“The Heart of the Collective”: Black Left Feminism, Black Women’s Intellectual History and *Freedomways* Magazine, 1930-1985

Lauren Eglen

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies

October 2021

Contents

Abstract i

Acknowledgements ii

List of Abbreviations iii

List of Illustrations iv

Introduction 1

Chapter One: "The Neglect Her Work Suffers": Intellectual and Political Development on the Path to *Freedomways* 33

Chapter Two: "Travel, In Its Truest Form, Is an Art": International Travel and Black Women's Internationalism 78

Chapter Three: "We Join Our Fate with Yours": Traversing Political Difference and Promoting Women's Voices 131

Chapter Four: "A Bridge for Them": Inter-Generational Relationships and Feminist Debate 185

Conclusion 234

Bibliography 245

Abstract

This thesis is the first to explore *Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Freedom Movement* through the lens of its women editors, as a Black feminist intellectual project that expands understanding of Black intellectual history and Black feminism. As activist-intellectuals, Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Jean Carey Bond, and other women in the *Freedomways* collective shaped the magazine's content and editorial outlook in line with their established political viewpoints, and from their distinct intellectual approaches. The magazine was the way that these women sustained their Black Left feminist politics that they had developed in the 1930s and 1940s Popular Front period, crafting it as a platform for leftist women's ideas and analyses of the global freedom struggle that could influence a new generation of feminist activists and writers with whom they built inter-generational relationships.

Their politics and intellectualism were grounded in a Black feminist epistemological understanding of lived experience as a criterion for meaning making through which they reconciled theory and praxis, and the personal and political, in their thinking and activism. Experiences acquired through study, activism, and travel shaped their editorship of the magazine that amplified women's activist voices in grassroots reportage, essays, conference reports, travel accounts, art, poetry, and literature. Through editing and writing for *Freedomways,* they collaborated on a platform that should be recognized for how it has contributed to Black women's intellectual history, highlighting women as writers, journalists, activists, academics, playwrights, composers, and as editors. A Black Left feminism was always at the center of that project, and in print it sustained them and other women as thinkers and activists.

Acknowledgements

This PhD would not have been possible without the support of my supervisory team: Professor Peter Ling and Professor Sharon Monteith. They have been generous with their time, their advice, and their feedback and they have seen me to completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Catherine Rottenberg who joined the project for its final year, and Dr. Karen Salt who supervised its first two years.

This project was funded by AHRC Midlands4Cities and I am grateful for the financial support and opportunities that they have provided. I would also like to thank archival staff at the Tamiment Library, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Moorland Springarn Research Center, and the Schlesinger Library for their invaluable assistance in my research both in person, and remotely. I would also like to thank Dr. Denise Lynn for sharing material from the Shirley Graham Du Bois Papers when I was unable to visit, and Dr. Annette Joseph-Gabriel and Dr. Phillip Luke-Sinitiere for facilitating the exchange of primary sources during the pandemic.

I am exceedingly grateful to the postgraduate community in the American and Canadian Studies Department at the University of Nottingham who have offered steadfast support and been a sounding board for ideas. I would like to thank Olivia Wright, Elle Griffiths, Charlotte James, Keisha Bruce, Emily Brady, and George Cox for their invaluable support and friendship over the past four years.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their resolute belief in me and their never-ending love and support. I am grateful for my friends Owen and Holly, who have never ceased in their care and generosity. Most of all, I will forever appreciate my Mum and Dad who encourage and support me in whatever I do, and who made it possible for me to undertake this PhD. I can only hope that I have made them proud.

List of Abbreviations

AISF – All Indian Students Federation

CAA – Council of African Affairs

COFO – Council of Federated Organizations

CORE – Congress of Racial Equality

CNAC – Cambridge Nonviolence Action Committee

CPUSA – Communist Party of the United States of America

CSA – Commission on the Status of Women

HBCU – Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HUAC – House of Un-American Activities Committee

IWY – International Women's Year

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NNC – National Negro Congress

NOI – Nation of Islam

PIC – Peace Information Center

SCLC – Southern Christian Leadership Conference

SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

SNYC – Southern Negro Youth Congress

STJ – Sojourners for Truth and Justice

UFT – United Federation of Teachers

WFDY – World Federation of Democratic Youth

WIDF – Women's International Democratic Federation

WREE – Women for Racial and Economic Equality

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: (left to right) Jack O'Dell, Eslanda Robeson, John Henrik Clarke, Paul Robeson, Normal Rogers, and Esther Cooper Jackson at the Salute to Paul Robeson sponsored by *Freedomways*, New York City, 22nd April 1965……..…54

Figure 2: Esther Cooper with Vidya Kanuga of the Indian All Students Federation and an unidentified British reporter at the World Youth Congress, London, *Chicago Bee,* December 16, 1945……....81

Figure 3: Dorothy Burnham in Copenhagen speaking at Women's International Democratic Federation, 1953……...90

Figure 4: Esther Cooper in back row, center as part of the all-female WDFY helping to rebuild postwar Stalingrad, 1945……106

Figure 5: W. E. B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Chinese entourage, ca. 1959……117

Figure 6: Charlotte Amévor, Cover Art, *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975)……163

Figure 7: Diane Nash Bevel, Obstetric ward of Phan Hao Hospital after U.S. bombing, June 1, 1966……210

Figure 8: Carlos W. Byron, Cover Art, *Freedomways* 23 no. 4 (Fall 1983)……230

Introduction

> We are here.
> Conceived of necessity and with impetuous ardour, born in travail, this newest, youngest publication is yet a lusty, bawling infant. This is a good world and a good time in which we are born. For we are African-American, and our name is FREEDOMWAYS—The Editors.[1]

The first issue of *Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Freedom Movement* was published in April 1961. It's opening editorial stated the purpose and goals of the collective people who had founded the magazine to be an "open channel of communication" that might "unite and mobilize our efforts for worthy and lasting results" in the global Black freedom struggle.[2] A New York-based Black Left magazine, it was published quarterly until 1985, and edited by activists who had been in struggle since the 1930s and 1940s. An initial press run of two thousand copies quickly increased to a paid circulation of between five and seven thousand from 1964 to its final issue—often reaching up to 15,000 copies for special issues.[3] It maintained an average of around four thousand subscribers, who were mostly from across the US, but also from countries including Zambia, Uganda, Ghana, England, Mexico, Denmark, Canada, and Puerto Rico.[4]

To celebrate the launch of their new magazine, its founding editors rented a ballroom at the Hotel Martinique on thirty-fourth and Broadway in New York City. To their surprise, over five hundred people came out to welcome this new publication and they had to open a second ballroom for the evening's festivities, attesting to the keen interest with which people received a magazine that linked the political and cultural work of Black people in their struggle

[1] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 7.
[2] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 7.
[3] Esther Cooper Jackson, ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in their Own Country* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), xxii; Circulation information for *Freedomways* was obtained from the magazine's "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation," written by managing editor Esther Cooper Jackson and printed in the magazine.
[4] Subscription lists can be found in the James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Box 6, Folder 50, and Box 7, Folder 19, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York (Hereafter cited as ECJ Papers).

for freedom, stressed the relationship between Black Americans and global liberation struggles, and promised to furnish "accurate information on the liberation movements in Africa itself."[5] Later, at a more private affair at the home of first general editor Shirley Graham Du Bois and her husband, W.E.B. Du Bois, the founding collective toasted the first issue and its editorial commitment to providing "all of us the opportunity to speak for ourselves."[6] Present at this intimate gathering were New York Black Left activists and intellectuals, including actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis; librarian Ernest Kaiser; writers Jean Carey Bond, John Oliver Killens and Julian Mayfield; activists Augusta Strong, Dorothy Burnham, and Jack O'Dell; scholar, John Henrik Clarke; and newspaper editor George B. Murphy Jr. Leading the event was managing editor Esther Cooper Jackson who, alongside the collective, created a political and cultural magazine that reflected their pre-existing socialist politics, looked ahead to new struggles of the 1960s, and offered ideas for liberation.

This thesis is the first research project to examine *Freedomways* as a Black feminist intellectual project in which women's ideas, approaches, and political viewpoints coalesced.[7] For its twenty-five years of publication, the magazine was shepherded by sociologist and Black activist Esther Cooper Jackson, who played a formative role in shaping its scope and content along Popular Front-inspired political lines. She worked with other women on the editorial board, most notably Shirley Graham Du Bois and Jean Carey Bond, to create a magazine that was socialist in viewpoint, international in scope, and feminist in sentiment. I argue that the magazine was a way for the editors to sustain their Black Left feminist politics that was comprised of their approaches to socialism with an emphasis on lived experience,

[5] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 9.
[6] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 9.
[7] For previous studies on *Freedomways* see, Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015); Ian Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle: Freedomways Magazine, Black Leftists and Continuities in the Freedom Movement," (Simon Fraser University, 2005); Daniel J. Leab and Michael Nash, "Freedomways," *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 227–37.

internationalism, and intersectional feminism. As editors, they created a platform for women to continue their activism, express their ideas, and through which to nurture inter-generational collaboration.

By reading the magazine as a project in women's intellectual history, I challenge a homogenizing tendency in scholarly accounts of Black women's intellectual activism. Women in *Freedomways* came together with similar social and political ideas but sometimes interpreted the tenets of socialism in different ways. Women's contributions to the magazine did not constitute a numerical majority—making up a third of the magazine's total content not including editorials which were often unattributed except to the editorial board which included men. However, it is not the number of times that women contributed that makes the magazine an important site for studying Black women's intellectualism, but rather who was making editorial decisions, who was contributing and what they were saying, and how this shaped the magazine's socialist message for its readers. Old Left activists including Augusta Strong, Maude White Katz, Beulah Richardson, and Dorothy Burnham found in *Freedomways* a platform from which to communicate facets of an enduring Black Left feminist analysis of the global freedom struggle, and to engage with emerging young feminist voices. The latter included Alice Walker, Angela Davis, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, and Constance E. Berkley, who found a space to publish; and activists including Diane Nash, and Dorothy Cotton who authored first-hand accounts of their activism and travel in the late 1960s.[8] The magazine's international scope and activist connections enabled women from outside the US to evaluate liberation struggles in their own locales, with notable contributors including

[8] Nash and Cotton each wrote a piece detailing their visit to Vietnam for the Spring 1967 and Fall 1970 issues of *Freedomways* respectively. Their essays speak to the view that, during the late 1960s, the Vietnam war eclipsed civil rights activism that up until that point, had tempered its criticism of US foreign policy as part of a Cold War liberalism, and led to fissures in the US struggle. See Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); 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); Daniel S. Lucks, *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

Egyptian feminist leader Ceza Nabaroui, Cuban poet Nancy Morejón, and South African author Bessie Head. Their editorials, travel reports, conference coverage, art, fiction, poetry, and political essays, offer new ways of thinking about the scope of Black internationalism, Black women's leadership, Black intellectual history, and Black feminism in the 1960s to the 1980s.

Freedomways was not the only Black magazine operating at the time to which women contributed, but it was distinctive in the gendered contours of its editorial leadership.[9] As Esther Cooper Jackson would state proudly in 2000, women were "the heart of the collective that produced *Freedomways* for 25 years."[10] They were key figures on the editorial board, influencing its content and political viewpoint, as well as building relationships and activist networks that generated both contributions and subscriptions. Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Jean Carey Bond form the heart of this thesis because, as editors, they shaped the magazine from their distinct and combined intellectual and political approaches, as a space where women's views would be promoted and read. They were supported by the broader women's collective at the magazine. Dorothy Burnham was chairperson of *Freedomways* Associates from the magazine's inception and, while not officially listed as an editor, was involved in fund-raising, editorial discussion, and special issue planning. Brenda L. Jones served as assistant managing editor between the Fall 1974-1977 issues; Norma Rogers was special projects director from the beginning of the magazine; Margaret G. Burroughs acted was the first art editor; and Mary Kaiser oversaw its circulation and finances. The list of contributing editors included Old Left activist Augusta Strong; actress Ruby Dee; author Alice

[9] Christopher M. Tinson in his study of *Liberator* magazine in the 1960s argues that it became "one of the spaces where women could articulate, debate, and share concerns on a range of topics," but acknowledges only "two women were fixtures on its staff," and that "the men in the organization led the production of the magazine." Christopher M. Tinson, *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 76-77.
In *SNCC's Stories*, Monteith argues for the importance of reading *Negro Digest* together with *Freedomways* for how SNCC activists contributed their writing but also singles out Hoyt Fuller as the editor at *Negro Digest* who championed women writers. Sharon Monteith, *SNCC's Stories: The African American Freedom Movement in the Civil Rights South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 163.
[10] Cooper Jackson, *Freedomways Reader*, 204.

Walker; and political activist, scholar, and writer Angela Davis. The editorial board was not solely made up of women; it included associate editors Jack O'Dell, John Henrik Clarke, and Ernest Kaiser who helped to shape content, plan issues, and write editorials.[11] *Freedomways* was a joint enterprise, but by the standards of the time, the collective female voice was a distinctive editorial influence and this thesis is concerned with the magazine's feminist output and gendered contours because that has been neglected, as has the number of women in leadership positions.

In my view, *Freedomways* is an example of a magazine where women worked co-operatively with men, and I wish to avoid the risk that men are seen as the dominant editorial forces. For example, Ian Rocksborough-Smith, analyzes *Freedomways* as evidence of activist continuity from the 1930s to the 1970s, and argues that Jack O'Dell had "a tremendous impact on the magazine, penning over sixty per cent of the staff editorials, writing twenty key strategy pieces over the twenty-five years of the magazine's existence, and playing a central role in soliciting material from activists for publication."[12] Rocksborough-Smith is correct to argue for O'Dell's substantial essays and his connections to activists in the southern movement, but there is no evidence he penned the majority of staff editorials, with only four being signed

[11] For example, John Henrik Clarke was the principal editor for the special issue 'Harlem: A Community in Transition' (Summer 1963) and made over thirty written contributions to the magazine including a travel report, book reviews and essays. Jack O'Dell penned over twenty essays for the magazine and facilitated connection to the Southern movement. Ernest Kaiser produced the "Recent Books" section for the magazine, highlighting the most recent work being produced by and about Black Americans and struggles for liberation occurring globally. For discussions of O'Dell and Clarke's contributions to *Freedomways* and the wider Black freedom struggle see Ian Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle: Freedomways Magazine, Black Leftists and Continuities in the Freedom Movement" (Simon Fraser University, 2005); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Kwaku Person-Lynn, "On My Journey Now: The Narrative and Works of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, The Knowledge Revolutionary," *The Journal of Pan-African Studies* 6, no. 7 (2014): 59-166. There is currently no study dedicated to the work of Ernest Kaiser, however his contributions are recognized in works on the US Black Left including Mary Helen Washington, *The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); James Edward Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[12] Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle," 40.

"Jack O'Dell for The Editors."[13] Men should not be discounted for their commitment and contribution to the magazine. However, my research identifies that the women need to be brought into frame because their editorial vision dominated, particularly that of Esther Cooper Jackson whose Popular Front sociological approach to the freedom struggle is discernible throughout the magazine's twenty-five years of publication. This becomes particularly clear in my examination of editorial disputes. The editors disagreed over how socialism should be applied to the Black freedom struggle but, despite individual conflicts, succeeded in blending their viewpoints to create a vision for its readership, crafting an editorial voice that heralded socialism, broadly conceived, as the path to liberation.

Black women's intellectual activism has received increased scholarly attention, and this thesis takes account of that body of work, but it has also has often been neglected because of women's ability to work closely with men in personal and professional capacities. I argue for the political nature of personal relationships between men and women as a central thread weaved throughout this thesis to combat the lack of attention *Freedomways'* women's ideas, approaches, and viewpoints have received. Existing scholarship sees Esther Cooper Jackson's activism as inter-twined with that of her husband James Jackson, so that it is difficult to see where her ideas figure. In *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (2015), Sara Rzeszutek Haviland is committed to an analysis of them as a couple to study "waves of social movements through the distinct lens of two individuals who worked with and loved one another."[14] She provides an important study of how Black activists of the Old Left sustained their activism and navigated the changing political landscape of the twentieth century and raises interesting questions about how personal relationships—romantic

[13] See Jack O'Dell, "The Time is Now," *Freedomways* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 3-5; Jack O'Dell, "The Democrats and the Rainbow," 24, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 83-86; Jack O'Dell, "Internationalism and the Rainbow Coalition," 24, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 163-166; Jack O'Dell, "Tracing the Freedom Way," *Freedomways* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 131-134.
[14] Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson,* 3.

and familial—impacted political development and activism. But her dual biography risks preventing an exploration of the ways the Jacksons' politics and strategies often diverged and of treating Cooper Jackson's activism secondary to her husband's.

This has also been a tendency in studies of Shirley Graham Du Bois that have begun to recover her intellectual significance, but often still examine her largely in terms of her role in upholding her husband's life and legacy. For example, Gerald Horne has written the first biography of Graham Du Bois and demonstrates deeper recognition of her independent political activism. But he is unable to reconcile her "bursts of gender consciousness" with her relationship with W.E.B. Du Bois.[15] There has been no book-length study of Jean Carey Bond and she more often figures briefly in studies of the Black Left alongside her husband, architect J. Max Bond Jr. for whom the biography *If Architecture Were for People: The Life and Work of J. Max Bond Jr.* is forthcoming with Princeton University Press. The dearth of literature on Bond is telling for how women who are married to well-known men are still often overlooked for their contributions to Black intellectual history. Here I offer an alternate approach by reading women's activism on behalf of their spouses as an additional avenue for their own political ideas and analyses that they brought to the magazine. The intellectualism of *Freedomways'* women can be found not only in their writing, editorship, and activism, but also in their personal relationships through which they advanced Black feminist thought and socialist politics.

Freedomways has also been misrepresented or under-read as a vehicle of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) because of the politics and activist background of its editorial collective. My research suggests that the editors worked to distance the magazine from their Marxist inclinations and past affiliations with the Communist Party

[15] Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 123.

but maintained a broad socialist position. FBI surveillance of Graham Du Bois indicates that *Freedomways* was originally going to be called "Foreward! [*sic*] A Marxist Quarterly Review of the Negro Freedom Movement," and that it would be:

> A Marxist Journal in that its editorial direction will be in the hands of Marxists. We make this announcement with full realization of the responsibilities, challenges, and perhaps risks involved…We, who are privileged to know something of the science of Marx and Lenin are duty bound to open a road for these marching feet…[16]

The editors' awareness of the "risks involved" in advertising a Marxist magazine suggests that anti-communism played a role in the subsequent change of name. Cooper Jackson has commented that she thought the inclusion of a celebration of May Day written by Graham Du Bois for the inaugural issue "was already narrowing the scope."[17] These concerns resulted in an approach that blended Left-liberal politics which enabled the magazine to engage with the developing mass movement in the US South that was, in the early 1960s, publicly focused on liberal reform through voter registration and direct action.[18] The editors published essays by activists and writers from organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); as well as those on the Left. They communicated information from the frontlines of the southern movement and put forward analyses of nonviolence, integration, and economic disparities. By distancing the magazine from their previous ties to the Party, the editors were able to straddle Cold War Left-liberal tensions in the magazine.

---

[16] Shirley Graham Du Bois, Federal Bureau of Investigation, https://archive.org/details/ShirleyGraham Du BoisDuBoisFBIFile/Shirley%20Graham Du Bois%20Du%20Bois%20012/page/n45/mode/2up?view=theater.
[17] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[18] Monteith argues "it was a route to publication for civil rights activists,' and that 'SNCC communicated the life of the organization outward through *Freedomways."* Monteith, *SNCC's Stories,* 158.
SNCC activism is particularly discernible in special issues on "The Southern Movement" (Winter 1964) and "Mississippi: Opening up a Closed Society" (Summer 1965). Haviland also emphasizes the inclusion of writing about economic disparity from activists across the political and organizational spectrum Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson,* 204-208.

The editorial direction of *Freedomways* was not controlled by the CPUSA, but it did remain "in the hands of Marxists," and this is reflected in its editorial viewpoint and content. Its stated editorial policy was that the publication would "mirror developments in the diversified and many-sided struggles of the Negro people," that it had "no special interests to serve save those already clearly stated—no political, organizational or institutional ties," and this was reflective of Cooper Jackson's Popular Front politics that emphasized coalition across political difference.[19] Most pertinent to my research is Haviland's analysis of how Cooper Jackson's, and by extension *Freedomways',* politics converged and differed to that of James Jackson's and the CPUSA. Cooper Jackson joined the CPUSA while at college in 1939 and Haviland maintains that while "Communism was an important part of Esther's individual political identity […] dedication to her political ideals did not come with the same organizational commitment to the CPUSA as did her husband's," and this was reflected in her editorship.[20] James Jackson remained a Party loyalist, serving as editor of *The Daily Worker* from 1959 to 1969, and subsequently serving as secretary of international affairs, director of the Party's Political Bureau, and education director, before retiring in 1991.[21] From my own research I agree with Haviland, and her assertion is supported by Cooper Jackson who, in an interview with historian Erik S. McDuffie stated, "I simply didn't go to Party club meetings. For years and years."[22]

Haviland reads *Freedomways* for how it overlapped with the Party in its promotion of integration, nonviolence, and analyses of the imperial contours of the Vietnam war. But she also suggests that by the 1970s, "the magazine was promoting more and more black

[19] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 9. The commitment to the "many-sided struggle" did not, however, result in the inclusion of Black nationalist voices, with the exception of artists and writers of the Black Arts Movement in the 1960s and 1970s whose work chimed with the editor's belief in culture's role in the freedom struggle.
[20] Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson*, 189.
[21] Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson*, 232.
[22] Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, April 10, 1999, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers.

nationalism in its pages," particularly by prioritizing Black authorship that reflected "the influence of black nationalism in intellectual life."[23] Cooper Jackson criticized "backward Communists," who believed "the white working-class is the struggle," and who failed to acknowledge the relationship between race, gender, and class oppressions that made Black, and women's struggles equal components of class struggle.[24] But I demonstrate that she was reluctant to include nationalist voices and that there was disagreement among the editors over its political scope. Cooper Jackson and Jack O'Dell remained committed to a coalitional Popular Front approach: they upheld a Marxist viewpoint opposed to race-based nationalism as a strategy for liberation. In contrast, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Jean Carey Bond, and John Henrik Clarke were critical of the CPUSA who, from the 1960s onwards, they did not view as relevant to the evolving Black freedom struggle that was becoming increasingly nationalist in scope in the US and abroad. I complicate Haviland's analysis of the magazine's politics by drawing attention to disagreements on the editorial board, stemming from different conceptions of how the tenets of socialism should be applied to the freedom struggle. In doing so, I shed light on how the women editors shaped the magazine as a Black feminist intellectual project for their ideas and as a platform for other leftist women's voices.

Black Left Feminism

This thesis critically engages the fields of Black intellectual history, Black internationalism, and Black Left feminism because ideas and intellectual approaches were embedded in the lived experience of *Freedomway*s' women editors, which they developed during the Popular Front milieu of the 1930s and 1940s. Ideas were carried through, adapted, and applied to the events of the Cold War, US Black freedom struggle, and movements for de-colonization in the 1960s,

[23] Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson*, 211-270.
[24] Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers.

1970s, and 1980s. Women's views did not always align, but their approaches came together and were brought to bear on their editorship. This thesis joins a wave of scholarship that is unearthing Black women's intellectual history and feminist activism on the Left. I expand upon current literature that explores Black Left women's activism from the 1930s labor movements to the 1960s civil rights milieu, and how print was an avenue for Old Left women to sustain their intellectual activism into the 1970s and 1980s. Black Left feminist politics was put in dialogue with the ideas of a new generation of activists in print culture, and central tenets were reflected in the magazine in women's analyses of the global struggle.

This thesis builds most directly on the work of scholars including Dayo F. Gore, Erik S. McDuffie, and Kate Weigand. The influence of Old Left women's activism on 1960s and 1970s social movements is a central thread picked up by Gore and McDuffie that expands Weigand's *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (2001). Weigand argues that women on the Left "sustained a small but vibrant women's movement through the 1940s and 1950s and transmitted influential terminology, tactics, and concepts to the next generation of feminists."[25] While not focusing exclusively on white women, Black women are often cast as supporting figures in Weigand's study. She analyzes Black women's relationship to the Party, specifically through the writing of Claudia Jones in Chapter Five of her study, but her focus is primarily on how (white) women advanced "the woman question" and she argues for how they used "the Party's approach to African Americans and racism as a model."[26] Weigand's argument for how Communist women influenced the second wave women's movement highlights white middle-class Left women and their writing and activism in the 1960s.

[25] Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 3.
[26] Weigand, *Red Feminism,* 27.

In response, Gore and McDuffie recover the longevity of Black Left women's activism and recast the periodization and political contours of 1960s and 1970s Black feminism. My thesis contends that not only did Black women on the Left craft *Freedomways* as platform that could sustain their ideas, but also created a space that could foster inter- and cross-generational feminist debate and developed personal and political relationships across Old and New Lefts. I challenge a linear progression of Black feminism and one-directional flow of knowledge, adding to disruptions of the feminist wave analogy.[27]

Gore's *Radicalism at the Crossroads* (2011) presents a sweeping "collective political biography" of a network of Black women leftists in New York who as "theorists and activists […] demanded that left-leaning organizations embrace an intersecting analysis that centered race and gender, as well as economics."[28] In tracing the activism of women including Thelma Dale Perkins, Maude White Katz, Marvel Cooke, and Vicki Garvin through their work in organizations such as the Sojourners for Truth and Justice (STJ), and the National Committee to Free the Ingram Family, as well as their writing for the newspaper *Freedom* and the magazine *Negro Digest,* Gore challenges previous accounts of Black women's leadership as operating solely at the grassroots and "dominant narratives that privilege the decimation of the U.S. Left and the experiences of well-known leaders in the black left and in the Communist Party."[29] Instead, she argues for Black women as leaders and strategists at the national and

[27] This project joins the work of other feminist scholars challenging the wave framework of the US women's movement and its exclusivity. See Kathleen A. Laughlin et al., "Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor," *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 1 (2010): 76–135; Nancy A. Hewitt, *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Benita Roth, *Seperate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[28] Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press), 5.

[29] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, 162. For studies that locate Black women's leadership at the grassroots see Belinda Robnett, "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership and Micromobilization," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6 (1996): 1661-1693; Belinda Robnett, "Formal Titles and Bridge Leaders: Reply to Keys," *American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 6 (1997): 1698-1701; Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Lee Sartain, *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

international levels and for the "continuity of black women radicals' political thought and activism into the 1960s and 1970s."[30] Gore demonstrates how Black women in Communist and Communist-affiliated organizations formulated broad intersectional analyses of the Black freedom struggle and the labor movement. She details how this group of women operated in a narrowing political landscape through their ability to "blend multiple strategies and ideological tendencies," that created more open and dynamic political spaces that allowed them to remain active into the 1970s, and this included *Freedomways*.[31] Gore gives a more or less chronological overview of the contours of Black Left women's activism from the 1930s to the 1970s that rectifies their previous marginalization in accounts that privileged Black male activism.

Gore labels Black Left women in New York who advanced intersectional analyses of the Black freedom struggle and labor movements "protofeminists," who are defined as women who "preshadowed contemporary black feminist radicalism," and "provided models and strategies for resistance."[32] Her analysis is joined by McDuffie's *Sojourning for Freedom,* also published in 2011, through the concept of a Black Left feminist framework. While Gore delivers a survey of Black women's thought and activism, McDuffie concentrates on the evolution of their feminist politics from the 1920s women's club movement, through Garveyism, and into the modern civil rights and second wave feminist movements of the 1960s. He employs the idea of an evolving Black Left feminism to argue that "the international Left provided a key site where black women in the United States forged an innovative radical black feminist politics in the early and mid-twentieth century that laid the groundwork for black feminism of the 1970s."[33] He defines Black Left feminism as a "brand of feminist politics that

[30] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, 12.
[31] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, 165.
[32] Joy James, *Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1999), 41.
[33] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 3.

centers working-class women by combining black nationalist and American Communist Party (CPUSA) positions on race, gender, and class with black women radicals' own lived experiences."[34]

While it was originally coined by Mary Helen Washington in her analysis of Black Left women's literary work in the post-war period, McDuffie uses it as a framework for recovering how "black women radicals attempted to rethink Marxism-Leninism and re-center the Communist Left by advancing black working-class women's concerns as central, not peripheral, to black and women's liberation, and the world revolution."[35] Charon Hribar argues that McDuffie's definition challenges previous formations of class-consciousness, Black women's activism and Black radicalism by "moving beyond the factory as the primary location through which class-consciousness is formed; expanding black women's activism beyond the confines of church, women's clubs, and the Garvey movement; and combating the masculinist framing of black radicalism."[36] It fuses women's leftist politics with their lived experience to present an understanding of "triple oppression" that informed their activism and that inspired the following generation's formulation of intersectionality.[37] *Freedomways* was a way the women editors sustained their Black Left feminist politics and I expand upon McDuffie's theorization of the concept to consider how its components, including socialism,

---

[34] McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom,* 3.

[35] Mary Helen Washington, "Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, and Claudia Jones: Black Women Write the Popular Front," in *Left of the Color Line: Race and Radicalism and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States,* eds., Bill V. Mullen and James Smethurst (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 183 – 204; McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom,* 4.

[36] Charon Hribar, "Radical Women in the Struggle: A Review of Recent Literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movements," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no.2 (2013): 103-4.

[37] Black women have long thought about the distinct way in which they have experienced oppression but the concept of "triple oppression," as understood by Black women on the Left, was popularized and synthesized by activist and Communist leader Claudia Jones. Jones argued that "Not equality, but degradation and super-exploitation: this is the actual lot of Negro women!" because of their existence at the interstices of race, class and gender oppression that constituted their "special oppressed status." Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!," *Political Affairs* (June 1949): 51-67.
See also Denise Lynn, "Socialist Feminism and Triple Oppression: Claudia Jones and African American Women in American Communism," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism,* 8 no. 4 (2014): 1-20; Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

internationalism, and intersectional feminism were formulated and expressed as part of a collaborative intellectual project with some individuated strands.

I trace the political and intellectual development of Esther Cooper Jackson, Jean Carey Bond, and Shirley Graham Du Bois for how it shaped their editorship of the magazine. As part of the network of Black women leftists analyzed by Gore and McDuffie, they were activists, intellectuals, and long-distance runners, in the global Black freedom struggle. My thesis specifically confirms the idea that Black Left women's activism did not end with anti-communist repression of the 1950s. Gore and McDuffie both highlight *Freedomways* as an example of the continuity of women's activism. Gore argues that the magazine allowed them to "continue to articulate a radical politics that centered black women's experiences and also build ties to new organizing efforts," while McDuffie contends that "no political or cultural formation better highlighted the continuation of black Left feminism than Esther Cooper Jackson's role in co-founding and editing *Freedomways.*"[38] My own analysis shows that the ideas and approaches developed during the Popular Front were not only echoed in the magazine but were also applied as analytical frames to understand contemporary liberation struggles. But while acknowledging such continuity of collective political approaches, I nonetheless emphasize the women's differing intellectual approaches and political viewpoints, that reflected their distinctive experiences and resist an oversimplification and homogenization of Black Left women's intellectual history.

Black Intellectual History

At the heart of my thesis is an insistence on the significance of women as activist intellectuals in the global Black freedom struggle. Broadly conceived, Black intellectual history engages with the ideas, perspectives, politics, and theories of Black people across time and space,

[38] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads,*136; McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom,* 201.

expressed in varying formats.[39] Scholarship on Black intellectual history is extensive, with earlier works including Earl Thorpe's *The Mind of the Negro: An Intellectual History of Afro-Americans* (1961), Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of The Negro Intellectual* (1967), August Meier's *Negro Thought in America,* 1880-1915 (1988), and William M. Banks's *Black Intellectuals: Race and Responsibility in American Life* (1997). These studies rely on intellectual history as exemplified by the educated middle class and expressed through the written record to establish a Black intellectual tradition. They often produce individual narratives that center the ideas of a single intellectual, most often a man.[40] While tracing Black thought from slavery, through abolition, and from the early twentieth century into the 1960s, Thorpe acknowledges "one might more rationally entitle an intellectual history of the race, 'The Minds of the Negro.'"[41] Yet, he argues "there are so many similarities and basic patterns of thought until one is justified in using the singular 'mind' so long as he does so with caution."[42] These studies are grounded in analyses of formally trained intellectuals and construct a "Great Men" narrative of Black intellectual history.[43] Carole Boyce Davies in her examination of Black Caribbean intellectuals challenges the dominance of male voices represented in Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* (1983) in which he identifies "three intellectuals as illustrative of the black radical tradition: W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James and Richard Wright."[44] By locating Black intellectual thought

[39] La Tasha Levy, "Beyond the 'Great Men' Canon of Black Intellectual History," *Black Perspectives,* June 11, 2019, https://www.aaihs.org/beyond-the-great-men-canon-of-black-intellectual-history/.
[40] See V. P. Franklin, *Living Our Stories, Telling Our Truths: Autobiography and the Making of the African-American Intellectual Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Martin Kilson, *Transformation of the African American Intelligentsia, 1880– 2012* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993); Jacqueline Johnson, *Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power* (Englewood Cliffs: Silver Burdett Press, 1990); Anthony Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (London: Routledge, 2003).
[41] Earl E. Thorpe, *The Mind of the Negro: An Intellectual History of Afro-Americans* (Baton Rouge: Ortlieb Press, 1961), xviii.
[42] Thorpe, *The Mind of the* Negro, xviii.
[43] See also Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Singh puts forward an expansive study of Black intellectuals' radical visions of race, nation, and internationalism in opposition to notions of American universalism that focuses exclusively on the work of men including W.E.B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, C.L.R. James, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.
[44] Carole Boyce Davies, "Sisters Outside: Tracing the Caribbean/Black Radical Intellectual Tradition," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 13, no. 1 (2009): 218.

in historical institutional academic space, such a framework erases women and fails to consider the complexities and forms of women's intellectual lives.

In their 2015 collection *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women,* editors Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Marth S. Jones, and Barbara Savage call for a restructuring of Black intellectual history to account for women, arguing that it was "time to recognize black women's intellectual history as a distinct and growing field of study."[45] They put forward an approach to intellectual history that "understands ideas as necessarily produced in dialogue with lived experience always inflected by the social facts of race class, and gender."[46] Essays analyze Black women's ideas from enslavement through to the twenty-first century, tracing how women's lived experience contributed to thinking that is expressed in fiction, poetry, political essays, activism, and women's life work as professionals. The collection details the diasporic character of Black women's ideas, drawing attention to thinkers in the Caribbean, the US, and Africa. In analyzing self-educated women, especially before the twentieth century, the collection challenges the existing framework of Black intellectual history that privileges academic modes of expression and instead documents Black women's ideas across time and space in everyday experiences. The crafting of a Black women's intellectual history began earlier with "the proliferation of book length scholarly biographies on black women," that laid the groundwork for positioning Black women as thinkers, but the editors argue that this created an "episodic chronicle of individual lives and exceptional writers."[47] This work of recovering

[45] Mia Bay et al., eds., *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 2.
The editors of *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* were not the first ones to recognize the need to take seriously black women as intellectual thinkers and political theorists. In 2007 Kristin Waters and Carol B. Comaway edited *Black Women's Intellectual Traditions: Speaking Their Minds* that highlighted the way Black women's intellectual traditions have been transmitted orally and in writing—through religious preaching, speeches and texts, the arts, and everyday activities.
[46] Bay et al., *Toward an Intellectual History*, 4.
[47] Bay et al., 3–4.
See for example, Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Linda O. McMurry, *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life*

the female voices within Black thought via "unconventional intellectuals" also builds on the scholarship of Keisha N. Blain, Ashley D. Farmer and Brittany Cooper.[48]

My thesis aligns with much contemporary scholarship through the inclusion of diverse voices, not just the educated male elite, but artists, teachers, grassroots activists, women, and the working class. It takes inspiration from Brittany Cooper's call to look for intellectualism in unexpected places.[49] Cooper argues for Black women as "race women" who have been "carefully and intentionally fashioning a more public leadership role for themselves as thinkers at the nexus of the race problem and the woman question since the early 1890s."[50] In doing so, she crafts a long Black women's intellectual history in which women operated in the public sphere, despite it being inherently raced, classed, and gendered, through autobiographical writing or writing about organizational work. Cooper's study expands understanding of how Black women's activism constituted public intellectual work but, by her own admission, her "focus on women who had access to public platforms […] limits the scope of the Black women knowledge producers under consideration here—for example poor and working-class Black women who produced knowledge in other forms."[51] Keisha Blain, Christopher Cameron and Ashley Farmer in *New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition* (2018) also call on historians to "broaden the scholarly discourse on what counts as black intellectual history and who counts as an intellectual."[52] Their edited collection is arranged into thematic sections that explore the "depth and richness of black intellectual history," as expressed through Black

of Ida B. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Patricia A. Schechter, *Ida B Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[48] Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Ashley D. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Brittany Cooper, *Beyond Respectability : The Intellectual Thought of Race Women* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

[49] Cooper, *Beyond Respectability*, 12.

[50] Cooper*, Beyond Respectability,* 14.

[51] Cooper*, Beyond Respectability,* 15.

[52] Keisha N. Blain, Christopher Cameron, and Ashley D. Farmer, eds., *New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition* (Illinois: North Western University Press, 2018), 4.

internationalism, religion and spirituality, and Black radicalism by Black people from across the diaspora and they point up working-class and less formally educated men and women.

My thesis joins and expands upon the project of recovering and broadening the intellectual history of Black women because I interrogate *Freedomways* for the different genres through which women advanced ideas for the global Black freedom struggle. The publication of women activists in the magazine also remedies the false dichotomy between theory and praxis in grassroots activism that widens the scope of who is classed as an intellectual. And analysis of editorial roles contributes to the task of unearthing the independent thinking of women sometimes subsumed by the intellectual activism of their well-known husbands, as Cooper Jackson, Bond, and Graham Du Bois have been. *Freedomways* brought together women with nuanced intellectual approaches and political viewpoints that they expressed and developed in its pages.

Black Internationalism

A central facet of *Freedomways'* women's Black Left feminist politics and intellectual activism was their global view of the Black freedom struggle. Robin Kelley argues that "for over two centuries, black writers and activists defined themselves as part of a larger international black community – an African diaspora" and that "some kind of diasporic vision shaped by antiracist and anti-imperialism politics of the nineteenth and twentieth century and deeply ensconced in black intellectual and historical traditions, profoundly shaped historical scholarship on black people in the new world."[53] There is a body of scholarship on Black activists' global politics, from Pan-Africanism and anti-colonial activism, epitomized in Penny Von Eschen's *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (1997), to the conception

[53] Robin D.G. Kelley, "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision 1883-1950," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1047.

of a broader Black internationalism in Michael O. West, William G. Martin and Fanon Che Wilkins' *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (2009).[54] Hakim Adi suggests that it is not useful to distinguish between the two, but Pan-Africanism represents just one expression of Black internationalism, referring to a movement centered on the belief that peoples of African descent throughout the continent and across the diaspora share a common past and destiny.[55] Black internationalism comprises political approaches and movements that extend beyond the African diaspora to include Afro-Asian-Arab solidarity, as emphasized in *Freedomways'* two special issues on the Middle East (Spring and Summer 1983), and its Afro-Asian special issue (Summer 1972). A Black Left feminist framework enables analysis of how internationalism was interpreted by *Freedomways'* women editors and how this was expressed in its pages.

West, Martin, and Wilkins posit that "at the core of Black internationalism is the ideal of universal emancipation, unbounded by national imperial, continental or oceanic boundaries

[54] Black American global views of the freedom struggle grew throughout the early twentieth century in response to American and European colonial expansion and anti-imperialist struggles in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, which is reflected in the scholarship. See for example Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937*-1957 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Marc S. Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China; Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Anne Garland Mahler, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism and Transnational Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[55] Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 4.
Pan-Africanism has received extensive scholarly attention and is a huge topic. For some key works see also: Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: the Communist International, Africa and the diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2013); Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora since 1787* (London: Routledge, 2003); S.K.B. Asante, *Pan-African Protest : West Africa and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934-1941* (London: Longman, 1977); Imanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement*, (London: Methuen, 1974); Stephen Howe, *Afrocentrism: Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes* (London: Verso, 1998); Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D.G. Kelley, eds., *Imagining Home: Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora*, (London: Verso, 1994); P. Olisanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1994); Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, *Manchester and the 1945 Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London: New Beacon Books, 1995).
For example, Kathryn Vaggalis, "Women, Gender Politics, and Pan-Africanism: An Interview with Keisha N. Blain," *Black Perspectives,* (2016), https://www.aaihs.org/women-gender-politics-and-pan-africanism-an-interview-with-keisha-n-blain/?utm_content=buffer025b9&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer%20.

– or even by racial ones."[56] And Keisha Blain locates the source of Black international activism in racial imperialism, when she defines it as "an insurgent political culture [that] emerged in response to slavery, colonialism and white imperialism" that describes "the visions of freedom and freedom movements among people of African descent worldwide and captures their efforts to forge transnational collaborations and solidarities with other people of color."[57] Blain alludes to the plurality of Black internationalist visions, and while these are a base from which to begin to understand how Black activists conceived of links between global freedom struggles as inextricable, and sought to build global solidarities across imperial, geographical and racial boundaries, there is a danger of homogenizing and over-emphasizing connections between people. For example, Bianca C. Williams in *The Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dream and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism* (2018) focuses on a group of African American women who travel to Jamaica with "what I call a diasporic heart," a feeling of connection and kinship to Jamaicans rooted in, "the ever-present history of African enslavement and exploitation of labor that African Americans and Jamaicans shared."[58] However, when she interviews Black Jamaicans, many feel "disconnected from African Americans, particularly in relation to the assumed shared experiences of racial discrimination."[59] Williams' study affirms the need for a framework of Black internationalism that takes account of diverse viewpoints and myriad experiences of Blackness across the diaspora when national histories are distinct. This is particularly acute in activist contexts and is apparent in the editors' failure to account for these differences in calls for solidarity and for sisterhood among women of color globally throughout the magazine's publication.

