study of New Haven’s political institutions, *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City* (1961), provided a crucial source for the attempt to apply the theory of pluralism to urban politics. In *Who Governs?*, Dahl elaborated his model of

⁸⁹ Richard M. Merelman, *Pluralism at Yale: The Culture of Political Science in America* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

⁹⁰ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956). In portraying Mills as an outsider to a social-scientific consensus, the pluralists both ironically increased his popularity with the New Left and obscured his deep connections with mainstream currents in sociology. See Daniel Geary, *Radical Ambition: C. Wright Mills, the Left, and American Social Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

⁹¹ Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 283.

⁹² Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 63–89.

political conflict. Dahl asserted that the ethnic composition of the city's various social groups shaped the alliances among the organizations and individuals that constituted the disaggregated elite of the city. Moreover, he insisted that these ethnic ties could not be subsumed under a class analysis. He denied that ethnic politics operated as a "substitute" for class politics or as a class politics in disguise, arguing instead that "an awareness of ethnic identification is not something created by politicians; it is created by the whole social system."⁹³ Even after immigrants underwent what Dahl called the "third stage" of political assimilation, ethnic identifications would drive political loyalties, even though the issues around which ethnic blocs might mobilize, from urban redevelopment to support for the Cold War, might be different.⁹⁴ Throughout his work, Dahl refused to countenance the possibility of a structural division in American politics on racial or class lines. He insisted that a combination of "widespread belief in the democratic creed" and a low correlation between wealth and direct influence on the political process transformed Americans of all classes into interest groups operating in the roughly level playing field of a pluralist democracy.⁹⁵

The place of *black* politics in this struggle for power among interest groups in the American city posed a particularly thorny problem for American social scientists in the 1960s.⁹⁶ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan addressed this issue directly in their 1963 book *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*.

⁹³ Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 54.

⁹⁴ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 61–2.

⁹⁵ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 163.

⁹⁶ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); 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, 2007); Daniel Geary, *Beyond Civil Rights: The Moynihan Report and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

In a similar fashion as Dahl, Glazer and Moynihan insisted on the persistence of ethnic identification across multiple generations, arguing against an assimilationist reading of the immigrant experience in America. Although they observed that “language and culture are very largely lost in the first and second generations,” which made “the dream of ‘cultural pluralism’ [...] as unlikely as the hope of a ‘melting pot,’” they argued that the power of ethnicity did not disappear.⁹⁷ Over the course of two generations, ethnicity in America was transformed from a source of shared cultural practices and dense social networks to a source of a thinner, but still potent, sense of group belonging. The continuing power of one’s “group” meant that New York’s municipal politics became a stage for conflict and alliance among these ethnic groups, each of which acted as a political bloc: “ethnic groups in New York are also *interest groups*.”⁹⁸

In this field of ethnic interest groups, Glazer and Moynihan declared African Americans’ position distinct and precarious. Drawing on the analyses of Gunnar Myrdal and E. Franklin Frazier, Glazer and Moynihan argued that African Americans lacked both a cultural identity distinct from the national culture of the United States and the “same kind of clannishness” of other ethnic groups, diminishing their opportunities to develop a robust market for goods produced and sold within their community.⁹⁹ The challenge for black politics, in Glazer and Moynihan’s mind, was to direct the “income and resources of leadership of the group [...] inwards.”¹⁰⁰ The path to black advancement ran through the empowerment of an elite leadership class.

⁹⁷ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963), 13.

⁹⁸ Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 17.

⁹⁹ Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 84.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton brought the language of internal colonialism into extended conversation with pluralist political science in their 1967 book *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. Hamilton, in particular, was responsible for establishing this association. Beginning in the 1950s, Hamilton had worked with the Tuskegee Civic Association in Macon County, Alabama, which brought him into contact with SNCC volunteers in the very earliest days of the organization's existence.¹⁰¹ Simultaneously, he gained exposure to the latest writings in modernization theory and pluralist political science while studying at the University of Chicago, from which he received his Ph.D. in 1964. Starting in the fall of 1966, at the urging of Random House publishers, Hamilton and Carmichael began collaborating on a book designed to illuminate the political and intellectual underpinnings of Black Power.¹⁰²

The composition of *Black Power* coincided with Carmichael's rise to a newfound status on the national and international political stages. Carmichael's election as chair of SNCC and his defiant proclamation of the necessity of "Black Power" during the "March Against Fear" in June 1966 had, according to his biographer Peniel Joseph, "elevated him alongside Martin Luther King as one of the most influential and reviled figures in American politics."¹⁰³ With SNCC's organizational capacity in the U.S. South waning, Carmichael embarked on a series of overseas journeys, traveling to the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, European capitals, and the revolutionary hubs of Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Guinea, Egypt, and Tanzania between the fall of 1966 and the fall of 1967.¹⁰⁴ Under constant surveillance by the FBI and foreign intelligence services,

¹⁰¹ Charles V. Hamilton and Frederick C. Harris, "A Conversation with Charles V. Hamilton," *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 24–25.

¹⁰² Charles V. Hamilton and Frederick C. Harris, "A Conversation with Charles V. Hamilton," *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 24–25.

¹⁰³ Joseph, *Stokely*, 173.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph, *Stokely*, 149–230. For an analysis of geographically dispersed "revolutionary hubs" in the age of decolonization, see Abdel Razzaq Takriti, *Monsoon Revolution: Republicans, Sultans, and Empires in Oman, 1965–1976* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Carmichael attempted to establish concrete connections with postcolonial regimes while affirming the burgeoning view of U.S. black politics as defined by a colonial relationship to white society.¹⁰⁵ Between trips, Carmichael joined Hamilton to write chapters of their book, which was released in November 1967.

An antinomy between the implications of the colonial analogy and the principles of pluralist political science pervaded Carmichael and Hamilton's analysis in *Black Power*. Building on Kenneth Clark's evocative portrayal of ghettos as "social, political, educational, and—above all—economic colonies" (a line that served as the book's epigraph), Carmichael and Hamilton turned to the language of internal colonialism to describe the structural place of racial hierarchy in the American political economy. Their influential distinction between individual and institutional racism relied on their equation of the former with colonialism. Institutional racism, they proclaimed, which was "less overt, far more subtle, [but] no less destructive of human life," had "another name: colonialism."¹⁰⁶ Following Clark, they argued that predatory lending, price-gouging in retail stores, and high rents maintained by outside landowners rendered the black ghetto a source of profit for the rest of American society.¹⁰⁷ In American ghettos, capital and labor, rather than the natural resources that constituted the economic prize in classical models of colonialism, were extracted from a spatially segregated, racialized population. This relationship of extraction contradicted two central tenets of pluralist political science. First, it gave the lie to the idea that the "American Creed," as Gunnar Myrdal defined it, defined political attitudes

¹⁰⁵ The high priority placed on surveilling Carmichael is discussed at length in Joseph, *Stokely*, especially 135–36, 155–56, 192–93, 247–48.

¹⁰⁶ Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (1967; New York: Vintage, 1992), 4, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 16–20. I am grateful to Brandon Terry for sharing his forthcoming essay on Carmichael, which also addresses some of these issues. See Brandon M. Terry, "Stokely Carmichael and the Longing for Black Liberation: Black Power and Beyond," in *African American Political Thought: A Collected History*, ed. Melvin Rogers and Jack Turner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

across a meaningful swathe of American society. Second, it countered pluralists' argument that belief in the "American Creed" reduced the level of antagonism in political conflicts. To Carmichael and Hamilton, "there is no 'American dilemma' because black people in this country form a colony, and it is not in the interest of the colonial power to liberate them."¹⁰⁸ Carmichael and Hamilton counterposed a view of internal colonialism as a system of exploitation to pluralism's creedal, consensual picture.

Carmichael and Hamilton further relied on the colonial analogy to argue that the pluralist theory of American politics failed to capture the relatively unified position of white Americans with regard to black advancement. The ruling elite did not fragment, as Dahl and others had argued, into a set of ethnic blocs and interest groups in competition with each other. Rather, the "white power structure" held an overarching, shared interest in the maintenance of black economic subordination, forming a class as monolithic "as the European colonial offices have been to African and Asian colonies."¹⁰⁹ The language of internal colonialism thus purported to offer a fundamentally different understanding of the struggle for power than the language of pluralism. The American metropolis was not a place where competition over resources among relatively equal groups enabled a tenable balance of power. Rather, it was a place where a territorially confined underclass sought to escape the predations of a monolithic elite.

Although Carmichael and Hamilton criticized the sanguine portrayal of American urban politics provided by pluralist social science, *Black Power* also reinforced several of pluralism's central tenets. Carmichael's and Hamilton's assertion that "the American pot has not melted" echoed the understanding of incomplete assimilation that Glazer, Moynihan, and Dahl

¹⁰⁸ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 10. Of course, scholars of European colonial rule would dispute the characterization of colonial offices as monolithic. See, for example, Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

embraced.¹¹⁰ Any political program organized under the sign of Black Power “must recognize” the “ethnic basis of American politics.”¹¹¹ This ethnic foundation required black Americans to embrace thick forms of racial identification and solidarity. Only through racial unity could black people advance their group interests. In one particularly controversial passage, Carmichael and Hamilton wrote, “the concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks.* By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.”¹¹² Recalling Du Bois’s infamous declaration that African Americans should “close ranks” in support of Woodrow Wilson during the First World War, Carmichael and Hamilton in this passage appeared to countenance a papering over of potential divisions of class, gender, and ideology in order to improve the “bargaining position” of the black community writ large.¹¹³ Carmichael and Hamilton thus portrayed the “internal colony” as an ethnic enclave in waiting, suggesting that a program of decolonization for black America might simply involve the greater incorporation of African Americans into the existing landscape of municipal power politics.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 45.

¹¹¹ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 47.

¹¹² Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 44.

¹¹³ W. E. B. Du Bois, “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis* 16 (July 1918): 111. While Carmichael later disowned the passage about “closing ranks,” Hamilton continued to defend it. Stokely Carmichael, “Pan-Africanism – Land and Power,” *The Black Scholar* 1, no. 1 (November 1969): 36–43; Charles V. Hamilton, “An Advocate of Black Power Defines It,” *New York Times Magazine*, April 14, 1968.

¹¹⁴ On the incorporation of the Black Power movement more broadly into existing structures of politics, especially at the municipal level, see, especially, Robert C. Smith, “Black Power and the Transformation from Protest to Politics,” *Political Science Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 431–43; Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders*; Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965–1980* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009); Karen Ferguson, *Top Down: The Ford Foundation, Black Power, and the Reinvention of Racial Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); and Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Black Power appeared to demand a radical revisioning of the American political economy and, simultaneously, to promote a conventional model of interest-group competition. This central tension revolved around the meaning of the colonial analogy. Carmichael and Hamilton's text, moreover, would mark a turning point in the career of the concept of internal colonialism. The antinomy between an understanding of the internal colony as a site of extractive capitalism and a view of the internal colony as one ethnic group among many would define contests over the broader trajectory of black urban politics over the next several years.

The shifting views of Harold Cruse further demonstrated this tension. Cruse's writings of the early 1960s had spurred other black thinkers to embrace the language of internal colonialism as an alternative to dominant formulations of African American inequality, such as "second-class citizenship," that aligned with the creedal narrative of American history on which pluralist political science depended. In "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," Cruse made this point explicitly: "the Negro is not really an integral part of the American nation beyond the convenient formal recognition that he lives within the borders of the United States."¹¹⁵ By 1967, however, Cruse turned to a form of pluralistic politics that took the U.S. nation-state as the inevitable container of black politics and saw ethnic-group advancement as its ultimate destination.

In his infamous 1967 book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Cruse attacked his own successors who sought to apply the language of decolonization to the African American freedom struggle. The numerous controversies surrounding *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* have obscured its ambiguous relationship to the internationalist language of Cruse's earlier writings.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," 77.

¹¹⁶ Nikhil Pal Singh, "Negro Exceptionalism: The Antinomies of Harold Cruse," in *Harold Cruse's The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered*, ed. Jerry Watts, 73–91.

Understandably, much of the critical attention, both at the time and since, has focused on Cruse's acerbic critiques of nearly every prominent black writer associated with the organized left, from Lorraine Hansberry to Julian Mayfield, his denigrating statements about Caribbean migrants to the United States, and his borderline anti-Semitism in his discussions of the place of Jews in American Communism. Yet his understandings of economic and cultural exploitation, his portrayal of the relationship between black intellectuals and their counterparts in the decolonizing world, and his calls to reframe the black freedom struggle as a contest within a pluralistic order of American ethnic groups all reflected his changing attitude toward decolonization.¹¹⁷

Although Cruse focused most of his attention in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* on literary and political culture, his analysis of urban economics reflected ideas about exploitation shared by other exponents of the internal colony thesis. Harlem, in Cruse's mind, not only stood on the verge of becoming "deracinated culturally" as a result of integration, but also remained a "an impoverished and superexploited economic dependency," whose residents served as no more than "captive consumers and cheap labor reserves, maintained for the extraction of profits."¹¹⁸ This economic condition placed Harlem in a global context of colonial labor exploitation that had spurred the previous decades' anticolonial revolts: "The ghettos of color, which exist all over the United States and the non-Western world, have today become the endemic wellsprings of revolutionary ideologies that will change the social relationships of races for decades to

¹¹⁷ For a critical examination of Cruse's *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, and his negative opinion of Caribbean immigrants in particular, see Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998). Hortense Spillers offers an insightful retrospective on Cruse's work, paying particular attention to his arguments about economics and cultural labor, in Hortense Spillers, "The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Post-Date," *boundary 2* 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 65–116. For a variety of perspectives on *Crisis*, some of which explore Cruse's views on international affairs, see the essays in Jerry Watts, ed., *Harold Cruse's The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered*.

¹¹⁸ Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (1967; repr., New York: New York Review Books, 2005), 85, 86, 94.

come.”¹¹⁹ While Cruse used this comparison to denounce those who thought integration could make the “Harlems of the world” disappear, he also refuted those who sought to apply the “revolutionary ideologies” of anticolonial struggle in the United States.¹²⁰

Cruse’s changing understanding of the relationship between African American and anticolonial struggles provided one reason for this denial. In his writings of the early 1960s, Cruse saw the African American struggle as lagging behind its counterparts in the colonial world, and he urged his fellow intellectuals to understand the politics of decolonization in order to better develop a theory and strategy of social action for African Americans. Five years later, he argued that this attempt to connect with the decolonizing world had failed. Cruse distanced himself from the younger writers and activists whom he had accompanied to Cuba in 1960. He The “generation” of new nationalists, which became “deeply impressed by the emergence of the African states, the Cuban Revolution, Malcolm X and Robert Williams,” had not heeded Cruse’s call for a homegrown strategy of struggle, but had instead been seduced by two romanticized visions of the foreign.¹²¹ Cruse argued that both the thrust of Robert Williams’ embrace of armed self-defense and the “naïve idealization of everything African” by what he termed “Harlem nationalists” reflected failures to parse the differences between “domestic colonialism” and colonialism proper.¹²² Despite the fact that “the social forces that have created both the Afro-American and the modern African are so similar,” their two “revolutions” were “so related, and yet so uniquely different,” that neither could fully understand the other.¹²³ Rather than showing

¹¹⁹ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 320.

¹²⁰ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 320.

¹²¹ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 354.

¹²² Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 391, 342.

¹²³ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 342.

the way out of the ideological confusion of the post-1965 era, the colonial analogy simply added to it.

Cruse never fully articulated his theory of the differences between “domestic colonialism” within the U.S. and colonialism abroad. But his view that these forms of domination were irreconcilably distinct related to his gradual embrace of a vision of U.S. politics as a pluralistic struggle for power among a variety of ethnic groups. By 1967, Cruse viewed American racial inequality as a “group power problem, an interethnic group power play,” rather than an outgrowth of a global history of exploitation and uneven development.¹²⁴

Even as he abandoned central claims from his essays of the early 1960s, Cruse expanded his argument about the necessity of a specifically cultural transformation in black life. Describing cultural producers as the true vanguard of black politics, Cruse advanced with greater force than he had in the early 1960s a political-economic vision centered on African Americans’ gaining greater levels of material control over the industries of cultural production.¹²⁵ This vision now appeared to fit seamlessly with the precepts of ethnic pluralism. “The path to the ethnic democratization of American society is through its culture, that is to say its cultural apparatus, Cruse argued, “which comprises the eyes, the ears, and the ‘mind’ of capitalism and its twentieth-century voice to the world.”¹²⁶ “To democratize the cultural apparatus” would “revolutioniz[e] American society itself into the living realization of its professed ideals.”¹²⁷ Greater autonomy over cultural production would give African Americans the resources and

¹²⁴ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 260.