---

[56] Michael O. West., William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins, *From Toussaint to Tupac*: *The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), xi.
[57] Keisha N. Blain, ""[F]or the Rights of Dark People in Every Part of the World": Pearl Sherrod, Black Internationalist Feminism, and Afro-Asian Politics during the 1930s," *Souls* 17, no. 1-2 (2015): 91.
[58] Bianca Williams, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams, and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 66.
[59] Williams, *The Pursuit of Happiness,* 84.

Minkah Makalani in his analysis of early twentieth-century Black radicals, primarily members of the African Blood Brotherhood and International African Service Bureau, calls for attention to "the nuances of radical internationalism as it emerged from activists' immediate circumstances and through an array of transatlantic exchanges carried on through pamphlets and periodicals, correspondence and debate."[60] Makalani's call, and the context of Harlem from which it is made, is representative of what Nikhil Pal Singh has termed "Black worldliness," a term he employs to describe Black left-wing intellectuals' development of an "independent political standpoint for advancing civil inclusion in the United States and stimulating anticolonial ferment in the world-system," during World War II.[61] *Freedomways*, itself a product of an international activist network that had its base in New York as part of the Black Left, incorporates Singh's "Black worldliness" as advanced through print culture. While the editors stated, "We are African-American," they also stressed "the relationship among peoples of African descent in this country, in Latin America, and wherever there are communities of such people anywhere in the world."[62] The editors' Black Left feminism intertwined "Black worldliness" with Pan-African claims to an African diasporic identity, and this internationalism co-existed with a feminist insistence on sisterhood and a socialist promotion of class solidarity. For Cooper Jackson, Bond, and Graham Du Bois, these issues were not mutually exclusive but worked simultaneously in interlocking systems of oppression that upheld the global system of racial capitalist imperialism.

---

[60] 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), 4.
Nicholas Grant in his study of African American activism against apartheid points out that it was not only Black radicals, but also more moderate activists in the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women, and the American Committee on Africa that "were part of a broad-based coalition of black liberals dedicated to the eradication of South Africa's white settler regime." He accounts for the nuanced approaches to internationalism, arguing for how "ideas and arguments often differed," and shifts focus onto the "ways in which black activists with different political visions responded to state power so that the urgent anticolonial calls of African leaders would not go unanswered." Nicholas Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans and Apartheid, 1945-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 8–11.
[61] Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 124.
[62] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 9.

An increasing number of studies assess the global Black freedom struggle with gender, class, and sexuality as lenses.[63] Keisha Blain and Tiffany M. Gill demonstrate that Black women's internationalism was "by no means static or monolithic," but took shape through "consumption activities and economic pursuits, leisure and religion, as well as through performance and artistic expression."[64] And Imaobong Umoren expands on Blain's assertion here via the plurality of Black women's conceptions, to point out that "black women activist intellectuals practice black, black feminist, Christian, liberal, conservative, radical, socialist, communist and imperial internationalism."[65] My research here elaborates on McDuffie's assertion that Black women have offered variants, formulating and practicing an "insurgent gendered vision of Black internationalism in response to retrogressive practices embodied in slavery, capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and their own lived experiences."[66] *Freedomways'* editors were embedded in wider discussions of global capitalist imperialism and are examples of the central roles women played as international activists and intellectuals. Their experiences of travel upheld their existing Black Left feminist politics, but sometimes they developed differently inflected ideas about international connections that attest to the heterogeneity of women's thinking.

Women in the Archive: Addressing Issues of Presence and Absence

This thesis is grounded in archival research, the foundation for which was a holistic search of the recently digitized *Freedomways* archive.[67] I created a database of *Freedomways'* content,

[63] See Carole Boyce Davies, Dayo F. Gore, Erik S McDuffie, Imaobong Umoren and Keisha Blain
[64] Keisha N. Blain and Tiffany M. Gill, eds., *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 2-4.
[65] Imaobong Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 2.
[66] Erik S. McDuffie, "'For Full Freedom Of…colored Women in Africa, Asian, and in These United States…' Black Women Radicals and the Practice of a Black Women's International," *Palimpset: A Journal of Women, Gender and the Black International* 1, no. 1 (2012): 3.
[67] *Freedomways* was digitized by Independent Voices, an open access digital collection of alternative press newspapers, magazines, and journals. The archive was permanently moved to JSTOR on June 30, 2021, where it remains open access.

its editorial board, and subscription rates from which I drew out common topics, writers, and intellectual approaches. Once these had been identified, I carried out a more systematic search to determine when and where they occurred and who was writing what and when. Analysis of the data collected revealed approaches to Black internationalism and feminism that ultimately helped to organize my thesis. Although broadly chronological, with interrogation of political and intellectual development traced through the magazine, I use key components of the editors' Black Left feminism as represented in *Freedomways* to guide this thesis to examine how the magazine offers insights into Black women's intellectual history. The three tenets I examine are socialist politics, internationalism, and intersectional feminism. Organizing my thesis in this way demonstrates how distinct and overlapping ideas were brought to bear on editorship of the magazine. It allows interrogation of whose editorial voice was prominent and when as different topics and perspectives are revealed across the print history. For example, a Popular Front philosophy and sociological approach is discernible during the magazine's production, pointing to Cooper Jackson's enduring influence.

The figures who were consistent members of the editorial board pointed to further archival research. As managing editor for the magazine's twenty-five years, the papers of Esther Cooper Jackson held in the Tamiment Library at New York University were a logical starting point. Correspondence between the editors and contributors, event flyers, special issue plans, subscription lists, and financial details allowed me to ascertain Cooper Jackson's editorial role in more precise and concrete ways and to understand how she viewed the magazine, as well as shedding light on editorial conflict and political incongruities. I also searched the papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois, John Henrik Clark, and George B. Murphy Jr., from which it became clear that Cooper Jackson shepherded the magazine and had the strongest influence on content, and this is reflected in the thesis. Archival research not only revealed a more in-depth view of the editorial board and inner workings of the magazine, but

also yielded sources that detailed the editors' earlier activism and writing that is essential for assessing how their lived experience shaped intellectual and political approaches, and how this was echoed in *Freedomways.* The Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) Papers and the Edward Strong Papers furnished details of Cooper Jackson and Dorothy Burnham's activism and leadership in SNYC, while the papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois included her work as a composer and biographer and detailed her international travels.

While archives have been crucial to my research that assesses Black women's intellectual contributions, it is important to acknowledge their limitations as a historical source, especially for researching more marginalized voices. Historian Ashley Farmer argues that there is a "persistent methodological quandary for scholars of black women's history: how should they address the paradox of simultaneously finding copious archival records on some black women, while also accounting for the deafening archival silence of others."[68] I was faced with such a quandary when I encountered a plethora of archival material on some *Freedomways* women, principally Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois, and a dearth on others. Shirley Graham Du Bois is the only woman editor at the magazine to have her own archival collection, while Esther Cooper Jackson's is part of the James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers—of which just two of seventeen series are concerned with her work at the magazine. There are no archival collections for Burnham or Bond, and I have therefore had to read them through the others and employ alternative historical methodologies to interrogate their activism.

Women historians have addressed the issue of archival silences as they pertain to the study of Black women and offer ideas and methods through which they might be overcome.[69]

---

[68] Ashley D. Farmer, "In Search of the Black Women's History Archive," *Modern American History* 1, (2018): 289.

[69] Black women historians in particular have put forward alternative methodologies for researching Black women's lives such as reading the silences for instances when women do materialize, looking for Black women in unexpected places both within and beyond the archive, and reading Black women's lives through others' stories and archives. See Kali Nicole Gross, *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives:*

Marisa Fuentes has questioned the "logic of historical methodology," which "purported that a history of silence could not be written."[70] Instead, she argues for developing "methodological pathways" into Black women's lives through explorations of "their historical or historiographical representations […] and changing the archival language and gaze to reflect the gaze and perspective of the women in the fragments."[71] While my own research did not necessitate interpretation of women through the white-created sources that construct the violence addressed in Fuentes' work, I nonetheless had to contend with how to access and think about the women in this thesis for which there are archival silences. I mined the historiography and searched for them "in the fragments" of other editors' collections, but I also considered where their silences occurred and what this revealed about their role and influence at the magazine. While Cooper Jackson was a mainstay of the magazine for its entire run, other figures' voices were amplified and then receded in relation to their fluctuating presence and engagement.

Testimony is a central thread weaved throughout the thesis and Cooper Jackson crafted *Freedomways* through a sociological lens that prioritized grassroots activists in telling the story of the global freedom struggle. Like Cooper Jackson in *Freedomways,* this thesis considers the women's words in its examination of editorial roles and relationships. Oral history allows for analysis of the rationale behind editorial decisions, individual views on magazine focus and content, and personal reflections on relationships made. I made the ethical and practical decision not to embark on conducting my own oral history interviews. Though Cooper Jackson and Burnham are still alive, they are more than one hundred years old, and Cooper Jackson has

Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (London: Serpent's Tail 2019); Talitha LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Ula Taylor, "Women in the Documents: Thoughts on Uncovering the Personal, Political, and Professional," *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 187–196; Deborah Gray White, "Mining the Forgotten: Manuscript Sources for Black Women's History," *Journal of American History* 74, no.1 (1987): 237–242.

[70] Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 146.

[71] Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 146.

given extensive oral history interviews over the last thirty years to Erik S McDuffie, John Munro, Robin D. G. Kelley, Mary Helen Washington, and Ian Rocksborough-Smith. Burnham, Bond, and John Henrik Clarke have also given oral testimony regarding their work at *Freedomways* and broader activism that is used throughout this thesis.[72]

Naming the Black Freedom Struggle and Leftist Politics

While embarking on my thesis I was faced with making decisions about terminology regarding the Black freedom struggle, the language I use to refer to groups of people in *Freedomways,* and terms used to describe the leftist politics of its editors. My thesis engages critically with Jacqueline Dowd-Hall's "long civil rights movement" paradigm, which stresses the continuity of activism from labor struggles of the 1930s, through the movement of the 1960s, and into the 1970s and beyond. Dowd Hall argues that limiting the civil rights movement to its "classical phase" of 1954-68 distorts and suppresses more than it reveals.[73] She also argues that the movement should not be confined to the South. As a New York based publication with an international outlook, *Freedomways* fits this paradigm, but my thesis does so critically. The "long movement" framework reveals the connection of forgotten organizations and activists to the better-known history of the post-war movement, but it also risks loosening the meaning of civil rights as it has been historically understood. Hence my study also engages with Christopher W. Schmidt's hypothesis that the term "civil rights" is a contested and evolving

[72] See Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith; Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, April 10, 1999, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers; Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers; Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley, June 22, 1988, Robin Kelley Oral History Collection; Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro, August 31, 2006, Box 27, Folder 5, ECJ Papers; Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by David Levering Lewis, 26, Box 20, Folder 15-16, David Levering Lewis Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Massachusetts; Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Mary Helen Washington, March 30, 1998, Box 8 Folder 25, ECJ Papers.

[73] Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233.

one, as racial justice activists use it in different periods and in different places.[74] I prefer "Black freedom struggle" to signify a broader struggle for racial justice that included diverse political viewpoints and tactics in pursuit of economic, social, and human rights that went beyond any narrow conceptualization of civil rights. By using the term "Black freedom struggle" in this examination of *Freedomways*, the thesis also captures the magazine's insistence that Black activism went beyond the borders of the United States to form a global movement in which activists recognized their own struggle's inextricable links to those of other oppressed people around the world.

The magazine's global outlook included Black men and women from across the African diaspora, people engaged in liberation struggles in Asia, and US ethnic minorities including Native American, Latina, Puerto Rican, and Chicana activists. To encapsulate the different racial and ethnic identities represented in *Freedomways,* I use the terms "women of color" and "people of color." While there are issues with terms that define people in opposition to a white "norm," there is not yet an alternative term that is sufficiently inclusive of, and widely accepted by people of different ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. While the editors often used "all oppressed people," to signal the inclusivity of their internationalism, this phrase renders "oppressed" the primary identifier. Therefore although "people of color" is homogenous, it does not place people in a subordinate position to those racialized as white. Black feminist activist Loretta Ross argues "women of color" was created by activists in the 1970s as a "solidarity definition, a commitment to work in collaboration with other oppressed women of color who have been minoritized," and this is how I use it throughout the thesis, to discuss the coalitional rhetoric in the magazine that sought to bring together women historically and systematically oppressed by race.[75] Where possible, I avoid generalizations of racial and ethnic

[74] Christopher W. Schmidt, "Legal History and the Problem of the Long Civil Rights Movement," *Law & Social Inquiry* 41, no. 4 (2016): 1100.
[75] Loretta Ross, "The origin of the Phrase 'Woman of Color,'" February 15, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82vl34mi4Iw.

identity and use accurate descriptors such as Black and Asian, in addition to national identifiers, such as Black US or Black Caribbean. I also capitalize racial identifiers as politically unifying terms that have been employed historically for collective empowerment.[76]

Terminology surrounding leftist politics is also contested. Current scholars of US Black Left history tend to conflate the terms "Left," "socialist," "communist," and "Marxist," employing them interchangeably in analyses of Black Left women's activism.[77] I resist collapsing the nuanced Left political positions of the women in this thesis. Not all women contributing to or working at *Freedomways* were members of the Communist Party during their engagement with the magazine, and I use the term only for women that identified in this way politically. In a similar way, Marxism, refers to the specific theory of history as class struggle that would inevitably overthrow capitalist society and lays out how communism would be achieved. I use socialist and socialism most often throughout the thesis as a broader term that encompasses the range of forms and approaches that socialist politics can take, including Marxism, Marxist-Leninism, African socialism, and Maoism. When possible and necessary, I use the most precise term when describing a woman's individual socialist viewpoint.

Structure

Chapter One examines the roots of *Freedomways* through the intellectual and political development of Cooper Jackson, Graham Du Bois, Burnham, and Bond from the 1930s to the 1950s. Through analysis of their lived experience, writing, and praxis, I argue that the women's distinct intellectual approaches and their Black Left feminist politics coalesced in their editorship of the magazine. By grounding intellectual activism in lived experience, the relationship between theory and praxis nuances what intellectual activism looks like in print.

[76] Deborah Gabriel, "Racial Categorisation and Terminology," *Black British Academics* https://blackbritishacademics.co.uk/about/racial-categorisation-and-terminology/.
[77] See Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads* and McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom.*

Expanding the contours of Black intellectual history accounts for the manifold ways in which the women editors advanced their ideas through academic theses, grassroots organizing, individual publishing initiatives, and then as editors. It challenges scholarship in which the women's intellectual contributions have been considered secondary to those of their activist husbands. They harnessed marital and social connections to advance their own ideas and political agendas. They shaped public representation of their spouses in biographies that were also expressions of their own intellectual positions and vehicles for their own work, rather than evidence of their subordination. As editors of *Freedomways*, they shaped its content and brought other women, often their friends, into its development.

Chapter Two investigates how travel was the way the editors sustained their Black Left feminist politics during the Cold War and how this was reflected in the magazine. I explore how the women valued travel and subsequently grounded their promotions of socialism in lived experience through a Black feminist epistemology that viewed travel as influential and transformative. I argue that, despite their claims, travel most often affirmed rather than transformed the women's political beliefs. The editors nonetheless valued travel accounts in the magazine for how they could promote international solidarity to an American reading audience that lacked the privilege of mobility. There were exceptions, and Graham Du Bois' visit to China led to a more fundamental evolution in her politics that departed from the continued Popular Front politics of other editors on the board. Her increasing affinity with Maoism, however, was not reflected in the magazine which continued to be a platform for a more Soviet-aligned Black Left feminism. Analysis of longer-term relocation abroad, notably Graham Du Bois and Bond's years living in Ghana, also shows how living in a newly independent country that was taking a socialist approach to development, had an impact on how the women viewed their relationship to Africa and the US. I explore how the editors promoted international solidarity in the magazine and how the international activist network

facilitated by the editors' travel sustained *Freedomways'* coverage of global anti-imperialist struggles and offered subscription bases beyond the US.

The positions that members of the editorial board took on the tenets of Black Left feminism—socialism, internationalism, and intersectional feminism—is the subject of Chapter Three. Differences led to disagreements and conflict in *Freedomways* about the application of socialism to the global Black freedom struggle, particularly its relationship to nationalism, and I explore how this was reflected in content. Despite political incongruities, the editors were able to work together to ensure the magazine remained a space where women's voices raised against racism, sexism, capitalism, imperialism, and war would be heard. I analyze editorials, coverage of international women's conferences, opinion pieces, literature, and artwork to demonstrate how women expressed their ideas in the magazine. If *Freedomways* espoused a Black international feminism, it was also an example of a Black women's international activist network and I focus on issues in 1975, International Women's Year, for how they elucidate women's solidarity. Esther Cooper Jackson was the mainstay of *Freedomways'* editorial voice, and this chapter demonstrates how her commitment to maintaining a Popular Front approach can be seen throughout its twenty-five years.

The final chapter traces how the editors promoted their Black Left feminist politics through essays, book reviews, literature, and artwork that engaged with emerging feminist literature. I argue that inter- and intra-generational disputes and cross-generational convergences on the nature of women's oppression, women's role in the global freedom struggle, and sexual violence characterized the magazine. The political nature of personal relationships is a central thread throughout the thesis and in this chapter, I assess how different understandings of "the personal is political" influenced feminist discourse and praxis in the magazine. As networks were built with women in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Australia, and

Europe, editors also built networks and mentor-like relationships with a younger generation of Black feminists in the US, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

Freedomways was a Black feminist intellectual project through which Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Jean Carey Bond, and the women's collective sustained their Black Left feminist politics. They created a platform for other leftist women to advance their ideas and analyses of the global freedom struggle and hoped the magazine would serve as a "bridge" between Old and New Lefts to influence a new generation of feminist activists and thinkers.

Chapter One: "The Neglect Her Work Suffers": Intellectual and Political Development on the Path to *Freedomways*

When asked how she became involved in founding *Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Freedom Movement*, Esther Cooper Jackson explained that "we were a group of friends involved in the Southern Negro Youth Congress," pointing towards the magazine's history as part of the Old Left and the importance of friendship to its founding.[1] Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Jean Carey Bond were leaders of the magazine. But how did they come together? In this chapter I explore the roots of *Freedomways* by tracing the women's political development from the 1930s to the 1950s, and the events and organizations that led them to create a magazine with an intersectional socialist approach to the global Black freedom struggle in 1961. I analyze each woman's burgeoning political ideas and how they are currently represented in existing scholarship where they are, typically and inadequately, regarded as secondary to their activist husbands. They were independent activists who used their marital connections as well as activist networks to launch a Black radical magazine that maintained a distinctly gendered lens. Through their editorial leadership they were able to continue in their activism, communicate their ideas, and educate readers on the long history and global contours of the freedom struggle. Extant scholarship has begun to bring Black women from margin to center in Black intellectual history, Black print culture and the Black radical tradition but when they are married, their agency is not always made as visible as it might be, and this chapter addresses that problem.

[1] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

"An Instrument of the Struggle": The Black Left and the Sociological Roots of *Freedomways*

The idea for a new Black magazine was originally conceived by activists Louis E. Burnham and Edward Strong in the mid-1950s after the demise of singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson's *Freedom* newspaper, of which Burnham had been chief editor. In the final *Freedomways* editorial, associate editor Jack O'Dell wrote that the newspaper's title "helped inspire our name."[2] *Freedom* was founded and produced in Harlem in response to the revocation of Robeson's passport in 1950, just a few months after he had given a speech at the World Peace Congress in Paris in April 1949. The Associated Press reported that Robeson had stated "it is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against a country [the Soviet Union] who in one generation has lifted our people to full human dignity."[3] His biographer Martin Duberman has suggested that he was misquoted and instead had declared that "our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war on anyone. We shall not make war on the Soviet Union."[4] But by the next day, the US press had dubbed him a traitor and un-American, and NAACP leader Walter White distanced the organization from him, averring Robeson spoke only for himself.[5]

His passport was later revoked under the Internal Security Act which "authorized the secretary of state to deny a passport to any member of a 'Communist organization,'" whose international travel was not "in the best interest of the United States."[6] Barbara Beeching argues that the while the communist press "objected loudly," on behalf of Robeson, the Black newspapers of the US "handled the continuing story on the whole with silence and ambiguity."[7]

---

[2] Jack O'Dell, "Tracing the Freedom Way (A Tribute)," *Freedomways* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 131.
[3] Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 342.
[4] Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 342.
[5] Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 342.
[6] Alan Rogers, "Passports and Politics: The Courts and the Cold War," *The Historian* 47, no. 4 (1985): 499.
[7] Barbara Beeching, "Paul Robeson and the Black Press: The 1950 Passport Controversy," *The Journal of African American History* 87, no. 3 (2002): 340.
Beeching cites the Los Angeles based Black newspaper the *California Eagle*, headed by Robeson's friend and fellow leftist Charlotta Bass, as an exception, stating that the newspaper was "unequivocally pro-Robeson," 350.

In *Freedom,* Robeson gave updates on his struggle in his column, "Here's My Story." It was a Left-led, political newspaper that also featured articles on the labor movement, National Negro Labor Council activities, the Korean War, and anti-colonial struggles in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. In the first issue, published in November 1950, Robeson outlined his motivations for creating the newspaper:

> Somehow, the masters of the press and radio had convinced at least this friend that a person who fights for peace, for the admission of People's China to the UN, for friendship with the Soviet Union, for labor's rights and for full equality for Negroes now**,** cannot be a "real" American, must have been "born in Russia". THESE ARE THE OBJECTIVES for which I will be fighting for some time to come and to which this column is dedicated.[8]

Freedom's purpose was to convince its readership of the baselessness of the allegations made against him, to advocate for civil rights, labor rights, and peace, and to criticize the contradiction inherent in the capitalist imperial foreign policy that had led black Americans into a colonial war in Korea in the name of anti-communism to protect freedom and democracy that they did not have at home. *Freedom* supplied readers with up-to-date information on local and global events that the editors hoped would boost support for Robeson, and for the broader, Black-Left agenda to restructure American society along socialist lines.

The end of World War II and emergence of a Cold War between the US and USSR, led to a renewed "Red Scare" which provided the context in which *Freedom*'s leftist editors were working. A Cold War liberalism that called for reform rather than radical change was adopted by organizations like the NAACP who distanced themselves from the Left, and specifically the CPUSA. Mary L. Dudziak contends that "civil rights groups had to walk a fine line, making it clear that their reform efforts were meant to fill out the contours of American democracy, and not to challenge or undermine it."[9] But Dayo F. Gore argues that there remained a "range of

---

[8] Paul Robeson, "Paul Robeson's Column," *Freedom*, November 1950, 1, The Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University Digital Archive, http://hdl.handle.net/2333.1/j9kd55h3.

[9] Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 11. Nicholas Grant in his analysis of African American anti-apartheid activism argues

black left activism that continued in the midst of anti-Communis[t]" intimidation and repression by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the FBI.[10] As the US and USSR sought to increase their spheres of influence in an increasingly globalized world, communism was seen as antithetical to the capitalist system on which the US had been built. To espouse socialism was presented by authorities as a direct threat to the American way of life and *Freedom*, its editors, and its writers were plagued by surveillance, a lack of subscriptions, and financial difficulties that led to its demise in 1955.

The Black leftists surrounding *Freedom* were involved in founding *Freedomways* in 1961. Shirley Graham Du Bois, George B. Murphy Jr., and Lorraine Hansberry, as well as members of the Harlem Writers Guild, John O. Killens, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, all contributed to *Freedomways* and were active in its fundraising activities. As a result, there was some significant similarity in coverage between the two publications. Both addressed global events and linked anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia to the domestic freedom struggle. *Freedomways* also celebrated and defended Black radical activists who had faced state repression because of their leftist politics. The magazine welcomed Robeson back to the US in the Winter 1964 issue and published speeches given at their "Salute to Paul Robeson" event in the Summer 1965 issue.[11] In the Winter 1971 special issue "Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner," the editors argued for the pertinence of his experiences and his contributions for "the rich meaning they hold for the present period."[12] Robeson featured on the cover of the

for a change in strategy rather than an abandonment of internationalism (that had become associated with the Left) among Black liberals, arguing that even while "operating in tightly controlled spaces," during the Cold War, they nevertheless, "reimagined the American state in ways that they hoped would lead to civil rights advances in the United States and help create an international climate that was conducive to the demands of the anti-apartheid movement." Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans and Apartheid, 1945-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 14.

[10] Dayo F. Gore, "'The Danger of Being an Active Anti-Communist': Expansive Black Left Politics and the Long Civil Rights Movement," *American Communist History* 11, no. 1 (2012): 47.

[11] Paul and Eslanda Robeson had been living in London since the re-instatement of Robeson's passport in 1958.

[12] The Editors, "Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner," *Freedomways* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 5. *Freedomways'* editors also compiled tributes to Robeson in prose and poetry, as well as selections of his own writing in a book published by Dodd Mead in 1978.

Summer 1965, Winter 1971, Winter 1973, and Fall 1985 issues, and essays, poems and editorials celebrating his life and activism appeared consistently throughout the magazine's twenty-five years of publication. The editors sustained their activist network and Black Left politics through *Freedomways* and claimed its continuing relevance to the contemporary movement in its pages.

Despite parallels in thought and approach however, Cooper Jackson did not consider the magazine a direct continuation of Robeson's newspaper and insisted that *Freedomways'* origins lay in sociology and that it had a focus on grassroots struggles around the world. In a 2014 interview she averred, "the name came from *Blackways of Kent*, Hylan Lewis' monumental sociological study of Blacks in the Piedmont community."[13] Lewis was a "distinguished African American scholar-activist," and high school classmate of Cooper Jackson's husband, James.[14] His study was "one of the first to make the connection between cultural and political change and argued that the meaning of a subculture needed to be changed before one could hope to change the racial order."[15] In his study, Lewis wanted to give an intimate account of Black life and claimed that:

> The degree to which I was permitted to share in the activities and thoughts of the people of Kent was in a large measure a function of the extent to which I came to know and to reciprocate the affection and confidence of many Kentians. This sharing paid dividends in personal satisfactions, continuing friendships and kinds of knowledge unobtainable otherwise.[16]

He argued for the merits of immersion as a technique in cultural anthropology and for the value of knowledge obtained from local people and this was a feature of *Freedomways* reportage.

---

[13] Esther Cooper Jackson, "Archive: Esther Cooper, 'Freedomways Magazine," interview by Dr Greene, July 13, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-6sK838Q44.
Blackways of Kent was part of a larger study of the continuities and fissures between Black and white culture in the area, with Lewis embedding himself within the Black community to gain access to their everyday lives. Study of the white community was undertaken by his research colleagues Ralph Patrick Jr and J. Kenneth Morland.
[14] Michael Nash and Daniel J. Leab, "*Freedomways," American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 227.
[15] Nash and Leab, "*Freedomways,"*227.
[16] Hylan Lewis, *Blackways of Kent* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), ix.

Cooper Jackson's insistence on the sociological groundings of *Freedomways* was strategic and facilitated the communication of Black Left analyses of the global freedom struggle to a broader Black American reading audience. It also enabled her to assert intellectual leadership of the magazine, linking its approach to her studies in sociology and conceiving of it as "an instrument of the struggle for civil rights," that could be "put in the hands of people involved in the struggle."[17] The magazine was used by activists in the South during the 1960s and Cooper Jackson has suggested it was "the publication that many young people, white and black, going into the South used as a guide because of the political articles, because of the poetry, because of the drama, because of the cartoons."[18] In March 1964, she received a letter from activist Michael Schwerner on behalf of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) who were developing grassroots activist programs for local Mississippi communities that summer. He asked, "because the recent edition of Freedomways [was] so pertinent to the work that [was] being done in the south," if the editors would be able to send "10 free copies," of the magazine for use in a community center in Meridian.[19] The recent edition Schwerner was referring to was the magazine's Winter 1964 special issue on "The Southern Movement," which was subsequently included in COFO's 1964 Freedom school teaching curriculum as a source for "use in the teaching of Negro history."[20] The magazine was a space for activist-

[17] Esther Cooper Jackson, "Esther Cooper Jackson at 96: Still in the Struggle," interview by Laura Flanders, January 20, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_Hwtv7ZM54.
[18] "Esther Cooper Jackson on *Freedomways* Magazine," May 24, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_VTBuYo3-w.
[19] Letter from Michael H. Schwerner to Esther Cooper Jackson, March 18, 1964, Box 7, Folder 44, James E. Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York (hereafter cited as ECJ Papers).
COFO was an umbrella organization developed in Mississippi for its 1964 Freedom Summer campaign and was made up of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and, to a lesser extent, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).
[20] Barbara Jones, "Mississippi Freedom Schools Curriculum Conference Report: Outline Material for Use in the Teaching of Negro History," Student nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=252253-067-1108&accountid=14664.

engagement; it was used by grassroots activists and in which their voices were heard and communicated with a wider Black population.

As managing editor for its twenty-five years of publication, Cooper Jackson shaped *Freedomways'* coverage and content. While studying for her undergraduate degree, she began developing the sociological approach and socialist position that would constitute the basis for her editorial outlook. She attended Oberlin College from 1934 to 1938, and in her sophomore year she "started getting active in some peace activities," taking part in "all kinds of demonstrations," to protest the Spanish Civil War.[21] She joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation explaining, "I was a pacifist for many years […] I thought no wars were just. I couldn't even defend the Civil War or the Revolutionary, I was just a total committed pacifist."[22] But her commitment to pacifism waned as the war continued and she "gradually began to change."[23] She was not a member of the CPUSA at Oberlin, nor did she agree with communists that violence was necessary for revolution to take place, but demonstrating when students left for Spain and died there fighting fascism had a profound impact on her.[24] She did, however, remain devoted to nonviolence as a strategy, and this may be understood as reflected in *Freedomways'* focus on Martin Luther King Jr. and the southern movement prior to the call for Black Power, and the neglect of Black Power and armed self-defense as major issues in the magazine, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Cooper Jackson cited Anna Louise Strong, a white American journalist who relocated to Moscow in 1921, as "the first person who came [to Oberlin] to speak that influenced me."[25]

---

[21] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley, June 22, 1988, Robin Kelley Hammer and Hoe Oral History Collection, Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, (Hereafter cited as RKOH Collection). Cooper Jackson was involved in a burning of nylon coats and attended student committees that were sending aid to Spain.
[22] Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley.
[23] Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley.
[24] Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley.
[25] Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley. Anna Louise Strong had no connection or relation to Edward Strong whom Cooper Jackson worked alongside in SNYC.

She had read her book *I Change Worlds* (1937) in which Strong traced her path to socialism from organizing Child Welfare Exhibits in the early 1910s:

> Not one of the reforms I had ever been told about would fix it […] The only remedy would be a world quite differently organized, where work and jobs and wages were public matters and everything that conditioned them was publicly owned […] I knew enough to know that such a society was called socialism, and that I must be a socialist. Thus I came to condemn capitalism.[26]

In 1916 Strong became involved in Seattle's labor movement and worked on a socialist newspaper, the Seattle *Daily Call,* authoring articles in support of the 1917 Russian Revolution. She made her first trip to the Soviet Union on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee in 1921, and founded the *Moscow Daily News* in 1930, primarily as a forum for the problems of Americans working in the USSR.[27] For the rest of her life, Strong travelled the world engaging with socialist ideas and undertook speaking tours to raise money and awareness of her endeavors in the Soviet Union. As an Oberlin alumna, "she would come from the Soviet Union and China to speak […] of her experiences of building socialism," and Cooper Jackson remembered that Strong had "quite a big impact on me."[28]

When Cooper Jackson was exposed to socialist ideas, she was one of only three Black students in her academic year at the predominantly white college. The first non-Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in the country to accept Black students, racism was prevalent on Oberlin's campus. Segregated dormitories were common, and Cooper Jackson remembered one Dean who "would call the parents of white students, if he and others thought their daughter or son was seeing or dating a member of the opposite sex who was black."[29] As a result, she made the decision to undertake her master's study at Fisk University in Nashville,

---

[26] Anna Louise Strong, *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1937), 40-41.
[27] Helene Keyssar and Tracy B. Strong, *Right in Her Soul: The Life of Anna Louise Strong* (New York: Random House, 1983), 152. Anna Louise Strong also serves as an example of a woman who was not defined by her husband, fellow journalist Joel Shubin.
[28] Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley.
[29] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott, *Abafazi,* 9, no. 1, Fall/Winter 1998, Box 8, Folder 28, ECJ Papers.

Tennessee: "I wanted to go to a Black school."[30] At Fisk, Cooper Jackson observed African-American women who "cooked and cleaned the school's dormitories and then returned home late and night to a small ghetto in town."[31] Erik McDuffie believes it sparked the idea for her MA Thesis, "The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism."[32] Her focus on Black women workers was further consolidated while she lived in a Methodist settlement house in Nashville. She professed, "I think my experience there for two years was a major development in my life; it helped steer me to radical politics. Seeing these conditions. I felt no small amount of change could do."[33] Witnessing the day-to-day struggles of impoverished black workers led to an understanding, much like Anna Louise Strong's, about the inadequacy of reform as a response to poverty and injustice, and a growing propinquity to the Left epitomized in her assertion that "some major change had to be taking place in this country in order to really advance the people who were the most oppressed."[34]

Cooper Jackson's thesis on Black domestic workers employed the sociological method of participant observation later seen in articles in *Freedomways.* She gathered comparative evidence from the organization of workers in Scandinavia, the Soviet Union, and other European countries to contend that "the problems faced by Negro women domestic workers are responsive to amelioration through trade union organizations."[35] She used US Labor department statistics, CIO and AFL reports, and samples of union contracts, but conversations

[30] Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott.
[31] Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott.
[32] Erik S. McDuffie, "Esther V. Cooper's 'The Negro Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism': Black Left Feminism and the Popular Front," *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 204.
[33] Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott.
[34] Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott.
[35] Esther Cooper, "The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism," (Master's thesis, Fisk University, 1940) https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/10/31/the-negro-woman-domestic-worker-in-relation-to-trade-unionism-1940/.
Ella Baker, Marvel Cooke, Mary Anderson, Louise Thompson Patterson and Claudia Jones also wrote on the "superexploitation" of Black women domestic workers and the necessity of their organization despite American labor's assertion that they were unorganizable due to the isolated nature of their work in private households. Mary Anderson, "The Plight of Negro Domestic Labor," *The Journal of Negro Education* 5, no. 1 (January 1936): 66–72; Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," *The Crisis*, November 1935, 330-331, 340; Louise Thompson, ''Toward a Brighter Future,'' *The Woman Today*, (April 1936), 14 - 30; Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!," *Political Affairs* (June 1949): 51-67.

and interviews with domestic workers grounded the thesis in lived experience.[36] She travelled to New York, Chicago, Newark, and Washington DC to speak to domestic workers about their needs and to ask their opinion on unionization which, as McDuffie summarizes, gave them a voice and recognized them "as key agents in their fight for freedom, dignity and respect."[37] Workers' first-hand experiences of unionization were central to her argument, and she included testimony from Black women who used to work "by the day for 25 cents an hour," but who after joining had "time for rest," and averred the union as "a God-send."[38]

Cooper Jackson's sociological approach to grassroots research and reporting is discernible throughout *Freedomways*, particularly in its coverage of the southern movement. In its first year, the magazine published a report by Freedom Rider Jimmy McDonald in which he explained the necessity of the Freedom Rides in the context of "so-called moderates," who called for "cooling-off periods and moderation," and because "we can count on the Klan and the Council for all the heat we shall need."[39] He argued that "segregation is a dangerous precedent, and if we accept it—shall we say, 'sitting down'—not one American is free."[40] In the magazine, activists illuminated the thinking behind their actions and the strategies they employed. McDonald suggested that Black Americans had been patient and nonviolent "when they lynched our mothers and fathers […] when they raped and jailed Mrs. Ros[a] Lee Ingram," and "when they told the Jim Crow school boards to let us get a decent education 'with all deliberate speed.'"[41] He not only expressed his commitment to nonviolent direct action as a strategy that young activists would continue to employ until "every American" was free, but also positioned his activism in a long history of US Black activism that included the Black Left's efforts on behalf of Rosa Lee Ingram, discussed further in Chapter Four.

[36] McDuffie, "Esther V. Cooper's 'The Negro Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism," 205.
[37] McDuffie, "Esther V. Cooper's 'The Negro Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism," 205.
[38] Cooper, "Negro Woman Domestic Worker."
[39] McDonald, "A Freedom Rider Speaks His Mind," *Freedomways* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 160.
[40] McDonald, "A Freedom Rider Speaks His Mind," 161.
[41] McDonald, "A Freedom Rider Speaks His Mind," 160.

Sharon Monteith in her study of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) narrative culture and literary history, points up *Freedomways* as a periodical that supported the organization. Monteith argues that the magazine was "a route to publication for civil rights activists," and shows how "SNCC maintained close ties with its editors, especially [Cooper] Jackson and former SCLC member Jack O'Dell."[42] The ways in which the magazine was a nurturing space for young women writers is discussed in Chapter Four, but the magazine was also a platform for young activists more broadly and was where "some of the young people around SNCC and CORE had their first writing experience."[43] With the exception of Monteith, the relationship between SNCC and *Freedomways* is largely absent from extant scholarship on the periodical.[44] But evidence of the relationship is discernable in its pages; in the *Freedomways Reader* (2000), for which former SNCC communications director Julian Bond wrote the foreword; and in the archives, and is a reflection of Cooper Jackson's editorial approach.

In the Spring 1962 "Reader's Forum," Julian Bond grounded SNCC's founding in the need "for communication between students, a need for an exchange of techniques, and a need for a coordination of effort."[45] *Freedomways* was a medium through which SNCC activists communicated to the broader American reading public. Julian Bond advertised the organization's activities "on the Freedom Rides […] in McComb, Mississippi, [that] helped begin the first action movement in that state," and detailed how activists "began voter

[42] Sharon Monteith, *SNCC's Stories: The African American Freedom Movement in the Civil Rights South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 158.
[43] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[44] As Monteith has detailed, "SNCC does not figure in David Levering Lewis, Michael H. Nash, and Daniel J. Leab, eds., *Red Activists and Black Freedom: James and Esther Jackson and the Long Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Dayo F. Gore, "From Freedom to Freedomways : Black Women Radicals and the Black Freedom Movement in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 130– 60; or Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, "Freedomways , the Communist Party USA , and Black Freedom in the Post– Civil Rights Years," *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 229– 72. Monteith, *SNCC's Stories,* 294.
[45] Horace Julian Bond, "Readers Forum: The Southern Youth Movement," *Freedomways* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1962): 308.

registration drive[s] in rural Mississippi counties, and were shot at, beaten, and jailed."[46] SNCC provided the magazine with "Pictures from the South" for the special issue on "The Southern Movement" that depicted the organization's efforts during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, including freedom rides, voter registration, and picket lines. The magazine also published "Notes from Southern Diaries,"—manuscripts, letters, and field diaries of SNCC activists' experiences.

A sociological approach revealing of the connections between theory and praxis in the US freedom struggle illuminated the intellectual underpinnings of direct action and expands who is included in Black intellectual history and what it looks like. The editorial for the Winter 1964 special issue stated that "the American reading public has read a lot about these personalities and their leadership activities in the Freedom Movement, seldom has the story of these activities been told by the persons themselves."[47] The editors published first-hand accounts from activists on the ground to obtain more accurate information about local struggles and to understand activists' motivations. Activist-authored essays demonstrate *Freedomways'* function as an "instrument of communication and exchange of information," with reports on direct action efforts from Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama; Albany and Savannah, Georgia; and Cambridge, Maryland.[48] Reports underlined the political ideas undergirding activism. Gloria Richardson, leader of the Cambridge Movement, advanced her thinking on nonviolence, leadership, and the "bread and butter" issues of the struggle. While Septima Clark, director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Citizenship Education Program, expressed a citizenship pedagogy that recognized the relationship between

[46] Bond, "Readers Forum: The Southern Youth Movement," 308.
[47] The Editors, "About This Issue," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 5
[48] The Editors, "About This Issue," 5; Fred L Shuttlesworth, "Birmingham Shall Be Free Some Day," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 16-19; W Haywood Burns, "Montgomery and After," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 22-27; Gloria Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1964): 28-34; Slater King, "The Bloody Battleground of Albany," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 93-101, Benjamin Van Clark, "Siege at Savannah," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 131-135.

illiteracy and disempowerment, declaring "literacy means liberation."[49] And young southern activists Doris Derby, Gilbert Moses, and John O'Neal communicated their intention to create a people's theatre, explaining that "the theatre cannot pretend to be a solution to the problems faced by the people who suffer the oppressive system in the South. Yet it can be the *beginning* of creative stimulus in a cultural desert where the patterns of reflective and creative thought have been restricted."[50] The special issue on the southern movement illustrated how Cooper Jackson's sociological approach crafted a space for grassroots activists' ideas and strategies to be publicized via the magazine.