¹²⁵ Cedric Johnson argues that the “racialized notion of culture” in Cruse’s *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* “stood outside of political economy.” While not denying the overall line of Johnson’s critique, I argue instead that Cruse’s consistent emphasis on the material conditions of cultural production did contain a vision of political economy, and one that aligned relatively neatly with the assumptions of ethnic-group pluralism. See Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders*, 5.

¹²⁶ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 188.

¹²⁷ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, 188.

respect they needed to achieve a level of power on par with other ethnic groups within the United States. Abandoning his view that African Americans should measure their struggle against the anticolonial revolutionaries of the Third World, Cruse now looked forward to the achievement of the American Creed.

Over the course of 1967, both Cruse and Carmichael and Hamilton placed the language of internal colonialism in conversation with major currents of pluralist political thought. Cruse, arguably the thinker most responsible for adoption of the colonial analogy in African American thought and activism, abandoned the analogy for a vision of black political struggle as an effort to rebalance power relations across America's ethnic groups, albeit one focused on achieving material control over cultural production. Carmichael and Hamilton, meanwhile, left the antinomy unresolved: their vision of the internal colony appeared simultaneously as a territory of exploitation set apart from the ordinary rules of pluralist competition, and as an ethnic enclave like any other. This tension coursed through the career of the colonial analogy at the end of the 1960s, as it gained a new prominence in the national political vocabulary.

The Colonial Analogy in National Politics

After the summers of 1967 and 1968, as the wave of urban uprisings that began in 1963 reached a new level of intensity, national political debate began to orbit around the political economy of racism in the American metropolis. As sociologist Peter B. Levy demonstrates, the wave of urban disturbances that spanned 1963 to 1971 constituted a "Great Uprising."¹²⁸ Urban revolts did not constitute simply "spontaneous and apolitical explosions of violence," but instead represented "the product of the long civil rights movement, the Great Migration, and the political

¹²⁸ Levy, *The Great Uprising*, 1.

economy of the postwar era.”¹²⁹ In the middle of this “Great Uprising,” President Johnson convened the National Commission on Civil Disorders (or the Kerner Commission) in 1967, after disturbances in over 200 U.S. cities, including the major metropolises of Newark and Detroit. Assessing the causes of these disorders, the commission painted a picture of the political economy of the American metropolis not dissimilar to the one described by Kenneth Clark in *Dark Ghetto*. “White society,” the Kerner Commission report argued, “is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.”¹³⁰ With the urban crisis occupying such a prominent place in the national imagination, the language of internal colonialism unexpectedly moved to the center of U.S. political discourse. As it did, the tensions between the two visions of the internal colony—as a pluralist enclave or a territory of exploitation—only grew in importance.

The spread of the colonial analogy and its linkage with pluralist political thought made the language of internal colonialism available across a wider range of the political spectrum. Conservative reaction was divided between fear at the implications of the analogy and attempts to appropriate it for the promotion of entrepreneurial solutions to the urban crisis. Some liberal Democratic politicians, on the other hand, began to embrace the image of black ghettos as subject to forms of colonial exploitation, incorporating this language of critique in their continued advocacy for developmentalist solutions to urban poverty. Meanwhile, voices on the black left became divided over whether or not the language could be salvaged from its new association with programs of business-led community development.

¹²⁹ Levy, *The Great Uprising*, 13, 11.

¹³⁰ National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, New York Times Edition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 2.

A number of conservative thinkers reacted to the proliferation of metaphors of colonialism with dismay. Defense intellectuals Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, as mentioned in the introduction, authored the most substantial conservative commentary on the adoption of the colonial analogy. Staff members of the RAND Corporation since the early 1950s, the Wohlstetters worked at the intellectual epicenter of Cold War national security policy. Roberta's historical study of the intelligence failures that left the U.S. military unprepared for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, entitled *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, exhibited a dramatic concern about U.S. readiness for a possible Soviet nuclear attack.¹³¹ Albert, trained as a mathematician, wrote extensively on nuclear strategy, emphasizing the looming threat of Soviet nuclear aggression and arguing constantly that the U.S. needed to adopt a more offensive nuclear posture.¹³² Their turn, in the summer of 1968, to an examination of the anticolonial language in the Black Power movement reflected a widespread view in the national security establishment of both urban riots and more sustained Black Power activism as components of a transnational continuum of insurgency that threatened the security of the United States.¹³³ The Wohlstetters worried that the influences of Malcolm X, Che Guevara, and Frantz Fanon on the spokespeople of the Black Power movement would lead to an embrace of offensive violence—often rendered as “guerilla war”—and that the urban riots augured the beginnings of a trend in this direction.¹³⁴ Labeling the uprisings “expressive,” they saw in black activists' identification with the

¹³¹ Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962).

¹³² Albert Wohlstetter, “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 1 (1958): 211; Andrew Bacevich, “Tailors to the Emperor,” *New Left Review* 69 (May–June 2011): 101–124.

¹³³ Schrader, *Badges without Borders*, 27–51.

¹³⁴ Albert Wohlstetter and Roberta Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models: Inequalities and Disorder at Home and Abroad,” RAND Corporation, D-17664-RC/ISA, August 27, 1968; Albert Wohlstetter and Roberta Wohlstetter, “‘Third Worlds’ Abroad and at Home,” *The Public Interest* 14, (Winter 1969): 88–107. For a similar perspective on the influence of Fanon in particular, see Aristide Zolberg and Vera Zolberg, “The Americanization of Frantz Fanon,” *The Public Interest* 9 (Fall 1967): 49–63.

revolutions in Cuba and Algeria an existential, “nihilist” posture rather than a meaningful political stance.¹³⁵

A concern about insurgent violence, however, constituted only one part of the Wohlstetters’ critique of the colonial analogy. The economic implications of the language of internal colonialism troubled them just as much. Taking note of the lure of postcolonial developmentalism for many black thinkers, they argued that, despite the “rich source of varied metaphor” that the history of colonialism provided, the language of internal colonialism only “evoke[d] a cloud of ideologies of economic development.”¹³⁶ Ignoring proposals for fair housing, welfare rights, full employment, and anti-employment discrimination legislation that littered the platforms of Black Power groups, the Wohlstetters reduced the economic message of Black Power to simplified demands for what they called economic “autarkies,” consisting of black ownership of businesses and black political power in predominantly black communities.¹³⁷

Yet the Wohlstetters did not deny wholesale the potential relevance of international economics to U.S. race relations. Rather, they argued, following economist Gary Becker’s influential 1957 study *The Economics of Discrimination*, that “the theory of international trade,” rather than “the rhetoric of imperialism,” could apply to domestic circumstances of racialized economic inequality.¹³⁸ The solution to discrimination in the labor market, in Becker’s model, lay simply in reducing the barriers to free market competition, as unfettered markets would cause firms with a higher “taste for discrimination” to fail.¹³⁹ Arguing that the economic relations between white and black Americans were roughly analogous to the relations between a nation

¹³⁵ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

¹³⁶ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “Metaphors and Models.”

¹³⁷ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “‘Third Worlds’ Abroad and at Home,” 101.

¹³⁸ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, “‘Third Worlds’ Abroad and at Home,” 90; Gary S. Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

¹³⁹ Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination*, 6.

that is a source of capital and one that is a source of labor, Becker suggested that the low-wage work that dominated the economic life of African Americans actually served as the source of their comparative advantage. Adopting Becker's analysis, the Wohlstetters countered theories of internal colonialism that envisioned an extractive relationship between the dominant institutions of American society and the black ghetto.

Outright rejection, however, was not the only reaction of American conservatives to the spread of the colonial analogy. Appropriation was another. In the same month that the Wohlstetters wrote their RAND Corporation analysis, Richard Nixon invoked the idea of the internal colony in his speech accepting the Republican Party's nomination for president in the 1968 election. Like many of Nixon's campaign speeches, his acceptance address reflected the influence of both Raymond Price, his chief speechwriter and a moderate Republican who had supported Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and the conservative firebrand Pat Buchanan.¹⁴⁰ Nixon's speech, which centered on themes of crime control and policing that dominated much of his campaign, also advanced his argument that antipoverty programs inaugurated under the Johnson administration fostered "dependency" among African Americans. Black people would benefit, Nixon argued, from a retreat from the War on Poverty and the empowerment of an entrepreneurial business class in black communities. He grounded this claim in an appeal to the image of the United States as the first new nation, recasting the nation's revolutionary beginnings as the origin point of a continuous tradition of entrepreneurial economic development. "The war on poverty didn't begin five years ago in this country," but rather "when this country began."¹⁴¹ Contemporary African Americans, especially those in impoverished

¹⁴⁰ Raymond Price, *With Nixon* (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

¹⁴¹ Richard Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," August 8, 1968, The American Presidency Project,

urban areas, should “turn to the American Revolution for the answer.”¹⁴² “They don’t want to be a colony in a nation,” Nixon announced.¹⁴³ “They want the pride, and the self-respect, and the dignity that can only come if they have an equal chance to own their own homes, to own their own businesses, to be managers and executives as well as workers, to have a piece of the action in the exciting ventures of private enterprise.”¹⁴⁴ Decolonization as entrepreneurship: Nixon’s acceptance speech starkly illustrated the semantic drift of the language of internal colonialism since the early 1960s.

Nixon’s entrepreneurial vision spoke to a long history of conservatives embracing ideologies of black self-help in order to disclaim the responsibility of the broader polity to combat structural inequality.¹⁴⁵ It also signaled a newfound support for “black capitalism” as an explicit aim of the American right. The support in Nixon’s campaign for the business-led community development efforts of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) illustrate the budding, if temporary, alliances between prominent elements in black politics, including black nationalist politics, and the resurgent Republican Party.¹⁴⁶ Floyd McKissick, who authored CORE’s shift to an identification as a Black Power organization in 1966, and his successor as CORE chairman, Roy Innis, forged these alliances through their advocacy for the Community Self-Determination Act of 1968. This act proposed the formation of locally administered, for-

<<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-accepting-the-presidential-nomination-the-republican-national-convention-miami>>.

¹⁴² Nixon, “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida.”

¹⁴³ Nixon, “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida.”

¹⁴⁴ Nixon, “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida.”

¹⁴⁵ Touré Reed explores this longer history as it relates to the Urban League in the first half of the twentieth century. See Touré F. Reed, *Not Alms but Opportunity: The Urban League and the Politics of Racial Uplift, 1910–1950* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

¹⁴⁶ Joshua D. Farrington, *Black Republicans and the Transformation of the GOP* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 170–95; Leah Wright Rigueur, *The Loneliness of the Black Republican: Pragmatic Politics and the Pursuit of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 136–76.

profit Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and community development banks, the profits of which would be used to bolster social services within areas of concentrated poverty.¹⁴⁷ Innis and Floyd McKissick presented the plan to both the Robert F. Kennedy and Nixon campaigns in 1968. After Kennedy's assassination, the CORE leaders were drawn closer into Nixon's orbit. Facing opposition from liberals and the left, Innis and McKissick, too, defended both their substantive vision and their strategic decision to partner with Nixon and the Republican Party by referring to the concept of internal colonialism. Their proposal, Innis argued, represented the first step toward a "new social contract" that would elevate black communities above the status of "sub-colonial appendages," allowing them to enter into the interest-group competition of metropolitan politics.¹⁴⁸ The linkage of the colonial analogy with the politics of ethnic group advancement had paved the way for its conservative appropriation.

Some Democratic politicians, too, began to adopt the language of internal colonialism, integrating elements of its critique of racialized exploitation into their existing understanding of black ghettos as zones of underdevelopment. In a hearing on "Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis" in September 1968, Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale cited a "growing awareness...that the problems of the inner city are similar to the problems of underdeveloped countries."¹⁴⁹ But Mondale went further than the liberal consensus in stating that "urban ghettos

¹⁴⁷ "Liberals, Conservatives Combine on Self-Help Bill," *Newsday*, July 25, 1968. On the Community Self-Determination Act, see William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 137–40; Nishani Frazier, *Harambee City: The Congress of Racial Equality and the Rise of Black Power Populism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2017), 194–206; and Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 174–75. See also, more generally, Laura Warren Hill and Julia Rabig, eds., *The Business of Black Power: Community Development, Capitalism, and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

¹⁴⁸ Roy Innis, "Separatist Economics: A New Social Contract," in *Black Economic Development*, ed. William Haddad and C. Douglas Pugh (Englewood Hills, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

¹⁴⁹ *Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis: Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions*, 90th Cong. 3 (1968) (statement of Walter F. Mondale, U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota).

may also share another characteristic with some undeveloped countries—and that is the problem of colonial exploitation.”¹⁵⁰ In addition to “fast-buck operators” and “unscrupulous lenders,” residents of poor black communities were subject to other, “more subtle forms of colonialism, such as absentee merchants who collect high prices on sales in the ghetto, but invest the profits outside the ghetto.”¹⁵¹ Financial institutions were implicated, too, as “many savings institutions located in or near ghetto areas might be tapping the savings of the ghetto and reinvesting them in mortgages in white suburbia.”¹⁵² The overall outcome of residential segregation, and the captive rental and consumer markets it created, was a “substantial capital outflow.”¹⁵³ Mondale’s description of the exploitation of the ghetto resembled the most stirring passages of the writings of black radicals who employed the colonial metaphor in service of a critique of extractive capitalism. He offered more conventional prescriptions, however. Citing Michael Harrington, Mondale reiterated the widespread view among liberal policymakers that, like underdeveloped countries, black ghettos needed a combination of technical assistance, the cultivation of local leadership, and capital investment, which the federal government could encourage through modest incentives to lending institutions.

Allusions to internal colonialism by both conservative and liberal figures at the highest levels of U.S. politics represented a significant departure in the career of the concept. On the one

¹⁵⁰ *Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis: Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions*, 90th Cong. 3 (1968) (statement of Walter F. Mondale, U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota).

¹⁵¹ *Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis: Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions*, 90th Cong. 3 (1968) (statement of Walter F. Mondale, U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota).

¹⁵² *Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis: Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions*, 90th Cong. 3 (1968) (statement of Walter F. Mondale, U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota).

¹⁵³ *Financial Institutions and the Urban Crisis: Hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions*, 90th Cong. 3 (1968) (statement of Walter F. Mondale, U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota). See also Taylor, *Race for Profit*, 48–54.

hand, these arrogations reflected transparent attempts to domesticate the language of the Black Power movement—to deny that it might represent a fundamental challenge to creedal narratives of American national identity or colorblind understandings of democracy. On the other hand, these references called attention to the proximate, if often conflictual, relationship between black internationalist politics and more conventional registers in the American political vocabulary that existed throughout the midcentury decades.

Rescue or Abandonment: The Colonial Analogy and the Black Left

Black activists and intellectuals who both criticized the shortcomings of the Great Society and rejected the Nixon administration's promotion of "black capitalism" continued to formulate their own agendas for economic self-determination. Increasingly, the association of the language of internal colonialism with a pluralistic politics of ethnic group advancement sparked a debate among black radicals on whether metaphors of colonialism best captured the dynamics of racialized economic exploitation in black ghettos. As some on the black left tried to rescue the colonial analogy from its pluralist associations, others argued it should be abandoned altogether.