"Developing Young Women Leaders": Leadership from SNYC to *Freedomways*

Cooper Jackson's commitment to grassroots voices derived not only from her studies in sociology, but also her lived experience of grassroots organizing in the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) in the 1940s. SNYC was founded by Edward Strong, youth chairman of the National Negro Congress (NNC), and young Black leftists James Jackson and Henry Winston.[51] They held an inaugural two-day conference in Richmond, Virginia on February 13-14, 1937. Over five hundred delegates from thirteen states, representing organizations of different political backgrounds, addressed labor issues, education, health, fascism, and voting rights.[52] The organization's leadership was made up of Black activists in their early twenties who wanted to foster inter-racial ties among working-class southerners. SNYC paid attention to how issues of labor were compounded by race in industries such as tobacco, mining, and steel, and worked on campaigns for voting rights and education.

[49] Septima Clark, "Literacy and Liberation," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 120.
[50] Doris Derby, Gilbert Moses, and John O'Neal, "The Need for a Southern Freedom Theatre," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 111.
[51] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 200.
[52] Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe,* 200.

The organization had a commitment to fostering grassroots women's leadership as described by its founder Edward Strong in a letter to Max Yergan of the Council of African Affairs (CAA) in which he stated "our policy of having young women become fully integrated into the Congress leadership."[53] Cooper Jackson credited Strong for pushing her into a leadership role at SNYC:

> Ed Strong was a man in advance of his time on the woman question and he actually wanted to promote and help women gain leadership. I wanted to work behind the scenes and get people to vote and didn't want to speak, and Ed was the one who pushed me, who insisted.[54]

She identified a dichotomy between what she perceived as visible national leadership and work behind the scenes, which speaks to broader questions about what leadership is, what it looks like and how her experience in SNYC was brought to bear on *Freedomways*. Lindsay R. Swindall reasons that "the grassroots structure of the organization as a federation of local councils alongside national headquarters with a commitment to participatory democracy was particularly suited to fostering female leadership."[55] This can be seen in how Cooper Jackson operated. She was active in the national office, spoke at local trade unions and youth councils, nurtured local leadership, made public addresses at annual national SNYC conferences, and wrote reports for the organization's newspaper *Cavalcade: March of Southern Negro Youth*. She worked alongside activists Dorothy Burnham and Augusta Jackson at all levels of leadership and together they promoted Black women workers' rights and lent their resources to fighting cases of racialized gender discrimination. They advanced a Black feminism on the

[53] Letter from Edward Strong to Max Yergan, 18 October 1940, Box 167, Box 1 Edward Strong Papers, Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington D.C.
[54] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley.
[55] Lindsay R. Swindall, *The Path to the Greater, Freer, Truer World: Southern Civil Rights and Anticolonialism, 1937-1955* (Tampa: University Press Florida, 2014), 80.

Left at a time when radical activism was more focused on "the Negro Question" rather than "the Woman question."[56]

Cooper Jackson's ideas about the relationship between race, gender, and class that she carried forward into her grassroots organizing in SNYC in the 1940s, and editorship of *Freedomways* were developed in her master's thesis, demonstrating the connection between her theory and praxis. In her analysis of working conditions, she argued that "more Negro women have not only suffered from lack of employment standards, long hours and low wages, exclusion from social insurance and legislation, and social stigma attached to the occupation, but they have also been forced to receive lower pay and to work under lower standards than white employees."[57] She located Black working women at the locus of systemic oppression and pushed against the notion of a universal womanhood. She posited that while domestic workers, as women and as workers, faced economic discrimination, discrimination was intensified by racism.

She began to employ a Black Left feminist analysis to prove that problems over unionizing domestic workers did not only occur along lines of race, but also across class divisions in Black communities. In New York, she interviewed domestic workers and their employers, including a Black "sophisticated New Yorker" who suggested that "Negroes should join unions, but domestic workers wouldn't know what to do even if they had a union. They're too ignorant, and like good times too much to take them seriously."[58] She revealed an antagonism that Black middle-class women employers had towards unionization and, as

[56] Kate Weigand argues that during Popular Front the CPUSA realized "African Americans could maintain race solidarity *and* work for Black liberation and still not lose sight of the larger issues of class exploitation and Communist revolution." She also argues, however, that while the Party "began to realize women could organize women and still support the Communist Party's larger goals, it did not embrace a practical program for resisting male chauvinism." Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 22-24.
[57] Cooper, "Negro Woman Domestic Worker."
[58] Cooper, "Negro Woman Domestic Worker."

Cooper Jackson saw it, the importance of Black women's unionization was necessitated by their existence at the interstices of interlocking systems of oppression.

Her intellectual output in the 1940s was located firmly within academe. Her thinking developed from her experiences at Oberlin and Fisk and her engagement with the people who were the subjects of her research. She thought about "The Negro Question," "The Woman Question," and routes to freedom, and her thesis reveals a Black Left feminist politics that is intersectional. While not coined until Kimberlé Crenshaw's 1989 essay, Black women had been theorizing intersectionality for decades as part of a long Black women's intellectual tradition.[59] She joined other Black women who were interrogating their position in the Party, in the Black freedom movement, and in women's organizations. In her thesis, she drew on Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke's 1935 essay "The Bronx Slave Market," an in-depth account of the daily exploitation of Black domestic workers for *The Crisis* that shed light on low wages, long hours, poor working conditions, and the practice of bartering for wages. They called for the unionization of domestic workers and suggested that the obstacles to their unionization included the failure of organized labor to recognize domestic work as a priority due to the racial makeup of its workforce and the disaggregated nature of the work. [60] Cooper Jackson's thesis,

---

[59] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139–67.

[60] Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," *The Crisis*, November 1935, 340.
Ashley Farmer explores how Black radical women used the Black woman domestic worker to "reformulate prevailing perceptions of black womanhood" and "frame the domestic workers as a symbol of [B]lack women's oppression and political potential." Farmer focuses on a continuous reformulation of the domestic worker from the 1930s to the 1960s, from a victim of "superexploitation" to a "Militant Domestic" to a "Black Power Militant." Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 27–29.
Farmer is not the first to examine how Black domestic workers were stereotyped and how they involved in militant Black activism. See Trudier Harris, *From Mammies to Militants* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism, 2nd edn* (London: Pluto Press, 1982); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London: Routledge, 1991); Sue K. Jewell, *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and the Shaping of U.S. Social Policy* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Sharon Monteith, *Advancing Sisterhood? Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000); Jeanne Noble, *Beautiful Also Are the Souls of Our Black Sisters* (London: Prentice Phall, 1978); Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

Baker and Cooke's report, and other writings by Louise Thompson Patterson and Claudia Jones, are among many works that testify to Black women's intellectual traditions that require deeper interrogation.[61] The militant symbolism of the Black woman domestic worker crafted by these women did not end race, gender, and class oppression. Neither men in the CPUSA, the Black Left, nor civil rights organizations like the NAACP, made Black working-class women's oppression central objectives in their operations. While Black Left women insisted on the untapped political potential of Black working-class women in the 1940s, their thinking did not necessarily influence the wider struggle, contributing to the obfuscation of their intellectual history. They did, however, endeavor to apply their thinking to their activism in Black Left organizations.

Cooper Jackson's work in SNYC alongside other women and grassroots activists developed her thinking about women in the freedom struggle and her experience shaped her editorial approach to *Freedomways* and its content. It is an example of what Farah Jasmine Griffin terms the "extra-academic origins of black women's intellectual work," that she argues demonstrates that the academy is "not the only place where socially and politically engaged intellectuals ought to find themselves."[62] Cooper Jackson's practical activism and lived experience built on the intellectual approaches she developed in the academy, illustrating her ability to express ideas in various activist settings. In December 1940, she submitted a "Report on Negro Youth and the Struggle for Peace" along with an administrative report on SNYC activities that argued for "the importance of developing young women leaders in the Youth movement who would be able to carry on if the young men are drafted," and called for "peace

[61] Louise Thompson, "Toward a Brighter Dawn," *Woman Today* (April 1936): 14-30; Jones, "An End to the Neglect."

[62] Farah Jasmine Griffin, "Conflict and Chorus: Reconsidering Toni Cade's The Black Woman: An Anthology," in *Is It Nation Time? Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism*, ed., Eddie S. Glaude Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 122.

clubs [to] be established in each Federation where women would take the leadership."[63] She reasoned that women's activism could sustain the domestic struggle to end race and class oppression and demonstrated her promotion of women's leadership as part of her activist ethos.

Cooper Jackson was working as Administrative Secretary until 1942 when Edward Strong was drafted into World War II and she took over as Executive Secretary. Dorothy Burnham was an untitled member of the executive board before she became Education Director in place of James Jackson in 1946. And with Augusta Strong as the editor of *Cavalcade*, approximately half of SNYC's national leadership was taken up by women during the war.[64] While Belinda Robnett argues that "power was not synonmyous with titles," she also upholds that "gendered hierarchy and racial and class constraints, in addition to Black cultural norms, shaped the structures of the civil rights movement and defined the nature of activist participation."[65] She purports that these constraints and cultural norms created a substructure of leadership—bridge leadership—that was "the only one available to women."[66] Bridge leadership developed as a result of gendered divisions of labor in movement organizations that "provided a construct of exclusion that helped to develop a strong grassroots tier of leadership that served as a critical bridge between the formal organization and adherents, and potential consituents."[67] While women in SNYC, such as Sallye B. Davis, did work at the local level to mobilize black communities, they were also leaders of regional SNYC chapters; at the national level, both with and without formal titles; and some served as representatives and spokespersons for the organization at international conferences. Cooper Jackson stressed the

[63] Cooper Jackson, "Report on Negro Youth and the Struggle for Peace," Box 167, Folder 2, Southern Negro Youth Congress Papers, Moorland-Springarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington DC.
[64] Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 61.
[65] Belinda Robnett, "Formal Titles and Bridge Leaders: Reply to Keys," *American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 6 (1997): 1698; Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.
[66] Belinda Robnett, "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership and Micromobilization," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6 (1996): 1667.
[67] Robnett, "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement," 1667.

importance of "train[ing] young women and men […] for leadership in SNYC clubs and in their communities."[68]

Local community women were responsible for planning and leading campaigns for the right to vote, to access education, to fight police brutality and sexual assault, and to battle for worker's rights. For example, in 1941 a local leader of SNYC's Atlanta chapter, Bertha Boozer, organized Black domestic workers, supported a strike of garbage collectors, and organized a boycott of stores refusing to hire Black workers.[69] Boozer also represented SNYC as a delegate at the American People's Meeting in New York in April 1941 where she met "democracy-loving people from all over America," illustrating the fluid nature of local and national leadership in the organization.[70] Ethel Goodman, chairman of the Rural Committee, oversaw the activities of SNYC's local councils and fielded their letters of concern to national headquarters. The November 1941 issue of *Cavalcade* featured a letter addressed to Goodman thanking her for reminding the local council of the upcoming National Conference: "We will try to send delegates from our Council for I know it is very important that the voice of farm youth ring out in this big meeting."[71] The flow of ideas and opinions gave local Black communities a voice in shaping the organization's national agenda. Indicative of Cooper Jackson's sociological approach and Black Left feminist politics, her experience of organizing SNYC campaigns and of seeing local women lead fostered an understanding of the relationship between lived experience, theory, and praxis, later seen in *Freedomways'* grassroots reportage and in the gendered contours of its editorial board.

[68] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott.
[69] Robin D.G. Kelley, "Southern Negro Youth Congress", Box 11, Folder 15, ECJ Papers.
[70] "Youth Legislature Sends Delegates to A.P.M.," *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Negro Youth*, May 1941, Box 11, Folder 29, ECJ Papers.
[71] "From the Rural Mail Bag," *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Negro Youth*, November 1941, 4, Box 11, Folder 29, ECJ Papers.

"The Seed It Planted Did Not Fall On Barren Ground": Sustaining Popular Front Politics

SNYC activism not only gave Cooper Jackson leadership experience, but also experience of coalitional working that would influence the operation of *Freedomways'* editorial board. While Chapter Three establishes Cooper Jackson's overarching influence of the magazine's editorial voice, its creation and maintenance was nontheless a collective effort. Reflective of previous participatory organizing in SNYC, a large portion of *Freedomways'* staff was made up of women who worked alongside men to put out and sustain the magazine. In addition to Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Jean Carey Bond, who shaped its scope and content as editors alongside Jack O'Dell, John Henrik Clarke, and Ernest Kaiser, women were essential to the day to day running and surivival of the magazine. SNYC leader and lifelong friend of Cooper Jackson, Dorothy Burnham, was involved in its founding and was chairperson of Freedomways Associates Inc. Contributing editor Keith E. Baird has remembered that she was an "active, dedicated, ever constructive worker and sagacious decision maker."[72] Burnham's position at *Freedomways* was peripheral insofar as she was not active full time, but she remained connected to the magazine throughout its years of publication, offering essays, editorial advice, and fundraising efforts that would help sustain the Black Left feminist politics she shared with the other editors.

Key to the magazine's ability to stay afloat in the face of continuously rising printing costs and office rental prices were sponsored events in New York City. Burnham helped organize events that were essential to the magazine's longevity and consistency. Previous experience in SNYC and its focus on cultural activities meant that Burnham was familiar with fundraising through hosting artistic performances.[73] In April 1976 with the help of Black Left

[72] Keith E. Baird, "Dorothy Burnham & Freedomways Magazine," Box 13, Folder 27, ECJ Papers.
[73] Jack O'Dell was also adept at using direct mail to bring monetary contributions into organizations. This was his role at SCLC, but there is no evidence of this activity at *Freedomways,* nor in organizing *Freedomways* events.

activist Louise Thompson Patterson, she coordinated the cultural evening, "How to Succeed In Making A Free, Beautiful And Peaceful World By Really Trying."[74] The evening consisted of an amateur performance based on events covered in the magazine, including The World Without the Bomb conference that took place in 1962 in Accra, Ghana, and postcards were sold featuring artwork by artists of the Black Left Elizabeth Catlett and Charles White.[75] Selling postcards was a common strategy employed to bring income into the magazine and they were often advertised for sale in the magazine itself. The magazine also hosted cultural evenings, book parties, art exhibits and festivals, and anniversary galas to stimulate revenue. Head of circulation Mary Kaiser, who sustained and expanded subscription bases and oversaw the magazine's finances, wrote to Burnham after the April benefit, which raised $353.50, to thank her for her efforts: it was "only because of affairs like this and the contributions of our friends (like you!) that the magazine has continued."[76]

The magazine's fundraising efforts were shepherded by Norma Rogers for its twenty-five years. As special projects director, she took the lead in coordinating events aimed at raising the profile and income of the magazine. In 1966 she arranged a benefit featuring the Afro-American Folkloric Troupe of performing artists from San Francisco. A letter sent to subscribers, signed by Rogers, Clarke, and Cooper Jackson explained, "we are constantly faced with the need to raise funds to meet printing costs and other financial obligations […] The Town Hall Benefit must be a financial success if we are to continue publishing and expand the circulation of FREEDOMWAYS."[77] And in 1975 she arranged the magazine's sponsorship of

[74] "How to Succeed In Making A Free, Beautiful And Peaceful World By Really Trying: A Freedomways Event," Box 6, Folder 48, ECJ Papers.
[75] In the early 1960s the government of Ghana sponsored a series of anti-nuclear conferences, culminating in The Accra Assembly "The World Without the Bomb" in 1962. It called for nuclear disarmament in the context of recent French nuclear arms testing in the Sahara, arguing that the nuclear arms race more broadly threatened intervention in Africa from neo-imperial powers, efforts towards building African unity over territorial disputes among newly independent countries, and global peace.
[76] Mary Kaiser, letter to Dorothy Burnham, April 21, 1976, Box 6, Folder 50, ECJ Papers.
[77] Norma Rogers, John Henrik Clark and Esther Jackson, letter to subscribers, January 21, 1966, Box 30, Folder 25, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library, New York (Hereafter cited as JHC Papers).

a reception for Dr. and Mrs. Calvin H. Sinnette. Sinnette was a Black pediatrician in New York and a member of the Board of *Freedomways*. He was leaving for Nairobi, Kenya to work as a Professor of Pediatrics at the Kenyatta National Hospital, and Rogers wrote to Clarke advising that they would "use the occasion to raise funds for the magazine."[78]



Figure 1: (Left to right) Jack O'Dell, Eslanda Robeson, John Henrik Clarke, Paul Robeson, Normal Rogers, and Esther Cooper Jackson at the Salute to Paul Robeson sponsored by *Freedomways*, New York City, April 22, 1965, *Freedomways* (Summer 1965).

Rogers not only contributed to the financial survival of the magazine but also to the maintenance of the editors' Black Left politics through the coordination of public events that celebrated activist intellectuals of the Old Left, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Lorraine Hansberry, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Charles White, and Paul Robeson. Ian Rocksborough-Smith argues that these events "effectively became demonstrations of significant public support of *Freedomways* magazine," and that through celebratory efforts "Popular Front legacies […] were concretely sustained into the 1960s."[79] For example, Figure 1 shows *Freedomways'* editors alongside Paul and Eslanda Robeson at the "Salute to Paul Robeson," organized by Rogers in April 1965. The editors claimed that the event brought together "old-timers," and

[78] Norma Rogers, letter to John Henrik Clarke, December 6, 1975, Box 30, Folder 36, JHC Papers.
[79] Ian Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle: Freedomways Magazine, Black Leftists and Continuities in the Freedom Movement," (Simon Fraser University, 2005), 35-39.

"young people from the Southern battlefront and Northern campus movements of today."[80] There were greetings from Old Left activists Elizabeth Catlett, who was residing in Mexico, and W. Alphaeus Hunton from Ghana, and remarks from novelist John Oliver Killens. The event connected the editors' previous activism to the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and SNCC chairman John Lewis gave a speech at the event in which he stated that young activists were "Robeson's spiritual children," because "we, too, have rejected gradualism and moderation. We, too, have called for nationwide protests and massive organizing of ordinary people," and "we, too, have been accused of being radicals, and of 'Communist influence.'"[81]

Through public events, Rogers promoted Black Left activists, connected activists across generations and stressed the enduring relevance of the editors' socialist politics to the contemporary struggle. She also did this through the development of the *Freedomways* Management Bureau which launched in 1976 offering "lecturers and performers who are highly knowledgeable and experienced in Arts, Political Sciences, Education, and other related fields. Available for high schools, colleges, community groups and other institutions."[82] Through this division of *Freedomways* and its inclusion of Black Left artists and intellectuals including associate editor John Henrik Clarke, playwright Alice Childress, novelist Loyle Hairston, cartoonist Brumsic Brandon Jr., and writer and poet Tom Dent, Rogers crafted another platform that could disseminate leftist politics and ideas to a wider public audience. Rogers and Burnham contributed to the magazine's intellectual output as a vehicle of communication for Black Left politics through public events and fundraisers. Women's positions on *Freedomways'* staff demonstrate how they were able to work alongside men as

[80] The Editors, "Salute to Paul Robeson," *Freedomways* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1965): 363.
[81] John Lewis, "Paul Robeson—Inspirer of Youth," *Freedomways* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1965): 370.
[82] Norma Rogers, letter to Andrew J. Young, December 1, 1972, Box 30, Folder 34, JHC Papers; "Freedomways Management Bureau: Newly Established Division of Freedomways Magazine," *Freedomways* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1976): back cover.

part of the collective to sustain the magazine and how this was reflective of activists' previous experience of participatory and gender egalitarian organizing in SNYC.[83]

Cooper Jackson's politics changed little over time and through the magazine she was able to sustain her Black Left feminist politics and Popular Front approach. In the Introduction to *Freedomways Reader*, she claimed that the origins of *Freedomways* "covers the period from the late 1930s to 1961," because SNYC activism facilitated the creation of the magazine.[84] The "Origins" section of the reader features an article by Henry O. Mayfield entitled "Memoirs of a Birmingham Coal Miner," which reports on SNYC's work organizing Birmingham coal miners and steel workers in the 1930s and 1940s.[85] The magazine also reprinted Du Bois' speech "Behold the Land" for SNYC's annual conference in 1946, and Augusta Strong traced SNYC's twelve-year history of activism in "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage" for the Winter 1964 issue.

Freedomways was a corrective to historical records that erased Black Left activists, their ideas, political outlook, and tactics from 1960s social movements. Strong framed SNYC as an activist forebear to the new youth movement and argued that "the seed it planted did not fall on barren ground" because "the problems the movement had tackled originally, as youth, had burgeoned into problems for the entire south."[86] She argued for SNYC activists' continued involvement in the contemporary struggle as "the young people who had initiated the movement had grown older, added responsiblities came their way."[87] These responsiblities included giving support and guidance to young activists, a function she saw the magazine serving. Strong's article demonstrates how she conceived the contemporary freedom struggle

[83] This is not to say that men at *Freedomways* never took issue with women's leadership at the magazine. Esther Cooper Jackson has recalled encountering male chauvinism and feeling that "some men, including Jack O'Dell […] were uncomfortable with the idea of a woman in charge." Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson*, 252.
[84] Esther Cooper Jackson ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in their Own Country* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), xxii.
[85] Cooper Jackson, *Freedomways Reader*, xxiv.
[86] Augusta Strong, "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage," *Freedomways* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1964): 50.
[87] Strong, "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage," 50.

of the 1960s as a direct continuation of activism undertaken during the Popular Front and *Freedomways* as a platform on which she could carry out the task of bringing her and the wider Black Left's contributions out of the shadow of anti-communism. She crafted the same argument for Black women's activism, examined in Chapter Four. In *Freedomways,* the editors' recovered Black Left activist strategies and argued for their pertinency to analyses of the contemporary moment.

Personal friendships that developed in SNYC were also carried into *Freedomways* and the magazine became a space for women to express their politics in a forum in which they could be understood. Esther Cooper Jackson and Dorothy Burnham developed a life-long friendship that was sustained by both being involved in the creation and maintenance of the magazine, and her contributions to the magazine demonstrate how activist friendships shaped magazine content. [88] The editors published three of Burnham's essays on the scientific manifestations of race, gender, and class oppression, despite it not being a critical focus for the magazine.[89] In the Winter 1977 issue, for example, she examined how gendered oppression was compounded by race and class, leading Black working-class women to be disproportionately affected by scientific theories about women. She addressed the issue of forced sterilization to illustrate how "minority women have been the victims of involuntary sterilization in alarmingly increasing numbers," because of "hereditarian ideas" that "Blacks are intellectually inferior and that this inferiority has a genetic base."[90] Burnham argued attacks on Black women's reproductive rights were ultimately rooted in building and sustaining the

[88] Dorothy Burnham was working as a science teacher in New York.
[89] Essays tracing the relationship between science and the black freedom struggle included Dorothy Burnham, "Jensenism: The New Pseudoscience of Racism," *Freedomways* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 150-157; Dorothy Burnham, "Science and Racism," *Freedomways* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1975): 89-95; Dorothy Burnham, "Biology and Gender: False Theories About Women and Blacks," *Freedomways,* 17 no. 1 (Winter 1977): 8-13; Frank E Chapman Jr, "Science and Africa," *Freedomways* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1966) 235-245; J H O'Dell, "In Praise of Science: On the Progressive Social Inheritance of Our Movement's Activists," *Freedomways* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 216-229.
[90] Dorothy Burnham, "Biology and Gender: False Theories About Women and Blacks," *Freedomways* 17, no. 1 (Winter 1977): 10.

capitalist system, revealing how she fused her Black Left feminist politics and scientific approach:

> In a period of world-wide starvation and hunger and endemic poverty, sterilization can become an acceptable solution to social problems […] During the period of slavery in the United States […] there were biologists who wrote of the inherited stupidity, emotional instability and amoral character of slaves. Given the fact that eugenics is proposed as a way to improve the species, one wonders why sterilization was not proposed at that time. My intuition tells me that Shockley and Eysenck would have been lynched had they made such a proposal to the slave-breeders.[91]

Burnham argued eugenics was a capitalist tool used to justify either the promotion or restriction of Black working-class women's reproductive potential based on the needs of the economy at any given time. She recognized how the system of slavery in the US was built and sustained by the physical and reproductive labor of Black women, and how the slave-owning class sought control over their bodies. Once the period of enslavement had ended, the ruling class needed new ways to maintain control and scientific theories were employed to deny Black and working-class women's access to the protections of womanhood and to maintain their exploitation in America's labor force. Burnham's essay for *Freedomways* discloses how through her Black Left feminism she applied a critical assessment in countering underlying assumptions about race, gender, and class: "If I sound more like a Black feminist than a biologist, the reason is—that's what I was first."[92] Her contribution to *Freedomways* is evidence of the editors' inclusion of women into an extended conception of Black intellectual history, the role personal relationships played in shaping magazine content, and reveals how connections made during earlier activism opened the magazine as an avenue for different intellectual methods for analyzing race and gender oppression.

[91] Burnham, "Biology and Gender," 10.
[92] Burnham, "Biology and Gender," 12.

"A Tool with Which to Do Something": Cooper Jackson's and Graham Du Bois' Activist Writing

Despite their activist-intellectual work in SNYC and at *Freedomways*, the women editors have often been omitted from extant scholarship on Black intellectual history, and this is largely a consequence of their ability to work with, and their romantic relationships with, well-known men. But they politicized their personal relationships and viewed them as important components of their broader political activism. How the editors conceptualized the "personal is political" in the feminist context, and how this differed from younger activists of the contemporary women's struggle is discussed in Chapter Four. But it was also an aspect of their development as intellectuals and was a way that they promoted their politics. Analyzing Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois' activism on behalf of their husbands not only brings them to the center of intellectual history, but also more clearly elucidates their political continuities from the 1950s to their editorship and places the magazine as part of their long careers as activist intellectuals.

SNYC folded in 1948 due to heightened red baiting and the increasing age of the organization's original leadership. By 1950, Cooper Jackson, Burnham, and Strong had left the south and moved to Brooklyn, New York with their husbands. The decision is perhaps unsurprising: Augusta Jackson and Louis and Dorothy Burnham were from Brooklyn and, since the 1930s, New York had been the center of Black intellectual life and the Black Left.[93] The SNYC cadre were in the company of Black Left thinkers, including Shirley Graham Du Bois and W.E.B. Du Bois, whom Cooper Jackson met in 1945 while representing SNYC at the World Youth Conference in London. In Brooklyn in the 1950s, Graham Du Bois and Du Bois became close to the SNYC activists and developed a network of activist intellectuals during

[93] James Smethurst has cited the "long held notion of Harlem as the center of African American intellectual, artistic, and political life." James Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 100. See also Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

the McCarthy period and supported each other during years of FBI suppression and harassment. These years also witnessed a shift in Cooper Jackson's activism and the way she expressed her politics.

James Jackson was indicted in 1951 under the Smith Act, accused of advocating the violent overthrow of the government for his work with the CPUSA.[94] To avoid prosecution he went underground and, for five years, Cooper Jackson had no contact with her husband. Forced to withstand the worst of FBI surveillance in the search for him, in 1953 she published a pamphlet: *This is My Husband: Fighter for His People, Political Refugee.* She shed light on the personal nature of FBI interrogation and adopted a public persona of wife and mother that conformed to a Cold War rhetoric of domesticity to frame her claims for social justice. Haviland argues Cooper Jackson's pamphlet "recast questions of political affiliation and national loyalties as issues of race, gender and class coercion that were contrary to the nuclear family."[95] And McDuffie examines evidence of Cooper Jackson's shift to a familial rhetoric that precluded "formulation of an alternative discourse that might have directly challenged the hegemonic masculinist logic undergirding post-war domesticity that buttressed US Cold War domestic and foreign policy and white supremacy."[96] But *This is My Husband* was intellectual activism that revealed her thinking on race, gender, class, colonialism, peace and democracy.

Cooper Jackson emphasized how her husband's socialist politics taught him to "seek the answer in an alliance of the Negro people with the white workers for immediate social gains and the eventual establishment of a social system in which economic exploitation and Jim Crow

[94] The Alien Registration Act of 1940 also known as the Smith Act made it a crime to 'advocate, abet, advise, or teach' the violent overthrow of the US government. The Act was used to prosecute socialists and communists during the McCarthy era of the 1950s.
[95] Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson,*132.
[96] McDuffie, "The March of Young Southern Black Women: Esther Cooper Jackson, Black Left Feminism, and the Personal and Political Costs of Cold War Repression," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: Another Side of the Story,* eds., Robbie Liberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 98.

oppression would be profitable to no one and would cease to exist."[97] In doing so, she promoted interracial coalition and advanced socialism as a solution to race and class oppression. She argued that one could not be abolished in isolation from the other because "only through the end of white supremacy in the southern states could exploitation and oppression end for all the southern people."[98] She rejected the dichotomy between a race-first or class-first approach in favor of a Black Left feminism that advocated for the simultaneous dismantlement of interlocking systems of oppression. And while she promoted coalition and had experience of cross-organizational activism, in the Cold War context, Cooper Jackson criticized other approaches to the US freedom struggle:

> Others, with full conviction, have chosen different paths leading to Negro freedom. Some still say education alone will do the job. Others propose to reach equality through success in business. Some would place complete reliance on court decisions. Some few still see no hope in the U.S.A. and turn their eyes wistfully to Africa as a "homeland."[99]

Her criticism of the "Back to Africa" movement may have stemmed from her understanding of the global nature of racial capitalist imperialism and its propensity for violence to maintain colonial domination. She recalled, "my father-in-law spoke against our entry into the war. He characterized it as an imperialist war of thieving nations whose hands would forever be stained with the blood of the outraged African and Asian peoples."[100] But the anti-communist milieu in which she was writing was reflected in assertions of American patriotism, particularly around her discussion of the Second World War:

> The outbreak of the anti-Hitler war found the SNYC in the forefront of the fight to rally Negro youth to the support of that just cause. At the same time the organization led a skillful, persistent, and militant struggle against all features of the Jim Crow system which handicapped Negro youth in making their fullest contribution to the patriotic work of defeating the fascists.[101]

---

[97] Esther Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband: Fighter for His People Political Refugee*, (New York: National Committee to Defend Negro Leadership, 1953), 19, Box 20, Folder 81, African Americans and the Left, American Left Ephemera Collection, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
[98] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband*, 25.
[99] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband,* 18-19.
[100] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband*, 11.
[101] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband,* 27.

Cooper Jackson skillfully framed SNYC's struggle against Jim Crow as a patriotic duty in juxtaposition to her husband's indictment on accusations of committing the un-patriotic act of overthrowing the American government. Instead, she claimed her husband's—and by extension her own—activism was being carried out in service of America and in the name of democracy. She may have positioned herself as a wife and mother speaking publicly in defense of the nuclear family, but Cooper Jackson produced a pamphlet promulgating her commitment to the socialist restructuring of society that she believed was necessary to end race and class oppression in the United States and imperialism abroad.

In *This is My Husband*, Cooper Jackson also clarified her ideas on the relationship between intellectual and political development and lived experience and the decision to act. She recalled her father-in-law's drug store and its operation as "a kind of neighborhood public forum":

> The seeds of thought, the tales of struggle, the psalms of hope which were thrown out in those fervent "bull sessions" found fertile soil in young Jack's bright mind, mellowing, maturing and growing to completion with his growth; and finally finding their expression in his understanding of the people of the South, and the determination to bring democracy in the fullest sense of the word.[102]

She traced her husband's childhood, his relationship with his parents, exposure to "drug store forums," and the plight of tobacco workers in his county, and his experiences at school and college, for how they coalesced to inform his belief in socialism and his decision to lead a life of activism on behalf of his people. In doing so, she revealed her understanding of how "experience strengthens conviction," and wrote against the counter narrative of communist brainwashing by outside agitators.[103] *This is My Husband* is an example of how Black Left

[102] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband,* 12-13.
[103] Cooper Jackson, *This is My Husband,* 24.

women used biography as a medium through which to communicate ideas and continue their activism in a period of heightened surveillance and activist repression.[104]

Shirley Graham Du Bois also wrote biographies of her husband, W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1971 Graham Du Bois published *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois* and in 1978, a year after her own death, *Du Bois: A Pictorial Biography* was published. Gerald Horne argues that Graham Du Bois' years married to Du Bois were "in many ways the least interesting and least productive in her life."[105] Graham Du Bois' son, David Du Bois, has confirmed her devotion to his memory and remembered how her "later years were so totally devoted to promoting and safe-guarding that legacy."[106] Graham Du Bois' efforts on behalf of her famous husband has led to a neglect of her own intellectual work. Her contribution as an activist-intellectual in molding his memory risks being discounted.

On February 16, 1951, Du Bois and his colleagues at the Peace Information Center (PIC) were indicted under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 for failing to register the organization.[107] Though they were due to be married later that month, upon hearing news

---

For scholars that have written on the Communist Party as authoritarian and manipulative, see Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951) and Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1964). On the historiography of the Communist Party, including detailed accounts of the traditionalist and revisionist approaches, see Maurice Isserman, ''Three Generations: Historians View American Communism,'' *Labor History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 517–545; John Earl Haynes, ''The Cold War Debate Continues: A Traditionalist View of Historical Writing on Domestic Communism and Anti-Communism,'' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 76–115; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, ''The Historiography of American Communism: An Unsettled Field,'' *Labor History Review* 68, no. 1 (2003): 61–78; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, ''Revising Revisionism: A New Look at American Communism,'' *Academic Questions* 22, no. 4 (2009): 452–462; Bryan D. Palmer, ''Rethinking the Historiography of United States Communism,'' *American Communist History* 2, no. 2 (2003): 139–173.

[104] For how Black Left women sustained activism during the Cold War see Dayo F. Gore, "'The Danger of Being an Active Anti-Communist': Expansive Black Left Politics and the Long Civil Rights Movement," *American Communist History* 11, no. 1 (2012): 45-48; Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women activists in the Cold War* (*War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[105] Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 123.

[106] David Du Bois quoted in, *Du Bois: A Pictorial Biography* by Shirley Graham Du Bois (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1978), 136-167. Also see Phillip Luke Sinitiere, "'There must be no idle mourning': W.E.B. Du Bois's Legacy as a Black Radical Intellectual," *Socialism and Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 223.

[107] Charisse Burden-Stelly, "W.E.B. Du Bois in the Tradition of Radical Blackness: Radicalism, Repression, and Mutual Comradeship, 1930–1960," *Socialism and Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 196.

of the pending indictment Graham Du Bois declared, "We must be married right away."[108] She reasoned, "him in jail where only a wife would be permitted entrance […] only a wife could carry the case to the people. *I must be in a position to stand at his side*."[109] She joined her husband on a national speaking tour to explain the case and raise funds for his defense, she was involved in the National Committee to Defend Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Associates in the PIC, and she used her position in Black Left feminist organization Sojourners for Truth and Justice (STJ) to garner support. STJ's manifesto, "A Call to Negro Women," explained how Black women were subjected to racist and gendered violence rooted in their interlocking identities, and the state's complicity in that violence. The manifesto included denunciation of state repression against Black activists, including Du Bois: "when the greatest mind we have produced dares speak out for peace, he is handcuffed and indicted as a foreign agent."[110] Graham Du Bois' marriage to Du Bois and her activism on his behalf during his indictment and trial, like Cooper Jackson's defense of James Jackson, can be viewed as a component of both women's wider Black Left activism. In defending their husbands, they gained a platform to promote their analyses of the Black freedom struggle and anti-communist repression.

Graham Du Bois' activism was motivated by both a personal concern and a political commitment to socialism and Black freedom. Charisse Burden-Stelly describes it as "mutual comradeship," which she defines as "a political commitment [that] necessarily prioritizes the racialized, colonized, and oppressed to expose statist imposition."[111] Burden-Stelly's definition is derived from "Four Theses on a Comrade," by Jodi Dean who argues that comradeship develops from "the sameness of those who share a politics."[112] Mutual comradeship extends

[108] Shirley Graham "Comment," in *In Battle for Peace: The Story of My 83rd Birthday,* by W.E.B. Du Bois, (Masses & Mainstream: 1952), 58.
[109] Graham Du Bois, *In Battle for Peace,* 59.
[110] Sojourners for Truth and Justice, "A Call to Negro Women," 1951, in *A Call to Negro Women; A (Little Known) Black Feminist Manifesto with an introduction by Mariame Kaba and an essay by Ashley Farmer* (2019): 15, https://issuu.com/projectnia/docs/2019.02.03_a_call_to_negro____women.
[111] Burden-Stelly, "Tradition of Radical Blackness," 200.
[112] Burden-Stelly, "Tradition of Radical Blackness," 200.

Dean's thesis to explain how "white supremacy compounded the effects of imperialism, colonialism, capitalist exploitation, and antiradical repression."[113] As a method for combatting Cold War repression, it illuminates how Graham Du Bois saw her role as wife and her defense of her husband in political terms. Legally married, she would have visiting rights, be able to relay his messages from prison, and could not be called on to testify against him. As comrades, Graham Du Bois and Cooper Jackson had an ethical duty to support Black leftists whose work on behalf of all oppressed people was being stymied at the intersection of state anti-radicalism and anti-Blackness.

Graham Du Bois' mutual comradeship with Du Bois continued after his death as she endeavored to shape his legacy, in which she had a personal stake. In the Winter 1965 Du Bois Memorial issue of *Freedomways*, she pronounced, "there must be no idle mourning. He *lives* in greater abundance than ever before. He *lives* on both sides of the Atlantic […] In Africa, they pass on the words of 'Our Father,' sometimes 'The Oldest Freedom Fighter,' as Pan-Africanism unfolds over the vast continent."[114] In this brief message she situated Du Bois at the center of the long struggle for liberation in the US and throughout Africa. Phillip Luke Sinitiere argues that "as a black radical woman, she used her artistic sensibilities and her skill as an intellectual and writer to re-narrate the reception of, perception about and reputational future of her husband."[115] Her commitment to presenting Du Bois as a radical intellectual is evidenced in *His Day is Marching On*, in which just three of eighteen chapters detail his life before his settlement in New York in the 1940s, when Graham Du Bois began to play an increasingly influential role in his life. Du Bois' activism with the Niagara Movement and the NAACP in the early 1920s is glossed over in favor of more in-depth accounts of his activism

[113] Burden-Stelly, "Tradition of Radical Blackness," 200.
[114] Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois, "Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois," *Freedomways* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1965): 9.
[115] Phillip Luke Sinitiere, "'There must be no idle mourning': W.E.B. Du Bois's Legacy as a Black Radical Intellectual," *Socialism and Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 223.

for the global peace movement, his indictment, and his engagement with Africa and China. Her understanding of how her own legacy was ineradicably tied to her husband's is laid bare in the biography, which can be readily interpreted as autobiography. Throughout *His Day is Marching On,* Graham Du Bois recounts her recollection of events, evidenced at the beginning of chapter three in which she writes "my life for the next ten years has little bearing on this story because Du Bois came into it only through reading."[116] Instead of recounting details of Du Bois' life she was not part of, Graham Du Bois focuses the chapter on her time at Oberlin and subsequent correspondence with him to maintain her presence in his narrative.

Graham Du Bois' use of biography as a writer-activist began before her marriage to Du Bois. Between 1943 and 1955 she authored eight biographical novels— seven on the lives of Black Americans and one on the Native American Pocahontas. Through the lives of William George Carver, Paul Robeson, Benjamin Banneker, Phillis Wheatley, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable and Booker T. Washington, Graham Du Bois elaborated her ideas about race, class, colonialism, socialism, and gender and her understanding of culture's role in the freedom struggle that provided the political underpinnings for her editorship of *Freedomways*. Horne posits that "her invention of dialogue for her biographies was an extension of her life, for if she could create—and unmake—details of her own life, why couldn't she for someone else?"[117] Biographical novels allowed her to reimagine conversations among historical Black figures with her voice present in these conversations and in the narration of events.

The novels can be read for the evolution of Graham Du Bois' political shift to the Left after her arrival in New York in the early 1940s when she began to associate with a circle of

[116] Shirley Graham Du Bois, *His Day Is Marching On, A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971), 37.

[117] Horne suggests that Graham Du Bois was "chameleon-like, she adapted to the location in which she found herself,' and argued that she 'deliberate[ly] obfuscat[ed] the simplest details of her life," including her claim "that her first husband, whom she left in the 1920s after bearting two children, died." Horne, *Race Woman*, 2; 10; 104.

writers operating around the John Reed Club who "had leftist ties or were communists."[118] The influence of leftist circles is perceptible in her second publication *Paul Robeson, Citizen of the World* (1946). Through a fictional conversation between Robeson and Claude McKay walking the streets of Nice, Graham Du Bois reveals her thoughts on Russia and its socialist society. After exchanging greetings Robeson remarks, "You look as if you've just fallen in love. What is it? What have you been doing?" to which McKay replies "I've been in Russia."[119] The two meet up with McKay's friends and they discuss their time in the country. Through invented dialogue Graham Du Bois advocates for socialist revolution and the inherent connections between global freedom struggles. McKay's older friend, who remains unnamed, suggests Robeson limits himself by focusing solely on Black music in his career because:

> People are singing all over the world. Today their songs are separated by mountains and rivers and oceans, by drawn bayonets held across lines, by strong high walls and customs […] But some day [*sic*] a great artist will come who will stand on a high place. He will sing the songs of all the people. Hearing him, the people will make a glorious discovery. They will discover a secret which has been hidden from them through the ages—hidden by the powers of darkness—hidden because it sets men free […] They will know that all the songs are one—that they blend into a single mighty chorus.[120]

Graham Du Bois uses songs as metaphors for the freedom struggles that are happening across the world. She suggests that while each of them looks and sounds distinct, that they are in fact connected—one mighty chorus. She underlines the inseparability of liberation struggles against a common enemy, here named "the powers of darkness." Her use of literature in this way delineates the key tenet of Popular Front culture for how art and literature can work to forge revolutionary class consciousness.[121] That music is the method of communication employed in the biography also presents the case for culture's functional potential for socialism.

---

[118] Alesia Elaine McFadden, "The Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois: A Twentieth Century African American Torchbearer," (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2009), 271, Open Access Dissertations (76) https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/76/.
[119] Shirley Graham, *Paul Robeson, Citizen of the World* (Connecticut: Negro University Press, 1946), 175; McFadden, "The Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois," 288.
[120] Graham, *Citizen of the World*, 176.
[121] See Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1997); Bill V. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

Her fictional biography is also representative of Popular Front culture in its international scope. James Smethurst suggests that internationalism was a key component of Black Left writer's work in the 1930s, "in no small part due to the Comintern's connection of African Americans with the colonial populations of the world, as well as with the working classes of the metropoles," and he argues for continuity "after the official end of the Popular Front and the onset of World War II."[122] Graham DuBois' biography is an example of this continuity. The development of her internationalism is addressed further in Chapter Two, but in *Citizen of the World*, she advances connections between people of color and the working class when Robeson thinks about how "the fisherman, their wives and children, huddled in the coves," in France remind him of "the beggars crouched against St Paul's Cathedral," and "of Harlem."[123] Robeson's fictive persona moves from an image that places working class poverty at the heart of empire to Harlem—the Black capital in New York—at the heart of US capitalism. At this point in the novel Robeson turns to his wife, Eslanda, and proclaims "I'm going to Russia."[124] Graham Du Bois conceived of writing as "a tool with which to do something."[125] She claimed she wrote the book in the hope that it would "inspire blacks and inform whites."[126] It also reflected her political shift to the Left in the areas of his life that she chose to include and it was subsequently targeted for subversive political views. Graham Du Bois' writing enabled her to generate an adequate income for the first time in her adult life, despite anti-communist repression leading to a decline in sales. As her popularity as an author increased, so did her role as an activist.

"The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois": *Freedomways* Reclaims a Legacy

[122] James Edward Smethhurst, *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8-11.
[123] Graham, *Citizen of the World,* 177.
[124] Graham, *Citizen of the World*, 177.
[125] Graham Du Bois, *His Day Is Marching On*, 62.
[126] Graham Du Bois, *His Day Is Marching On*, 66.

Graham Du Bois' biographical novels were not the only cultural form she employed to communicate her politics. Since the 1930s she had been a musician, composer, playwright, and director. Her position as comrade and wife to Du Bois has led to a relative neglect of her cultural activism.[127] The other *Freedomways'* editors endeavored to rectify this in the Winter 1985 issue, with the publication of "The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois." The essay framed her as a Black intellectual whose path to activism began before her marriage:

> The many accomplishments of Shirley Graham Du Bois in the areas of music and theater have been overlooked or forgotten like those of too many talented [B]lack artists […] Few Blacks have succeeded simultaneously as a writer, composer, conductor and director. To achieve success in just one for these areas would have been noteworthy for a [B]lack woman during Graham Du Bois's time and in such a short span of years. To have achieved in all of those areas deserves acclaim and appreciation.[128]

In the 1980s, Kathy A. Perkins claimed Graham Du Bois' work had been overlooked because the landscape of music and the theatre was "overwhelming dominated by whites and men" in the 1930s and 1940s, but her artistic activism from the composition of her opera *Tom Tom* (1932), analyzed in Chapter Two, to her work in the Federal Theater Project in Chicago (1936-38) attests to it.[129] Perkins suggested "the unfortunate fact that only one of her plays and one of her musical compositions have been published to date testifies to the neglect her work suffers."[130] She believed that, "Graham Du Bois shared her husband's cause and, following his death in 1963, spent the rest of her life trying to vindicate his name from the slanderous effects

---

[127] For exceptions see Bettina Aptheker, "The Passion and Pageantry of Shirley Graham's Opera Tom-Tom," *Souls* 18, no. 2 (2016): 263-270; Alesia Elaine McFadden, "The Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois: A Twentieth Century African American Torchbearer," (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2009), 271, Open Access Dissertations (76) https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/76/; Sarah Schmalenberger, "Debuting Her Political Voice: The Lost Opera of Shirley Graham," *Black Music Research Journal* 26, no. 1 (2006): 39-87.

[128] Kathy A. Perkins, "The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," *Freedomways,* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 17.

[129] Perkins "Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," 6. Increasing Cold War repression of leftist activists and ideas also contributed to the obscurity of her work. The Federal Theater Project in Chicago for which she was director was targeted by HUAC for promoting Communist propaganda and was consequently shut down.

[130] Perkins, "Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," 17. Shirley Graham Du Bois authored seven plays, *Tom Tom* (1932), *It's Morning* (1937), *Cold Dust* (1939), *Dust to Earth* (1940), *I Gotta Home* (1939), *Elijah's Raven's* (1940), and *Track 13* (1940), all of which have now been published and made available online by Alexander Street Press.

of his arrest and trial. This commitment ended her professional career."[131] Graham Du Bois' activism was seemingly bound to her husband's and, while Perkins claimed that her ambitions as a musicologist had "given way to other interests" prior to their marriage, she nonetheless emphasized how commitment to her husband limited the spaces in which Graham Du Bois' self-generated activism could occur.

Dedication to her spouse should not lead to a wholesale disregard of Graham Du Bois' work. The intimate connection between her and Du Bois' political thinking renders their individual ideas and opinions difficult to disentangle. Even while recovering Graham Du Bois' work, Perkins depoliticized their romantic relationship and her efforts before and after her husband's death. Women's advocacy for their husbands is a facet of their intellectual activism that should not be overshadowed by the personal nature of relationships. In *Freedomways,* these relationships did not eclipse celebrations of women's writings, speeches, and praxis. The left-leaning content of Graham Du Bois' compositions, plays, and novels caught the attention of anti-communist Cold War authorities and were the target of FBI repression that, combined with her marriage, disrupted her professional career. But in *Freedomways*, alongside Cooper Jackson, Burnham, Rogers, and Bond, who shared a Black leftist belief in culture's efficacy in the liberation struggle, she rekindled her engagement with cultural approaches that she had developed during the 1930s and 1940s through the inclusion of music, art, literature, and theatre in the magazine. For example, there were fourteen contributions about music, including essays on jazz and the blues, and printed song lyrics. Her creative approach had largely given way to a more political and journalistic methods in the 1960s and 1970s, as evidenced by her writing, speeches, and activities in this period and that will be discussed in Chapter Two. Art, fiction, and poetry continued to be promoted in the magazine after Graham Du Bois' departure from the editorial board in 1964, but her editorship from the beginning set the tone for the

[131] Perkins, "Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," 16.

magazine's cultural scope and *Freedomways'* editorial team reclaimed her contributions for the global Black freedom struggle and clarified her position in Black intellectual history.

Posthumous acts of memorialization of other women featured in the magazine, included Eslanda Robeson in the Fall 1966 issue. [132] Cooper Jackson, Burnham and Graham Du Bois had known her since the 1940s and the idea for the issue came from Robeson's own proposal for "a special issue in tribute to the role which women of African descent have played in freedom movements the world over."[133] A "friend of FREEDOMWAYS since its inception," the editors framed Robeson as a "writer, anthropologist, lecturer [and] world traveler."[134] The memorialization included "Remembrances of Eslanda" written by friends and associates, as well as selections of her written work and her speeches that foregrounded her thinking on race, gender, colonialism, internationalism, and peace. A reprint of her speech "The Freedom Family" illuminated her Black Left feminist politics developed from lived experience:

> In Harlem, I found that I belonged to a much larger family—the Negro family— and that I had 15 million Negro relations […] In the public schools of New York I learned that I belonged to a still larger family, the American family […] Later on when I travelled through Africa, I discovered that I belonged to the African family […] with more travelling, experience, and study I learned that I also belonged to the family of colored peoples […] When I began to feel that I must take some direct active part in the political life of my country, I joined a Political family (The Progressive Party).[135]

Originally delivered at a meeting in New York for victims of the Smith Act in October 1951, Robeson explained how each interlocking facet of her identity coalesced to inform her participation in a global freedom struggle as a Black, American, African-descended, socialist woman.

---

[132] Eslanda Robeson died on December 13, 1965.Graham Du Bois was the only one of the four editors in this study to die while the magazine was in publication. She died on March 27, 1977 in Peking, China. Cooper Jackson, Burnham, and Carey Bond are all still alive at the time of writing.
[133] Letter from John Henrik Clarke to Augusta Strong, June 3, 1966, Sc MG 572, Box 30, Folder 26, JHC Papers.
[134] The Editors, "Tribute to Eslanda Robeson," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 327.
[135] Eslanda Robeson, "The Freedom Family," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 343-344.

She promoted international feminist solidarity and included women's oppression in her intersectional analysis when she averred that "together with my Sisters [I] work in every way I can for Peace-in-our-time. This family is of course related to Women and Peace fighters everywhere."[136] Promotions of sisterhood and solidarity will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, but it was a principal component of Black Left feminists' internationalism, and Robeson's liberatory agenda. In a review report of the 1958 Accra Conference for *New World Review* in February 1959, which was also reprinted in *Freedomways*, she recalled that she had spoken to women at the conference, and to the women's organization in Accra "about the lack of women delegates at the conference. They agreed that this was a sign of backwardness, that women in Africa do participate in all the freedom struggles," and she asserted that "a whole population cannot be properly mobilized if half of it is officially ignored."[137] From the intertwining pieces of her identity Robeson formulated a broader understanding of links between struggles in "North and South America, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia and Africa," against colonialism, imperialism, racism, women's oppression, capitalism, and war.[138] Robeson was celebrated in *Freedomways* for her ideas of a broad "Freedom family" and the necessity of addressing interlocking systems of oppression globally that aligned with the editors' socialist politics. As with Graham Du Bois, Robeson's relationship to her famous activist husband, Paul Robeson, was given attention:

> She was ever proud of being Mrs. Paul Robeson, and yet standing beside her renowned husband, in the midst of the beloved family, the children and grandchildren, she was a complete and separate woman unto herself, writing, lecturing, using the fullness of each day with little, if any, time for retreat or despair.[139]

Her efforts against racial capitalism were presented as equal to those of her husband, as novelist Alice Childress accentuated when describing her as a "complete and separate woman unto

[136] Robeson, "The Freedom Family," 344.
[137] Eslanda Robeson "The Accra Conference," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 349.
[138] Robeson, "The Freedom Family," 344.
[139] Alice Childress, "Remembrances of Eslanda," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 329.

herself." The editors shaped content in line with their political outlooks and intellectual backgrounds, recognizing other women, often their friends, as producers of knowledge in the global black freedom struggle.

"I Picked Up Where I Left Off": Jean Carey Bond's Growing Editorial Role

When the Black women's collective at the heart of *Freedomways* came together in New York to create a magazine grounded in their Black Left politics and Jean Carey Bond joined them, she did not have the activist experience Burnham and Cooper Jackson had in SNYC. Nor did she have extensive experience in the Black literary left like Graham Du Bois. Her intellectual approach to the freedom struggle was grounded in her upbringing in New York. Bond was born in Harlem, the daughter of the city's first Black heart surgeon and the niece of well-known Black Communist Ben Davis.[140] She credited her family background for her leftist politics because her "uncle was a very prominent figure in the Communist Party," and her father "a socialist," so she went to what she described as "a progressive school."[141] She grew up in the "two worlds" of Harlem and Greenwich Village, and remembered that "in Harlem's multifaceted world, African-American intellectuals, artists and professionals lived side by side with the black working people of many talents who had fled the South's lynching fields and led what's called the 'Great Migration' northward."[142]

In Greenwich Village, Bond attended the Little Red School House founded in 1921 by educator, psychologist, and reformer Elisabeth Irwin. Former student Ronald Radosh has

[140] Bond's father, Dr. Carey, was physician to W.E.B. Du Bois during his time in New York and her uncle Ben Davis represented Angelo Herndon, a nineteen-year-old Communist Party organizer who was arrested in 1931 in Georgia and indicted for attempting to overthrow the government for heading an integrated group of 'hungry Atlantans who marched to the Fulton County Courthouse.' Davis was radicalized by Herndon's case and joined the Communist Party, embedding himself in the Communist milieu of Harlem in the 1930s. He served as city councilman from 1943 to 1949 and was himself indicted under the Smith Act in the 1950s. John Hammond Moore, "The Angelo Herndon Case, 1932-1937," *Phylon* 32, no. 1 (1971): 60.
[141] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, November 9, 2001, New York, interview shared with me by email by Erik S. McDuffie.
[142] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Women's Voices for Change, July 22, 2009, https://womensvoicesforchange.org/memories-of-max-bond-the-real-master-builder.htm,.

suggested that it "was a refuge for teachers who would be thrown out of the public school system because they would not sign the Feinberg Law oath, stating that they were not members of the Communist Party."[143] Bond described the school as a "cocoon of radicalism" attended by children of "European immigrants: socialist visionaries and revolutionaries."[144] Given the radical climate of her upbringing, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bond would find herself moving in the intellectual circles of the Black literary Left in adulthood. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1959 and, knowing she wanted to be a writer, joined the Harlem Writer's Guild upon her return to Harlem.

Bond met the women at *Freedomways*, she said, because "Esther and others were around the Guild and there was a whole community of cultural activists and writers and people who were older and had been involved with the National Negro Congress and the earlier incarnation of the Black Arts Movement and so forth."[145] After Graham Du Bois stepped down as editor in 1964, Cooper Jackson, Jack O'Dell, and John Henrik Clarke constituted the core editorial staff, but Clarke stressed that "there [was] really only one, full-time functioning editor at FREEDOMWAYS […] Esther Jackson."[146] Bond was a founder of the magazine and initially a contributing editor. She wrote book reviews and some articles but allowed that she was "not involved with the actual editorial work of the magazine at that point."[147] She relocated to Ghana with her husband J. Max Bond Jr. in 1964 but considered herself still very much "associated with the magazine," and continued to offer Cooper Jackson editorial critique.[148] In a letter she wrote in August 1964 for example, she sent her thoughts on the Spring 1964 issue, "since I wasn't able to attend the board meeting. I particularly wanted to do so […] because

[143] Ronald Radosh, *Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001), 25.
[144] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Women's Voices for Change.
[145] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 29, 2004, interviewed shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[146] Letter from John Henrik Clarke to Ms. Latham and Ms. McRae, August 4, 1975, Box 30, Folder 37, JHC Papers.
[147] Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[148] Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

my reactions were quite negative."[149] Bond's critique reflected her literary background and training at Sarah Lawrence when she argued that the issue "lacked vitality and boldness, partly due to the uneven quality of the writing from article to article."[150] When she returned to New York in 1968, she "picked up where [she] left off," taking on increased editorial responsibilities and becoming more involved with production:

> I worked for several years with Esther, and we sort of together put it out, and I did a lot of copy editing and was involved in a lot of the decisions that were made, about what's going to go into the magazine […] in the last years of its existence, I really worked on a daily basis at the office and was effectively the managing editor I guess you could say, but again, under Esther's supervision.[151]

Bond's leadership was reflected in the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration for *Freedomways* which listed her and Cooper Jackson as lead editors.[152] Her editorial voice is felt more strongly after her promotion to associate editor in 1980, when she suggests she "was effectively managing editor."[153] Before this period, her literary approach was reflected most in the fifteen book reviews she wrote for the magazine. After being promoted, her contributions expanded through decision-making and editorials, and she authored essays on peace, war, imperialism, socialism, and feminism much more frequently.

In her editorials, Bond advanced an expansive view of the freedom struggle that included concern for all of humanity and the planet. In the editorial for *Freedomways'* twentieth birthday issue, she traced the development of the language of the freedom movement, averring "we were Negroes in 1961; lately we are Afro-Americans. Now let it be added that we are citizens of the small planet Earth, which is threatened with fiery extinction; and we are brothers and sisters to millions whose humanity is under siege."[154] Bond's Black Left feminist politics differed slightly from Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois', something she attributed

[149] Letter from Jean Carey Bond to Esther Cooper Jackson, August 20, 1964, Box 5, Folder 14, JHC Papers.
[150] Jean Carey Bond to Esther Cooper Jackson, 20 August 1964.
[151] Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[152] "The Freedomways Legacy: A 25th Anniversary Celebration," Box 6, Folder 48, ECJ Papers.
[153] Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[154] The Editors, "And Now We Are Twenty," *Freedomways* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 5-6.

to being of a 'different generation' and analyzed in more detail in Chapter Three.[155] But in essays and editorials, she expressed a socialist politics that chimed with other editors' and reflected her political development in the radical socialist environment of Greenwich Village. In her essay "Merchandising War" for the Fall 1980 issue, Bond explored how the US sold war to the American public through the myth of the Soviet threat and used this threat to justify the development of nuclear armaments, arguing "the power of this concept of the U.S. as victim to obscure […] the real threats confronting us and all humanity—the threats presented by continued unequal distribution of the world's resources, by racism, by world war, etc."[156] Bond's analysis fit the magazine's wider socialist viewpoint and reflected her editorial focus on the relationship between capitalism and war that she also advanced in the Spring 1985 penultimate editorial "Of Wars and Birthdays." Through book reviews, essays, editorials, and editorial decision making, Bond advanced her socialist politics and literary approach that affirms how the magazine can be read for its contribution to Black women's intellectual history.

***

Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Dorothy Burnham, and Jean Carey Bond had a multigenerational political friendship. Each woman was embedded in a Black radical tradition and engaged in activism before participating in *Freedomways.* As writers, editors, and organizers throughout its twenty-five-year history, they constituted "the heart of the collective," a phrase that Cooper Jackson used to describe women at the magazine.[157] The women at *Freedomways* worked in collaboration, employing their distinct intellectual approaches that could sustain their Black Left feminist politics. This collaborative way of

[155] Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[156] Jean Carey Bond, "Merchandising War," *Freedomways* 20, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 279.
[157] Cooper Jackson, *Freedomways Reader,* 204.

working was reflective of their previous organizing experience in Black Left groups including SNYC, STJ and the Harlem Writers Guild, and enabled them to work alongside men at the magazine. In positions more traditionally occupied by men they could shape its scope and viewpoint. Their intellectual and political thinking on the freedom movement developed out of their lived experience and they brought sociology, science, art, and literature, to bear on their editorship. I have argued for their position as Black intellectuals in academia, and the print media, as well as in art, music, and grassroots organizing to expand understanding of what intellectualism looks like in this context. Having traced the roots of *Freedomways* and the collective's political and intellectual development, Chapter Two explores the role of international travel in sustaining the women editors' thinking on Black internationalism. It analyses their activism against racial capitalist imperialism and examines how this was presented in *Freedomways*.

Chapter Two: "Travel, In Its Truest Form, Is an Art": International Travel and Black Women's Internationalism

The Spring 1974 issue of *Freedomways* advertised "People-To-People Tours" from the United States to the Soviet Union, Middle East, and "Socialist Europe."[1] The advertisement appeared again in the Fall 1975 issue edited to read: "Travel with ANNIVERSARY TOURS… meet our friends around the world."[2] Aware of the economic privileges associated with international travel, the magazine promoted "Worker-to-Worker Budget Tours to the Soviet Union" and "Youth Bargain Travel," as well as Group Tours to the USSR, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America.[3] "Workers' Specials (for workers and farmers only)," offered two-week tours of the Soviet Union for $760 or $900, while other tours were between $1,135 and $1,235.[4] Though less expensive, these prices still required a disposable income unlikely to be enjoyed by workers or farmers in the US. The class dynamics of these advertisements were consolidated in descriptions of the tours as incorporating "All Meals • First Class Hotels • Fully Escorted," and "Cruises" and "Health Spas/Sanitoria."[5] While presenting an opportunity for individuals on lower incomes to travel internationally, Anniversary Tours and *Freedomways*' editors couched package deals in a language of luxury that was at odds with attempts to keep costs down. Information on the extent to which these advertisements may have led to bookings is not available, but the focus on international connection is clear for readers, and the editors underlined the relationship between physical

[1] "People-To-People Tours," *Freedomways* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): inside cover.
[2] "Travel with ANNIVERSARY TOURS," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): inside cover. The advertisement then appeared in the following two issues of the magazine, Winter and Spring 1976. It is not clear why these advertisements were only listed for such a short period of time; however, it could be speculated that Anniversary Tours were not receiving sufficient bookings to continue paying for advertising space within the magazine.
[3] "Travel with ANNIVERSARY TOURS," inside cover. Though each advertisement offered 'budget' and 'bargain' travel, only the Spring 1974 advert featured a list of prices.
[4] "People-To-People Tours," inside cover.
[5] "People-To-People Tours," inside cover; "Travel with ANNIVERSARY TOURS," inside cover.

travel and building international solidarities. The choice to use descriptors like "People-To-People" and "Worker-to-Worker" suggests travel's facility for creating collaborations and implies an important difference between *reading* about "our friends around the world" and *meeting* "our friends around the world." There are economic and class privileges inherent in international mobility, but *Freedomways'* editors clearly believed in the global contours of the Black freedom struggle. This belief derived from their lived experience.

A chief component of Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Dorothy Burnham, and Jean Carey Bond's Black Left feminist politics was a global view of the freedom struggle. This chapter analyzes the editors' internationalism and the role travel played in consolidating an interconnected activist stance, not only against racism but also against the oppression of women, colonialism, imperialism, and war. As intellectuals, *Freedomways'* women editors held conceptions of internationalism that were informed by their wider political development on the Left and travel was an avenue through which they sustained their internationalism when the US domestic scene was at best unsympathetic, and at worst hostile, to leftist radicalism in the Cold War context. It facilitated the creation of an international activist network of writers who could be called upon for first-hand accounts, as well as for the subscription bases that were essential to the magazine's survival. Different forms of travel offered varying experiences that affected the extent to which existing political outlooks were either affirmed or transformed, but in most cases, travel, and the relationships it nurtured, were important for keeping the faith and sustaining activists' morale. Rather than an openness to new and different viewpoints, the editors travelled with an eagerness to meet like-minded people who could affirm their beliefs in key facets of Black Left feminism, leading to a continuity in political outlook that is reflected in the magazine. I examine travel to international conferences, short visits abroad, and more permanent re-patriation to argue for how they

shaped the internationalism and socialist politics of the editors, and I assess how they were presented in the magazine for readers who lacked the privilege of mobility.

"Young People from All Over the World": Building Solidarity at International Conferences

As Executive Secretary of the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC), Cooper Jackson was invited to attend international youth conferences in Mexico and London. Under the auspices of the International Youth Planning Conference, she travelled to Mexico City in October 1941 to "initiate plans of youth solidarity in the defeat of Hitler."[6] Young activists from "Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and the United States," had come together to formulate a unified response to "Hitlerism."[7] Principal to discussion was the premise of the conference—attendees believed that they faced a common struggle against a common enemy, an assumption central to the Popular Front phase in leftist politics. Cooper Jackson reported that she was "happy to work with the democratic loving youth from all the countries of America in this historic meeting" because "our struggle for freedom in the United States can only be won by joining hands with them to destroy the menace of Hitler. This is OUR FIGHT."[8] Her trip to Mexico introduced her to the possibility of coalitional activism on an international scale and through it she expressed her burgeoning belief that thinking in international terms was essential to struggle.

Cooper Jackson's leftist politics were supported further at the World Youth Conference in London held between October 29 and November 10, 1945 when she heard activists from around the world who espoused ideals in line with her own. Convened under the direction of

[6] Esther V. Cooper, "Hitler's Foes from Canada to the Cape," *Cavalcade*, November 1941, 5, Box 167, Folder 19, Edward Strong Papers, Moorland Springarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington DC (Hereafter Ed Strong Papers).
[7] Cooper, "Hitler's Foes from Canada to the Cape," 5.
[8] Cooper, "Hitler's Foes from Canada to the Cape," 7.

the World Youth Council, an organization founded in 1941 to represent the youth of the Allied and occupied countries of World War II, the conference was organized to discuss "the problems and desires of democratic young people from all parts of the world and the responsibility that they bear in helping to secure peace and build a better world."[9] Present were 437 delegates from sixty-two countries, including the future president of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, who would also become a central figure in *Freedomways*' activist network.



Figure 2: Esther Cooper with Vidya Kanuga of the Indian All Students Federation and an unidentified British reporter at the World Youth Congress, London, 1945 published in *Chicago Bee,* December 16, 1945.

[9] Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 157; Esther Cooper Jackson, "Historic London Conference United Youth of the World", Box 11, Folder 33, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York (Hereafter cited as ECJ Papers).

The conference addressed world peace, the atomic bomb, colonial independence, and capitalism. In *The People's Voice*, Cooper Jackson reported that "the problems of the colonial people of the world received much attention."[10] For example, Kitty Boomla, a delegate from the All-Indian Students Federation (AISF), urged that "youth in the advanced countries take practical steps to eliminate color and racial discrimination in factories and workshops, in trade unions, in schools and colleges and in literature."[11] This sentiment chimed with the Black Left feminist politics Cooper Jackson exhibited in her MA thesis and SNYC activism. She was being exposed to the ideas of political organizations and saw liberation from capitalist imperialism as tied to the actions of youth "in the advanced countries" who were fighting racial discrimination in their various locales.

In Figure 2 Cooper Jackson is seen talking to Indian student activist Vidya Kanuga, another delegate of AISF about "mutual problems."[12] The AISF was founded in 1936 to consolidate existing student organizations at the national level across political lines, but Tom Wilkinson has pointed out that by 1940 "the communist student leaders successfully expanded and institutionalized their power in the AISF."[13] The organization's socialist politics aligned with SNYC's anti-imperialism and Popular Front promotions of unity. Like SNYC, the AISF followed Party line throughout World War II, shifting from condemnations of British colonialism, to support for the British war effort against fascism after Nazi Germany invaded Russia in 1941. Kanuga's student and women's activism chimed with Cooper Jackson's, and they shared a feminism on the Left as women of color with global views of the struggle for liberation. Boomla and Kanuga invited Cooper Jackson to the International Congress of Women in Paris later that month, that would establish the Women's International Democratic

[10] Esther Cooper Jackson, "American Girl Views World Youth Confab," *The People's Voice*, 24 November 1945.
[11] Cooper Jackson, "American Girl Views World Youth Confab," 24.
[12] "Youth Leaders Confer," *Chicago Bee,* December 16, 1945: 6.
[13] Tom Wilkinson, "Student Politics in British India and Beyond: The Rise and Fragmentation of the All India Student Federation (AISF), 1936 – 1950," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 22 (2019): 4.

Federation (WIDF), however for unexplained reasons, the State Department refused to grant her visa to travel.[14]

Listening to addresses made by young people from colonized countries beyond her immediate American context and engaging in personal conversations, Cooper Jackson consolidated her commitment to socialism. Attendance situated her as part of a global struggle and further instilled in her the necessity of building international solidarities for the freedom and independence of all people.[15] She met "young people from all over the world who were all determined to make changes in their society for the better," and she discerned "a belief [in] many of them that capitalism wasn't the answer to their problems."[16] Networks made were maintained through the creation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), an outcome of the conference that regarded its work as a contribution to the United Nations and a means of protecting the rights and interests of youth across the world. Cooper Jackson was elected to the permanent council.

But while mobility facilitated access to the conference space, the site of the conference, and consequently the travel experience, was peripheral to the affirmation of Cooper Jackson's political outlook. It was meeting with other leftists from across the world that had the largest impact on her, as evidenced by her reports that emphasized communication rather than location. Conference attendance meant that when speaking on the US freedom struggle's global contours, she could employ a Black feminist epistemology that emphasized "lived experience as a criterion of meaning making."[17] Patricia Hill Collins argues that Black women have "often

[14] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011). 155.
[15] Nicholas Grant argues that transatlantic journeys shaped how activists "related to one another's struggles," and Cooper Jackson's attendance at conferences demonstrates the role conversations with like-minded people played in consolidating her ideas about global connections and common oppression. Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans and Apartheid, 1945-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 66.
[16] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro, August 31, 2006, Box 27, 5 ECJ Papers.
[17] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment,* 2nd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2000), 254.

relied on alternative knowledge validating processes," that constitute the four tenets of Black feminist epistemology— lived experience as a criterion of meaning, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, the ethics of caring, and the ethic of personal accountability.[18] In her promotion of Black Americans' connection to global anti-colonial and antifascist struggles in reports of her trips to Mexico and London, Cooper Jackson situated herself through use of the first person as deeply involved and in the employment of active verbs "meeting," "planning," and reporting how, "despite the handicaps of language, a feeling of real brotherhood and solidarity was evident."[19] If Collins argues that "new knowledge claims are […] developed through dialogues with other members of a community," Cooper Jackson substantiated her knowledge about global solidarity in discussions with activists. She invoked an ethics of caring and personal accountability through emotional and personal language: she was "happy" to work with "democratic loving youth" from across the world and felt that she had been personally influenced by her experience— "it affected my work for the rest of my life. There's no question about it."[20] Cooper Jackson embraced international conferences and networking to find people who would affirm her views. A Black feminist epistemology that places value on lived experience is marked in *Freedomways'* inclusion of first-hand travel accounts and conference reports, and through them can be traced connections between global struggles against racial capitalist imperialism for an international reading audience.

International conferences were spaces for discussion and for building activist networks that would lend authority to women's intellectual work, but the extent to which they could also transform an activist's thinking was dependent on how an individual built on them. Conferences gave Cooper Jackson opportunities to meet like-minded activists working towards similar aims. The seeds of her internationalism were planted during pacifist activism at Oberlin

[18] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 254.
[19] Esther V. Cooper, "Hitler's Foes from Canada to the Cape," *Cavalcade*, November 1941, 5, Box 167, Folder 19, Ed Strong Papers.
[20] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro.

and her time in SNYC before she began travelling abroad. *Cavalcade: March of Southern Youth* featured a "Youth Around the World" segment that delivered information on international youth movements to its grassroots readership. In its October 1941 issue, the periodical detailed SNYC's birth when "the fascist rape of Ethiopia still painted the consciousness of the world."[21] SNYC maintained that "with the young people in colonial countries [we have] felt a close kinship," because "we share with you a common enemy—fascism."[22] Cooper Jackson's report on her trip to Mexico echoed the kinship SNYC proclaimed in "All Out for Democracy." SNYC was founded in response to international events and its activists understood the global contours of their work as particularly connected to struggles against colonialism because of a shared source of exploitation.

This viewpoint was sustained in *Freedomways* as the editors advanced their thinking on the relationship between racism, colonialism, and global capital. For example, in the editorial for the Winter 1962 special issue, Graham Du Bois posited that "the interest of American Negroes in Africa is of deep and partisan intensity," not only because of "the ties of blood which bind the present-day Negroes in America to their African brothers," but also "the blood-letting at the hands of our common exploiters."[23] Graham Du Bois traced the historic connections among Afro-descended people and how they endured in the contemporary moment as both Black Americans and Africans on the continent struggled against the "common exploiters"—racial capitalist imperialism manifest in segregation and discrimination in the US and Western colonial control in Africa. And in the Summer 1972 Afro-Asia special issue, when Cooper Jackson was the only editor working full-time, she published an essay by political economist Robert Rhodes that argued for international solidarity in the Black freedom struggle in the face of a predatory neo-colonialism emanating from Western Europe and the United

[21] "All-Out for Democracy," *Cavalcade,* October 1941, Box 167, Folder 19, Ed Strong Papers.
[22] "All-Out for Democracy."
[23] The Editors, "The new Image of Africa," *Freedomways* 2, no. 4 (Fall 1962): 357.

States. Central to his argument, was that "Africans and other Third World peoples […] who have pursued the capitalist path of development have, without exception, all failed in developing viable independent economies."[24] He put forward a classic Marxist-Leninist analysis representative of Cooper Jackson's political views that rooted this failure in the lack of class struggle and participation in the global capitalist system which maintained dependence on colonial and neo-colonial "aid," resulting in the exploitation of their national resources. He argued for the relationship between race and class, as Cooper Jackson had done in her MA thesis and SNYC activism, because "since the majority of black people in the US and overseas are workers, an anti-working class position is an anti-black position."[25] His essay demonstrates how as editor, Cooper Jackson selected material that chimed with her own thinking about the connection between US and international liberation struggles grounded in Black peoples' lived experience at the intersection of race and class. The editors covered global freedom struggles consistently in the magazine, including in Grenada, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, and the Congo through which they sustained the international tenets of their Black Left feminist politics that emphasized a common enemy and building international solidarity among people of color and the working class for global liberation.

SNYC's internationalist philosophy underpinned the global nature of racial capital and salient links between different struggles for peace and freedom, and international conferences instilled a sense of belonging to a coherent global movement. They also facilitated the creation of international activist networks that would be important to *Freedomways* twenty years later because of the experiences of the editors. SNYC continued to participate in the WFDY and in 1946, Education Director Dorothy Burnham travelled to Paris for the organization's first council meeting. She gave a speech arguing against "members of this Council [who] have

[24] Robert Rhodes, "Internationalism and Social Consciousness in the Black Community," *Freedomways* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 233.
[25] Rhodes, "Internationalism and Social Consciousness in the Black," 235.

accepted the declaration proclaimed so often that the United States is the seat of peace and well-being," because, in her opinion, "the United States is the center of imperialist activities."[26] The WFDY failed to recognize, she said, that "the atomic bomb trials seem to be proof that the United States are in the forefront of those who want to prepare a new war," and that "the 'Ku-Klux Klan is growing very much in the United States and this organization is perhaps one of the most powerful active fascist forces in the world."[27] Burnham used international conferences to advocate for the connection between US and global anti-fascist struggles to an international audience. Haviland argues that Burnham's speech "brought the discrepancies between American democratic rhetoric and the reality of racism and segregation in the South to the forefront of a global conversation about injustice."[28] In response, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) cabled Attorney General Tom C. Clark "in the name of forty nations" to express "indignation at the assassination of four Negroes two of which were women, committed in the state of Georgia, July 25."[29] They believed "no democratic state can tolerate similar crimes of racial and fascist inspiration" and they asked for "punishment of murderers and measures protecting the Negro population."[30] Their action demonstrates how Burnham's analyses presented at WFDY influenced international organization's thinking and activism on behalf of Black people in the US. Conferences not only gave Cooper Jackson and Burnham the opportunity to consolidate their thinking on the world-wide contours of the struggle against racial capitalist imperialism, but also gave them an international platform for their ideas and the opportunity to put the international tenets of Black Left feminism into practice, while expanding their activist networks.

---

[26] "Accuses Byrnes off Harboring KKK-Fascism at Home but Preaching Democracy Abroad," *Plaindealer* (Kansas City, Kansas) 48, no. 33, August 16, 1946: 1.
[27] "Accuses Byrnes off Harboring KKK-Fascism at Home," 1.
[28] Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 94.
[29] "Paris Group Hits Lynching," *People's Voice,* September 7, 1946: 16.
[30] "Paris Group Hits Lynching," 16.

Burnham continued to attend international conferences after SNYC's demise in 1948. She journeyed to Copenhagen in 1953 for the WIDF conference. The WIDF was founded in Paris in November 1945 as a "progressive left-feminist international umbrella organization."[31] Like SNYC, it had a strong association with the communist world and many of its leading women were communists. Francisca de Haan has suggested the idea for WIDF emerged "in a context of shared transnational, anti-fascist, anti-war, socialist and feminist activism" during World War II.[32] It was an international network that sought to build solidarity among women toward the interrelated goals of decolonization, peace, women's rights, and better conditions for children.

The 1953 conference was attended by 1,990 representatives from sixty-seven countries, of whom 613 were delegates, 1213 guests and sixty-five observers.[33] It celebrated the fact that it had "brought together women of very different nationalities, races, walks of life, political opinions, religious convictions, who spoke in the name of hundreds of millions of women, united by the desire to find a basis of understanding which will enable them to join together their forces for the cause of peace and progress."[34] Yulia Gradskova has argued that "the gradual inclusion of women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America led at times to conflict about

---

[31] Francisca de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation: History, Main Agenda and Contributions, 1945-1991", in *Women and Social Movements International (WASI) Online Archive,* eds. Thomas Dublin and Kathryn Kish Sklar, 2012, 1.

[32] de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation," 10. For more on the WIDF see Elisabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 2 (2015): 305-331; Yulia Gradskova, *The Women's International Democratic Federation, the Global South and the Cold War: Defending the Rights of Women of the 'Whole World'?* (London: Routledge, 2021); Melanie Ilic, "Soviet Women, Cultural Exchange, and the Women's International Democratic Federation," in *Reassessing Cold War Europe,* ed. Sari Autio and Miklósy Katalin (London: Routledge, 2010) 171-188; Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organizations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, "Fighting Fascism and Forging New Political Activism: The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in the Cold War," in *De-Centering Cold War History,* ed. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza (London: Routledge, 2012), 64-84.

[33] "As One! For Equality. For Happiness. For Peace", World Congress of Women, Copenhagen, June 5-10, 1953 (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1953), 3, Women and Social Movements International 1840 to Present, Alexander Street, *https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C1631445#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|1631445.*

[34] "As One! For Equality. For Happiness. For Peace," 3.

the struggle and aims of the organization […] especially when proposed changes went against current Soviet foreign policy goals."[35] She suggests that "the lack of internal democracy in the Federation and the dominant role of the Secretariat in the organization's decision-making process meant that women from the Global South were rarely appointed onto the key bodies," and therefore "struggled to shape the WIDF's programs in ways that benefitted the women in their countries."[36] However, the organization's public support for anti-colonial struggles, women's rights, and their rhetoric of solidarity, peace, and progress was in line with Burnham's Popular Front coalitional politics that encouraged cross-organizational alliances, her previous work nurturing women's activism in SNYC, and her belief in the connections between the Black US struggle and anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia.

[35] Yulia Gradskova "Women's International Democratic Federation, The 'Third World' and the Global Cold War from the late-1950s to the mid-1960s," *Women's History Review* 29, no. 2 (2020): 283.
[36] Gradskova "Women's International Democratic Federation," 283.



Figure 3: Dorothy Burnham in Copenhagen speaking at Women's International Democratic Federation, 1953, Box 13, Folder 37, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers.

The 1953 conference program addressed women's experiences in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Australia and North America in the areas of "economic and social rights, political and civil rights, the right to education, protection of children and peace and friendship between the peoples."[37] Like Cooper Jackson at the World Youth Congress, Burnham heard hundreds of women connect women's rights with anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, and peace movements that affirmed her position as a member of a world community of women activists and bolstered her Left feminist internationalism. For example, president of the Swedish section of the WIDF, Andrea Andreen, presented a report on, "The

[37] "As One! For Equality. For Happiness. For Peace," 4.

Struggle for the Winning and Defence of Women's Rights as Mothers, Workers, and Citizens." She stressed the connections between women's participation in the economic, political, social, and legal spheres of their societies on national and international scales. She argued that possibilities for women taking part in economic, political, and social life were curtailed by "the pretext that nature has allotted to them the destiny of bearing children and of occupying themselves with household tasks," but that women's rights as mothers did not contradict their rights as citizens and as workers. Andreen argued that "one of the essential conditions for the realisation of real equality for women is their active participation on an equal footing with men in the economic life of their countries," and that women have "struggled, together with their peoples, for bread for their children and for the liberty and independence of their homelands."[38] In the absence of an official organizational base in the US because of anti-communist repression, access to international conferences such as WIDF's maintained Burnham's belief in the connection between race, gender, and class, and women's rights as a central component of the global freedom struggle that were essential tenets of her Black Left feminism.

Freedomways' women built activist networks at conferences and met individuals who could be called upon for contributions to the magazine in later years. The editors included coverage of the WIDF conferences for UN International Women's Year (1975) and International Year of the Child (1979) and so, the connections made found their way into the magazine's content, even years later. For example, among delegates at the Copenhagen conference in 1953 was the General Secretary of the Egyptian Feminist Union, Ceza Nabaroui, who spoke of "Third World" women living under colonialism in the belief that, "one cannot continue to claim freedom and equality for individuals and refuse it to great groups of

[38] Andrea Andreen, "'The Struggle for the Winning and Defence of Women's Rights as Mothers, Workers, and Citizens," World Congress of Women, Copenhagen, June 5-10, 1953 (Berlin: Berlin State: Women's International Democratic Federation, 29153) Women and Social Movements International 1840 to Present, 11-22.

people."[39] In the inaugural Spring 1961 issue of *Freedomways* Nabaroui was invited to report on the WIDF supported First Afro-Asian Women's Conference that was held in Cairo from January 14-22, 1961. The connection was apparent when she argued, in emotional prose, that, "the struggle of women in Asia and Africa for independence and peace is their highest title of glory," because "in every country where independence has been won by great sacrifices the figures of heroic women force the [colonial] administration of their enemies and keep the sacred fire of struggle alive in the hearts of their countrymen."[40]

The maintenance of activist connections facilitated the promotion of Black feminist internationalism in the magazine.[41] For women who had been active in the 1930s and 1940s Black Left, the right to self-determination was a foundational tenet of their politics and Nabaraoui's report positioned women as central actors in nation building as an essential step towards worldwide socialism and the liberation of oppressed peoples. Cheryl Higashida argues that Black feminist internationalism challenged "masculinist articulations of nationalism while maintaining the importance, even centrality, of national liberation movements for achieving black women's social, political and economic rights."[42] Nationalism was an important strand in this argument and seemingly stands at odds with traditional Marxist theory that the creation of a modern nation required a capitalist mode of production and represented bourgeois class rule.[43] However, Sanjay Seth posits Lenin's theory of imperialism as the "highest stage of capitalism" came to dominate the international communist movement, bringing the non-

[39] Ceza Nabaroui, "The Delegates Speak," World Congress of Women, Copenhagen, June 5-10, 1953, 113 (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation, 29153) Women and Social Movements International 1840 to Present.
[40] Céza Nabaroui, "African Women Seek Independence and Peace," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 106.
[41] Shirley Graham Du Bois was also in attendance at the conference and wrote to W.E.B. Du Bois expressing her excitement for the scale of the international meeting.
[42] Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 2.
[43] Ephraim Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism: Theoretical Origins of a Political Crisis* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), 21–22.