The most sustained attempt to return the colonial analogy to its associations with the global dynamics of racialized economic exploitation emerged from a young journalist and sociologist named Robert L. Allen. A student activist involved in civil rights protests while a student at Morehouse College in the early 1960s, Allen moved to New York in 1963, becoming an early participant in the antiwar movement while studying for a master's degree in sociology at Columbia University. Writing for the leftist newspaper the *National Guardian*, Allen reported on the antiwar and Black Power movements. He even traveled to North Vietnam in October 1967 to

write about the progress of the war with a small group of peace activists and journalists.¹⁵⁴

Allen's reporting on the Newark Black Power Conference in the summer of 1967 provided the impetus for his 1969 book *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, an extended, critical appraisal of what he saw as conservative tendencies in the Black Power movement.¹⁵⁵ Allen turned to the language of "domestic *neocolonialism*" to emphasize the failure of rising black political power in American cities to address economic inequality and, further, to highlight the common dynamics affecting the global political economy after formal decolonization and the political economy of the American metropolis.¹⁵⁶

Allen's formulation of domestic neocolonialism marked a recognition of the changes that the civil rights movement and the new empowerment of black political leaders had wrought.¹⁵⁷ It also reflected a belated adaptation of a language that had taken hold in the decolonizing world several years earlier, most prominently with the publication of Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* in 1965.¹⁵⁸ Nkrumah's analysis of the continuing control of important sectors of postcolonial economies by American- and European-owned businesses after formal independence gave a new name and a new urgency to the longstanding emphasis in black internationalist writing on the dangers that faced states that won their political independence without achieving economic sovereignty.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton had already incorporated an understanding of the insufficiency of the transfer of political power to black leaders in their theorization of internal

¹⁵⁴ Robert L. Allen, "Hanoi readies for final attack," *National Guardian*, October 14, 1967, folder 61, carton 1, Dr. Robert L. Allen Papers, BANC MSS 2017/193, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹⁵⁵ "Notebook: Black Power Conference, Newark, New Jersey, and Core Press Conference, 1967," folder 53, carton 1, Dr. Robert L. Allen Papers.

¹⁵⁶ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 17. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁷ J. Phillip Thompson, III, *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965).

colonialism in *Black Power*. In this analysis they drew on the scholarship of Martin Kilson, a black political scientist and member of AMSAC who had studied with Rupert Emerson at Harvard, on so-called “indirect rule” in the British colonies of Africa.¹⁵⁹ The changing social base of the black leadership class rendered neocolonialism a more adequate reference point than colonial indirect rule, in Allen’s mind. The cultivation of nationalist consciousness in colonial territories, and the struggle for political independence itself, produced a new elite fluent in the languages of militancy and revolt and dependent on political support from nationalist elements of the populace. Using Ghana as an example, where Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP had appeared to supplant the system of chieftaincy through which Britain had long exercised its authority, Allen argued that, in the first years after political independence, the new, “Nkrumahian political elite” continued to serve the interests of foreign, especially British, capital.¹⁶⁰ The coup that brought down Nkrumah in 1966—which exposed the “face of neocolonialism”—only occurred *after* his turn toward a socialist developmental model for Ghana, which threatened these prerogatives and drove a wedge between Nkrumah and other members of his party.¹⁶¹

Ghana’s experience illustrated that even the empowerment of a political elite comprised of “militant nationalists” offered no guarantees of an end to colonial processes of economic exploitation.¹⁶² This lesson, Allen argued, applied equally well to the cities of the United States. In cities ranging from Newark to Cleveland, a new leadership class had emerged that “denounced the old black elite of Tomming preachers, teachers, and businessmen-politicians”

¹⁵⁹ Ture and Hamilton, *Black Power*, 10. Martin Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State: A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone* (New York: Atheneum, 1966).

¹⁶⁰ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 17. Historian Richard Rathbone has revised the view that the structures of authority of nationalist governance completely and simply replaced chieftaincy in Ghana, arguing that, in many areas, the CPP worked to gain the favor of chiefs as it pursued its aims. See Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951–60* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000).

¹⁶¹ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 14.

¹⁶² Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 17.

and “announced that it supported black power.”¹⁶³ In Allen’s analysis, the sincerity of this new elite’s support for black nationalism did not change the fact that its structural position in metropolitan politics was to mediate the relationship between corporate power and the “rebellious colony.”¹⁶⁴ In addition to Nkrumah’s analysis of the economic structures of neocolonialism, Allen turned to the writing of Frantz Fanon to provide a fuller picture of how nationalist political leaders and intellectuals turned their militancy into a currency that could advance their own aims. Fanon’s argument that postcolonial leaders relied on cultural nationalist appeals to maintain popularity while undermining democratic processes provided a striking parallel, in Allen’s eyes, to the strategies of a new generation—the first since Reconstruction—of black political leaders holding elected office in the United States.

Allen continued to believe that the colonial analogy offered resources for a radical analysis of the dynamics of race and capitalism in American cities. Yet he acknowledged that the force of this language had been blunted by semantic drift. Noting the similarities between Carmichael and Hamilton’s *Black Power* and traditional pluralist analyses in American political science, Allen argued that their manifesto put forward “another form of traditional ethnic group politics” that was in keeping with the “reformist tendency in black nationalism.”¹⁶⁵ Allen further criticized Harold Cruse’s cultural program, even while relying on and adapting Cruse’s language throughout. Acknowledging that the idiosyncratic Cruse “stands outside the pale of accepted categories,” Allen argued that his emphasis on the “cultural apparatus” and his desire for a “cultural revolution” would only “exacerbate” class divisions among African Americans.¹⁶⁶ Cruse’s program of increasing black control over the cultural apparatus would only serve to

¹⁶³ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 19.

¹⁶⁴ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 65.

¹⁶⁵ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 50.

¹⁶⁶ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 177.

empower a new black intelligentsia, a goal that aligned well with “corporate America’s agenda for the black colony.”¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Allen contended that the mere appearance of “cultural democratization” through greater visibility of black leaders would end up undermining Cruse’s broader aims.¹⁶⁸ Allen argued that if, as Cruse had written, “the American social system quite easily absorbs all foreign, and even native, radical doctrines and neutralizes them,” then surely Cruse’s own program for greater black control of the cultural apparatus was susceptible to this neutralization as well.¹⁶⁹

The uncompromising critiques Allen leveled at other black intellectuals and political leaders did not indicate complete pessimism about the prospects of a domestic decolonization. Recalling the analyses advanced by James and Grace Lee Boggs, Allen argued that automation and growing redundancies in the U.S. industrial workforce that it created would soon force the labor movement into a crisis. This crisis, he argued, had already caused black industrial workers and former industrial workers to seek new alliances and organizations to advance their political goals. He struck an optimistic tone about both the black student movement and the Black Panther Party as signs of the potential for new forms of black activism to build coalitions that would work against the “neocolonial” leadership of American cities at the end of the 1960s.¹⁷⁰ Yet the promising signs he saw in each case were provisional. The agent of a more thoroughgoing reconstruction of metropolitan politics remained obscure. Allen’s “neocolonial” critique of prevailing forms of black political authority thus ultimately pointed backwards, toward the question of the revolutionary subject that underlay the initial adoption of the colonial analogy.

¹⁶⁷ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 178.

¹⁶⁸ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 182.

¹⁶⁹ Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, quoted in Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 179.

¹⁷⁰ Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, 261–62, 268–73.

Allen's efforts to rescue the language of internal colonialism from its association with the pluralistic politics of ethnic group advancement coincided with an abandonment of this vocabulary by other segments of the black left. The Oakland-based leadership of Black Panther Party, most notably, began at the turn of the 1970s to turn away from the understanding of African Americans as subject to a regime of internal colonialism that had undergirded much of their internationalist activism. While the writings of BPP co-founders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton made reference to the "black colony" as early as 1966, a more programmatic understanding of internal colonialism in Panther ideology only emerged in 1968, as the organization grew nationwide and engaged in more overt efforts at establishing international connections.¹⁷¹ In the spring and summer of 1968, the BPP collaborated with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, building on the work of Forman and others to establish SNCC's international connections in the previous year.¹⁷² Despite growing animosity between Forman and Carmichael, both figures joined a delegation from the Panthers for a series of rallies in New York and Newark to promote the Panthers' new demand: a call for a UN-sponsored plebiscite on the political status of black Americans.

The demand for a plebiscite grew out of the call by Malcolm X in the last year of his life to bring the U.S. black freedom struggle before the forum of the United Nations.¹⁷³ Similar demands existed in the platforms of other Black Power organizations, notably the Republic of New Afrika, which sought to establish an independent state in the Black Belt of the South.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Bloom and Martin, *Black against Empire*, 66–73; Malloy, *Out of Oakland*, 110–114.

¹⁷² Bloom and Martin, *Black against Empire*, 122–123; Yohuru R. Williams, "American Exported Black Nationalism: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panther Party, and the Worldwide Freedom Struggle, 1967–1972," *Negro History Bulletin* 60, no. 3 (July–September 1997): 13–20.

¹⁷³ Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 35.