Western world into the ambit of Marxism.[44] The essence of imperialism as the division of nations into the oppressor and the oppressed justified the right to self-determination, so while national liberation struggles' goals were bourgeois-democratic because they were formed in resistance to capitalism, they were also anti-capitalist. This view was endorsed in the magazine and Robert Rhodes argued that "if a nationalist or internationalist is fighting against national and colonial oppression, we should support that fight; if said nationalist is fighting for special privileges which class power will give him, then we should oppose such nationalism."[45] And Nabaroui's report demonstrates women's international feminist thinking on anti-imperialism along Leninist lines in *Freedomways* that corresponded with the editors' socialist politics and wider promotion of African liberation.

Central to Nabaroui's report was her espousal of international solidarity among Asian, African, and Afro-descended women, reflecting the belief that shared experiences of a transnational matrix of domination under white capitalist imperialism could build unity and coalition.[46] Women came together in dialogue to test and affirm ideas, and to put forward recommendations for the UN Struggle for National Independence and Peace on the basis of "the exchange of views and the experiences demonstrated during the conference" and concluded that "the women of Africa and Asia have the same enemy to fight and the same aims to aspire for."[47] Nabaroui employed leftist rhetoric that mirrored Cooper Jackson's earlier language of a "common enemy," and this was routinely used in the magazine to promote commonality among African and Asian anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.

---

[44] Sanjay Seth, *Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: The Case of Colonial India* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1995), 44.
[45] Rhodes, "Internationalism and Social Consciousness," 235.
[46] The 'transnational matrix of domination', acknowledges that Black women's experiences that contribute to the shaping of Black feminist thought, are not limited to the US. Women of African descent have a distinctive, shared legacy that forms part of a global women's movement due to their shared experiences of oppression in their respective nation-states. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 231-232.
[47] Nabaraoui, "African Women Seek Independence and Peace," 103.

International conferences continued to be an arena in which the editors sustained activist discussions that facilitated coverage of anti-imperialist struggles. Brenda L. Jones was assistant managing editor from Fall 1974 to Fall 1977 and represented the magazine at a seminar on the Angola liberation struggle that was hosted in Havana, Cuba, from February 26-28, 1974. She impressed on those present:

> We very deeply identify with the people of Angola against imperialist domination and for the control of your own land, your own destiny. We recognize that when you defeated the Portuguese colonialists, you won a victory not only for yourselves, but for all of us who struggle for liberation. The invasion of your country by the mercenary forces of imperialism constituted an act of aggression against all who seek peace and freedom. Recognizing the great significance of the Angolan struggle in furthering the process of national liberation in all of Africa, we will utilize the pages of our magazine to bring the true news of Angola to the people of the US.[48]

Jones' message echoed Nabaraoui and Graham Du Bois' promotions of internationalism through national liberation of ten years earlier, pointing to a consistency in editorial approach. When she argued that Angola's victory over Portuguese colonialism was a victory for "all of us who struggle for liberation," she reaffirmed how anti-colonial struggle and national development had been presented in *Freedomways* over previous decades.

Jones saw the magazine as a facilitator of the "true news" of the world-wide struggle for peace and freedom. While the mainstream US press categorized Cuban and Soviet involvement in Angola as an attempt to expand their sphere of influence during the Cold War, *Freedomways* countered this as a kind of predatory narrative and exposed the US' neo-colonialist ambitions.[49] The Fall 1975 editorial upheld Jones' promise at the seminar. The editors supported the Communist-aligned Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola,

[48] Brenda L. Jones speech at seminar on Angola in Havana, 'Angola Featured in forthcoming "Freedomways"', *Daily World*, March 17, 1976, Box 22, Folder 9, George B Murphy Jr Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington DC (Hereafter GBM Papers).
[49] For more on the involvement of Cuba, the Soviet Union and the US in Angola see, Edward George, *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991: From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale* (London: Frank Cass: 2005); Fernando Andresen Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001); Peter Polack, *The Last Hot Battle of the Cold war: South Africa vs. Cuba in the Angolan Civil War* (Oxford: Casemate, 2013).

which won liberation in 1974, and suggested that Soviet and Cuban aid was "of long standing, dating back to the early 1960s […] not unlike the aid that came from many nations in Africa, Scandinavia and other socialist countries."[50] In contrast, they contended, counter-revolutionary forces headed by the US sought "to replace Portuguese colonialism with a neo-colonialism that reflects the political and military interests of the Western powers."[51] This line of critique was consistently found in the magazine, with American "assistance" understood as attempts to implant a pro-Western government in order to exploit resources.[52]

The response to the situation in Angola must be understood in the longer print history in which the editors featured articles on newly independent African nations' socialist path to independence from the 1960s into the 1970s. Even in the inaugural issue, in an analysis of Guinea's development, Alphaeus Hunton argued that the colonizers' "central objective" was to "increase the export of African resources in accordance with European and American interests and for the further enrichment of non-Africans."[53] Hunton was unequivocal when stating that, "this still remains the central aim, explicit or implicit, of Western proposals for 'aiding' in the 'development' of new African states."[54] Participation in international conferences enabled the creation and maintenance of activist connections in *Freedomways* to furnish news on African struggles against colonial and neo-colonial forces in ways that married with its editors' socialist politics.

---

[50] The Editors, "Recognition for the MPLA", *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 246.
[51] The Editors, "Recognition for the MPLA", 245.
[52] See John Pittman, "How Socialist States Help Africa – and why," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 81-92; Ernest Kaiser, "United States Relations with Africa," *Freedomways* 1, no.3 (Fall 1961): 308-319; Charles P. Howard Sr., "Katanga and the Congo Betrayal," *Freedomways* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 136-148; Harry Schachter, "Barebreasted in Leopoldville – A Poem," *Freedomways* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 149; The Editors, "The War in Vietnam," *Freedomways* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 229-230; Kwame Nkrumah, "The Mechanisms of Neo-Colonialism," *Freedomways* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1966): 139-151; C.E. Wilson, "American Investment in Portuguese Africa: A Problem of 'Democratic Colonialism," *Freedomways* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1967): 214-224; Robert S. Browne, "Roots of US Intervention in Cambodia," *Freedomways,* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 115-123; The Editors, "American Corporate Investment in South Africa," *Freedomways* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 255-256; The Editors, "South Africa and the USA," *Freedomways* 16, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 214-215.
[53] Alphaeus Hunton "Guinea Strides Forward," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 22-23.
[54] Hunton "Guinea Strides Forward," 23.

"I Learned More from the Africans Than the School": Studying Abroad and Developing Pan-Africanism

Shirley Graham Du Bois first travelled abroad in 1926 to Paris. She enrolled in the Sorbonne to study theories of musical composition and orchestration and immersed herself in the Black cultural milieu.[55] She arrived at the height of the city's importance as a site of African American creative and intellectual life. Black Americans' "love affair" with France began during World War I when Black soldiers felt that they were often received and treated as equals by the French.[56] The apparent lack of racial discrimination and segregation, as well as an "interwar taste for exoticism and black culture" and the popularity of jazz, made Paris "a center for hundreds of African American performers, artists and writers," as cultural historians have traced.[57] Black American cultural producers of the Harlem Renaissance, including Alain Locke, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Josephine Baker, found opportunities in a system "unfettered by Jim Crow."[58] Not only did Paris provide Black Americans with an escape from discrimination and violence, but it was also a place to meet francophone Black intellectuals and foster a climate of intellectual, cultural and political exchange.

By the late 1920s, transatlantic exchanges between writers from French West Africa, the French West Indies and New York increased dramatically, converging on Paris which

[55] Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 52–53.
[56] Kenneth R. Janken, "African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals During the Harlem Renaissance," *The Historian*, 60, no. 3 (1998): 488.
[57] Tyler Stovall, "No Green Pastures: The African-Americanization of France," in *Empire Lost: France and its Other Worlds,* ed., Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi (New York: Lexington Press, 2009), 73. For more on African Americans in Paris see, Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000); Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Tricia Danielle Keaton, "Black (American) Paris and the French Outer-Cities: The Race Question and Questioning Solidarity," in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora,* eds. Darlene Clarke Hine, Tricia Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars* (New York: SUNY Press, 2015); T. Stovall, ed., *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).
[58] Janken, "African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals," 488.

became a cultural hub of the African diaspora.[59] For Graham Du Bois, participation in this transatlantic exchange exposed her to different constructions of Blackness that Gerald Horne claims "introduced her to part of her heritage with which she was unfamiliar."[60] Her time in Paris offers an example of how travel could induce a re-evaluation of identity and suggests that she was ready to embrace other cultures that offered her a platform for her creativity. She would take what she learned in Paris and apply it to her writing after she returned to the US.

For young Black intellectuals in the 1920s, Paris was the gateway to Africa, geographically and intellectually. This was also the case for Graham Du Bois who in 1954, in the *Parish News,* the newsletter for Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn, reflected on the influence Paris had on her creativity. Discussions with diasporic intellectuals impacted the composition of her opera *Tom Tom* (1936):

> My father went to Africa to head a school on the West Coast, and one of my brothers went with him. I was in school in Paris most of the time they were in Africa, and, of course, looked up about Africa. Actually, I learned more from the Africans than the school. I learned about their music and rhythms and got terribly interested in folk lore. After two years I then came back to this country and went to school here. I composed a music drama and called it "Tom Tom".[61]

Graham Du Bois grounded the composition of *Tom Tom* in her interactions with African students at the Sorbonne; it was imbued with her creative thinking on Africa, the diaspora, and the freedom struggle in the US. In a hotel room with a piano, she spent three months composing the 16-scene, three-act opera that traced the history of Black music from Africa to the US. It opened on June 30, 1932, at the Cleveland Stadium.[62] The show premiered before an open-air crowd of more than 10,000, and its second— and final— performance on July 9, 1932, drew

[59] *Paris Noir—African Americans in the City of Light* directed by Joanna Burke (New York: Blue Lion Films, 2016).
[60] Horne, *Race Woman*, 53.
[61] Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois, "As A Man Thinketh In His Heart, So Is He," *The Parish News* 57, no. 4 (February 1964): 3, Box 27, Folder 3, Papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts (Hereafter SGDB Papers).
[62] Kathy A. Perkins, "The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," *Freedomways* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 8.

an audience of more than 15,000.[63] The opera depicted the seeds of Pan-Africanism that would become central to Graham Du Bois' politics in subsequent years.

Beginning in 1619 in Africa and moving to the US in the period of slavery, the opera ends in Harlem where opposing factions of the Black community embrace an African diasporic identity and history while affirming their commitment to struggling for equality in the US. The character of Voodoo Man represents an enduring affinity for his homeland. In the first act, he is a protector of his community but while performing a sacrificial ritual together with Mother, Girl, and Boy, he is captured by Bantu slave traders, and transported via the Middle Passage. Act Two depicts life during enslavement in the US South. Voodoo Man refuses to adopt Western Christianity, retains his belief in the African spiritual practice of voodoo, and continues to imagine Africa as his homeland. He sings:

> Tom-toms beating somewhere in the
>
> Vastness of the jungle,
>
> Never ceasing, like the beating of
>
> my aching heart.
>
> I am thy priest,
>
> Fashioned to serve thee,
>
> No other gods will I hear.
>
> […] Oh! homeland ever do you call me.[64]

Graham Du Bois clarified the role of the tom tom drum, as she conceived it, "as the beating of the heart of a people."[65] While other characters are converted to Christianity by a Black preacher on the plantation, in the drumming, Voodoo Man hears Africa calling him back.

---

[63] Perkins, "The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham Du Bois," 9.
[64] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Tom-Tom: A Music-drama in three acts," script, 12-13, Box 23, Folder 4, SGDB Papers.
[65] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Tom-Tom: An Opera in Three Acts by Miss Shirley Graham Du Bois," *Parade Stadium Opera Magazine* (1932), 3, Box 23, Folder 1, SGDB Papers.

Graham Du Bois addresses differing perspectives of the Black freedom struggle when Voodoo Man's African spirituality is juxtaposed with Boy's religious conversion.[66] In America, Boy sings "Darkness! Darkness! Is there no light for us in all the world?" and cries "Give us light!"[67] At which point, a pipe organ and "Calvin-like hymn" signify the supposedly enlightening and civilizing force of Christianity. But the tom tom signifies more surely African culture and spirituals bridge the diaspora, until in Act Three when Graham Du Bois uses jazz and the blues to represent a multiplicity of musical identities in Harlem circa 1930, influenced by the diaspora.

The opera's depiction of progress from a "primitive" African culture to a modern sophisticated Harlem Renaissance, represented most fully in its protagonist Voodoo Man, was a far cry from the sharp critique of colonialism and imperialism that would imbue her later work. Black American intellectual experiences in Paris were distinctly marked by the class contours of the Black community residing there. Intellectuals, including Graham Du Bois, recognized a link to their African heritage in, "westernized, college educated, cultivated [Black people] interested in searching out an African past."[68] And it is difficult to disagree with the idea that her depiction of the African continent in *Tom Tom* was filtered "through the lens of a 'primitive' according to classical exoticism: the sun, the jungle, wild animals, the drumbeat, dance but also beauty, purity and innocence."[69] The opera's first act begins in an imagined and generic "Africa," in a dark jungle with an elephant hunt in progress and the constant beat of the tom tom drum that introduces Voodoo Man.[70] While she described *Tom Tom* as "the voice of Africa calling her children to a better understanding and a deeper appreciation of the gifts

[66] Horne suggests "Graham Du Bois continually presents theses and antithesis," through Boy and Voodoo Man, *Race Woman, 61.*
[67] Graham Du Bois, "Tom-Tom: A Music-drama in three acts*,"* script, 11, Box 23, Folder 4, SGDB Papers.
[68] Janken, "African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals," 499.
[69] Janken, "African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals," 499.
[70] Bettina Aptheker, "The Passion and Pageantry of Shirley Graham's Opera Tom-Tom," *Souls* 18, no. 2 (2016): 264.

which she has showered upon them," it was criticized, as acknowledged in Perkins' retrospective on her career in *Freedomways*, for attempting to be "acceptable to whites" because "it reinforced their belief that Blacks were 'exotic' and 'primitive.'"[71] Nevertheless, Graham Du Bois confided that she could not think of the opera "as either a score of music or as a piece of literature": "I cannot think in terms of having written it. It is my life, not for these few years now, but stretching back through many hundreds of years."[72] Her prolonged interaction with African students in Paris infused *Tom Tom*; Sarah Schmalenberger has suggested that "first-hand experiences with continental Africans and some of their music undoubtedly influenced how Graham Du Bois crafted the African scenes for her opera."[73] Her interactions abroad not only influenced her composition of the opera, but in her belief that "it is my life," she suggested that it had altered her perspective on her relationship to Africa and her diasporic identity.

The promotion of a diasporic Black identity through music history is also presented in *Freedomways.* During her tenure as general editor, alongside the other editors, Graham Du Bois oversaw the publication of essays on music that chimed with the Pan-Africanism previously presented in *Tom Tom*, illustrating continuity in approaches to Black American's relationship to their African past, and the use of music to signal its endurance. It also signaled Graham Du Bois' growing embrace of left nationalism at odds with Cooper Jackson, as discussed in Chapter Three. In the Spring 1962 issue, well-known exponent of jazz Max Roach published an essay tracing the African roots of the genre that echoed Graham Du Bois' use of the tom tom in Act Three of her opera.[74] In the same way that she suggested the opera was her life "stretching back through many hundreds of years," Roach similarly claimed jazz as "the

[71] Kathy A. Perkins, "The Unknown Career of Shirley Graham," *Freedomways* (Winter 1985): 10.
[72] Graham Du Bois, "Tom-Tom: An Opera in Three Acts by Miss Shirley Graham Du Bois," *3.*
[73] Sarah Schmalenberger, "Debuting Her Political Voice : The Lost Opera of Shirley ," *Black Music Research Journal* 26, no. 1 (2006): 47.
[74] Max Roach, "Jazz," *Freedomways* 2, no.2 (Spring 1962): 173.

indigenous music of the indigent black man and woman […] indicative of where the 'Negro' came *from* and *to* and foretells where he might one day go."[75] He suggested that jazz was "an extension of the African chants and songs," and emphasized the importance of lived experience to its creation, arguing that "until the white musician has been called upon to give and experience as much, and the same, he cannot, in all honestly, claim the kind of affinity to the music he insists he has."[76] Roach's essay also reflects Graham Du Bois' leftist politics that she had not yet developed when she wrote *Tom Tom.* He argued for the capitalist colonization of jazz by white Americans who have "distorted" the music's meaning and robbed Black Americans of their cultural heritage for monetary gain.

The colonial manipulation of Black diasporic music was also delineated by Guianese doctor John Grimes in his contribution "Caribbean Music and Dance," for the Summer 1964 issue. Grimes argued that British control of West Indian countries for more than one hundred years meant that "territories were oriented to England and not each other," preventing people from realizing that their "culture was part and parcel of a West Indian whole," until "the recent political attempt to unite the territories into a federation."[77] Grimes argued that West Indian common culture is rooted in the enslaved West African who was "the foundation on which the developing culture patterns were built." And while he "borrowed from other cultures," he "never lost his identity, his control."[78] From this common African culture derived calypso, river-boat songs, steel bands and folk songs as part of a wider Black diasporic music history. As general editor, Graham continued to promote Pan-African connections through music that she had learned during her time at the Sorbonne, and the analyses encompassed the Black Left politics she had developed in the 1940s and 1950s through her engagement with Black leftists

[75] Max Roach, "Jazz," *Freedomways* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 174.
[76] Roach, "Jazz," 174.
[77] John Grimes, "Caribbean Music and Dance," *Freedomways* 4. no. 3 (Summer 1964): 426-427.
[78] Grimes, "Caribbean Music and Dance," 428-429.

in New York as detailed in Chapter One, and that would continue to evolve as she travelled in the late 1950s and 1960s.

"How the Solution Works Out in Actuality": Sustaining Politics in the Postwar World

In the Cold War context, travel became one way Graham Du Bois could engage more openly with leftist ideas that were increasingly being met with hostility in the US. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, this transpired in the form of her involvement in peace activities. In 1948, the Soviet Union made the "Struggle for Peace in All the World" a central feature of its foreign policy rhetoric that appealed to Black leftists who denounced US foreign policy that protected European imperialism and benefitted economically from the exploitation of colonized people.[79] Because the Soviet Union condemned "capitalist warmongers" whose development and trade of the atomic bomb threatened a still unstable world after World War II, the United States government denounced those advocating for peace in the US as communists.[80]

In 1948, Graham Du Bois joined the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions and began to help plan the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace.[81] It was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York March 25-27, 1949 and invitations were sent to "leading intellectuals in Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Puerto Rico, the Soviet Union, Venezuela and the West Indies."[82] The conference was called in response to US Cold War anti-Soviet policies that had led to the curtailment of political, intellectual and scientific freedom, increased militarization, and a perceived escalating atomic threat. Conference organizers asserted that to de-escalate

[79] Timothy Johnston, "Peace or Pacifism? The Soviet Struggle for Peace in All the World, 1948-54," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2 (2008): 259.
[80] See J. Samuel Walker, "No More Cold War: American Foreign Policy and the 1948 Soviet Peace Offensive," *Diplomatic History*, 5 no. 1 (1981): 75-91; Robert Liberman, "Does That Make Peace A Bad Word?": American Responses to the Communist Peace Offensive, 1949-1950," *Peace & Change* 17, no. 2 (1992): 198-228;
[81] Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching on: A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971) 103.
[82] Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching on,* 105.

tensions and maintain world peace, "whatever may be our views in regard to the social, political and economic policies of the Soviet Union," it was "necessary to re-establish America-Soviet understanding and co-operation, which alone can make peace possible."[83] During the Cold War the location of conferences became more pertinent to the ability of *Freedomways'* women to sustain their activism and political outlook. While prior to and during World War II it is feasible that Cooper Jackson's conferences in Mexico and London could have produced the same experience as if they were held in the US, with the onset of the Cold War, location had more of an impact on proceedings. Graham Du Bois detailed how the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace was discredited as a communist front: "visas were refused to all applications from Western European countries and to many from South America," and "pressure on sponsors to withdraw their support was enormous."[84] While it went ahead and the National Council received "cables from all over the world congratulating [it] on 'noble efforts' to advance world peace," once the conference was over, the council's "offices had been sacked," and its "files stolen."[85]

In the context of political repression in the US, organizers of the New York conference were invited to take part in a Congress of the Partisans of Peace in Paris where they could more openly meet with activists from around the world who shared their political views.[86] At the conference in Paris, Graham Du Bois had "the realization that [she] was at the crossroads of all nations, all peoples of the world – where past, present and future, east, west, north and south did meet."[87] Her internationalism was cultivated through what she witnessed as people from across the world came together for a common goal. The acquaintances she made at the Paris peace conference also facilitated further travel around France and exposure to the effects

[83] "The Call", Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, 2-3, Box 27, Folder 2, SGDB Papers
[84] Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching on,* 107-108.
[85] Shirley Graham, *His Day is Marching on,* 115-116.
[86] While the FBI continued to monitor the movements of activists with suspected communist affiliations during this time, they were unable to restrict activity and censure speech outside the US.
[87] Graham, "Comment," in *In Battle for Peace,* 30.

of World War II. In the memoir she published in 1971, Graham Du Bois remembered how "afterward a group of us went to Marseilles where, for the first time, I saw something of the devastation of war […] we went to Nice, where the contrast between the haves and the have-nots was so painfully striking that it blotted out everything else and gave even the word 'peace' a hollow ring."[88] She conveyed the impact of witnessing the devastation of war and how her exposure to the contrast between "the haves and the have-nots" affirmed her belief in equal distribution of wealth and a socialist re-structuring of society to ensure equality. Her socialism was fortified when she stopped in Hamburg on her way to Copenhagen:

> Hamburg was a massive pile of rubble. I was standing aside from the others, staring out over a vast level of desolation, when a woman wrapped in a shawl came up and asked in English, "you are an American?" I nodded […] "It is strange that I am alive when everyone I knew is dead, buried under those ruins […] as far as you can see were only poor tenements where workers lived […] the Nazis called my city 'Red Hamburg'. Hitler could never come here. They built no ammunition factories here, since they did not trust us with any armaments. Yet Hamburg was the first place levelled by the American and the British Bombers". I stretched out my hand to her.[89]

Her emphasis on this exchange reveals the effect she perceived that it had on her and the message she sought to convey to readers. Her narration emoted the human cost of war, placing the working class at its center. Journeys that resulted from activist conferences led to additional experiences that enabled Graham Du Bois to bear witness to the physical devastation that had resulted from capitalist imperial aggression. Her focus on "the haves and the have nots" would be reflected in her critique of US social movements in an article, "Return After Ten Years," printed in *Freedomways'* Spring 1971 issue. She criticized the women's liberation movement and racial and generational fractures in the US Black freedom struggle for a lack of class analysis and inability to see capitalism as the root cause of oppression. Her assessment was part of a wider criticism of social movements in the 1970s by the older Black Left and will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four, but what she observed was factional tussles seeming

[88] Graham Du Bois, *His Day Is Marching On* 120.
[89] Graham Du Bois, *His Day is Marching On*, 121.

to have "taken precedence over the struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' Indeed, the number of 'haves' has certainly increased. But apparently this fact is of little importance."[90] Graham Du Bois' memoir and her article for *Freedomways* were published in the same year which may account for similarity in phrasing. They illustrate how she cogitated on her experiences abroad in the 1940s and 1950s for how they could inform her analysis of the domestic freedom struggle subsequently and her thoughts appeared in the magazine over twenty years later.

The activist networks that Cooper Jackson became part of at the World Youth Conference also led to more travel when she was invited to spend six weeks in the Soviet Union at the end of 1945. She went from London to Berlin, travelling with "two white young women from the United States": Elsa Graves, the Chicago National Industrial Chairman of the Young Women's Christian Association, and Elizabeth MacAndless, vice president of the Los Angeles Youth Council.[91] On arrival in the US sector with their passports, "they kept us waiting all day," because "they didn't know what to do with me […] and the next day we went into the Soviet section where" she wrote, "we were of course warmly welcomed."[92] If Cooper Jackson's experience of racism at the hands of the segregated US army contrasted with the warm welcome received in the Soviet sector, Erik S. McDuffie contends that "for several black women, the Soviet Union served as a political terrain for nurturing this [leftist] politics."[93] He suggests that Black US activist Louise Thompson Patterson's five-month tour through the Soviet Union in 1932 had also "proved to be a transformative experience, prompting her to enlist in the Communist Party soon after she returned home."[94] While this may have been the

[90] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Return After Ten Years," *Freedomways* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 161.
[91] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro, 31 August 2006, Box 27, ECJ Papers; Chatwood Hall, "Youth Parley Delegate Guest of Russ," *Chicago Defender (National Edition)* January 26, 1946: 20.
[92] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro, 31 August 2006, Box 27, ECJ Papers.
[93] McDuffie, "'For Full Freedom Of…colored Women in Africa, Asian, and in These United States…' Black Women Radicals and the Practice of a Black Women's International," 4.
[94] McDuffie, "'For Full Freedom,'" 4.

case for Patterson, individual circumstances led to different experiences and Cooper Jackson's was more nuanced.



Figure 4: Esther Cooper in back row, center as part of the all-female WDFY helping to rebuild postwar Stalingrad, 1945. Photo courtesy of Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement*, (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2015), 187.

Cooper Jackson travelled to the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet Anti-Fascist Youth Committee, who planned the activities she undertook, what she saw, and the people she spoke to. As a result, she was not necessarily presented with an accurate picture of life in the country; nor was her political outlook altered. Instead, her experiences upheld her previously held political beliefs. During her first few days in Russia, she was a guest director at the University of Moscow where she witnessed what she perceived as Soviet progressiveness on

For more on Black American travels to the Soviet Union see Keith Gilyard, *Louise Thompson Patterson: A Life of Struggle for Justice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); John L. Gardner, "African Americans in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s: The Development of Transcontinental Protest," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 3 (1999): 190-201.

issues of race and gender. In an interview with Chatwood Hall, Moscow correspondent for the *Chicago Defender*, she stated that she was surprised "to find that 65 per cent of the students are women," and celebrated how "its 8000 students include 58 different nationalities, all matriculating without any discrimination."[95] She also visited the "big 'Hammer and Sickle' plant," saw the "famous Russian ballet at Bolshoi Theater," and interviewed high trade union officials who told her about Soviet social insurance systems that covered "all categories of working people, including domestic and agricultural workers."[96] She drew on knowledge gained from her MA thesis to assert that this was "unlike American social insurance" whose system of social security excluded these groups of workers—a large percentage of whom were Black women.[97] Not only did her itinerary include discussions with people who verified that socialism could secure Black women workers' rights, but it also confirmed her thinking about the global connections between liberation struggles that she had previously developed in SNYC and at international conferences. She was a guest of Ethiopian Minister Lorenzo Taezaz and Madame Taezaz, with whom "views were exchanged on questions of mutual interest to the Abyssinian and Negro people of America."[98] These discussions assured her that her belief in international connections was shared by African activists and leaders, and that she was on the correct path towards securing global liberation.

Cooper Jackson considered the destruction wrought from the war evidence of the Soviet Union's dedication to destroying fascism which, for her, validated her support for the Party's wartime policy shift from condemning its imperialist motivations to supporting the allied forces in the fight against fascism. Figure 4 shows Cooper Jackson as part of an all-female delegation

[95] Hall, "Youth Parley Delegate Guest," 20.
[96] Hall, "Youth Parley Delegate Guest," 20.
The Guzhon Plant was one of the oldest industrial enterprises in Russia that produced steel during Czarist Russia's industrialization. Founded in 1883, during the Soviet era it was renamed after the hammer and sickle symbol of communism.
[97] The 1935 Social Security Act excluded approximately half of American workers, including agricultural and domestic workers.
[98] Hall, "Youth Parley Delegate Guest," 20.

for whom the Anti-Fascist Youth Committee organized work with young Soviet people to assist in the reconstruction of the city. While in Stalingrad, she lived "in the basement of the one or two houses that were not bombed," and "worked on one of the buildings," to help "rebuild the city."[99] Like Graham Du Bois, she declared "the choices I made from then on were […] reflected in what I learned both in seeing the devastation of war, and especially in the Soviet Union I met such heroic young people."[100] Cooper Jackson perceived that the Soviet Union had taken "the brunt of defeating fascism," and applauded the effort of its young people in helping rebuild. The nature of her trip and the work she undertook in bombed out cities, meant that she did not gain a keen sense of what life was like, but her comments exemplify how the visit deepened her belief in socialism.

Cooper Jackson's experiences in SNYC, at international conferences, and in the Soviet Union informed how she thought about racism, gender oppression, colonialism, capitalism and liberation.[101] Decades later, she summarized that at *Freedomways* "We had a world-wide approach to the struggle; the struggle of blacks in this country was related to the struggle of oppressed people throughout the world. And we had that same approach earlier in the Southern Negro Youth Congress."[102] She ultimately believed that liberation was dependent on global revolution; that no one could be truly free until the system of racial capital was destroyed globally. In the Winter 1975 issue of the magazine for International Women's Year, which will be discussed in Chapter Three, the editorial addressed "our progressive sisters everywhere," and declared that "we join our fate with yours in recognition of the fact that your victories are our victories, that our liberation once gained will not be secure until yours is fully

[99] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[100] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro.
[101] Erik S. McDuffie, "The March of Young Southern Black Women: Esther Cooper Jackson, Black Left Feminism, and the Personal and Political Costs of Cold War Repression," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: "Another Side of the Story,"* eds. Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 89.
[102] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott, *Abafazi,* 9, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 1998), 8, Box 8, Folder 28, ECJ Papers.

consolidated."[103] Cooper Jackson espoused the interconnected nature of race, gender, and class oppression and the imperative of solidarity in the face of a common oppressor. Her "world-wide approach" stemmed from her Black Left feminist politics and demonstrates how she saw oppression around the world as ultimately derived from a unified structure that needed to be toppled for all oppression to end. She returned to the Soviet Union in 1966, and while undertaking work on the "circulation of the magazine," she toured the building that she had helped to build twenty years before and continued to have an affinity for the country. [104]

Short, tailored visits facilitated by networks made at international conferences constituted the type of international travel typical of the experience of most of the women at *Freedomways*. Members of the Black Left had been travelling to the Soviet Union since the 1920s, and the experience of the women editors was not unusual in this regard. In 1971, contributing editor George B. Murphy Jr. led another Black delegation to the USSR and Higashida argues for the "improbable, anachronistic nature" of this trip because "by most accounts the Black Communist Left was rendered irrelevant or nonexistent long before 1971."[105] Higashida proposes reading the trip as an indication of how "the post-World War II Harlem-based Black Left, continued to shape African American culture and thought throughout the second half of the twentieth century."[106] The extent to which this trip represented the Old Left's ability to shape Black US culture in the 1970s is, however, limited. Despite Murphy Jr.'s assertion that the "members of our delegation had different ideas about the Soviet Union […] in terms of their attitude to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism," all eleven delegates were leftists, if not communists, and four had contributed to *Freedomways* or were part of the

[103] The Editors, "Black Women: Internationalizing the Struggle," *Freedomways* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 6.
[104] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith; Letter from Esther Cooper Jackson to George B. Murphy Jr. May 17, 1966, Box 31, Folder 2, GBM Papers.
[105] Higashida, *Black International Feminism*, 2.
[106] Higashida, *Black International Feminism*, 2.

editorial board.[107] Murphy Jr.'s report on the trip was published in the CPUSA publication, *New World Review,* bringing into question the extent to which the delegation had an impact on Black culture beyond their immediate circle. The Black Left's criticism of emergent Black writers in the 1960s and 1970s is discussed in Chapter Four and demonstrates different political approaches to combatting oppression between generations. It also suggests limitations of Old Left influence, especially in the context of competing Black nationalist and liberal reformist voices vying for authority in the Black freedom struggle in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Black leftists continued to believe in the efficacy of travel for upholding their political views. Murphy Jr. expressed a continued "desire to learn and to bring back the meaning of our experience," and to "see how the Soviet Union has solved the national question."[108] Bearing witness to socialist society in the Soviet Union was important because "it is one thing to read about it and even to have some theoretical understanding about it, and quite another thing to see with your own eyes how the solution works out in actuality."[109] This phrase was mirrored almost exactly in *Freedomways* when Black professor of history, Clarence J. Munford, also travelled to the Soviet Union in the early 1970s, and wrote, "it is one thing to read about and study a society that lies far yonder, and another to see for oneself how wealth may be used to improve the people's material and cultural standards."[110] Also part of the delegation was the

---

[107] George B. Murphy Jr., "Delegation to the U.S.S.R.," 3, Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of the family of Dr. Maurice Jackson and Laura Ginsburg, https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2010.55.95.
Members of the delegation were: George B. Murphy Jr. who was a member of the Old Left and contributing editor for *Freedomways;* Norma Rogers, leftist and *Freedomways'* Special Project Director; Old Left writer and contributor to *Freedomways,* Alice Childress; author and *Freedomways* contributor Pauline Young; Robert Rhodes, a political economist at Antioch College and member of the Black Left who played an early role in the development of Black Studies, he contributed to the Summer 1972 issue of *Freedomways;* Jane Williams, a student at Antioch; Rodney Sampson, an instructor at the Center for Afro-American Affairs at Ohio University and who worked with Robert Rhodes to set up a Black Studies Institute in 1969; Ella Pappademos, an elementary school teacher, and John Pappademos, an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois were both members of the CPUSA; and florists Evelyn O. Chisley and his wife Jocelyn Chisley, Evelyn had written a tribute to Paul Robeson published in the *Washington Afro-American* in 1976.
[108] Murphy Jr., "Delegation to the U.S.S.R.," 3.
[109] Murphy Jr., "Delegation to the U.S.S.R.," 4.
[110] Clarence J. Munford, "Travels in the Soviet Union—Manchild in the Land of Lenin," *Freedomways* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 15.

director of special projects for *Freedomways,* Norma Rogers, and novelist and playwright Alice Childress, whose views on "The Negro Woman in American Literature" were printed in the magazine: both members of the Black Left who continued to see travel to socialist countries in general and the Soviet Union in particular as a means to comprehend how "the [socialist] solution works out in actuality."[111] These trips evidence how *Freedomways'* personnel continued to travel uncritically, seeing what they chose to see, and telling for how politics could inform lived experience just as lived experience could shape politics. This was reflected in the magazine.

Throughout its publication history, *Freedomways* printed travel accounts. Among these are Calvin Sinnette's "Trip to Africa" (Fall 1962); Diane Nash's "Journey to Vietnam" (Fall 1967); Michele Russell's "Algerian Journey" (Fall 1969); Dorothy Cotton's "The Peace Movement in Saigon" (Fall 1970) and Clarence J. Munford's "Travels in the Soviet Union" (Winter 1974). When associate editor John Henrik Clarke reported on his trip to socialist Cuba for the inaugural issue, he confided a "deep and selfish" motivation to "observe the program of land reform."[112] It made him think of his late father, "an Alabama sharecropper who never owned an inch of land, of the landless Cuban farmers now being given land, and of the dispossessed African farmers whose land has been taken over by European settlers."[113] Clarke rooted his motivation for travel as understanding how his experience as the son of a sharecropping family who never owned their land, and Black agricultural labor in the US South, was linked to labor taking place in Cuba and African countries, underlining diasporic economic injustice and hailing Cuba's socialist advancement toward developing racial and economic equality. Arriving in the Sierra Maestra to "band-playing, flag-waving" and "revolutionary songs" sung by "Cubans of every color," Clarke reflected that, "in all the

[111] Murphy Jr., "Delegation to the U.S.S.R.," 4.
[112] John Henrik Clarke, "Journey to the Sierra Maestra," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 33.
[113] Clarke, "Journey to the Sierra Maestra," 33.

countries in which I have travelled on this hemisphere, I have never been made to feel more welcome."[114]

Clarke, like Cooper Jackson, asserted his authority to argue for the progressivism of socialism and its applicability to the Black American context as an eyewitness. In this way, the editors and the magazine's contributors can be considered what Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan have termed "countertravelers," who seek "alternatives to European models, different ways of seeing the world that combat centuries of European prejudice, and that enjoin their readers in turn to adjust their attitudes and perceptions."[115] While they did not eschew tourism—even if they did not readily acknowledge it, their experiences during their sojourns can be labelled as such—they did understand the political capacity of travel writing for critiquing domestic US culture, and this is how it was used in the magazine. By recounting what they had seen and heard in Cuba and the Soviet Union, as well as in countries that had prevailed and were still struggling against imperialism, travel writing was a genre through which to impress their socialist message onto readers. However, as Holland and Huggan suggest, this raises questions about the writers' own position and highlights the "tension between the writers' compulsion to report the world they see and their often-repressed desire to make the world conform to their preconception of it."[116] The editors selected travel writing that chimed with their Black Left politics rather than that which depicted more accurate representations of life inside socialist countries. And as writer-travelers they were most often invited guests who were treated graciously and mixed mostly with like-minded activists, celebrities, and political officials, limiting the potential for presenting authentic reports about life under socialism.

[114] Clarke, "Journey to the Sierra Maestra," 34.
[115] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Abor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 65.
[116] Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters,* 10.

The internationalism expressed in the magazine was typical of Popular Front politics. Not only did it promote socialism and racial solidarity, but it also stressed solidarity with the white working class who were also in struggle against capitalist imperialism. In the Winter 1982 issue, for example, Jean Carey Bond wrote of her travels to Northern Ireland with a seven-person delegation where she met with Catholic civil rights activists and representatives of social and political organizations. She affirmed the wider application of activist networks, explaining that her visit was facilitated by "a very prominent African American filmmaker who had ties to the Irish revolutionary movement," and explained that they were friends and "moved in similar circles."[117] Bond described how Irish Catholics positioned their struggle as a "Third World" struggle, specifically "a fight against British colonialism in particular and imperialism in general — a fight for self-determination."[118] She drew parallels between the US freedom struggle and that of young Northern Irish activists who sang the US civil rights movement anthem "We Shall Overcome": "passionately and with less solemnity than we used to sing this anthem in the days of lunch-counter sit-ins and Freedom Rides and Bull Connor's dogs."[119] Like Cooper Jackson at international conferences, Bond underlined the importance of conversation with activists for how it afforded her opportunities to see how their seemingly disparate struggles were connected and she communicated how to *Freedomways'* readers. But the magazine's travel writing often painted romanticized depictions of resistance and interracial solidarity that stemmed from the manufactured political nature of these short tours sponsored, most often, by official government organizations. As a result, what activists saw, and their subsequent reports, often upheld existing political views. However, there were exceptions and brief visits could sometimes lead to transformations in political viewpoint.

[117] Bond was referring to Black US filmmakers St. Claire Borne who was working on a documentary, *The Black and the Green,* chronicling a fact-finding trip to Belfast made by five Black US civil rights activists. Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 29, 2004, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[118] Jean Carey Bond, "Northern Ireland Through Black Eyes," *Freedomways* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 20.
[119] Bond, "Northern Ireland Through Black Eyes," 16.

"I Have Seen China": An Evolution in Political Outlook

Graham Du Bois' passport was revoked in 1951 but her engagement with Black students, conversations with other activists, and exposure to the impact of World War II in Europe had already affirmed the international nature of the Black freedom struggle, its similarities with African and Asian liberation struggles, and the necessity of global socialism. Once her passport was reinstated in 1958, she and W.E.B. Du Bois embarked on a long trip through socialist Europe and the Soviet Union. She witnessed the benefits of socialism and the commitment to racial equality in the Soviet Union in April 1958 when reporting on the Conference of Afro-Asian Writers in Uzbekistan. The conference grew out of the Bandung Conference, held three years earlier.[120] Graham Du Bois had been unable to attend Bandung in 1955 after her passport application was denied, but the conference in Tashkent allowed her to be part of transnational solidarities forged among people from colonized countries, with more than two hundred writers from Asia and emerging African nations in attendance. Rossen Djagalov argues that this conference also represented the Soviet Union's "return to the colonial question" after it was "somewhat neglected during the war." [121] Attendance confirmed Graham Du Bois' view that the Soviet Union had succeeded in creating an environment in which writers could formulate theories of a postcolonial world that could built on solidarity and economic, political, and social independence from colonial metropoles.[122] At the University of Wisconsin upon her return, she shared that she had learned about "the important role being played by the writers of these

[120] In April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, free states of Asia and African assembled to discuss common problems and attempted to formulate a united approach to international relations.' At the conference, representatives from twenty-nine governments discussed peace, economic development, and decolonization, and promoted nonalignment in the Third World's approach to Cold War relations. Roland Burke, ""The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom": Human Rights at the Bandung Conference," *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2006): 947.
[121] Rossen Djagalov, "The Afro-Asian Writers Association and Soviet Engagement with Africa," *Black Perspectives*, November 2, 2017, https://www.aaihs.org/the-afro-asian-writers-association-and-soviet-engagement-with-africa/.
[122] Duncan M. Yoon, ""Our Forces Have Redoubled": World Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry,* 2 no. 2 (2015): 252.

emerging countries both in informing and inspiring their own peoples and in giving articulate voice to the struggles, the hopes and aspirations."[123] As a writer herself, this conference was particularly significant in granting her a sense of a global community of writer activists and her role within the world-wide struggle.

After leaving Uzbekistan, she spent time in Leningrad and Moscow. She attended the parade for the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution where "Mr Khrushchev looked down and saw us […] smiled, took off his hat and returned the bow," that W.E.B. Du Bois had extended to him.[124] Throughout the trip with her husband, she met Soviet government officials, spoke with the Soviet Writers' Union, attended the ballet at the Bolshoi Theater and observed the 1959 May Day parade in Red Square. Her account of the trip challenged Western reports of "the scarcities and shortages in the Soviet Union," and contrasted her experience with that of racism in the US: "we were ordinary citizens—no, not ordinary citizens, black *second-class* citizens from the world's most self-assured 'democracy'—here we were joining the citizens of the Soviet Union to celebrate their revolution and the dawn of the New Russia!"[125] In this way, like the other editors' travel accounts, she was a "countertraveler," writing to persuade readers of socialism's progressiveness on race.

While her sojourn in the Soviet Union confirmed her belief in the necessity of socialism's application in the US, her two-month trip to China from February 1959 led to a transformation in her political outlook. Up to this point, Graham Du Bois' socialist politics had developed in line with the other *Freedomways* editors' affinity to the Soviet bloc, but her visit to China and subsequent engagement with Maoism, led to an approach that diverged from their political leanings. Her embryonic Maoism was facilitated through travel and in *Freedomways* she wrote an uncritical depiction of life in Mao's China during the Great Leap Forward, in

[123] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Speech," University of Wisconsin, April 9, 1960, 4, Box 27, Folder 12, SGDB Papers.
[124] Graham Du Bois, *His Day is Marching On*, 262
[125] Graham Du Bois, *His Day is Marching On*, 262

"Minority People's in China" (Spring 1961). She saw China in racialized terms, as a formerly colonized nation whose national minorities had been "oppressed and exploited by the ruling majority, despised, excluded from the development in the regions, hunted down by Japanese invaders and enslaved by Kuomintang despots."[126] She claimed that, in contrast, after the socialist revolution, minorities were "the favored ones, today […] And other Chinese smile indulgently, and say softly, 'We are all Chinese!'"[127] She framed the Chinese Revolution as particularly relevant to African and Afro-descended activists because it addressed capitalist imperialism's racial contours. As Robin D.G. Kelley and Betsy Esch argue, Mao and Chinese socialism "offered Black radicals a 'colored' or Third World Marxist model that enabled them challenge a white and western vision of class struggle," and this marries with the way Graham Du Bois wrote and spoke about China.[128]

Graham Du Bois was an advocate of both the Soviet Union and China at the time of writing "Minority Peoples in China," but her remarks reveal a shift in her Black Left politics and internationalism that she made clear in an address to the Rally for Peace and Friendship in New York in 1960 that celebrated the forty-third anniversary of the October Revolution. She hailed the Soviet Union as "a friend" to the "millions of dark skinned peoples who have suffered and starved under the heavy yoke of colonial exploitation."[129] But if the Soviet Union was "a friend," China represented "a colored people, once oppressed," that had "thrown off oppressors, imperialists and slavedrivers."[130] She suggested that because Chinese people had prevailed over the same colonial forces that African and Afro-descended people were struggling against, their socialism could be "a model for colored nations worldwide."[131] Taj

[126] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Minority Peoples in China," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 95.
[127] Graham Du Bois, "Minority Peoples in China," 101.
[128] Robin D.G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution," *Souls: Critical Journal of Black Politics and Culture* 1, no. 4 (1999): 8.
[129] Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois, "The Year of Africa address to the Rally for Peace and Friendship," November 8, 1960, New York City, Box 27, Folder 12, SGDB Papers.
[130] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "I Have Seen China," Box 29, Folder 12, SGDB Papers
[131] Keisha Brown, "Blackness in Exile: W.E.B. Du Bois' Role in the Formation of Representations of Blackness as Conceptualized by the Chinese Communist Party," *Phylon* 53, no.2 (2015): 26.

Frazier explains how the Chinese Communist Party's assertion that "revolution could occur in a dominantly agrarian society made up mostly of impoverished peasants," went against the Marxist tenet that "such political movements could only develop among working-class populations led by a centralized party of activists in a largely industrialized society."[132] As an agrarian peasant revolution, Chinese socialism appeared more suited to African liberation among nations whose development had been curtailed by colonialism, and race became the primary lens through which China's model of global power was differentiated from both the US and the Soviet Union. This lens fit with Graham Du Bois' existing Pan-African framework for viewing international connections along racial lines and led to a shift in her socialist politics that stemmed from her experience visiting the country.



Figure 5: W. E. B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Chinese entourage, ca. 1959. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

[132] Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 25.

Highly regulated and relatively brief visits most often affirmed and consolidated, rather than critically challenged, the editors' Black Left feminist politics. But Graham Du Bois' sojourn to China was an exception. Just how carefully curated their visits in 1959 and 1962 were has been examined by Robeson Taj Frazier, Keisha Brown, Joe Lockard and Yunxiang Gao, as part of a foreign policy that represented China as an ally to Black Americans and to newly independent African nations to establish its position as a powerful alternative to US capitalism and (white European) Soviet socialism. Frazier suggests that "every moment of the couple's tour was scripted and pre-planned" and that they were "led around and trailed at all times by government assigned guides and handlers."[133] Figure 5 illustrates the close surveillance of the couple during the trip, as they are escorted by official chaperones at a public landmark. While a large entourage of people look on, more Chinese officials can be seen at each side of the monument, monitoring the situation. The image illustrates how their movements and interactions were controlled and suggests that the China they saw communicated a keenly curated political message of progress and prosperity. Brown points out that foreign guests "were entertained by prominent Chinese of their own occupation and members of the association that invited them […] the most important visitors invariably met Mao and other Chinese dignitaries […] they were taken to impressive factories and public works from Manchuria to Canton."[134] Despite the careful curation of the trip, in her report for *Freedomways,* the only report on China to appear in the magazine, Graham Du Bois ruminated on the markers of progress she saw and was told about on her trip. She detailed how the new People's Government were assisting the different minority groups in the country through redistribution of land, and providing "building materials for homes, draught animals, seed grain and farm tools."[135] And progress in education was exhibited by the existence of "Nationality

[133] Frazier, *The East is Black,* 57.
[134] Brown, "Blackness in Exile, 26.
[135] Graham, "Minority Peoples in China," 100.

Institutes in nearly every province in China where students may receive Normal School or Technical Training," that enabled "young people of differing national backgrounds," to be trained "for leadership in the entire People's Republic of China."[136]

Graham Du Bois and W.E.B. were celebrated as distinguished guests of state and the negative social and economic impact of the Great Leap Forward was concealed from them. A China Central News and Documentary Films Studio propaganda video entitled "Welcome Dr W.E.B. Du Bois!" collated footage of warm receptions and informal conversations with government officials, including Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice Premier and Madam Chen Yi. It depicts Du Bois' ninety-first birthday celebration at Peking University, where he gave a speech lauding the country as an example for African liberation struggles, a guided visit to Shanghai, and finally their meeting with Chairman Mao Zedong in Wuhan.[137] Graham Du Bois' visit was filled with official activities and meetings, and she seems to have been prevented from speaking to Chinese citizens about life in the country. This impacts how her account must be contextualized to ascertain how it diverged from other short political visits to impact her political outlook.

Principal to Graham Du Bois' understanding of Chinese socialism's benefits was the improvement in the status of women she perceived while in China. She saw "doctors, most of them women, without lectures or criticism […] helping mothers with their children [and] tending the sick and old people."[138] Her feminism was not always explicit in her writing and women are not the primary focus of "Minority Peoples in China," but their roles in national liberation and building socialism are incorporated very specifically into a wider analysis of how Chinese socialism improved the condition of minorities. The role of official translator Bei

[136] Graham, "Minority Peoples in China," 101
[137] Central News and Documentary Films Studio," Welcome W. E. B. Du Bois!," W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, Massachusetts.
[138] Graham Du Bois, "Minority Peoples in China," 97-98.

Guangli is particularly pertinent to an analysis of how conversations with Chinese women altered her Black Left feminist viewpoint. In *His Day Is Marching On,* Graham Du Bois recalled that at the dinner party for Du Bois' ninety-first birthday, she was "seated next to the pretty wife of the Vice Premier": "I learned that she was Mme. Shih Liang, Minister of Justice. She spoke no English, but we conversed through the interpreter."[139] This brings into question the accuracy of conversations she had with other women in the country that are cited by Gerald Horne as influential to her political evolution.[140] Her conversations were filtered through an official government translator employed to uphold the PRC's progressive image. Despite the political purpose of the visit, neither activist intellectual's reports acknowledged how that regulated the "politics of seeing." Horne suggests it was "enough for her that China was then hostile to those who were depriving her own people of their human rights," that is, capitalist imperialist governments' oppression of people of color, following the idea that "enemy of my enemy is my friend" that allowed her to look beyond "pressing domestic problems in China."[141] As a highly educated intellectual engaged in world affairs, it is unlikely that Graham Du Bois was oblivious to atrocities in China or the Chinese government's repression of critics of its socialist project. She nevertheless cited women's liberation in China in a way that could give credibility to her claims about the connections between women in China and "dark sisters" across the world, pronouncing, "I have seen China and life for me has been transformed!"[142]

Despite the structured curation of her visit, Graham Du Bois believed she saw socialist progress in action, and this led to a transformation in her politics as she came to embrace an increasingly race-first approach to global solidarity. The rest of the *Freedomways* collective did not share her celebration of Chinese socialism, and "Minority Peoples in China" was the only occasion the magazine covered events in the country. The editors were strategic in the

[139] Graham Du Bois Du Bois, *His Day Is Marching On*, 281.
[140] Horne, *Race Woman,* 160.
[141] Horne, *Race Woman,* 158.
[142] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "I Have Seen China," 1, Box 29, Folder 12, SGDB Papers.

representation of socialism for readers, and China's absence suggests something of the cleavages in their views on which national tenets of socialism should be applicable to the freedom struggle.

"We Were Americans in Ghana": Repatriation and Diasporic Identity

The magazine's international view of the freedom struggle drew on the editors' lived experiences of travel and the cultivation of international activist networks for its editorial outlook and content. The Black expatriate community in Africa was particularly valuable for giving *Freedomways* an international voice. Cooper Jackson remembered, "we had a whole number of people involved with the magazine whose main interest was keeping in touch […] with things that were happening in movements in Africa."[143] Expatriates including W. Alphaeus and Dorothy Hunton, Julian Mayfield, Max and Jean Carey Bond, and Shirley Graham Du Bois and W.E.B. Du Bois all relocated to Ghana in the early 1960s and maintained personal and political relationships with the magazine's other editors.

After relocating to Ghana in 1961, Graham Du Bois continued delivering her editorial responsibilities until 1964, during which time she dealt with the magazine's finances, and sought out new subscription bases on the continent, as well as sending content. In a May 1963 letter, for example, she told Cooper Jackson she would "try to get some unusual articles for the African issue."[144] After stepping down as editor, she passed on the responsibility for subscriptions to Dorothy Hunton but continued to send her thoughts on the magazine. In 1967 letter, she commended the latest issue featuring Muhammad Ali as "an expressive and timely demonstration of the real understanding of crucial issues facing the world today."[145] Alphaeus

[143] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[144] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 11, 1963, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[145] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 30, 1967, Box 7, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.

Hunton was working in Ghana with W.E.B. Du Bois on the *Encyclopedia Africana* and wrote an essay for the inaugural issue on Guinea's recent independence and socialist development, and Julian Mayfield, who had also moved to Ghana in 1961, contributed essays on the Cuban Revolution (Summer 1961) and James Baldwin (Spring 1963), who was living in Paris at the time. In the early 1960s, these expatriates acquired contributions from African writers and leaders including Congo Vice Prime minister Antoine Gizenga; President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta; Ghanaian playwright and author Efua Sutherland; Nigerian scholar E.U. Essien-Udom; and Ghanaian artist Kofi Antubam.

Repatriation expanded the depth of coverage in the magazine, notably after Graham Du Bois and Bond's relocation to Ghana, that was committed to socialist development. West Africa in particular, featured heavily in the magazine's international coverage. It gave *Freedomways* access to activists and politicians on the continent. Bond resided in Ghana from 1964 to 1968.[146] While there, she contributed seven book reviews and an essay on the New York school crisis and stated unequivocally that she was "associated with the magazine even though I was away for four years."[147] She and her husband, architect J. Max Bond Jr., decided on an expatriate life:

> Largely because we were socialist-minded, and when Ghana got its independence and Nkrumah came to power, Ghana became a kind of beacon of progressive society in the world, and it was Africa […] both of us just wanted to be part of that nation-building project. We never imagined that we wouldn't return to the United States, but we did want to spend time in Ghana. And many of the people who were there in the African American community at that time also came basically out of the same sort of motivation.[148]

[146] Unlike many African American expatriates in Ghana, including Shirley Graham Du Bois, Max and Jean Carey Bond remained in Ghana after the military coup that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah in 1966. Carey Bond has attributed their ability to stay as a result of the apolitical nature of her husband's job as an architect. As a result, the Bonds were not seen as a political threat to the new regime.
[147] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[148] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, November 9, 2001, New York, NY, Erik S. McDuffie Personal Papers.

Nkrumah's development of an independent nation that could eschew imperial and neo-colonial relationships chimed with Bond's Black Left politics. In Ghana, she felt an affinity and common struggle and she was also introduced to people from "from the socialist countries, from Hungary, from the Soviet Union, from East Germany, as well as from Japan. Even from India" which she considered to be "a very fascinating and illuminating and educating experience. It was fantastic."[149] Bond's husband was working for Nkrumah's government, and she had access to government officials and events where she could meet like-minded individuals in a way that paralleled experiences at conferences and during brief political visits.

But Bond valued living in a country with "a different set of values." Having witnessed African socialism in action, with hindsight, she was emphatic that it had a "profound effect on my development and my work." [150] For Bond, Ghana was a living example of her ideas about socialism's capacity for securing self-determination and a nation free from imperial control and oppression, and this had an impact on her way of living after she returned to the US in 1968. She underlined that upon returning to the US, she was "physically repelled by walking into a supermarket and seeing all this stuff," confiding, "it just actually repelled me. Because I had been living in a situation that confirmed that one didn't need 99% of what was in that store."[151] This evolution of thought was lasting: "since then, I've always experienced a culture shock coming back to the US rather than leaving it. Always. And I like to leave the US, I really like to be on my way out. Not to say I don't like to come home, home is home, But I think that that time in Ghana very much, it gave me that orientation."[152] Bond's remarks demonstrate how sometimes more lasting forms of international travel, that result in prolonged exposure to different cultures, had the power to alter how activists saw the world, and she brought that idea to *Freedomways.*

[149] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.
[150] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.
[151] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.
[152] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.

In her review of artist Elton Fax's book *Through Black Eyes: Journeys of a Black Artists to East Africa and Russia* (1974) for the Spring 1974 issue, she argued that travel "in its truest form, is an art," that could only change the outlook of the person "who observes with humility as opposed to arrogance, who sincerely respects the history and contemporary customs of the people he moved among and who is blessed with the capacity to learn and be enriched by his experience."[153] In her view, travel had the potential to alter the way one sees the world, and had shaped her internationalist view in ways that both aligned with and departed from other women on the editorial board. She resisted collapsing the differences between Black diasporic experiences because she understood that "we were Americans in Ghana," and did not feel that "just by virtue of our color," that she could "make any assumptions or presumptions" about a shared relationship to Africa among Black people globally.[154] Living in Ghana long-term permanently altered how Bond viewed the US, but she still averred that she was an American in Ghana— a declaration that stood in contrast to repatriation's effect on Graham Du Bois' thinking.

Kevin Gaines has argued that despite Black expatriates' support for African revolution, their status as "diasporic strangers" limited their influence on and comprehension of events in Ghana because, while of African descent, they were "socially and culturally alien to Ghanaian culture" where "race consciousness lacked the visceral meaning it held for them as African Americans."[155] Gaines' use of the phrase "diasporic strangers" encapsulates the imagined kinship that some Black Americans romanticized before more permanent relocation led to the realization that, while they shared a diasporic history, their lived experiences were vastly different. Though after residing in African countries for prolonged periods of time, a "certain level of immersion in Ghanaian culture, traditional or otherwise, was inevitable for many

[153] Jean Carey Bond, "Two Writers Look at Through Black Eyes," *Freedomways* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 157.
[154] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie; Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Du Bois*, 231.
[155] Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 143.

expatriates," Gaines argues that "some would have been too busy with their government appointed tasks to avail themselves of local cultural experiences."[156] He suggests that Black Americans came to Ghana with pre-conceived notions of Ghanaians that were often shattered, complicating Black Americans' understandings of diasporic interconnection. Repatriation had the potential to transform Black expatriates, evident in Bond's affirmation of her American identity. Graham Du Bois, however, as a close advisor to Kwame Nkrumah was removed from the public and the extent to which she experienced immersion in Ghanaian culture is debatable.

Graham Du Bois' previous international travel had convinced her of the necessity of international socialism and racial solidarity after having witnessed it in action in the Soviet Union and China. She had previously spent time in Ghana at the All-African People's Conference in 1958, and The Conference of the Women of Africa and African Descent in 1960, where she gave a speech to "The Women of Ghana." Her indictment, the revocation of her passport, and sustained FBI surveillance curtailing her activism, made her increasingly ambivalent and resentful of the US. After witnessing the potential of socialism abroad, being welcomed with open arms, and treated royally in these countries, "the simple fact," Gerald Horne argues, "was that Graham Du Bois could play a larger role abroad than at home" where her idea of a global democracy built on socialism did not come under official censure.[157] In contrast to the repression she faced in the US because of her communist affiliation, in Nkrumah's Ghana it was an advantage.

As the government sought out favorable socialist alliances in their plans for economic development, Graham Du Bois' existing connections to Moscow and Beijing were beneficial and she was given an official role in the government as Director of Education for Ghana Television. Graham Du Bois, W.E.B. Du Bois, and her son David, who was residing in Cairo

[156] Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana*, 159.
[157] Horne, *Race Woman*, 163.

at the time, became citizens of Ghana after the US embassy refused to renew their passports in 1963. In October 1963, she wrote to the editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Percival Leroy Prattis: "I am a Ghanaian citizen…this is my home."[158] She signaled her African identity again, in a 1967 letter to Cooper Jackson, when discussing the dangers of neo-colonial advances on the continent: "We in Africa have become increasingly concerned and, at times bitter, by the support and recognition being given the military regimes which are beating down our advances and recolonizing our peoples, by the European Socialist countries."[159] Different lived experiences among the editors in the newly independent nation shaped their conceptions of international connections and their relationship to Africa differently. While Bond's experience in Ghana complicated her relationship to the US, it nevertheless reaffirmed her American identity. Graham Du Bois on the other hand, claimed an Africanist "we-identity."[160] Repatriation did not necessarily alter the women's political outlook, but it did have an impact on how they lived and how they thought about their diasporic identities.

Graham Du Bois' letter to Cooper Jackson also signaled her growing repudiation of European socialism after a military coup in 1966 when Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown while out of the country.[161] Ghana had become a central point of contact for *Freedomways*' editors as Black Americans on the Left settled in the new pioneering socialist nation and the

[158] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois to P.L. Prattis, October 16, 1963, in Horne, *Race Woman,* 175.
[159] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 30, 1967, Box 7, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[160] The concept of a "we-identity" was developed by sociologist Norbert Elias and refers to the groups of people who share an identity within a larger society. Such we-relations include people's families or friends, their hometowns, nation states, race, gender, and class identities, and even mankind. Christa Buschendorf uses the concept of the "we-identity" to argue for how it was used by African Americans in their transatlantic appeals for solidarity and brotherhood among Black diasporic identities. Christ Buschendorf, "*Freedomways:* Transnationalism in the Work of Shirley Graham Du Bois," in *Obama and Transnational American Studies,* ed. Alfred Hornung (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2016), 495-499.
[161] *Freedomways* editors in a 'Welcome Home, Dr Hunton' editorial message described the coup as enacted by "Neo-colonialists and a clique of military men who seized power in Ghana while Kwame Nkrumah was out of the country on a Vietnam peace mission." For more on Kwame Nkrumah and the 1966 coup see David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 1988); Ama Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Westview Press, 1989).

coup made it "a very hard time to maintain contacts."[162] Graham Du Bois, Dorothy and Alphaeus Hunton, Tom Feelings, and Julian Mayfield, who had been connections for the magazine in West Africa, found themselves fleeing persecution from the new anti-Nkrumah regime. Graham Du Bois' response to the coup was published in the Summer 1966 issue of the magazine. In "What Happened in Ghana? The Inside Story," she championed Nkrumah's Seven-Year Plan that "clearly stated the Government's intention to build a socialist society," and argued "there was no climate of revolution in Ghana […] any resemblance to a revolt on the part of the people of Ghana had to be manipulated and fabricated by skillful, directed intelligence from outside."[163] She suggested that Nkrumah had been ousted "under the manipulation of imperialists and neo-colonialists," and argued that the coup was "employed as the surest and most effective offensive against the freedom and independence of emerging peoples. In Latin America, in the Middle East, in Asia and now in Africa, the *coup* has operated successfully."[164] Her reaction illustrates her continued devotion to Kwame Nkrumah and his program for a united socialist Africa.

Her essay also reveals how out of touch with the Ghanaian public she had been, bringing into question her claim to an African identity from her privileged position as close advisor to the President. In a letter to Julian Mayfield on March 8, 1967, Richard Gibson described Graham Du Bois as "the one person in Ghana who did not know that there was going to be a coup."[165] While the magazine featured reactions to Nkrumah's ousting, by Chicago-based activist Christine Johnson, for example, it was unable (and unwilling) to provide any future coverage of Ghana. Graham Du Bois remained in Africa, moving to Cairo. She would

[162] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[163] Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois, "What Happened in Ghana? The Inside Story," *Freedomways* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 218.
[164] Graham Du Bois Du Bois, "What Happened in Ghana? The Inside Story," 201.
[165] Letter from Richard Gibson to Julian Mayfield, 8 March, 1967, Box 119, Folder 2, Gerald Horne Papers, Sc MG 559, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, New York.

divide her time between there and Beijing until her death in 1977, reflecting her continued affinity with Chinese socialism.

***

While the displacement of contacts in Ghana was a blow to *Freedomways*' global activist network, Cooper Jackson detailed other ways for the editors to remain engaged with global liberations struggles and build new international contacts. Exchange subscriptions with other progressive and Left publications was another avenue for circulating the magazine beyond the US:

> We also got the South African Communist Party publication, and we exchanged bundles with them. So, we kept in tune with what was happening. We received a couple of Japanese publications. Marxist publications […] this was very helpful to keep in line with what was happening throughout the world. And the aboriginal movement in Australia we had contact with. We published some of their poetry and some of their articles. The Palestinian movement. We had contacts in both Israel and Palestine, we received material from them. [166]

Through international travel, maintenance of existing contacts, and the cultivation of new connections, the women editors were able to maintain the magazine's international ethos in solidarity with oppressed people across the world. *Freedomways* was always an international magazine in content and circulation because its editors believed that "the American civil rights struggle was linked to people in struggle all over the world. It couldn't be separated from people struggling for their basic rights in Asia and Africa, and everywhere […] wherever we had contacts, we hoped to bring to our readers the worldwide struggle of oppressed people. It was key to show that we're not alone."[167] Travel also enabled Cooper Jackson to promote the circulation of the magazine during a trip to Socialist Europe, including the Soviet Union in 1966. She described the opportunity to travel for the first time in twenty years as "inspiring

[166] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[167] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

and educational," and she was eager to talk to George Murphy Jr. about "some ideas developed following this trip."[168] Maintaining a global activist network was not easy, she allowed: "It was hard. But having contacts with other revolutionary groups who themselves had other contacts throughout the world helped. I travelled a lot."[169] The editors used contacts in Africa, Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and Australia to facilitate and sustain the magazine's international voice.

The editors celebrated the formative power of travel for developing their ideas about the salient connections between global liberation struggles, and Black feminist epistemology grounded in lived experience shaped how activist intellectuals discussed and editorialized internationalism in the magazine. But my research has shown that their travel was rarely transformative, and in most cases, it sustained their existing Black Left feminist politics. Attendance at conferences strengthened the women's thinking and maintained their activism in an international network, and during highly curated visits to socialist countries, the women often saw, or were shown, what they wanted to see. Graham Du Bois' trip to China was the exception and led to a shift in her socialist politics. She embraced Maoism after being shown progress in education and women's rights, and in this way departed from the politics of the other editors who continued to espouse socialism in line with the Soviet Union and Popular Front politics. Living as expatriates also functioned to bring the editors into contact with like-minded people, who could affirm their socialism. Ghana was an example of what they had been struggling for come to life. But it also had the potential to impact their sense of diasporic identity and the way they lived.

Ultimately, travel was a way for the editors to continue their activism during the Cold War and uphold the international tenets of their Black Left feminist politics, which, as

[168] Letter from Esther Cooper Jackson to George B. Murphy Jr., May 17, 1966, GBM Papers.
[169] Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

presented in *Freedomways,* remained consistent throughout publication. But while the editors shared a broad socialist politics, Graham Du Bois' embrace of Maoism indicates that there were differences in their ideas about socialism, nationalism, and internationalism, and this led to conflict on the editorial board that will be analyzed in the next chapter. The editors nonetheless all "viewed the upsurge of liberation taking place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as clearly a social change force that was an ally of our movement and its aspirations."[170] As a result, they crafted *Freedomways* as a "window to the world."[171]

[170] Jack O'Dell for the Editors, "Tracing the Freedom Way," *Freedomways* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1985), 131.
[171] O'Dell, "Tracing the Freedom Way," 132.

Chapter Three: "We Join Our Fate with Yours": Traversing Political Difference and Promoting Women's Voices

Freedomways' inaugural editorial stated that the magazine would be a "public forum for the review, examination, and debate of all problems confronting Negroes in the United States," and introduced an editorial policy "designed to provide an open forum for the free expression of ideas."[1] In *Freedomways Reader* (2000), Esther Cooper Jackson reiterated that the opening editorial reflected "the purpose and goals of the collective of people who had founded *Freedomways.*"[2] Though the magazine did feature voices with different political viewpoints, the editors maintained a socialist political outlook that influenced content and editorial approach. The extent to which the magazine lived up to its promise to be an "open forum" is discussed in this chapter. Foregrounding the editorial collective has also rendered individual editorial authorship elusive in the magazine in favor of crafting a seamless editorial voice. This has obscured the different, and sometimes conflicting, ideas and approaches about the applications of socialism to the freedom struggle among its editors, as I have been suggesting in this thesis. Study of the internal dynamics of the editorial board begins to uncover how varying views influenced content and how Cooper Jackson was the most enduring editorial voice across the magazine's twenty-five years of publication. But despite political differences and disputes, I argue Cooper Jackson, Graham Du Bois, and Bond, alongside other women in the collective, came together and created the magazine as a space for women's voices, particularly those that aligned with their Black Left feminist politics.

[1] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," *Freedomways* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 9.
[2] Esther Cooper Jackson, ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in their Own Country* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), xix.

"I Just Was Never Particularly Amused with That Policy": Esther Cooper Jackson and the Exclusion of Black Nationalism

In a 2004 interview, when asked to describe her role as managing editor, Cooper Jackson responded, "I was everything. Raised funds, set-up parties, and art shows. Trained other people to do the same thing […] I did a little bit of everything."[3] Her statement undermined the non-hierarchical, coalition-based impression of the collective that she had previously championed, and Bond argued that even after she effectively became editor in chief, Cooper Jackson remained "the senior person in terms of decision making."[4] Study of submissions sent to the *Freedomways* office confirm Cooper Jackson's editorial control. In September 1967, for example, when associate editor John Henrik Clarke responded to a poetry submission, he wrote, "I have read your poems with interest and will put them in a folder to be read by Mrs. Jackson when she returns to the office."[5] This is just one of several letters in which Clarke deferred to Cooper Jackson to make decisions on what would be published the magazine. Further evidence of Cooper Jackson's influence may be discerned through analysis of what was left out of the magazine, just as much as what is included in its pages. The magazine's mission statement promised to "mirror the development in the diversified and many-sided struggles of the Negro people," by bringing the coalitional politics of the Popular Front to bear on the emergent 1960s movement.[6] However, Black Power and Black nationalist voices are absent from the magazine.

[3] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, New York, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough Smith.
[4] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 29, 2004, New York, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough Smith.
[5] John Henrik Clarke, letter to Mr. Sat Steiner, September 6, 1967, Box 30, Folder 27, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library, New York (Hereafter cited as JHC Papers).
[6] The Editors, "It's a Journal!," 9.

In December 1966, the *Freedomways* office received a manuscript entitled "Identity and Black Power," but neither this nor any other article on Black Power was ever printed.[7] A June 1964 exchange between Graham Du Bois and Cooper Jackson suggests that the latter was largely responsible for this absence. In the letter, Graham Du Bois recalled a conversation with Malcolm X during a visit to Ghana when he met with Nkrumah. She claimed that Malcolm revered "this fearless and wise Leader, his words and what I see he is doing in Ghana has opened my eyes, has given me Peace and Vision which I never had before."[8] While Graham Du Bois was convinced the Black nationalist was on the correct path to socialism and felt his voice should be included in *Freedomways*, Cooper Jackson was more cautious in describing Malcolm X as "a young man in search of answers at a very trying period in his life."[9]

Malcolm X had formally split from the Nation of Islam (NOI) and its leader Elijah Muhammed just three months earlier in March 1964. The NOI had a policy of non-engagement which "prevented members from joining any protest activity."[10] But, as Trevin Jones suggests, "Malcolm catapulted the NOI onto the national stage through his controversial rhetoric and approach to social activism."[11] He believed that lack of engagement in political action limited the organization as a force in the Black freedom struggle, and Kevin Gaines suggests that, "emboldened by the racial crises of 1963, Malcolm ceased to defer to Muhammed's anodyne religion and apolitical nationalism."[12] When he commented publicly that the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was an example of "chickens coming home to roost," Malcolm was

---

[7] P. Chike Onwauchi letter to The Editor, December 5, 1966, Box 30, Folder 45, JHC Papers.
[8] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 31, 1964, Box 8, Folder 11, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York (Hereafter cited as ECJ Papers).
[9] Letter from Esther Cooper Jackson to Shirley Graham Du Bois, June 20, 1964, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[10] Clayborne Carson, "Rethinking African-American Political Thought in the Post-Revolutionary Era," in *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement,* eds. Brian Ward and Tony Badger (London: Macmillian Press Ltd., 1996), 119-120.
[11] Trevin Jones, "The Ideological and Spiritual Transformation of Malcolm X," *Journal of African American Studies* 24 (2020): 426.
[12] Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 183.

prevented from public speaking for ninety days and subsequently departed the organization.[13] In November 1963, he advanced the idea of a Black united front across difference in his "Message to the Grassroots"' at the Northern Negro Grassroots Leadership conference in Detroit. He urged Black Americans to "learn to forget our differences," because "you don't catch hell because you're Methodist or Baptist, you don't catch hell because you're a Democrat or Republican […] You catch hell because you're a black man. You catch hell, all of us catch hell, for the same reason."[14] But this rhetoric of coalition promoted Black nationalism as the basis for Black unity and was opposed to the inclusion of the white working class and white leftists promoted by Popular Front ideals. Malcolm X went on to declare "we have a common enemy," but while for Cooper Jackson and the other *Freedomways* editors the common enemy was the global capitalist system, for Malcolm X in November 1963, "what we have foremost in common is that enemy—the white man."[15] As a space for her to continue her old guard leftist politics, it is unsurprising that Cooper Jackson was averse to including Malcolm X as a voice in the magazine in the context of his public speeches that contradicted her beliefs. However, a shift in his politics is discernable after his split from Muhammad and the NOI. He sought collaboration with other civil rights leaders, softened his criticism of the civil rights movement, and embarked on sojourns to the Middle East and Africa where he pointed up connections between Black Americans and Africans as he sought to garner support from African heads of state to bring US human rights violations to the United Nations.[16]

Malcolm's viewpoint was undergoing an evolution, but Cooper Jackson was not entirely incorrect when she advised Graham Du Bois that he had "much thinking, studying, reading, listening to do in his search for the answers," or that "we need to give him the time to

[13] Jones, "Ideological and Spiritual Transformation of Malcolm X," 427.
[14] Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," November 10, 1963, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0147.html.
[15] Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots."
[16] Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana,* 186-187.

do so without attributing to him a position of leadership which he has yet to earn."[17] Graham Du Bois intimated that Malcolm's meeting with Nkrumah had opened his eyes to the possibilities of socialism but other Black expatriates in Ghana had contrasting recollections of the visit.[18] Black expatriate, leftist activist, and writer Julian Mayfield advised that "there was no love lost between the two men," that the meeting only lasted twenty minutes as opposed to the "more than hour long visit" Graham Du Bois claimed took place, and that Malcolm questioned Mayfield on corruption in Nkrumah's government.[19] Though his opinion of white people softened, Malcolm X remained committed to a race-first Black nationalism and never wrote for *Freedomways;* nor did the magazine cover his organizing efforts, such as the founding of the Organization of Afro-American Unity in 1965, despite Clarke's involvement, which points to the over-arching editorial control of Cooper Jackson and her Popular Front brand of socialism.[20]

While she did not share Graham Du Bois' growing support of Black nationalism and its rhetoric of Black unity at the expense of working-class solidarity, Bond also felt that the "hardcore position" taken by the magazine "was not helpful," and that "it would have been much more helpful to reflect those voices and critique them if needs be […] But to just not have them in there at all… I just was never particularly amused with that policy."[21] Bond confirmed Cooper Jackson's formative role and revealed their differing editorial approaches to Black nationalism and the Black Power movement as a source of tension among members of

[17] Esther Cooper Jackson, letter to Shirley Graham Du Bois, June 20, 1964, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[18] Gaines suggests that "because Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism was decidedly non-racialist, he would have been cool to Malcolm's separatist views, which the latter had espoused immediately prior to his trip to Africa and the Middle East," *American Africans in Ghana,* 189.
[19] Shirley Graham Du Bois, letter to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 31, 1964, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers; Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana,*194.
[20] Garrett Felber suggests that the Organization of Afro-American Unity took as its inspiration, following john Henrik Clarke's suggestion, was the recently formed Organization of African Unity, a body of African nations unified around goals of anti-colonialism and human rights. Garrett Felber, "Harlem is the Black World: The Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Grassroots," *The Journal of African American History* 100, no. 2 (2015): 203.
[21] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

the editorial board. Though Cooper Jackson raised legitimate concerns in her belief that in June 1964, he had not yet figured out who he or what his message was, she later reflected that she wished that *Freedomways* had published an article by or about Malcolm X, and added, "I was on a radio talk show once with Malcolm, and we had a very pleasant relationship. My only criticism was that he was a fast talker and a fast thinker, and he often dominated the conversation. But he was very friendly towards the magazine then."[22] If the reason for Malcolm's absence from the magazine was not personal, it was certainly political. The magazine did address his legacy in posthumous evaluations of his life and death in book reviews and poetry. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his proximity to the Black intellectual and his own Black Left nationalism, John Henrik Clarke contributed the first assessment of Malcolm's political evolution, reviewing Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) for the Winter 1966 issue. Clarke crafted a narrative of political growth and emphasized how Malcolm "out[grew] the narrow stage of the Black Muslim Movement," and he averred that "the book is more precisely about a man in search of a definition of himself and his relationships to his people, his country, and the world."[23] But Clarke concluded that, "revealing as it is, [it] reads like the first draft of what could have been the most exciting autobiography of our time […] he died on the threshold of his potential."[24]

Cooper Jackson refused to give space to his ideas and approaches while he was alive, but capitalized on his celebrity after his death.[25] It is possible that in the months leading up to his death, Cooper Jackson and other editors discerned the beginnings of class analysis in Malcolm X's rhetoric, but Loyle Hairston argued in his review of Peter Louis Goldman's *The*

[22] Cooper Jackson, *Freedomways Reader*, xxviii.
[23]John Henrik Clarke, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," *Freedomways* 6, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 48-51.
[24] Clarke, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," 52.
[25] For example, Patricia McIlnay, "Two for Malcolm," *Freedomways* 6, no. 2, (Spring 1966): 135; Nikki Giovanni, "Malcolm X, The Man and His Times," *Freedomways* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1970): 84-87; Patricia Gow, "For Malcolm X: Poems of the Life and the Death of Malcolm X," *Freedomways* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 167-168.

Death and Life of Malcolm X (1973) for the Spring 1973 issue, that "however explosive his presence was among black people, unfortunately he was no Lenin."[26] The appearance of the poem "The Word Above the Sword: Some Words for Malcolm X" by New York poet and playwright Richard Davidson in the magazine's final issue, indicates how *Freedomways* was trying to find its way in a counter-revolutionary age where Communism was in retreat by claiming a leftward shift in his later political rhetoric:

> In the beginning he was one way,
>
> One shout,
>
> One chorus.
>
> National pride crowding out human need,
>
> Violence and hate taking reign.
>
> But in the end he was changing.
>
> He was reaching his hand,
>
> He was trembling with the love of brother for brother,
>
> Man for man.
>
> And he was killed for it.
>
> Killed as any who speak of human rights.
>
> […]
>
> He, who in the end forged his bitterness
>
> Into hope,
>
> Framed his pain into a universal shout,
>
> Blended his agony with the agony of millions.[27]

[26] Loyle Hairston, "The Death and Life of Malcolm X," *Freedomways* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 161.
[27] Richard Davidson, "The Word Above the Sword: Some Words for Malcolm X," *Freedomways* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 195-196.

Davidson intimates that at the end of his life, Malcolm X's politics were moving closer in line with the editors' beliefs, signaling a shift in language from a singular, Black, "one shout, one chorus," to a "universal shout," that included the "agony of millions." After his death in 1965, as was the case with Du Bois, activists began laying claim to Malcolm's legacy. In 1967 for the *International Socialist Review,* for example, Marxist intellectual George Novack argued, "Malcolm was on the way to becoming something more than a pure and simple black nationalist and a revolutionary advocate of Black power, he was beginning to embrace some of the ideas of socialism."[28] Posthumous coverage of Malcolm X in the magazine was not evidence of a change in Cooper Jackson's political thinking, nor disruption of her editorial influence, but an example of how the magazine staked claim to his legacy. Ian Rocksborough-Smith argues that, while Malcolm's omission from the magazine is "indicative of a political rift between his militant Muslim populism and the Popular Front ideals of *Freedomways,*" the magazine represented "both integrationist and nationalist perspectives through its participation in Harlem's literary and artistic scene."[29] However, in the case of Malcolm X, literary contributions in the magazine can be read not as an endorsement of his nationalist ideas, but as a tactic that capitalized on his celebrity for the promotion of their politics. While Malcolm may have been "no Lenin," *Freedomways* suggested that immediately prior to his death, he was on a path to socialism.

"We Had Some Differences on the Staff": Socialism, Nationalism, and Editorial Conflict

When Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois created *Freedomways*, they shared a political approach that was shaped by the Popular Front and their experience of 1950s anti-communism. As the years progressed, Graham Du Bois' politics began to shift towards a Black Left

[28] George Novack, "Malcolm X, Black Nationalism and Socialism," *International Socialist Review* 28, no. 4 (1967): 43-51. https://www.marxists.org/archive/novack/works/1967/julaug/mx02.htm.
[29] Ian Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle: Freedomways Magazine, Black Leftists and Continuities in the Freedom Movement," (Simon Fraser University, 2005), 64-69.

nationalism that stood at odds with Cooper Jackson's continued belief in the efficacy of cross-racial alliances for Black liberation. Graham Du Bois' residence in Ghana, her affinity to China, and her close relationship with Kwame Nkrumah, led her to develop, in Gerald Horne's summation, a "nationalism that tended to subsume class and ideological differences among African Americans under the guise of race."[30] This led to a disagreement between Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois over the content of the magazine that tested their friendship to its limits.

This was made manifest in the discord that developed over *Freedomways'* memorial issue for W.E. B. Du Bois in Winter 1965. After his death in August 1963, Black activists, and organizations from across the political spectrum sought to memorialize the Black intellectual. Graham Du Bois continued her work of mutual comradeship and had a very personal stake in how he was remembered. She accused the other editors of attempting to "rehabilitate Du Bois into U.S. respectability," pointing to the inclusion of messages from moderate Black liberals as evidence that Cooper Jackson had lost her revolutionary spirit.[31] On the decision to include NAACP president Roy Wilkins, Graham Du Bois chastised Copper Jackson: "I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO WANTS TO READ ROY WILKINS ON ANY PHASE OF W.E.B. DU BOIS."[32] Roy Wilkins had been assistant to National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Executive Secretary Walter White in 1948 when he had helped force Du Bois out of the organization after his increasingly Left politics and rhetoric became antithetical to the embrace of Cold War liberalism.[33] Wilkins' inclusion is evidence of Cooper Jackson's continued adherence to Popular Front Left-liberal coalitional politics, and while the NAAACP remained the largest

[30] Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 193.
[31] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 31,1964, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[32] Graham Du Bois to Cooper Jackson, May 31,1964.
[33] 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), 99-104.

civil rights organization and a force in local Black politics, his inclusion can also be read as strategic. But to Graham Du Bois, this compromised the magazine's socialist message and capitulated to a Cold War reformist agenda. Cooper Jackson responded by denying "that any attempt had been made to 'rehabilitate' Du Bois to respectability."[34] She rebuffed Graham Du Bois' assumption that she was the only one able to act or write as an authority on the Black intellectual:

> We invited Dr. Du Bois to the Atlanta Conference of the SNYC, to Columbia and other meetings because of our deep conviction of the greatness of the man. You speak of the vision of those young people who invited him. I believe I still have that vision and I intend, along with many others to do my share in bringing about a new America. Without vision, I would have long ago given up on Freedomways and the multitude of problems associated with getting it out.[35]

Cooper Jackson referred to her own relationship with Du Bois, reaffirmed her commitment to revolutionary change, and rejected Graham Du Bois' accusation that she had lost sight of the necessities of struggle.