¹⁷⁴ For an analysis of the Republic of New Afrika's demand for a UN plebiscite and its broader engagement with international legal arguments, see Sam Klug, "'What, Then, of the Land?': Territoriality, International Law, and the Republic of New Afrika," *Journal of the History of International Law*, forthcoming.

Underscoring the centrality of this demand to Black Panther Party leaders, especially Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver, the party expanded the final point of its Ten Point Program to include a call for the plebiscite.¹⁷⁵ The revised program listed as the party's "major political demand" a "United Nations sponsored plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny."¹⁷⁶ For Cleaver, the colonial analogy and the Panthers' appeal to a UN plebiscite signified a sharp rebuke to the common understanding of black inequality as a form of "second-class citizenship."¹⁷⁷ Rather than an extension of the rights of citizens, Cleaver argued, the Panthers' program, and indeed the broader Black Power movement, constituted a "projection of sovereignty," a symbolic manifestation of black people's rejection of the authority of the American state and a positioning of African Americans within a global majority of the Third World.¹⁷⁸

The demand for a plebiscite further reframed the colonial analogy around the question of black people's political status, rather than the economic questions that seemed to bedevil other analyses of internal colonialism. By linking the analogy to the question of black people's "political destiny" within or outside the United States, the demand for a plebiscite sidestepped the question of what resources black ghettos possessed that made them comparable sources of profit for white society as colonies had been for imperial powers.¹⁷⁹ The "decentralized colony" of "Afro-America," as Cleaver described it, must assert itself as a nation-in-waiting via the

¹⁷⁵ On Cleaver's central role, see Malloy, *Out of Oakland*, 112.

¹⁷⁶ *Black Panther*, May 4, 1968, 7.

¹⁷⁷ Eldridge Cleaver, "The Land Question and Black Liberation," in *Eldridge Cleaver: Post-Prison Writings and Speeches*, ed. Robert Scheer (New York: Random House, 1969), 61.

¹⁷⁸ Cleaver, "The Land Question and Black Liberation," 67.

¹⁷⁹ Wohlstetter and Wohlstetter, "Metaphors and Models."

international forum of the United Nations, before a concrete alteration of the colonial relationship between “black colony” and “white mother country” could be achieved.¹⁸⁰

Although Cleaver had argued for the embrace of a plebiscite demand most forcefully, other Black Panther Party members supported its addition to the Ten Point Program in 1968. In the coming years, both the failure of this demand to win traction in the international community and the widening fissures in the organization’s leadership generated a turn away from the language of internal colonialism altogether.¹⁸¹ With very few exceptions, postcolonial states in Asia and Africa refrained from endorsing this demand, both because it risked angering the United States, and because they feared that the success of any claim to national self-determination by a group that could be categorized as a “national minority” might prompt additional claims that threatened their own national integrity.¹⁸² The well-known division between Cleaver and his allies, who relocated to Algiers in 1969, and the circle around Newton and his allies in Oakland, stemmed from a variety of sources, from growing personal animosity to conflicting visions of the purpose of the party. Cleaver and the International Section continued to advocate revolutionary violence and guerrilla warfare, while the leadership in Oakland, and most chapters throughout the United States, engaged more deeply in the local community service programs—“survival programs,” as Newton now labeled them—established over the course of 1969 and 1970.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Cleaver, “The Land Question and Black Liberation,” 67. The claim-making strategies of “states-in-waiting,” or national minorities who asserted a right of self-determination *within* postcolonial states, are explored in Lydia Walker, “Decolonization in the 1960s: On Legitimate and Illegitimate Nationalist Claims-Making,” *Past & Present* 242, no. 1 (February 2019): 227–64.

¹⁸¹ Malloy, *Out of Oakland*, 114.

¹⁸² On the broader reluctance of postcolonial states to support demands for autonomy of national minorities or other “subnational” communities, see Walker, “Decolonization in the 1960s,” 233.

¹⁸³ Bloom and Martin, *Black against Empire*, 354; Nelson, *Body and Soul*, 61–64; Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*, 77–92.

As these divisions grew in the organization, Huey Newton articulated a new analysis of the relationship of the Black Panther Party, and of the African American struggle for equality broadly, to global dynamics of capitalism and empire. In a speech at Boston College in November 1970, and in a joint speech with psychologist Erik Erikson in February 1971, Newton introduced his concept of “intercommunalism.”¹⁸⁴ For Newton, the language of internal colonialism, even in its neocolonial variant, failed to register what made the world order of the late twentieth century distinctive from the imperial and colonial orders that preceded it.¹⁸⁵ The globe-spanning power of the United States, and its ability to achieve global hegemony with minimal control of foreign territories, rendered colonial models inapplicable.¹⁸⁶ Strategically, the Panthers had adopted the analysis of internal colonialism as a force multiplier, he declared. Because “black communities throughout the country” held “many similarities” with the “traditional kind of colony,” he declared, “we thought that if we allied with those other colonies we would have a greater number, a greater chance, a greater force; and that is what we needed, of course, because only force kept us a colonized people.”¹⁸⁷ Shifts in the configuration of global power, however, had rendered these alliances untenable. Technological transformations, especially in mass media, communications, and transportation had undermined the power of the

¹⁸⁴ Huey P. Newton, “Speech Delivered at Boston College: November 18, 1970” and “Intercommunalism: February 1971,” in *The Huey P. Newton Reader*, ed. David Hilliard and Donald Weise (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 160–75, 181–99.

¹⁸⁵ Judson L. Jeffries argues that Newton’s philosophy of intercommunalism “grew out of the Panthers’ fundamental ideological position on internationalism,” failing to register how it in fact marked an important shift. See Judson L. Jeffries, *Huey P. Newton: The Radical Theorist* (Oxford, MS: The University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 79. More sensitive to the evolving nature of Newton’s views on the international order are John Narayan, “Huey P. Newton’s Intercommunalism: An Unacknowledged Theory of Empire,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, online only (2017): doi 10.1177/0263276417741348; and Malloy, *Out of Oakland*, 174–81.

¹⁸⁶ The shift to a “pointillist” version of U.S. hegemony that relied on control of military bases, technologies of communication, and standardization of commercial objects as well as social practices, but only minimally on territorial sovereignty, is analyzed in Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 213–401.

¹⁸⁷ Newton, “Intercommunalism,” 185.

nation-state and the appeal of the “revolutionary nationalism” that Harold Cruse had once advanced and that the Panthers had initially defined as their ideological lodestar.

“There are no more colonies or neo-colonies,” Newton proclaimed, in an explicit renunciation of the language of internal colonialism, “only a dispersed collection of communities.”¹⁸⁸ Even the analysis of neocolonialism, in which the continuing economic power of former imperial rulers and foreign corporations undermined the sovereignty of a purportedly independent polity failed to capture the deterritorialized nature of imperial power. The replacement of colonialism and even neocolonialism by a spatially diffuse system of technologically advanced, U.S.-backed transnational capitalism made it “impossible to ‘decolonize,’” in Newton’s mind.¹⁸⁹ The “waning of territoriality,” as historian Charles Maier characterizes this shift, demanded a rethinking of the language and the spatial imaginary of black struggle.¹⁹⁰ A more pervasive form of domination existed, Newton claimed, than the relations of dependency and exploitation between colony and metropole—or between internal colony and wealthy suburb.

“The communications revolution, combined with the expansive domination of the American empire,” Newton announced, “has created the ‘global village.’”¹⁹¹ This global unity, Newton suggested, provided the basis for an archipelago of struggle among a “dispersed collection of communities,” united only by a desire to “determine their own destinies” against the “small circle that administers and profits from the empire of the United States.”¹⁹² This vision

¹⁸⁸ Newton, “Speech Delivered at Boston College,” 169.

¹⁸⁹ Newton, “Intercommunalism,” 187.

¹⁹⁰ Charles S. Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 807–31, quoted at 818. For the longer version of this argument, see Charles S. Maier, *Once within Borders: Territories of Wealth, Power, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). George Lipsitz provides a compelling justification of the idea of a “black spatial imaginary” in George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 13.

¹⁹¹ Newton, “Intercommunalism,” 188.