Politics got in the way of their friendship at times. Cooper Jackson later reflected, "we had some differences on the staff. Shirley Graham Du Bois and I…especially after she had moved to Ghana, she didn't think that the magazine was militant enough […] She was a very talented and brilliant woman, but sometimes a little difficult."[36] While Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois worked closely together to create *Freedomways*' early issues, they did not always share a cohesive political viewpoint and there were moments of conflict among the editorial collective. Graham Du Bois believed that the magazine was extending its coverage of the US movement at the cost of its international outlook. In an April 1965 letter to John Henrik Clarke, she charged that she had a "much wider world view" of the freedom struggle than other members of the editorial board.[37] She was no doubt reacting to the direction of the magazine

[34] Letter from Esther Cooper Jackson to Shirley Graham Du Bois, June 20, 1964, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[35] Cooper Jackson to Graham Du Bois, June 20, 1964.
[36] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[37] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to John Henrik Clarke, April 16, 1965, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.

in the wake of her departure as editor in early 1964 and referring to recent special issues "The Southern Movement" (Winter 1964) and "Mississippi: The Closed Society" (Spring 1965). Her letter to Clarke was also written in the wake of her clash with Cooper Jackson over the Du Bois Memorial issue, published Winter 1965. In this context, Graham Du Bois' criticism is perhaps unsurprising, however she was incorrect to suggest that she had a "wider world view" than the other editors and the magazine maintained its international outlook after her departure. In addition to the Caribbean special issue published in Summer 1964, that contradicts Graham Du Bois' claim, the magazine continued to report on liberation struggles in Nigeria, Cambodia, South Africa, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Grenada, and published special issues on "Afro-Asia" (Summer 1972), a "Caribbean/Latin America Focus" (Summer 1981), and the Middle East (Spring and Summer 1983).[38]

Cooper Jackson's sociological Popular Front approach did, however, shape her focus on the domestic struggle and coverage of grassroots activism. The activism being carried out by young activists in the South resonated with her experience in the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) and she was more willing than Graham Du Bois to include moderate voices in the magazine. This may have also been a consequence of her network building in the South. Jack O'Dell was working in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) before he joined *Freedomways,* giving Cooper Jackson access to Martin Luther King Jr. and the

[38] In the immediate aftermath of the Ghana coup in 1966 there is a decrease in international coverage because *Freedomways* lost a lot of its international connections who were forced to flee the country, with some returning to the US. However, it did not cease its international reportage, especially on South Africa which received consistent coverage from 1971. See also Lindsay Barrett, "A Message to Black Activists on the Nigerian Crisis," *Freedomways* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 212-220; Robert S Browne, "Roots of U.S. Intervention in Cambodia," *Freedomways* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 115-123; Armando Panguene, "The National Liberation Struggle in Mozambique: A Process of Transformation," *Freedomways* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 183-188; Cruz Pinto, "Guinea-Bissau's Liberation Struggle Against Portuguese Colonialism, *Freedomways* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 189-198; The Editors, "Victory in Guinea-Bissau," *Freedomways* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1974): 182; Anthony Monteiro, "Angola's Second War of Liberation," *Freedomways* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1976): 47-59; Anthony Monteiro, "The Bright Future of the Ethiopian Revolution," *Freedomways* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 136-150; The Editors, "Victory to the People of South Africa and Zimbabwe!," *Freedomways* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 5-6; Annette Walker, "Grenada's Women Move Forward with the Revolution," *Freedomways* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 23-28.

nonviolent movement for integration in the early 1960s. The magazine also continued, to an extent, to promote union organizing as an avenue for Black activism, even though by the 1960s labor unions had significant race problems. Paul Frymer points out that unions were discriminating by "explicitly creating racially segregated locals; implicitly segregating the work force through the use of different job duties and pay scales; denying opportunities for apprenticeship training; maintaining seniority systems that left black workers as the first to be fired; and excluding minority workers from union leadership positions."[39] By 1968, he states, that "numerous building trade presidents and members were vocal supporters of George Wallace's presidential campaign, vowing active defiance to even symbolic reform efforts."[40] Cooper Jackson has recalled, "we had articles on unionizing drives, in the South in Charleston and a whole number of places," but also acknowledged that "we could have done much more than we did."[41] Some union activism was covered in the magazine, but perhaps not as much as would be expected from editors whose politics developed in the ferment of trade union organizing in the 1930s.

Cooper Jackson suggested that it was "partly neglect on our part," but also stemmed from race issues and lack of action on the part of national unions under AFL/CIO. Nevertheless, the Spring 1969 editorial designated the 1969 Hospital Workers' Strike in Charleston, South Carolina a "crucial battleground," in "this new phase of the Freedom movement," in which "the dignity of the poor is being asserted in a determined effort to build organization powerful enough to deal with the conditions under which they labor."[42] The editors highlighted the involvement of the SCLC and the "multi-ethnic character of the developing movement of the

[39] Paul Frymer, "Affirmative Action in American Labor Unions: Necessary but Problematic for the Cause of Civil Rights," *Revue Française d'études d'Amérique* 111, no. 1 (2007): 75.
[40] Frymer, "Affirmative Action in American Labor Unions," 75-76.
[41] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[42] The Editors, "Charleston—Battleground for the Dignity of the Poor," *Freedomways* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 101.

poor," that married with their earlier Popular Front trade union activism. As they did with Black Power and issues of corruption in post-independence socialist countries, the magazine largely ignored union racism, opting instead to emphasize local unions and strikes that represented coalition between people of color and the white working class, and civil rights and union organizing during the 1960s and 1970s.

It would be a mistake to view disagreements among activists at *Freedomways* as evidence of their lack of support for one another. Graham Du Bois continued to write for the magazine and maintained both a professional and personal friendship with Cooper Jackson, despite their political disagreements. Following the coup in Ghana, Graham Du Bois fled to London before relocating to Cairo where her son David was living. Cooper Jackson remembered that "she was very frightened when she left Ghana. She left almost everything she had."[43] On a trip to London, Cooper Jackson "stayed with her the whole day, and I went out and bought her flowers and told her that everything was going to work out all right […] she was very conscious of being followed. She thought people were there at the hotel."[44] The enduring personal friendship cultivated between Graham Du Bois and Cooper Jackson has been obscured by their relationships with their husbands and other men, but they continued to support each other. In 1970, the editors condemned the US Department of Justice's denial of a visa for Graham Du Bois to return to America as "a glaring racist offense committed against a Black woman of world-wide distinction" and they called for "removal of this arbitrary barrier."[45] After her visa was granted, Graham Du Bois reflected on her visit in "Return After Ten Years" for the Spring 1971 issue.[46]

---

[43] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by David Levering Lewis, 26, Box 20, Folder 15-16, David Levering Lewis Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Massachusetts.
[44] Cooper Jackson, interview by David Levering Lewis.
[45] The Editors, *Freedomways* 10, no. 2, Spring 1970, 103.
[46] Graham Du Bois commented on the multiple directions the freedom struggle had taken since she had left in the context of organized direct action in 1961. She commented that she "did not perceive disciplined, well-organized ranks marching in step under one Leader," but rather "under vaporous steam I saw a hot bubbling

In addition to differences in political approach, letters between Graham Du Bois, Cooper Jackson, and Graham Du Bois' lawyer Bernard Jaffe, illuminate the practical challenges of being an editor for the magazine from as far away as Ghana. It took at least a week for their letters to reach each other, causing confusion and misunderstanding that widened the rift between the editors. The dependence on airmail for discussion may well have contributed to Graham Du Bois' increasing disillusionment with the magazine, as evidenced in a letter dated July 15, 1966, regarding her essay on the Ghana coup. She had not received word if it would be included and was "certain some 'political expert' inside Freedomways decided that my article would fan the flames of the Black Power advocates, strike too hard at the Great powers and that it would be best to postpone this article until 'things quietened down.'"[47] But by July 26, she had received Cooper Jackson's reply and admitted to a friend that she "immediately wrote her saying how sorry I was for the misunderstanding."[48] In 1964, as her responsibilities within the Ghanaian government increased, she stepped down from her position at the magazine, she wrote to James Aronson, editor of the *National Guardian*, insisting "my dear staff at FREEDOMWAYS accept my resignation as editor because it is totally impossible for me to give further and constructive guidance to that journal. I am tremendously proud of it! Now, it is well on its feet and no longer needs my 'long-distant' efforts."[49]

cauldron, the top already blown off, and now with every atom of the seething mass pushing upward to overflowing! No leadership? Black Movement is everywhere." Shirley Graham Du Bois, "Return After Ten Years," *Freedomways* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 166.

[47] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Bernard Jaffe, July 15, 1966, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries (Hereafter cited as Du Bois Papers)

[48] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois to Bernard Jaffe July 26, 1966, Du Bois Papers.

[49] Letter from Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois to James Aronson, February 1, 1964, Du Bois Papers.

"The Mag Just Ain't In Step with the Times": Popular Front Politics vs. Black Left Nationalism

Graham Du Bois was not the only editor to oppose Cooper Jackson's brand of socialism. A divide widened among core editorial staff, with Cooper Jackson and O'Dell in one camp and Graham Du Bois and Clarke in the other, with Bond mostly occupying a middle ground. However, in 1965, Bond wrote to Clarke from Ghana to inform him:

> I discussed the *Freedomways* business with Shirley. Frankly, her policy is one of disengagement. It was very clear from her few remarks that she is no longer vitally concerned with the magazine's affairs […] Her final position on the matter was to read aloud the editorial which she wrote for the first issue of FW. At the end, she said and I quote: "Freedomways is no longer embued with the spirit of this editorial." I, of course, agree completely […] The mag just ain't in step with the times and all that's happening out here. It may as well call itself "A journal of the American CP" as anything else – it most certainly is not a "Journal of the Negro Freedom Movement." Is the cause lost or what? What has developed since I left?[50]

Bond, Clarke, and Graham Du Bois criticized Cooper Jackson and O'Dell for not adhering to the magazine's original ethos of covering the many-sided struggle. They charged that the exclusion of Black nationalism had made the magazine irrelevant to the global struggle for freedom based on similar principles. Former CPUSA member Theodore Draper has contended that in 1958, the Party reneged on the "Black Belt Thesis" for the second time in its history, meaning "the Negro national question was no longer 'essentially a peasant question,' […] therefore the right to self-determination did not apply to them."[51] Cooper Jackson and O'Dell were no longer active members of the CPUSA, but it is clear from correspondence that in the view of the other editors, they were still wedded to a Party that no longer served Black people. Clarke responded to Bond:

> They do not know that their dwindling leftist world has been out of contact with the realities of our people for over twenty years. […] Jean, you should have known long ago that there is nothing the American left movement hates more than an independent

[50] Letter from Jean Carey Bond to John Henrik Clarke, August 27, 1965, Box 5, Folder 14, JHC Papers.
[51] Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), 355. The "Black Belt Thesis" was initially adopted during the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1928 which called for self-determination for the Black Belt in the US South.

> radical who is also a devout nationalist […] They are now only a dwindling clan of middle-class soreheads talking to themselves. The new revolutionary world has left them behind.[52]

The Communist Party's disavowal of Black nationalism was at odds with trends in US Black politics and the emerging African nationalism being espoused by leaders like Kwame Nkrumah in the context of decolonization. As newly independent countries in both Africa and Asia undertook the project of nation-building along socialist lines and promoted race-based unity, the Soviet Union no longer appeared to be the "beacon of global revolution."[53] This influenced the development of Black nationalism in the US, accounting for Graham Du Bois and Clarke's advocacy for a Black Left nationalism in the magazine. While Bond criticized Cooper Jackson for neglecting Black nationalist voices, she also disparaged Clarke for being "simplistically nationalistic at times," and confided later that "to me he often went over the top in terms of his protectiveness towards black people and their history. And it was almost too precious at times, as if we're not part of the human race, with all the foibles and problems of any other group of people in the species."[54]

In mining the magazine for an answer to Bond's 1965 question "Is the cause lost or what?" I found a subsequent increase in nationalist voices. In his response to Bond, Clarke intimated that he "intend[ed] to leave the magazine after the first issue next year," but he stayed for almost twenty more years, suggesting that Cooper Jackson and O'Dell relented, somewhat, to the other editors' criticisms.[55] The rise of the Black Arts Movement and the magazine's promotion of "culture in the cause of freedom," which is discussed later in this chapter, led to the inclusion of more nationalist perspectives in the magazine. James Smethurst argues that the

[52] Letter from John Henrik Clarke to Jean Carey Bond, September 7, 1965, Box 5, Folder 14, JHC Papers.
[53] Erik S. McDuffie, ""I wanted a Communist philosophy, but I wanted us to have a chance to organize our people": The Diasporic Radicalism of Queen Mother Audley Moore and the Origins of Black Power," *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal,* 3, no. 2 (2010): 185.
[54] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[55] Henrik Clarke to Bond, September 7, 1965.

"density of 'alternative' Left, nationalist, and, often, Left-nationalist mentors and role models," in New York in the 1960s, made the city "an incubator for Black Power and Black arts ideologies, poetics and activists."[56] He traces the connections between the Old Left cultural front and the Black Arts Movement, arguing that while "some later commentators, notably Harold Cruse, would posit and unbridgeable gulf between the Harlem Writers Guild and the young nationalist writers, in practice there was considerable interaction in the 1960s."[57] This explains why *Freedomways'* old guard leftist editors were willing to include nationalist voices through art and literature when they were not willing to include promotions of nationalist tactics. The Black Arts Movement, to an extent, mirrored the Black Left's promotion of Black culture and a cultural front in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the Spring 1962 editorial, the editors explained how they believed "that the growth and further development of the distinctive cultural expression of the Negro will not tend to perpetuate our separation and isolation from the cultural life of the nation," but was a "necessary aspect of the struggle for the equal inclusion of that which is distinctive and indigenous in Negro culture for creating the atmosphere in which the individual cultural worker will be able to attain a status on his merit without prejudice."[58] The reconciliation of Black cultural nationalism with the magazine's aims for the equal valuation of Black American culture in a reformed US society, made art and literature an avenue for nationalist voices in the magazine. Ian Rocksborough-Smith makes this observation when he records that the magazine received "frequent contributions from younger writers and artists who were involved in publications and literary movements closely associated with radical nationalist organizations." [59] This included Sylvester Leaks, contributor to *Muhammad Speaks*; editors from the Left-

[56] Bill V. Mullen and James Smethurst, eds., *Left of the Color Line: Race and Radicalism and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 260.
[57] Mullen and Smethurst, *Left of the Color Line*, 265
[58] The Editors, "Culture in the Cause of Freedom," *Freedomways* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 118.
[59] Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle," 73.

nationalist *Liberator* magazine, L.P. Beveridge and Elton Fax; *Umbra* writers Tom Dent and Rolland Snellings; and other young nationalist writers including Nikki Giovanni, Larry Neal, and Mari Evans. Rocksborough-Smith also points out the inclusion uncritical assessments of the "urban rebellions" of the late 1960s in the magazine to support his argument for how "non-sectarianism helped the magazine contribute significantly to the black radical discourse of the 1960s and early 1970s."[60] But while the editors expanded coverage of nationalist activity, the magazine did not give space to Black nationalists in the same way it did to young people in the south, that is, giving them a platform from which to explain the theory behind their praxis.

The magazine's political outlook remained in the hands of the Cooper Jackson—O'Dell camp who promoted progress through the reform of US society rather than its destruction, and continued coalition with liberal whites and the white working class. Editorials continued to advocate for a Popular Front, Marxist-Leninist approach to socialism, and the freedom struggle more broadly, and the magazine aligned with Soviet foreign policy into the 1970s and 1980s. The magazine supported the policy of détente and urged the US to ratify the nuclear dis-armament agreement SALT II on the basis that "if the leaders of the Soviet Union are satisfied that they can trust our country, then we should be prepared to trust them since the burden is on the country that used atomic weapons against other people."[61] It supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and, as shown in Chapter Two, defended Soviet and Cuban intervention in Africa and Asia. But the magazine did not dogmatically follow contemporary Party line. Cooper Jackson took issue with the Party that she saw as increasingly taking the

---

Haviland also observed that "by the 1970s, the magazine was promoting more and more black nationalism in its pages,' and how it 'built coalitions among politically disparate groups,' through 'coverage of the literary and artistic expression of the black arts movement." Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 211.

[60] Rocksborough-Smith, "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle," 56. The magazine also gave coverage to Black uprising in the US including in Watts, CA and Newark, NJ. See Joseph Boskin, "Historical Roots of the Riots," *Freedomways* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 60-63; John Henry Jones, "Revolt in the Ghettos," *Freedomways* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 35-41; Donal Wheeldin, "The Situation in Watts Today," *Freedomways* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 54-59; The Editors, "Massacre at Newark," *Freedomways* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1967): 197-198.

[61] The Editors, "SALT II: An Honorable Agreement," *Freedomways* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 70.

position that "the white working-class is the struggle," rather than advocating for interracial class solidarity as they had during the Popular Front.[62] As Chapter One pointed out, the inclusion of moderate voices reflected the editors' enduring commitment to a coalitional politics of the 1930s and 1940s, a politics that some of the other editors argued did not exist anymore.

Political differences came to a head in 1982 after a public confrontation between Cooper Jackson's husband, James Jackson, and Clarke in the wider socialist press. In the November 1982 issue of *Daily World,* James Jackson attacked Clarke for a lecture he gave in Harlem that failed to criticize the Reagan administration's alliance with the apartheid regime in South Africa or call out aggression against Lebanon and Syria, or promote liberation struggles in Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe.[63] He accused Clarke of supporting "U.S. imperialist penetration of Africa, to gain Africa for the U.S. and keep out any Soviet influence of aid or development placement."[64] Clarke identified the root of the conflict insisting, "we have a strong difference of opinion on the relationship of socialism to the liberation of African people. I am an African world nationalist, a pan-Africanist and a socialist, and I see no contradictions in being all three simultaneously."[65] As a result of the conflict, Clarke resigned from the magazine in December 1982, citing personal reasons.[66] In a press release dated two days later Clarke lamented that people of European descent "think that socialism is their private property to be dispensed to the world as they see fit and to their convenience. I think socialism for

[62] Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson interview by Erik S. McDuffie, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers.
[63] James E. Jackson, "John Henrik Clarke: Advises CIA and joins 'Beat the Russians' Band," *Daily World,* November 12, 1982, 9, Box 5, Folder 62, JHC Papers.
[64] Jackson, "John Henrik Clarke: Advises CIA,"9.
[65] John Henrik Clarke, "Response to James E. Jackson's Article in the November 12, 1982 Issue of the Daily World," *Black American,* February, 1983, Box 5, Folder 62, JHC Papers.
[66] While James Jackson was present at the founding meeting of *Freedomways*, he was not a member of the editorial board and was not involved in sharping magazine content. He was the editor of the CPUSA's newspaper *The Worker* from 1959

African people will have to be designed by African people.'[67] The editors' adherence to Communist Party line is not the focus of this thesis, but disagreements among the editorial board illustrate how nuanced approaches to socialism and nationalism had ramifications for the intellectual production of the magazine. While they worked as a collective to develop and put out the magazine, and each editors' individual approaches and politics are present in its pages, Esther Cooper Jackson was the driving force of its editorial voice and through her Popular Front ethos she shaped who was pointed up and how in its pages.

"To Our Progressive Sisters Everywhere": Promoting Feminist Solidarity

Despite political discord, the editors did agree on addressing women's oppression in the freedom struggle and were able to blend their approaches and work together to craft the magazine as a space for women's voices. Cooper Jackson maintained that "women played a major role" and attributed the magazine's support for women's ideas to "the women who were involved in the early days of the magazine," because they "were very much aware [of] the role that women played in the struggle historically."[68] In editorials, travel accounts, conference coverage, literature, and artwork women advanced their ideas on race, gender, class, imperialism, and war in *Freedomways.* The magazine was an example of a Black women's international network. Political viewpoints were not always in harmony, but the editors shared an understanding of how gender interacted with race and class, and this is visible particularly in the magazine's celebration of International Women's Year (IWY) in 1975.

The resolution proclaiming IWY was made at the 1972 session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) by the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).[69] From the beginning, discussions about the IWY program were plagued

[67] Clarke, "Response to James E. Jackson's Article."
[68] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[69] Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19.

by Cold War tensions because, as Jocelyn Olcott summarizes, "although détente had softened Cold War enmities a bit by the 1970s, it could not reverse decades-long antagonisms."[70] Hostilities manifested among two groups operating in Geneva and New York who began working simultaneously to plan IWY activities, but who held competing ideas of women's issues. The Geneva committee was led by WIDF member and Iranian exile Shahnaz Alami who had lived in East Berlin since 1953.[71] Women on this committee advocated for a program addressing peace, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism; believing a restructuring of society was required for social justice. Women on the New York committee considered these issues political distractions from women's specific concerns and emphasized a program calling for equal opportunity, development aid, and training.[72] Programmatic disagreements became particularly prominent after the US State Department learned that the IWY coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the WIDF's founding and their planned World Congress on Women in East Berlin in October 1975. Olcott argues that "the possibility that the centerpiece IWY event might take place behind the Iron Curtain galvanized the State Department to take it more seriously."[73] Recognizing IWY's foreign policy potential, at the CSW session in January 1974, Republican Party activist Patricia Hutar introduced "a resolution for the UN to sponsor a world conference" that would subsume the East Berlin conference.[74]

The New York Committee worked to gain support and, despite protestation from the Eastern bloc that securing ratification of UN resolutions on women's issues would have a more lasting impact; intense struggles for funding; a lack of endorsement from Women's International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of whom both committees were a part; and changing host countries, the UN General Assembly agreed to an NGO conference to be

[70] Olcott, *International Women's Year,* 19.
[71] Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 34.
[72] Olcott, *International Women's Year,* 36-45.
[73] Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 39.
[74] Olcott, *International Women's Year,* 39.

held in Mexico City and that it would be organized by the New York group. The UN-sponsored International Women's Year Conference agenda made no mention of peace, anti-racism, anti-colonialism or human rights.[75] Of the final conference program's twenty-four sessions, just two were concerned with "Peace and Disarmament," and one with "Implementation of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations" (organized with assistance of WIDF), reflecting the marginalization of what had become seen as the Soviet-affiliated issue of peace in favor of development and equality in IWY's theme.[76]

The Cold War antagonisms laid out by Olcott were reflected in *Freedomways'* coverage, and in the voices the editors chose to proselytize in the IWY issues. The editorials advocated for how racism, colonialism, class oppression, and peace were principal issues for women's liberation in line with the Geneva Committee and WIDF's program. The magazine did not cover the UN's International Women's Year conference that was held in Mexico City in June 1975, and there is no evidence that a representative of the magazine attended. Instead, Elizabeth V. Murrell attended the WIDF's World Congress of Women for International Women's Year in East Berlin in October 1975 as the *Freedomways'* representative. Leftists were not invited to be part of the official US delegation, who, according to women's activist Arvonne Fraser, were "strictly forb[idden]' from speaking to delegates from the socialist countries."[77] And while the parallel NGO tribune was meant to be autonomous from government intervention, Olcott found that "it was almost entirely funded by the State Department-allied Ford and Rockefeller foundations," and therefore "many of those who participated in the NGO tribune were selected and funded by their home governments."[78] What is less clear, is the magazine's complete omission of the conference with the exception of a

[75] Olcott, *International Women's Year,* 61.
[76]International Women's Year Tribune 1975, "International Women's Year Tribune—1975," Mildred E. Persinger Papers*,* Wyndham Robertson Library, Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia.
[77] Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex, Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2019), 147.
[78] Olcott, *International Women's Year,* 14.

sentence from Murrell stating that the nine Commissions that formed the structure of the East Berlin Congress were "based on the United Nations Plan of Action adopted at the U.N. Conference in Mexico City, July 1975."[79] The domination of the Western liberal feminist conception of women's issues, that addressed the symptoms rather than the systemic causes of women's oppression, did not align with the editors' Black Left feminist politics and it could be that, as with Black nationalist voices, they simply refused to engage with this point of view in the magazine. But as Chapter Four demonstrates, the editors and other women of the Black Left criticized liberal feminists' writing in the magazine that suggested women's oppression was rooted in their relationships with men rather than interlocking systems of oppression under capitalism. Kristen Ghodsee also argues that "the state socialist countries were as active in preparing for discussion about equality and development as about peace," and that thanks to the collaboration of the socialist bloc countries in attendance, "the Western countries were prevented from separating women's issues from their larger social, political, and economic contexts."[80] Whatever the reason, the omission is telling for the message that the editors wanted to communicate about the global struggle for women's liberation and reflected their Cold War sympathies.

Murrell was a social worker and Executive Director of YWCA-YMCA Daycare, Inc. in New York City. In 1975 she joined Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE), an organization that worked to promote the end of race and sex discrimination in the workplace, as well as advocating for public education, federally funded childcare, peace, and solidarity with women of all countries, and it was affiliated with WIDF.[81] She was married to Elton Fax who contributed artwork to the magazine throughout the 1960s. Her political viewpoint was in

[79] Elizabeth V. Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal: World Congress for The International Women's Year," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 253.
[80] Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex, Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2019), 140; 156.
[81] Jean Carey Bond and Dorothy Burnham were also members of WREE.

line with that of the editors and her writing in the magazine highlights the sustained international feminist networks that the editors had been building in the magazine.

Murrell described how delegates "formed a human collage of many colors—black, brown, tan, beige, red, yellow, and white skins," to signify how different races, as well as people from "diverse backgrounds, political and religious beliefs and ages," came together with a common purpose reflected in IWY's chosen theme: "equality, development and, above all, peace."[82] Murrell's emphasis on peace can be read as a critique of the Mexico City conference and its overwhelming emphasis on development in education that failed to address the structural roots of oppression. Murrell included white women in her collage, an acknowledgment that race and gender oppression would not be overcome in isolation from class struggle. Her report also demarcates bonds of sisterhood shared by Black women at the conference that was also employed by the editors. She recounted a Black Sudanese activist, Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, relating the oppressive conditions in Sudan. When she did not finish her story in the seven minutes allotted to delegates, a "Black U.S. delegate from California rose and […] simply stated 'I yield my seven minutes to the Sister from the Sudan for it is important to hear her entire story.'"[83] Murrell detailed Ibrahim's claim to have been "inspired by Angela Davis' struggle in the United States."[84] In November 1970, Black communist activist and scholar Angela Davis was indicted for murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy, stemming from a courtroom shootout in San Rafael, California that August. Her case garnered international attention and sparked a global movement to "Free Angela!" After her acquittal, she became an icon across the communist world and *Freedomways* celebrated her as "an inspiration to take up the good fight until the final victory of the people is won."[85] In Murrell's report, support for

[82] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 252-253.
[83] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 249.
[84] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 249.
[85] The Editors, "Free— At Last!," *Freedomways* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1972): inside cover.

her was posited as an example of international Black feminist solidarity, demonstrating how the US freedom struggle resonated world-wide and shared affinity. Parallels between Davis' prosecution by the US government and Ibrahim, the first woman MP in the Sudanese government after the 1964 October Revolution and president of the Sudanese Women's Democratic Union, were implied, with both advocating for women's rights. After a 1969 counter coup saw the government replaced by a regime that rejected socialism in favor of alignment with the United States, Ibrahim was incarcerated for two years and her husband murdered, before she was exiled.[86]

The East Berlin conference was a space where women could question who the legitimate voices were—or should be—for newly independent countries. While Ibrahim was telling her story, another Sudanese delegate "arose and protested Fatima's right to speak for the Sudan, declaring she was in exile, not a legitimate delegate and that her followers were the enemies of the present government."[87] The next day another Black US delegate reaffirmed that the US had "yielded its time the previous day and would not speak, for the delegation was in solidarity with other oppressed sisters; if anything happened to one, other dedicated people would rise to take the place of the fallen sister."[88] The US delegation's act of unity intimated that Ibrahim's was the legitimate voice on Sudan, and Murrell concluded that "Black sisters […] represented many points of view, nevertheless they all united with oppressed groups whether Third World or other."[89] Sisterhood was invoked at the WIDF conference by Black women to establish a collective identity. In this instance, it was not feminist praxis that rendered someone a "sister," but identity racialized as Black.

---

[86] Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, "Sudanese Women's Union: Strategies for Emancipation and the Counter Movement," *Ufahamu: Journal of African Studies* 24, no. 2-3 (1996): 3-19.
While the magazine paralleled Ibrahim and Davis as leftist women who had faced anti-communist repression, it should be noted that Ibrahim's experience of violence and murder was more severe.
[87] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 249.
[88] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 250.
[89] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 255.

While advancing a Black women's internationalism that could join Black women in the US to their "Black sisters," Murrell also explained the limits of a universal sisterhood with the example of conflict that developed within the US delegation when Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, Chicana and Asian American women found that they had more in common with "Third World" women because some white feminists "simply could not or would not try to understand that Third World priorities were 'gut issues' and were concerned with survival."[90] Murrell drew on common antagonisms emerging between white feminists and feminists of color in the 1970s around issues of race, class, and reproductive rights; as Laura Brier summarizes, white middle-class feminist rhetoric "often rejected ethnic and national differences between women in favor of a notion of solidarity on the sole basis of gender."[91] For women of color in the US delegation, their existence at the interstices of oppression created different feminist priorities. A Native American woman argued, "we are concerned with problems such as the illegal sterilization by the U.S. Health Service of 132 Indian women," pointing to different reproductive rights concerns to the white, middle-class delegates.[92] While reproductive freedom and control over their own bodies, was a shared concern in the US, women's bodies were oppressed and assaulted in different ways. White middle-class women often struggled over access to abortions, birth control and sterilization because they posed a threat to a white motherhood valorized in US society. Access to abortion and birth control were also central feminist issues for women of color and working-class white women, but these women found themselves subjected to forced sterilization on the basis of racist and classist stereotypes such as the "Welfare Queen," the "pathology of Black motherhood," and scientific theories such as eugenics, as laid out by Dorothy Burnham in her 1974 essay "Biology and

[90] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 255.
[91] Laura Brier, "Feminism, Solidarity and Identity in the Age of Bandung: Third World Women in the Egyptian Women's Press," in *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher J. Lee (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 148.
[92] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 255.

Gender," for the magazine and discussed in Chapter One.[93] Native American women on federal reservations were vulnerable to forced sterilizations through control of their healthcare and eugenicist theories extended to poor white working-class women, especially in the South. While illuminating commonalities and advancing a global Black sisterhood, Murrell also challenged the limitations of a universal sisterhood.

Enmities between white and minority US delegates were not only rooted in racial difference, but simultaneously in class disparities. Murrell criticized middle-class white liberal feminists for seeking increased participation in the existing capitalist system. She recalled how a Black US delegate averred, "we do not have time for middle-class aspirations—our priorities must deal with the elimination of racism, injustice and oppression."[94] She intimated that securing greater access to the workplace would not end women's oppression because it did not address the underlying economic system responsible. Such "equality" would simply increase white middle-class women's complicity in racial capital and its imperialist foreign policy that would continue to oppress other women globally. In this way, Murrell's essay chimed with the editorial closing IWY which argued that the "enemies of racial and sexual equality are the same. […] Marx's penetrating observation that 'labor in the white skin cannot be free, while labor in the Black skin is branded' has its implications for women as well. For women can be fully liberated only in a society where there is no oppression of races or minorities, and where all are equal partners economically, politically and socially."[95]

---

[93] For more on struggles for reproductive rights and justice in the US see: Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Rebecca Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2009); Zakiya Luna, *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: Women of Color and the Fight for Reproductive Justice* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Meg Devlin O'Sullivan, "Informing Red Power and Transforming the Second Wave: Native American women and the struggle against coerced sterilization in the 1970s," *Women's History Review* 25, no. 6 (2016): 965-982; Johanna Schoen, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Boston: South End Press, 2005).
[94] Murrell, "Many Women—One Goal," 255.
[95] The Editors, "The Year Ends—The Struggle Continues," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 247.

Freedomways' editors took the opportunity of International Women's Year (IWY) to unequivocally express the Black Left feminism they had promoted in the magazine since its inception, and in their own activism since the 1930s and 1940s. Editorials that book-ended the year endorsed global sisterhood, solidarity, and the relationship between women's liberation and the liberation of all oppressed people from the global capitalist system. The opening editorial exhibited an understanding that "Black women have been and remain the most discriminated against, oppressed and exploited segment of the U.S. population."[96] Their existence at the interstices of race, gender, and class was underlined in the declaration that "by advancing the special demands for the rights of black women […] we will raise the level of democracy for all."[97] They saw the cause of freedom for women as an "essential part of Black liberation, conjoined with the struggle for liberation of all oppressed humankind," and IWY aligned with the international contours of the editors' Black Left feminist politics because it recognized the "international quality of this struggle," and cemented "world-wide ties, in friendship and solidarity, with progressive women around the world."[98]

Cooper Jackson, Bond, and Brenda L. Jones, as the principal editors of the magazine during the 1970s, crafted an editorial advancing their definition of sisterhood as a framework for fostering connections between women in the US and abroad. Their framework was grounded in a notion of solidarity that sought to build unity across difference for a common cause that is epitomized in the title of Murrell's report on WIDF's World Congress— "Many Women—One Goal." The editors explained in their opening editorial that they "recognize[d] the special oppression of Black women," and the "necessity of allying the struggle for an end to that special oppression with the nationwide and worldwide movement for the rights of

[96] The Editors, "Black Women: Internationalizing the Struggle," *Freedomways* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 5.
[97] The Editors, "Black Women: Internationalizing the Struggle," 5.
[98] The Editors, "The Year Ends—The Struggle Continues," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 248.; The Editors, "Black Women: Internationalizing the Struggle," 5.

women and of all working people."[99] They asserted "solidarity with our Black, Puerto Rican, Chicana, Native American sisters, and our white working-class sisters here in the United States" and with "our heroic sisters of Africa and Latin America, of Asia," recognizing that, "your victories are our victories," and that "our liberation once gained, will not be secure until yours is fully consolidated." [100]

Sisterhood as a framework for building alliances among women was reflective of the language being used by the wider US women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Agatha Beins asserts that in the early 1970s, "sisterhood was everywhere."[101] But as a concept, it has been criticized by feminist activists and scholars for how it has been used to homogenize women through the notion of a universal womanhood coded as white, and the ubiquity of patriarchy that neglects questions of privilege and recognition of interlocking identities.[102] It was often invoked by white middle-class liberal feminists based on the idea of common gender oppression that bell hooks argued was "a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality."[103] Similarly, Audre Lorde in her 1984 collection *Sister Outsider,* criticized this tendency and argued "there is pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist."[104] The editors claimed that their rhetoric of sisterhood was "not a random and subjective cry for unity in the abstract," but an historically constituted prerequisite "for the unification of

[99] The Editors, "Black Women Internationalizing the Struggle," 5-6.
[100] "Black Women Internationalizing the Struggle," 6.
[101] Agatha Beins, *Liberation in Print: Feminist Periodicals and Social Movement Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 91.
[102] See Hazel Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in '70s Britain*, 212-35 (London: Hutchinson, 1982); bell hooks, *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984); Florynce Kennedy, "Institutionalized Oppression vs. The Female," in *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement,* ed. Robin Morgan, 492-501 (New York: Vintage Books, 1970); Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984); Sharon Monteith, *Advancing Sisterhood? Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000); Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynephobia," in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose, 1966-1978* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979).
[103] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 44.
[104] Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984), 116.

all those who suffer under the domination of a 'free enterprise' system."[105] They deployed sisterhood in ways that encompassed its delineation as developed out of struggle, and from a Marxist understanding of oppression. "Sisters" were women reading the magazine and women engaged in struggle against the system of global capitalist imperialism that was the underlying source of all oppression.

The editors' employment of sisterhood, however, was complex and sometimes contradictory. While espousing political solidarity, defined by Sally J. Scholz as "a moral relation that marks a social movement wherein individuals have committed to positive duties in response to perceived injustice," they also promoted social solidarity that claimed "bonds of community by some shared characteristic or similarity," among Black women and other women of color globally throughout the magazine.[106] The opening editorial reflected a belief in how women of color world-wide operated at the nexus of race, class, and gender oppression in their struggles against racial capitalist imperialism, creating threads of shared experience that could be sewn to foster empathy, understanding, and build friendships among women globally. While challenging a middle-class white universal womanhood, their internationalist rhetoric was nonetheless grounded in the idea of common oppression, despite national and world-wide variations in how women of color experienced exploitation. This is reflected in the opening editorial, Murrell's report, and throughout the magazine, as demonstrated in claims of a common enemy employed to build ties among Black American, African, Afro-descended, and Asian people. But political and social solidarity need not be mutually exclusive in sisterhood frameworks. The editors advanced a Black Left sisterhood in the magazine in which

[105] The Editors, ""Black Women Internationalizing the Struggle," *Freedomways* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 5.
[106] Sally J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 5-6. For discussions on the uses of solidarity in building feminist sisterhood see bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women," *Feminist Review* 23, no.1 (1986): 125-138; Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Mary Grey, "Claiming Power-In-Relation: Exploring the Ethics of Connection," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no.1 (1991); 7-18; Pamela K. Brubaker, "Sisterhood, Solidarity and Feminist Ethics," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9, no.1/2 (1993):53-66.

they advocated for the necessity of women's solidarity across difference for liberation "of all oppressed humankind," while simultaneously drawing on a feeling of shared racial identity with women of color globally, recognizing that the transnational matrix of domination in which they lived did not stop at US borders.

The opening and closing editorials for the IWY issues illuminate a Black Left feminist editorial ethos that promoted women's thoughts, experiences, and ideas as an "indissoluble part of the liberation of humankind."[107] IWY was celebrated in the magazine in art, poetry, and reports on international conferences, and the editors favored a particular kind of Black international feminist expression in the magazine's pages, privileging women's voices that were in line with their own socialist politics.

"Culture in the Cause of Freedom": Amplifying Black Left Feminism Through Art and Literature

Freedomways' editors celebrated women from across the world who were making advancements towards ending oppression in their countries through a socialist structuring of society. The women depicted in the cover art for the closing IWY issue epitomized how the editors understood art and literature's purpose in the freedom struggle. As a composer, playwright, and author Graham Du Bois had delivered cultural criticism addressing racism, capitalism, and imperialism in her novels, plays and musical compositions. Cooper Jackson and Burnham had championed the literary work of young writers in SNYC, *Cavalcade: March of Southern Youth* published poetry and the organization developed the Association of Young Writers and Artists because the Black freedom struggle was "a story that must and will be written and sung, painted and dramatized."[108] And Bond continued to write fiction while

[107] The Editors, "The Year Ends—The Struggle Continues," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 247.
[108] "Prospectus of the Association of Young Writers and Artists," Box 11, Folder 24, ECJ Papers.

editing the magazine, publishing race-conscious children's books *A Is for Africa* (1969) and *Brown is a Beautiful Color* (1969).[109] Ruby Dee argued that a "hallmark of *Freedomways'* editorial view was that literature, poetry, drama, and music could contribute to liberation struggles."[110] In the Spring 1962 editorial, the editors explained:

> The Negro cultural worker in our own country has a great function of the utmost social significance to perform in expressing the reality of life and aspirations, in clearly demarcating the face of the enemy of our progress, in inspiring and summoning the people of the world to support and march with us on our freedomway.[111]

Women's art in *Freedomways* should therefore be read for how it communicated activism and solidarity, and the cover art for IWY featured work by Black women artists Joan B. Maynard, Ann Tanksley, and Charlotte Amévor.[112] New York-based Amévor created the artwork for the Fall 1975 issue closing the year to illustrate the feminist message of shared struggle in its pages. Black-and-white sketches of each activist appear in a circle around the IWY symbol—a peace dove with a mathematical equals sign for feathers and the biological sign for women at its center. The individual circles containing each woman overlap, signaling the interrelation between their individual efforts in their respective countries for equality, development, and peace.

---

[109] Both of Bond's children's books were reviewed in *Freedomways* by special project coordinator Norma Rogers. Rogers asserts that "Mrs. Bond has constructively written about the meaning of color which has been given little or no attention in juvenile literature […] It refutes and exposes the concept of racism." Norma Rogers, "Brown is a Beautiful Color by Jean Carey Bond," *Freedomways* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1970): 93.

[110] Ruby Dee, "Culture and the Cause of Black Freedom," in *Freedomways Reader*, ed. Esther Cooper Jackson (Colorado: Westview Press, 2003), 290.
Freedomways was not the only Black periodical to publish art and literature and was joined by other publications including *The Crisis, Student Voice, Umbra, Negro Digest/Black World, The Black Scholar, Journal of Black Poetry, Black Dialogue, Ebony, Liberator* and *Muhammad Speaks.*

[111] The Editors, "Culture in the Cause of Freedom," *Freedomways* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 118.