¹⁹² Newton, “Intercommunalism,” 187.

contradicted the emphasis on the territorial specificity of the black ghetto that had held an important place in analyses of internal colonialism from Kenneth Clark's *Dark Ghetto* onwards. For all their differences, visions of the internal colony as an ethnic enclave in waiting and visions of it as a site for the extraction of rents and profits shared this understanding of territorial specificity. To Newton, however, this territorial specificity no longer held true. Without explicitly addressing the entailments of the language of domestic colonialism in the previous few years, Newton framed the Panthers' abandonment of the colonial analogy as a revision to their analysis of the political-economic order at both local and global scales.

Other African Americans on the left, however, began to discard the concept of internal colonialism specifically because its many uses over the previous few years seemed to have left it with muddled political implications. James Boggs, for his part, found that the ideological promiscuity of the colonial analogy in the late 1960s and early 1970s had rendered it useless for radical politics. The introduction of "concepts that grew out of and are relevant to the African struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism" only "confuse[d] the struggle for a U.S. revolution," Boggs confided in a letter.¹⁹³ Those who continued to employ such language, which Boggs now viewed as a foreign importation, to identify movements for democracy and economic equality among black Americans only engaged in a form of "self-indulgence."¹⁹⁴ To Boggs, for whom structural commonalities between the decolonizing world and the deindustrializing United States had appeared to provide an opening for radical politics in the early 1960s, the colonial analogy appeared by the early 1970s no more than a radical veneer.

The weakening political purchase of the colonial analogy on the black left nonetheless did not slow its profusion in academic venues. Ongoing debates over the analytical clarity and

¹⁹³ James Boggs to unknown recipient, March 28, 1973, folder 10, box 2, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

¹⁹⁴ James Boggs to unknown recipient, March 28, 1973, folder 10, box 2, James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers.

usefulness of internal colonialism played out in several new publications and institutions created through the movement for black studies.¹⁹⁵ *The Black Scholar*, founded in 1969 following the firing of sociologist Nathan Hare from San Francisco State University's pioneering Black Studies department for supporting a student strike in the university, and *The Review of Black Political Economy*, founded in 1970 by economist Robert S. Browne, a former staffer of USAID in Cambodia and Vietnam and an early, vocal opponent of the Vietnam War within the black freedom movement, hosted many of these discussions.¹⁹⁶ In the same period, several heterodox social scientists, most notably sociologist Robert Blauner and economist William Tabb, promoted the concept of internal colonialism within their disciplines.¹⁹⁷ As these scholars sought to bring the concept to bear on narrower disciplinary debates throughout the 1970s, other strands of thought that had once been organized under its sign, from the Boggses' vision of a new revolutionary subject to Robert Allen's challenge to black nationalist political elites, fell away.

In 1975, St. Clair Drake surveyed the role the internal colony thesis had played in black life and thought in the preceding years. Drake's writings and political activities over the previous three decades years had, in fact, laid some of the groundwork for the appeal of this analogy. In *Black Metropolis*, composed at the end of the Second World War, Drake and Horace Cayton had observed that the average resident of Chicago's Bronzeville ghetto "found the problems of the

¹⁹⁵ The Institute of the Black World in Atlanta represents one example. See Institute of the Black World, ed., *Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonized World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review, 1974); Derrick E. White, *The Challenge of Blackness: The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

¹⁹⁶ Robert L. Allen became Senior Editor of *The Black Scholar* in 1971. For an examination of the social and intellectual history of Black Studies at San Francisco State University, see Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 43–78. For more on Robert Browne's career, see Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

¹⁹⁷ Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); William K. Tabb, *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970); Donald J. Harris, "The Black Ghetto as Colony: A Theoretical Critique and Alternative Formulation," *Review of Black Political Economy* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 3–33; William K. Tabb, "Marxian Exploitation and Domestic Colonialism: A Reply to Donald J. Harris," *Review of Black Political Economy* 4, no. 4 (December 1974): 69–87.

Chinese, the Indians, and the Burmese strangely analogous to his own,” while insisting that “a blow struck for freedom in Bronzeville finds its echo in Chungking and Moscow, in Paris and Senegal.”¹⁹⁸ From his involvement in George Padmore’s circles of activism in London and his experiences teaching in Ghana, to his training of Peace Corps volunteers and his mentorship of civil rights organizers such as James Forman, Drake’s influence coursed through major currents in black internationalist thought and activism.

Drake’s own role was not his concern as he looked back on the career of the language of internal colonialism, however. Rather, he sought to interrogate whether the language operated as a “mere analogy” or a “scientific concept.”¹⁹⁹ Drake lauded that the widespread embrace of the idea of the internal colony in the middle of the 1960s had “been useful in raising the consciousness of the young Black American” and in “generating sentiments of Third World solidarity.”²⁰⁰ Further, its ability to capture shared features of the “process” of racial subordination and the psychological effects of resistance rendered it more than a “mere” analogy and reinforced that the language of internal colonialism had a “heuristic value” for African Americans.²⁰¹

Its economic legacy appeared more ambiguous, however. For one, Drake argued that the colonial analogy had an insoluble problem of scale. Did it apply “only to the discretely bounded ghettos—to Harlem, Bronzeville, and the others large and small, North, South, and West? Or is this whole farflung Black population in the United States ‘the colony?’”²⁰² Variations between

¹⁹⁸ Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 762, 767.

¹⁹⁹ St. Clair Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 1, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

²⁰⁰ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 21, p. 22, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

²⁰¹ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 23, p. 24, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

²⁰² Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 9, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

urban and rural areas and among regions, Drake argued, had not been adequately addressed by proponents of the colonial analogy, who moved too quickly from analyses of the political economy of black ghettos to characterizations of a national population. Drake acknowledged some parallels between “the concept of ‘Black Capitalism’” and “the Colonial Development Welfare schemes during the final stages of Britain’s decolonization process,” implying that the analogy might have continuing purchase for the critique, rather than the advancement, of business-led programs of community development.²⁰³ Overall, however, the diminishing economic prospects of black workers in the mid-1970s indicated a broader set of problems than the language of internal colonialism could address. “As inflation persists and Black unemployment [ratios] not only stay high as compared to whites but also begin to increase,” Drake argued, the galvanizing and consciousness-raising features of the language of internal colonialism diminished in importance.²⁰⁴ A decade after the internal colony thesis gained widespread adoption in the black freedom movement, Drake argued that “the concept of ‘internal colony’ as ideology...may have outlived its usefulness to Black Americans.”²⁰⁵

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The language of internal colonialism traced a winding path through the landscape of American politics between the early 1960s and the middle of the 1970s. From its origin points in Harold Cruse’s attempt to revise Marxian conceptions of the revolutionary subject and Kenneth Clark’s description of ghettos as colonies, the colonial analogy gained broad appeal across the freedom movement as leading activists sought to develop a new conceptual register in the mid-1960s. The

²⁰³ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 22, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

²⁰⁴ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 22, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

²⁰⁵ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 22, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

concept occupied a central place in the attempt by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton to provide an analytical grounding for the protean refrain of Black Power. The antinomy in Carmichael's and Hamilton's *Black Power* between an understanding of the internal colony as a site of extraction and exploitation and as an ethnic enclave engaged in the push and pull of interest-group politics had a profound effect on the language of internal colonialism. Tensions between these two meanings gave rise to the attachment of the colonial analogy to multiple political agendas in the years to come.

In the midst of urban uprisings, the analysis of American racial hierarchy as a form of internal colonialism moved to the center of American political conversation by the late 1960s. As this language spread, contests over what this analysis entailed replaced contests over whether colonialism and decolonization had meaningful implications for supposedly domestic issues in U.S. politics. Supporters of a politics of black capitalism and entrepreneurship, as well as advocates of the extension of the War on Poverty's community development initiatives, adopted internal colonialism as a central component of their political vocabulary. Thinkers and activists on the black left, meanwhile, were divided over whether the colonial analogy could be rescued for the critique of metropolitan capitalism or whether it should be abandoned altogether. Both international and domestic developments contributed to the waning allure of the language of internal colonialism by the middle of the 1970s. Shifting configurations of global power diminished the relevance of colonialism and even neocolonialism as the paradigmatic forms of international domination. At the same time, proliferating uses of the colonial analogy across the political spectrum left the core of the concept muddled.

The declining appeal of the language of internal colonialism does not reduce its importance. From the middle of the 1960s until the middle of the 1970s, decolonization

motivated the adoption of a new language of politics—in liberal, radical, and conservative elements in the black freedom movement, and at the highest levels of U.S. politics. The history of the colonial analogy marked vital struggles over the meaning of American democracy in the Black Power era.

Conclusion

From the Second World War to the middle of the 1970s, the meanings of colonialism and decolonization formed an essential site of political contestation in the United States. The understanding of racialized economic exploitation as the central problem of colonial rule forged by African American internationalists during the Second World War undergirded their visions for the institutional structure of the postwar international order. As the trajectory of U.S. policy and the ultimate shape of the United Nations confounded black internationalists' hopes for the postwar order, their vision of colonialism itself persisted. Fears of a neocolonial future pervaded African Americans' involvement in the politics of international development in the late 1940s and 1950s. From U.S. foreign aid policy and British colonial development schemes to the economic plans of decolonizing Ghana, black activists and thinkers worked to prevent the continuation of relations of economic exploitation and domination after formal independence. Struggles over the international order in the 1940s and 1950s further generated new reflection and new debates about the relation between colonialism and racial hierarchy within the United States, producing colonial comparison as a terrain of political conflict.

Racial liberals in the 1960s, from state policymakers to foundation officials and social scientists, relied on a variable register of colonial comparison in their efforts both to influence the trajectories of postcolonial states and to manage the politics of racialized and impoverished communities domestically. Images of the United States as a postcolonial success story and a home to its own underdeveloped peoples coexisted simultaneously. Both images sought to check the radical potential of decolonization, through different means. Promoting a narrow definition of colonialism and portraying the United States as an exemplar of postcolonial governance,

prominent social scientists and policymakers contested the idea that decolonization might entail a broader restructuring of the international economy or might implicate American power itself. Engineering policies to confront domestic underdevelopment through the empowerment of a politically moderate leadership class, racial liberals applied a template to American urban politics initially created to temper potential radicalism in the postcolonial world. Dominant strands of liberal politics struggled to constrain more expansive imaginaries of decolonization.

Black activists and intellectuals argued that decolonization held a very different set of implications for the politics of race and class in the United States. Radicals and nationalists, as well as some black liberals, such as Kenneth Clark, invoked black internationalist ideas about colonialism and neocolonialism in domestic debate. Black writers disputed the narrow definition of colonialism and the image of the United States as a postcolonial model advanced in the mainstream of liberal politics. The understanding of racialized economic exploitation as the central problem of colonial rule coursed through black Americans' contributions to the global debate on the scope of colonialism at the turn of the 1960s. This conception similarly undergirded the turn in black urban politics to a critique of social welfare programs and the War on Poverty in the language of colonialism. The image of the ghetto as colony, one of the hallmarks of African American thought and activism in the 1960s, emerged from both a long tradition of black internationalism and a confrontation with new forms of liberal social policy—social policy that was equally forged through encounters with the decolonizing world. Conflicts over the meaning of decolonization thus intensified the growing divisions between prevailing elements in American liberalism and powerful currents in the black freedom movement.

Understanding this history shows that the rise of a language of internal colonialism in the Black Power movement did not represent an opportunistic importation of a foreign ideology or a

merely rhetorical flourish. Rather, the language both signaled the ways that decolonization had contributed to the discord between liberalism and the black freedom movement and amplified the discord itself.

The difficulty black activists faced in turning the language of internal colonialism from a potent metaphor into a concrete program of action resulted, in part, from internal contradictions and ideological conflicts within the black freedom movement, as discussed in chapter 5. Yet the downfall of this language of politics also resulted from the devaluation of postcolonial sovereignty and the recasting of decolonization as a failure that increasingly took hold by the middle of the 1970s. Rising authoritarianism and ethnic conflict in postcolonial states had fractured African American anticolonial alliances, with the Nigerian-Biafran War at the end of the 1960s playing a particularly crucial role.¹ For many American policymakers and social scientists, already suspicious of expansive visions of decolonization, the trajectories of postcolonial states called into question the normative foundations of Third World self-determination itself.² By the middle of the 1970s, war, repression, and famine in the postcolonial world appeared to wide swathes of the American elite to prove decolonization a failure.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan declared this verdict with particular fervor. In March 1975, after returning from a two-year stint as U.S. ambassador to India and on the eve of his appointment as ambassador to the United Nations, Moynihan penned an article denouncing the demands for global wealth redistribution emanating from the postcolonial world. A coalition of Third World states had months earlier called for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), proclaiming in the forum of the UN General Assembly a set of demands for global economic equalization. While a full accounting of the origins and objectives of the NIEO is not possible

¹ Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 193–99.

² Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 176–81.

here, the states that promoted it aimed to assert ownership over the natural resources within their territories, to affirm their authority to regulate multinational corporations, and to address the uneven terms of trade that afflicted developing economies.³ Broadly, the NIEO sought to enact the redistributive mechanisms of the welfare state at a global scale.⁴ To Moynihan, the United States needed adopt a posture of “opposition” to this “new majority” of postcolonial states in the United Nations.⁵ This opposition must include, he argued, an outward rejection of the argument that colonialism was primarily responsible for the underdevelopment and poverty so pervasive in the Third World. Economic conditions in postcolonial states are “of their own making and no one else’s, and no claim on anyone else arises in consequence.”⁶ Moynihan framed this argument as a hard truth the Third World must learn. But it would be more accurate to see it as a disavowal of responsibility from the center of global power. He disputed the notion that decolonization might entail a broader reconstruction of the world economy to repair the racialized economic exploitation at the heart of the colonial project.

St. Clair Drake saw a parallel between Moynihan’s views of the international economy and his earlier pronouncements on African American poverty. Moynihan’s 1965 report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, had grown infamous for its demonization of black families, and especially black mothers.⁷ Although advocating job creation programs for black men that in some ways went beyond the War on Poverty’s commitments, the report insisted that

³ Vanessa Ogle, “State Rights against Private Capital: The ‘New International Economic Order’ and the Struggle over Aid, Trade, and Foreign Investment, 1962–1981,” *Humanity* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 211–34; Johanna Bockman, “Socialist Globalization against Capitalist Neocolonialism: The Economic Ideas Behind the New International Economic Order,” *Humanity* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 109–128.

⁴ Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 142–75; Moyn, *Not Enough*, 89–118.

⁵ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The United States in Opposition,” *Commentary* 59 (March 1975): <<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/daniel-moynihan/the-united-states-in-opposition/>>

⁶ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “The United States in Opposition,” *Commentary* 59 (March 1975): <<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/daniel-moynihan/the-united-states-in-opposition/>>

⁷ Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965).

the internal structure of black families held the greatest share of responsibility for perpetuating black poverty. At the end of the 1960s, Moynihan argued—in a memo to Richard Nixon that gained almost equal notoriety as his 1965 report—that issues of racial discrimination might benefit from a period of “benign neglect” in national politics.⁸ These perspectives on black inequality, Drake argued, “have now been transferred to the world scene.”⁹ Moynihan’s “refusal to accept concepts of ‘exploitation’ and ‘reparations’” in the global arena represented no more than the “international extension of his oft-reiterated refusal to consider ‘white racism’ in the United States as the basic cause of black poverty.”¹⁰ Deep commonalities remained in the ways U.S. policymakers treated black Americans and the postcolonial world, especially when it came to demands for economic redistribution.

Drake wrote his rebuke to Moynihan around the same time that he argued that the image of the “internal colony” had “outlived its usefulness to black Americans.”¹¹ This specific analogy had faltered, Drake argued, because of ambiguities in its economic entailments and the scale of its applicability to black Americans. But Drake held on to a central insight of the black internationalist politics from which the language of internal colonialism had emerged. This political formation insisted on linking struggles against racial and class inequality in the United States to hopes for a more egalitarian global order. A politics that envisions the domestic in light of the international remains essential.

⁸ Geary, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 199–205.

⁹ St. Clair Drake, “Moynihan and the Third World,” *The Nation*, July 5, 1975, 8–13, quoted at 9.

¹⁰ Drake, “Moynihan and the Third World,” 13.

¹¹ Drake, “The ‘Internal Colony’: Mere Analogy or Scientific Concept?,” p. 22, folder 8, box 23, St. Clair Drake Papers.

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