[112] The cover art for the Summer 1975 issue of the magazine was created by New York-based Black artist and teacher Hale Woodruff. The issue takes as its theme "Afro-American Youth—The Road Ahead." It is unclear why editors chose to depart from their focus on International Women's Year with this issue.



Figure 6: Charlotte Amévor, Cover Art, *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975)

Nguyen Thi Binh, depicted in the top right of the cover (Figure 6), was a leader in the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and women's liberation struggle in Vietnam. She joined the Viet Minh in struggles against French imperialism in 1945 and was arrested in 1951 for her participation in anti-imperialist struggles in Saigon, after which she spent three years in a French prison.[113] Binh was released under the Geneva Accords in 1954 and continued her

[113] "Vietnam: A Television History; Interview with Nguyen Thi Binh," February 16, 1981, The Vietnam Collection. GBH Archives, https://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_0A9E5D4D3F0A495395A0272C2A15AFAC.

activism as a member of the Resistance to the Diem regime. In 1960, she was appointed a member of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front and tasked with "carry[ing] on activities at the international level."[114] Later, Binh served as Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and its chief negotiator at the Paris peace talks beginning in 1968.[115] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, analyzing the cultivation of international contacts between North American and Vietnamese women during the war, argues that Binh became "one of the most recognizable Asian female figures in Western women's political circles."[116] Amévor's artwork celebrates her involvement in ending the war in Vietnam and building socialism as part of women's global efforts against colonialism and imperialism. Binh engaged in political education at the grassroots, "explaining to the population that the real enemy was the Americans," a viewpoint *Freedomways'* editors shared. They condemned America's imperialist and anti-communist motivations for intervention in Vietnam as "a style as old as the system of colonialism itself."[117]

The women on Amévor's cover all outwardly advocated socialism. It included Black communist, academic, and political leader Angela Davis, whose "Free Angela!" campaign the editors had supported, and with whom Cooper Jackson had a close relationship, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. It celebrated socialist political activist Hortensia Bussi de Allende, a leader of efforts against the US-backed "bloody coup in Chile against the democratically elected government"—the Popular Unity Government— that had been led by her husband, Salvador Allende. [118] Teacher and Guinean representative to the United Nations who became the first woman to serve as President of the UN Security Council in 1972, Jean Martin Cissé,

---

[114] Interview with Nguyen Thi Binh.
[115] Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Peace Activism and Women's Orientalism," in *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism,* ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 196.
[116] Tzu-Chun Wu, "Rethinking Global Sisterhood," 196.
[117] Interview with Nguyen Thi Binh.
The Editors, "Gunning Down the Vietnamese," *Freedomways* 9, no. 4 (Fall 1969): 295-296.
[118] "Editor's note," *Freedomways* 16, no. 1, (Winter 1976): 19.

features because the editors applauded women's contributions to the country's victory over Portuguese colonialism: "women left hearths and cradles to fight side by side with their male compatriots […] Black women press on, playing a prominent part in the agonizing struggle for freedom."[119]

The cover also included Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who, despite being accused of corruption and authoritarian rule at the time, was celebrated among other socialist women on the cover and was the subject of two essays in the magazine that praised her leadership.[120] After becoming Prime Minister in 1966, Gandhi had adopted an increasingly leftist approach that chimed with the editors' politics.[121] However her commitment to the Left has been questioned by scholars, and Yogendra K. Malik argues that Gandhi projected herself "as a progressive leader with a leftist ideological orientation devoted to the 'uplift' of the poor and the disadvantaged sector of the society" purely as a political tactic that "helped her ward off any threat to her authority from the Communist or socialist parties which claimed to be champions of the poor segments of society."[122] And Leslie Derfler argues that, because she had previously brokered a deal with the US that devalued the rupee to increase exports and receive food grain that was "seen as surrender to U.S. pressure," she "began veering further to the Left."[123] Gandhi used socialist politics strategically to gain political power which, once gained, she often abused. She would be voted out of office and arrested just two years after her appearance on the magazine's cover after she implemented a state of emergency in June 1975

[119] The Editors, "The Year Ends—The Struggle Continues," *Freedomways* 15, no.4 (Fall 1975): 247.
[120] See Mary Terrell, "Bangladesh: Another Victory Over Colonialism," *Freedomways* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 222-229; Mary Terrell, "Indira Gandhi as World Leader," *Freedomways* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 230-240.
[121] Indira Gandhi had effectively inherited leadership of India's Congress Party from her father Jawaharlal Nehru and was sometimes pushed Left by more radical parties in the provinces, notably in the South of the country.
[122] Yogendra K. Malik, "Indira Gandhi: Personality, Political Power and Party Politics," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 22, no. 3-4 (1987): 148
[123] Leslie Derfler, *The Fall and Rise of Political Leaders: Olof Palme, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Indira Gandhi* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 156.

that censored and arrested her political adversaries.[124] None of this was covered in the magazine which uncritically praised Gandhi's alignment with the Soviet Union and her domestic policies from which "the women of the world could learn."[125] Indira Gandhi and other women featured on the cover of IWY were promoted as international leaders in the global freedom struggle by women because they promoted socialism as the path to liberation. The magazine remained a space for women whose leftist politics had limited options for dissemination in the enduring Cold War climate.

Women writing in *Freedomways* were overwhelmingly American. In the early 1960s the magazine had stronger connections to the African continent through the expatriate community but even in this period the number of non-US women contributing to the magazine was small: Nabaroui's coverage of the First Afro-Asian Women's Conference (Spring 1961); Ghanaian author Efua Sutherland's short story "Samantaase Village" (Fall 1963); Australian aboriginal poet Kath Walker's "A Song of Hope" (Winter 1963); and Israeli writer and activist Yael Lotan's essay "Jamaica Today" (Summer 1964). Calls for international solidarity and the inseparability of global struggles for liberation in *Freedomways* derived predominantly from American women. Cooper Jackson overemphasized their ubiquity when she stated, "we had women that were writing for it that were not known in this country," and that this was a "unique contribution" made by the magazine.[126]

Instead, international women's contributions enabled the editors to demonstrate how their analyses of the US freedom struggle and global imperialism were mirrored in different locales. Women from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Australia illustrated how the wider issues being addressed in the magazine, including colonialism, capitalism, racism, and gender oppression, manifested in their national contexts. In the Winter 1967 issue, editors

[124] Derfler, *The Fall and Rise of Political Leaders,* 170-172.
[125] Mary Terrell, "Indira Gandhi as World Leader," *Freedomways* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 233.
[126] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

published the short story "Tao" by South African writer Bessie Head, who had been living in exile in Botswana since 1964 after departing South Africa with her son on an exit pass after the dissolution of her marriage.[127] "Tao" explores the endurance of neo-colonial control in Botswana after independence from Britain in 1966. Unlike African countries with strong anti-colonial movements that called for the right to self-determination and immediate transfer of power, no such mass movement manifested in Botswana. Its independence was won in an election for self-government in 1965, which saw the success of the Democratic Party who favored gradual development and maintaining close ties with Britain politically and economically.[128]

Through the character of Tao, Head explores the impact of British imperialism on Botswanan political and economic life that sought to "stem the tide of African nationalism that is sweeping the continent!"[129] Tao is a "speaker for the political party" who "preaches politics like a mad man."[130] He represents the Botswanan Democratic Party which "largely consisted of an African elite class," and through his speeches reveals manipulation by the neo-colonial administration through the projection of benevolent imperialism when he claims, "I have power to do as I like with you but I cannot because I respect you too much."[131] Head writes of a "strong current of trust between the man and his audience" that fosters political complacency developed from the fact that he is "one of us and yet a contrast."[132] After listening to Tao's

[127] Mary Cappelli, "Decolonizing Female Consciousness in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*," *Journal of the African Literature Association* 11, no. 2 (2017): 161.
[128] James Kirby, ""What has Ghana Got That We Haven't?' Party Politics and Anti-Colonialism in Botswana, 1960–66," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 45, no. 6 (2018): 1050-1051.
By the 1960s, the United Kingdom had adopted a neo-colonial approach to its colonial system to cut the costs of imperial rule while maintaining indirect financial and political control.
[129] Bessie Head, "Tao—A Short Story," *Freedomways* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 26.
[130] Head, "Tao," 29.
[131] Head, "Tao," 31.
The Democratic Party, with the backing of the British metropole, won election against the Bechuanaland People's Party that had been created by former anti-apartheid activists exiled from South Africa and adhered to the politics of anti-colonialism, Pan-Africanism, and African socialism. Kirby, "'What has Ghana Got That We Haven't?,'" 1052.
[132] Head, "Tao," 31.

speech, the protagonist of the story, Lorato, returns home to her roommate Kate who "plunged into a vigorous tirade against our politics," and complained how "Tao has been the poorest of the poor and now he is the richest of the rich," and that "the party of the rich would get nowhere without him. They sit in their houses the whole day. It's Tao all the time who speaks to us. They say he has to just address a crowd of people once and they can't run fast enough to join the party."[133] Through this conversation Head describes how the Botswanan bourgeoisie of the Democratic Party, who appear to be "one of us," are complicit in sustaining capitalist imperial control by giving examples of "the few who have," to convince the "majority who have not," that they too can improve their economic condition, like Tao, through support for the "party of the rich."[134]

Head depicts the false nature of Botswana's independence and how the sustained capitalist imperial system works to maintain class divisions in society. Lorato critiques those who embrace capitalism because "the few who have become the thing they have till man can no longer separate himself from his possessions. Without them he would be a shaken, frail, shrunken, lifeless skeleton for he has put all of himself into his possessions."[135] Those who place value in materialism, she suggests, "constrict the horizon,"—the extent of liberation—and "condemn themselves to a living death and a dread emptiness."[136] Head's short story is one of awakening political consciousness. At the beginning of "Tao," Lorato suggests "all that is suppressed so deep within us that it would take an upheaval of gigantic proportions to release it."[137] But after attending Tao's speech and talking with Kate, she has "no courage in this upside-down world," because "intensities awakened can never be put to sleep again and a spark from any direction can turn the smouldering fire within into a great conflagration."[138] It is a

[133] Head, "Tao," 32.
[134] Head, "Tao," 29.
[135] Head, "Tao," 29.
[136] Head, "Tao," 29.
[137] Head, "Tao," 26.
[138] Head, "Tao," 32.

critique of imperialism in Botswana that suppresses real independence achieved through struggle, such as those celebrated in *Freedomways.*

The indictment of imperialism is mirrored in poetry by Lindiwe Mabuza and Nancy Morejón in the South African and Cuban contexts respectively. Mabuza, a South African poet and member of the African National Congress, wrote "Death to the Gold Mine" in the wake of the shooting of twelve striking mine workers by police in Carletonville, near Johannesburg in 1973:

> Only yesterday
>
> There was a Sharpeville pitch
>
> In Johannesburg…
>
> And all the sounds of the city
>
> Congealed in a ripped faith!
>
> Only yesterday
>
> Our rising voices choked
>
> In a symphony of terror at Langa
>
> And all the sounds of the country
>
> Congealed in a ripped faith!
>
> Laws bound us
>
> Laws exiled us
>
> Laws murdered us

Only yesterday

All the sounds of the world

Congealed in a ripped faith!

And now,

Blood without motion on a gold mine!

Who shall raise the lowered heads

When black codes weave an iron grip

Around our wrists

Around our ankles?

Who shall home the child of the miners' dream—

This hope, this anger,

This vision, this march?

Say! Who will write and write over

The saga of a lasting people

Lasting when life winds

Like a straitjacket winding

Forever winding to twist-in

The frail bits of nerves

Entwining with a pass

That saga of a people

Clear as the message in the black clouds

Lasting and moving on…

Who will? Tell me who will?[139]

Mabuza places the Carletonville shooting in a recent history of imperial violence against Black South Africans, including the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 in which South African police opened fire on a crowd of Black demonstrators peacefully protesting pass laws that placed restrictions on their travel. She compares the activist reaction to Sharpeville, with the "symphony of terror at Langa," referring to the march of 101 people from Langa to police headquarters in Cape Town in March 1960, with the silence, the "blood without motion," in the wake of Carletonville shootings. The iconography of slavery likens the physical bonds of enslavement to the metaphorical bonds of the capitalist system that continue to exploit Black labor through the imagery of black codes that take the form of an iron grip "around our wrists/around our ankles." The gold mine is a manifestation of the capitalist motivations of the apartheid regime and Mabuza draws connections between race and class for how they shape Black oppression in the country.

The poem builds in intensity as Mabuza uses more graphic imagery to depict colonial violence against Black bodies: "Along bloodriver banks of white dominion/Our brains mingle with ant-trails and gravel."[140] But she insists that "there will be life," and voices a revolutionary call: "DEATH TO THE GOLD MINE!"[141] The call is for the overthrow of imperialist capitalist oppression through revolution. She asks, "Who will write and write over the saga of a lasting people?" and warns that Black history in South Africa can be written over by those who

[139] Lindiwe Mabuza, "Death to the Gold Mine," *Freedomways* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1975): 269-270.
[140] Mabuza, "Death to the Gold Mine," 270.
[141] Mabuza, "Death to the Gold Mine," 271.

celebrate and uphold the existing regime, or it can be written by Black people in struggle against that regime. She urges "Who will?/Tell me who will?" hoping to stimulate struggle. Though the poem mourns the lack of action in the wake of Carletonville, Mabuza expresses hope for liberation through struggle.

Black feminist poet Nancy Morejón's poem "Black Woman*"* similarly promotes a socialist politics and Black Left feminism that claims a central place for women in Cuba's struggle for independence. Her support for the Cuban Revolution of 1959, and eschewal of separatist race-based Black nationalism in favor of socialism, chimes with the magazine's editorial outlook and broader trends in its content. Women are historical agents in Cuba's socialist revolution and independence struggles since enslavement; not "a mere beneficiary of a struggle waged by others."[142] Morejón uses the first person "I" in the poem but invokes a collective identity among Black Cuban women, placing herself as part of a long history:

I came, down, down from the Sierra…

To end the reign of capital and usurers.

Of generals and the bourgeoisie.

Now I am: only today we have and we create

Nothing is alien to us.

Ours is the land.

Ours the sea and the sky.

Ours the magic and the dream.

My brothers and sisters, my equals, here I can see you all dancing

Around the tree we have planted for communism.

A generous giving wood already sends out its echo.[143]

[142] C. Rose-Green William, "Rewritings the history of the Afro-Cuban Woman: Nancy Morejón's "Black Woman"," *Caribbean Quarterly* 24, no. 1-2 (March-June 1988): 16.
[143] Nancy Morejón, "Black Woman," *Freedomways* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 268.

Morejón puts forward a classic Marxist position that women's liberation can be achieved through socialist revolution because race and gender oppression work in tandem with the "reign of capitalist usurers" to maintain Black women's exploitation. But she portrays the specific raced and gendered contours of Black women's exploitation. She points to the abuse of their reproductive labor and the sexual violence perpetrated against Black women: "I embroidered Your Grace's frockcoat and bore Your Grace a healthy son," and how the capitalist imperial system in Cuba was built on the exploitation of their manual labor: "Beneath its sun, I planted, I reaped, but ate none of its harvests." In contrast, after socialist revolution, Black women enjoy equal share of its benefits with their "brothers and sisters." The portrayal of women in revolutionary struggle is in harmony with the magazine's emphasis on gender as a central component of liberation

Morejón also depicts the transformation of women's Afro-Cuban identity from the period of enslavement to the present. The opening line connects Cuban women to their African past: "I can still smell the foam on the sea they forced me to cross," and she proposes, "Perhaps I have not really forgotten, after all, my vanished coast line,/nor my ancestral language."[144] She signals an enduring African culture and language in Black women's identities, but as the Black woman continues to reside in Cuba, the nature of her connection to Africa shifts. She claims, "Here I was re-born," and signals how forced removal can foster disconnection from a diasporic identity.[145] She questions notions of a shared African identity because "I never again imagined the road home to Guinea./Was it Guinea? or Benin? Or Madagascar? Or Cape Verde?"[146] Like Bond's assertion of her American identity in Ghana, Morejón indicates how relocation can lead to an evolution in how people view their diasporic relationship to Africa. While the editors and other contributors often emphasized a shared African past to foster solidarity, here the validity

[144] Morejón, "Black Woman," 267.
[145] Morejón, "Black Woman," 267.
[146] Morejón, "Black Woman," 267.

of shared experience is questioned. The Black woman is aware of how the transplantation of African women to Cuba during slavery sparked an evolution in her identity as she was exposed to Spanish imperial culture and grew further removed from her history in Africa. Morejón's poem presents a moment of alternative viewpoint on the relationship between race and national identity and the differences among Black women globally, but it upholds the socialist message.

Women from outside the US may not have been prolific contributors but their contributions dovetail with the political ethos of the magazine. In this context, it would appear that the editors reneged on the promise to create a "forum for the free expression of ideas," in favor of creating an echo chamber for their own political outlook and approach to the global struggle for peace and freedom. Nevertheless, the magazine was a space for women to advance Black Left feminist ideas as they applied to their national contexts.

"If Any Real Progress Is to Be Made": Women's Ideas on the US Struggle

"Into such dense foliage and lush green grass Stanley had never been before. He was more used to plain dry sand and a barren view."[147] In the Fall 1974 issue of *Freedomways,* Alice Walker told the story of a young Black boy's first day attending a formerly all-white school after the Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. The Board of Education* (1954) ruled the mandate "separate but equal," that had previously been codified in *Plessy Vs. Ferguson* (1896), unconstitutional in public schools. Walker underlines the inequalities in the public school system that rendered Black schools "plain dry sand and barren view," while white schools were filled with "dense foliage and lush green grass." She depicts white resistance to school integration, as Stanley approaches the school—"the edge of the jungle"—he is set upon by

[147] Alice Walker, "The First Day (A Fable After *Brown*)*," Freedomways* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1974): 314.

snarling, biting, and roaring animals and "the closer he got to where he was going the more furious the animals became."[148]

After one lioness "leapt forward and drove her claws down the side of his face," the other animals become incensed, "sniffing at the blood and wanting more."[149] Sharon Monteith notes that, in Black folklore, "animals are configured as creatures whose meaning carries the weight of the tale in etiological stories."[150] Walker paints a fearful Stanley walking to school in his new smart clothes, only to be met by a seething crowd of angry white parents, particularly white mothers, enraged by the prospect of the young Black boy going to school, sitting next to, and receiving the same education as their children. She draws on the realities of massive resistance to the *Brown* decision twenty years after its ruling. Her short story mirrors the real-life experiences of young Black children at the center of efforts to desegregate formerly all-white schools and gives an insight into their experience as they were forced to bear the brunt of angry, and often violent, white crowds. The story's appearance in the magazine in 1974 reflected the ongoing effort to integrate and to combat race and class inequality in the US education system.

An endeavor to promote Black international feminism in *Freedomways* did not lead to a neglect of domestic concerns such as civil rights leadership, activist strategy, and education. In opposition to what could be viewed as a preoccupation with events abroad, women in the magazine also examined events closer to home. Women close to the collective were involved in the New York City struggles over public education in the 1950s that came to a head in the school boycott campaigns of 1963 and 1964 and battles over community control in 1967 and

[148] Walker, "The First Day*,"* 315.
[149] Walker, "The First Day*,"* 315.
[150] Sharon Monteith, "Civil Rights Fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American South* ed. Sharon Monteith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 168.

1968.[151] On February 3, 1964, Reverend Milton A. Galamison, who would contribute to the magazine's Fall 1968 special issue on the education crisis, led a one-day boycott of the public school system protesting the failure of the New York City Board of Education to come up with a plan and timetable for integration.[152] The boycott saw almost half a million children kept out of the public schools, making it one of the largest civil rights protests in the country's history.

In the Spring 1964 issue, Bond denounced the "neighborhood school" policy developed by the Board of Education as "a device by which to perpetuate a system of inequality […] to the disadvantage of Negro children."[153] In the "neighborhood school" system, zoning was determined by residential housing districts which, through redlining, maintained housing segregation, and therefore segregation in schools. She argued for the inseparability of the two issues because "as long as schools in certain areas remain[ed] predominantly white and, thus, better equipped and managed than those in ghetto areas, real estate interests [would] continue to encourage and profit from a system whereby place of residence connotes either good schools, good housing, good location and exclusive associations or inferior schools and slum living."[154] She proposed that if "white parents would no longer be able to predict whether in such-and-such a neighborhood their children's classmates would be of such-and-such social, economic and racial background," that "the incentive for white tenants to cling to segregated housing would be significantly reduced."[155] Her analysis of public-school education was rooted in her leftist politics and she framed the issue as one derived not only from the "prejudices of

[151] Kristopher Bryan Burrell in his research on Ella Baker and Mae Mallory's activism around New York public schools in the 1950s has argued that Black women were "central to the struggle to desegregate New York's Jim Crow education system as theorists, organizers, advocates and mothers." Kristopher Bryan Burrell, "Black Women as Activist Intellectuals: Elle Baker and Mae Mallory Combat Northern Jim Cross in New York City's Public Schools during the 1950s," in *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle Outside of the South* eds. Brian Purnell, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 90.
[152] Clarence Taylor, *Civil Rights in New York: From World War II to the Giuliani Era,* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 96.
[153] Jean Carey Bond, "The New York School Crisis: Integration for What?," *Freedomways* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 197.
[154] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 197.
[155] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 197.

the white man-in-the-street," but also the "economic concerns of the local power structure," who benefitted from a system that underfunded schools in predominantly Black and Puerto Rican areas, and facilitated high real estate prices in white housing districts.

Bond also addressed fears that underlay some Black parents' reluctance to see their children in integrated classrooms, one of which was "the extinction of Negro culture."[156] Bond focused on the increasing nationalist consciousness of the nascent Black Power era that rejected the possibility of liberation through integration in favor of racial pride, autonomy, and self-determination. Black Power advocates promoted Black identity and a distinct Black culture that they argued would be subsumed with integration through promotions of American multiculturalism that required sharing power. Instead, they advocated for Black control over their own institutions and for autonomous social, political, and economic power. The rising nationalist consciousness was at odds with *Freedomways'* editors' belief in interracial class-based solidarity and continued promotion of liberation within a reformed American system.

Bond defended the leftist position by arguing for the compatibility of integration and maintaining Black culture and identity because, "the ghetto has […] always been mainly one thing: a condition imposed upon the Negro against him and, thus, a perennial symbol of his alleged worthlessness and inferiority."[157] She contended that Black identity was not rooted in the race and class oppression that kept Black people economically bound to underfunded, underdeveloped, and segregated housing, and schools, but that "Thinking black," while it must continue to be frankly emphasized, has been "a natural outgrowth of the current struggle for human dignity and equality in America."[158] The strength of Back communities and identity would not be submerged through integration, "black organizations, black newspapers and magazines, black theaters and musical societies would flourish to an extent yet unheard of

"[156] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 199-200.
[157] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 201.
[158] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 199-200.

because, at last, the Negro could have attained the freedom to assert his identity as a wealthy benefactor of American life."[159] Bond's reconciliation of Black cultural nationalism with her leftist politics was reflective of the broader trend in the magazine for marrying political and social solidarity that allowed for struggle across difference while simultaneously acknowledging the particularity of a shared Black identity.

Education continued to be a focus for women in the magazine into the 1970s and they promoted their activism and analyses of the local struggle.[160] The Fall 1968 issue on "The Crisis in Education and the Changing Afro-American Community," was crafted in response to the ongoing struggle in New York that editors argued was "a microcosm of where the struggle for quality education is today."[161] Old Left communist activist and friend of *Freedomways,* Maude White Katz, along with Professor of Child Development and Family Life, Mary P. Endres, contributed to the special issue that brought together activists and educators to "analyze, interpret and add valuable information to the body of experience being accumulated in the struggle for quality public education in America."[162]

Maude wrote as "a concerned Black parent of two daughters attending the public schools in New York City," condemning a racist education system that "serves the interests of those who own and control the economic resources of the country."[163] Katz applied an economic analysis to the issue of community control of public schools reminiscent of her political background and previous activism in union desegregation in the 1930s. Daniel Perlstein argues Black activists "saw community control as a prerequisite for democratizing

[159] Bond, "The New York School Crisis," 199-202.
[160] Jane Power, "An Urgent Task: Changing Our Educational System," *Freedomways* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1977): 215-223; Gertrude A. Goldberg, "Class Action, Community Organization and School Reform—Part I," *Freedomways* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1977): 224-238; Mildred C. Fierce, "Observations on Bakke: History, Issues, Implications," *Freedomways* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 9-15; Gertrude A. Goldberg, "Class Action, Community Organization and School Reform—Part II," *Freedomways* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 28-35.
[161] The Editors, "Education for Social Change," *Freedomways* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1968): 301.
[162] The Editors, "Education for Social Change," 301.
[163] Maude White Katz, "End Racism in Education: A Concerned Parent Speaks," *Freedomways* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1968): 347.

school governance, eliminating racism in education, and opening school jobs to African Americans."[164] It was part of the organized struggle to integrate New York's public schools and reflected the increasing prominence of Black nationalist sentiments of self-determination. Local activists felt the teacher's union the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the central Board of Education were recalcitrant to do anything about racism in the public school system or address the subsequent inferior quality of the education received by minority children in the city. To combat bureaucratic obstinacy, Black and Puerto Rican community activists and parents across New York sought local school board control of public-school finances, curriculum, and personnel.[165] The most notorious example of the conflict between the UFT, Board of Education, and Black activists on the issue was the Ocean-Hill Brownsville community control experiment begun in 1967. Conflict between the local board and UFT came to a head in May 1968 when the local board terminated the employment of nineteen, mostly white and Jewish, UFT teachers in the district.[166] The termination culminated in a string of citywide teachers strikes in September 1968 that shut down public schools and increased racial tensions across the city.[167] Jerald Podair argues that, "while teachers viewed the education system as one that, while flawed, had helped them, and would help anyone wishing to work hard. Black parents saw the system as a failure. It was obvious to them that white control of black schools had led nowhere."[168] The conflict was rooted in fundamentally diverging understandings of the causes of inequality in the public school system.

Katz's article, published in the wake of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict, defended Black parents' demand for community control "to determine the destiny of their children" in

[164] Daniel Perlstein, "The Dead End of Despair: Bayard Rustin, the 1968 New York School Crisis, and the Struggle for Racial Justice," in *Civil Rights in New York: From World War II to the Giuliani Era,* ed. Clarence Taylor (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 119.
[165] Jerald E. Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 4.
[166] Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York,* 101-102
[167] Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York,* 115-123.
[168] Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York,* 77.

light of "a union whose hierarchy presents demands inimical to the interests of their children […] The union is at the service of the Establishment who does not want educated Black masses."[169] Her indictment of the UFT alliance with the Board of Education (the Establishment) was representative of activism addressing the fact that "more than a decade after the historic Supreme Court Decision on School Desegregation in 1954, the educational situation for the Black has worsened."[170] She asked, "Why should Black parents accommodate to an educational system where the quality of teaching in New York's Benjamin Franklin High School has reached the level where only 300 students achieve diplomas out of a total enrolment of 3,000 pupils?"[171] Katz's analysis spoke to the fundamental differences in viewpoint, arguing that white teachers had not succeeded in providing quality education for Black children and were unable to address the fundamental economic basis of inequality because they benefitted from it.

Katz also chastised those middle-class Black professionals who "barter their heritage for a fee," and would do well to "remember their insecurity and begin to relate to that Black parent who has nothing to lose but her poverty."[172] She posited that the movement for community control as led by the Black masses, with working-class Black women and its center. Gore suggests that Katz's politics "revealed the ways many black women radicals continued to bridge the divides between integrationist ideals and black nationalist solidarities," and was evidence of how the Old Left "remained committed to the radical views that they had forged during the Popular Front," while "their politics also took on the emphasis of the times."[173] Her essay also reveals how *Freedomways* was a platform from which Old Left women could

[169] Katz, "End Racism in Education," 352.
[170] Katz, "End Racism in Education," 350.
[171] Katz, "End Racism in Education," 347.
[172] Katz, "End Racism in Education," 353.
[173] Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 141; 144

continue to promote their radical views, analyses and activism in the contemporary Black freedom struggle.

While advancing analyses of the struggle for equal and integrated education close to home in New York, the magazine was also a space in which women clarified their ideas on civil rights leadership and strategy. Gloria Richardson, Chairman of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC), reported on the organization's local struggle in Cambridge, Maryland for the Winter 1964 issue. She put forward a class analysis: "Negroes are faced with chronic and widespread unemployment and underemployment, inadequate and substandard housing and living conditions, discrimination in every area of endeavor."[174] As a result, "the attack now has to be directed toward the economic and political structure of a community if any real progress is to be made."[175] Fundamental change in the economic and political structure of the country was required for liberation. Though she did not explicitly state that "real progress" would involve a move toward socialism, she explained that what she called "the Negro revolution," was rooted in economic and political transformation.

This revolution, she believed, would not come from "self-appointed leadership which has forgotten what second-class citizenship really feels like," but through educating Black communities with knowledge of "what it wants to achieve, how it can be achieved and how to apply techniques so that they become second nature."[176] Education would enable "grassroots people to take leadership positions, making it possible for them to guide their own destiny, determine their own pace."[177] Richardson's vision for leadership took control out of the hands of the white power structure and into the hands of local Black people who would not only work on a daily basis for the issues specific to their locale, but also for systemic change beyond tokenistic gains being offered to current leadership.

---

[174] Gloria Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," *Freedomways* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 32.
[175] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 32.
[176] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 32-33.
[177] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 30

Her vision of leadership married with Cooper Jackson's previous approach in SNYC, and she addressed negative portrayals of her own leadership of the Cambridge movement in the magazine that reflected broader debates on nonviolence developing among activists. Jenny Walker contends violent incidents that occurred in Cambridge "undoubtedly contributed to a widespread misunderstanding concerning Richardson's and CNAC's commitment to nonviolence."[178] The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) arrived in Cambridge in 1961 and formed CNAC in early 1962 to address segregation in public accommodations through the strategy of nonviolent direct action. While CNAC demonstrations remained nonviolent, Richardson recalled that "two months after the beginning [of official organizing], trouble started."[179] White mobs and a segment of the Black community, unrelated to CNAC, employed violent tactics that led city government to put forward a charter amendment "which would have made discrimination on the basis of race, illegal in restaurants, hotels and motels in this city."[180] The amendment was passed unanimously but segregationists successfully petitioned for a referendum which took place October 2, 1963.

Walker proposes Richardson's opposition to the referendum "showed herself as somewhat removed from the mainstream civil rights leaders and their liberal white allies, who broadly supported the freedom struggle's goal of equality before the law."[181] This opposition was framed in print media as evidence of Richardson's irresponsible leadership and orchestration of Black violence, but Richardson believed that:

The referendum was unconstitutional, illegal and immoral. We called for Negroes to boycott the polls in an expression of passive resistance in the face of an illegal hoax being perpetrated against the people […] We were being asked to tuck our dignity in our pockets and crawl to the polls to prove in a stacked vote that once again we were going to let the whites in control say what we would be permitted to do in a "free, democratic country." […] this type of precedent would have laid people bare to the whims of dishonest, big business politicians who would piously use "the referendum" as a tool to shove down the throats of an unsuspecting and

[178] Walker, "The 'Gun-Toting' Gloria Richardson: Black Violence in Cambridge, Maryland," in *Gender in the Civil Rights movement* eds., Peter J. Ling and Sharon Monteith (London: Routledge, 1999), 173.
[179] Gloria Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1964): 29.
[180] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 29.
[181] Walker, "The 'Gun-Toting' Gloria Richardson," 174.

unwary racial or economic minority any type of racially punitive or economically punitive legislation, on a local, state or federal level.[182]

For Richardson, voting in the referendum would have cemented its legitimacy as a method for segregationists and "big business" to limit the democratic rights of Black and poor US citizens. She understood the limitations of litigation as a strategy for addressing issues of economic disparity and class that were central to the US freedom struggle. She combatted claims about her promotion of Black violence, acknowledging that "slowly and surely there is being born within the hearts and minds of Negroes today attitudes of violence […] It is just beginning to be vocalized," but affirming, "let us hope and pray that it does not find active expression."[183]

While confirming her commitment to nonviolence in alignment with the editor's support for the approach, she recognized that the move towards it "can be directly traced to the fact that the federal government has failed to *act* with vigor to stop police brutality."[184] She also linked Black nationalist willingness to engage in violence as a consequence of the government's use of war to uphold democracy abroad because "after all, America trained them to kill and to be immune to death in order to win for an ideal—democracy."[185] The editors gave Richardson a platform to clarify her political thinking and convey a more accurate account of what was happening in her locale to readers. Her essay illustrated how local direct action was grounded in intellectual understandings of the nature of oppression in the US and the path to freedom, and how *Freedomways'* editors promoted grassroots women as thinkers as well as doers in the magazine

[182] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 31.
[183] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 33.
[184] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 33.
[185] Richardson, "Focus on Cambridge," 33.

***

Despite the presentation of a collective editorial voice, *Freedomways'* editors did not always agree on the application of socialism to the global freedom struggle. Tracing some of their disagreements reveals Esther Cooper Jackson as the enduring authorial voice shaping magazine content in line with her Popular Front political views. This led to a neglect of Black nationalist voices in the magazine and the failure to live up to a stated editorial ethos to provide an "open forum for the free expression of ideas." Nevertheless, the editors came together to create a space for women to advance their ideas on internationalism, imperialism, colonialism, solidarity, feminism, and socialism, and advanced Black Left international sisterhood that promoted a collective feminist identity based on shared experiences of exploitation while recognizing race, gender, and class difference that required solidarity in the struggle against global racial capitalist imperialism. The editors gave space to activists, intellectuals, artists, and writers whose messages chimed with theirs, bolstering their political views and claims in the magazine through different forms. The magazine was a space for non-US women to communicate analyses of their own locales, and a space for women to address issues facing the US struggle. But while the editors presented a united socialist feminist voice, generational and political differences would unearth different feminist formulations that would have to be reckoned with. The final chapter of this thesis examines how women in *Freedomways* sustained their Black Left feminism in opposition to contemporary liberal feminists, traced feminist histories, and cultivated inter-generational relationships with younger feminist writers.

Chapter Four: "A Bridge for Them": Inter-Generational Relationships and Feminist Debate

Jean Carey Bond edited the Fall 1979 special issue of *Freedomways* devoted to Black playwright and author Lorraine Hansberry. Bond wished to "introduce and, in some cases reintroduce Hansberry to those who are unaware of the range of her work," and to "encourage attention to, and study of, a woman whose understanding and vision have enduring relevance, and whose artistry entitles her to inclusion among the best contemporary American writers."[1] The editorial claimed the applicability of Black Left feminist politics to a new generation of feminists and the celebration of Hansberry exemplifies how *Freedomways* operated as a multi-generational platform for feminist dialogue and debate, as women writers and activists examined her feminist intellectual vision. Playwright and academic Margaret B. Wilkerson lauded Hansberry as "The Complete Feminist" who recognized the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in lived experience. Wilkerson argued that Hansberry formulated a vision "expansive enough to contain and even synthesize what to others would be contradictions […] although she recognizes and accepts the discreteness of being black and female. Hansberry also understands their interrelatedness."[2] For Wilkerson, the women in Hansberry's plays, "particularly the black women," were "thoroughly interwoven into the central issues of the play and into the dramatic action."[3]

Nikki Giovanni, in a telling essay, entitled "An Emotional View of Lorraine Hansberry," celebrated Hansberry's ability to read "through and between the lines" that "made

[1] Jean Carey Bond for the Editors, "Lorraine Hansberry: To Reclaim her Legacy," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 183.
[2] Wilkerson, "Lorrain Hansberry: The Complete Feminist," 236-237.
[3] Wilkerson, "Lorrain Hansberry: The Complete Feminist," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 236-238.

it possible for all of us to look a little deeper."[4] She argued for the importance of Black feminist writers' intersectional analyses of the Black freedom struggle and upheld Bond's conviction of Hansberry's enduring relevance to subsequent generations. Women from different generations commemorated Hansberry as a feminist intellectual. They included the white lesbian feminist writer Adrienne Rich; Black Old Left activist and writer Sarah E. Wright; and playwright Aishah Rahman. Their evaluations of Hansberry's legacy spoke to a long and abiding tradition of Black feminist intellectualism, but also how feminism was formulated differently among women in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

In this chapter, I trace intergenerational feminist debates in *Freedomways* for how they reveal nuances in Black feminist thought. While there were continuities, there were also divergences, conflicts, and disruptions in the way contributors approached feminism and women's issues across generational and political lines. *Freedomways*' editors created a space for the continuation of Black Left feminism as it developed during the 1930s and 1940s via women whose views chimed with the editors' socialist politics. Essays by Augusta Strong and Maude White Katz were among those that crafted a long narrative of Black women's activism and advanced socialist analyses of gender oppression in the US. But how did these approaches compare with new generations of feminist writers emerging in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s? When they wrote about sexual violence, motherhood, marriage, family, and sexuality to argue that the "personal is political" did they do so differently when the editors created a nurturing space for younger Black feminists, an outlet for their writings when publishing options were limited?

[4] Nikki Giovanni, "An Emotional View of Lorraine Hansberry," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 282.

"Learning from History": Sustaining Black Left Feminism

In the Summer 1961 issue, Augusta Strong praised Arna Bontemps' *One Hundred Years of Negro Freedom* (1961) as "the kind of book, which in one sweep can bring the reader a sense of Negro history."[5] Nevertheless, she lamented, "there is no mention in the struggle for Negro freedom of the role played by left-wing writers and thinkers, even though this has been a significant influence since the early 'Thirties."[6] Strong addressed this erasure of leftist thought and praxis from the history of Black activism when Black labor struggles were a central component of this history.[7] She clearly believed that Bontemps risked rendering the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) and the wider Black Left invisible. *Freedomways* gave Popular Front thinkers a platform from which to continue their activism.[8] It is important to drill down into how an older generation of Black feminists in the magazine served as "prototypes of the brave young women of the 1950's and '60's," as Strong contended in "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles" (1967).[9] Kate Weigand believes that "Communist feminists transmitted components of their work on the woman question to the next generation in three ways," the first was through what they published in the late 1950s and 1960s, generating "a small body of literature that helped the women's movement shape its agenda."[10] With subscription bases that included "nearly all the major libraries in the country, colleges," and civil rights organizations including, "SNCC, CORE and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference," *Freedomways*

[5] Augusta Strong, "Arna Bontemps—One Hundred Years of Negro Freedom," *Freedomways* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 345.
[6] Strong, "One Hundred Years of Negro Freedom," 346.
[7] Strong, "One Hundred Years of Negro Freedom," 346.
[8] Dayo F. Gore has summarized that *Freedomways* "served as an important point of connection for this community of black women, allowing them to continue to articulate a radical politics that centered black women's experiences and also build ties with new organizing efforts." Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 136.
[9] Augusta Strong, "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," *Freedomways* 7, no. 4 (Fall 1967): 315.
[10] Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 141.
Other routes of transmission detailed by Weigand include Communist parents who raised red-diaper babies, nurturing the activists who would build the social movements of the 1960s and as informal consultants offering advice to younger feminists.

constituted a sustained body of literature with which a younger generation of activists could engage and, as Monteith shows in the case of SNCC, it was also "a route to publication for civil rights activists" and "SNCC communicated the life of the organization outward through *Freedomways*."[11]

Augusta Strong was a contributing editor from the Winter 1965 issue until her death in 1976 when *Freedomways* published an "In Memoriam" celebrating her as a "fine scholar, journalist and inspiring organizer […] a representative of that generation of militant youth activists of the 1940's who inspired others by the attraction of their examples."[12] Strong made nineteen contributions to the magazine between 1961 and 1971, comprised of essays and book reviews on Black history, anti-colonial struggle, and women's activism. She placed working-class women and their labor at the center of struggles for social transformation. In "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," she pointed out that "from the beginning of the organized anti-slavery movement, Negro women were active participants and leaders."[13] She traced the tradition of Black women's activism through the post-Civil War period, to the contemporary moment in 1967, celebrating the efforts of women such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell, Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hamer. Strong explored the different strategies through which women sought liberation, "some ways devious and obscure, some pioneering; some sanctioned, though seldom aided, by laws and legislatures; some illegal and inseparable from violence," and illustrated a sustained Black feminist activist tradition.[14] The

[11] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 28, 2004, New York, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith; Sharon Monteith, *SNCC's Stories: The African American Freedom Movement in the Civil Rights South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 158-159.
The Fall 1968 issue listed university libraries with complete sets of *Freedomways* to date, which included: Yale, Harvard, Tuskegee, John Hopkins, Stanford University, Marlboro (Vt.), Antioch, Talladega, Boston University, Kent States, Alabama A & M, Howard University, The Wisconsin Historical Society, Texas Women's College, University of Hawaii, Michigan States, Dartmouth and Roosevelt University. By the end of its publication in 1985, all issues could be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
[12] The Editors, "In Memoriam: Augusta Strong," *Freedomways* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 149.
[13] Strong, "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," 304.
[14] Strong, "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," 304.

closing paragraph of her essay is especially telling for how Strong addressed a historical record that silenced "other women of courage and conviction […] who rose from the ranks during the hunger years of the 1930's."[15] She argued for the inclusion of the Black Left in the Black feminist tradition, as exemplified by Claudia Jones, "one of the best known of these valiant women," who, as Strong reminded readers, had "suffered imprisonment and later deportation for her activities."[16] The essay illustrates how the magazine recovered women's activism, placing it in the context of an enduring history of the struggle for freedom. Nevertheless, reading Black feminist history as a linear progression does not account fully for the complexity of multiple Black feminisms. It risks treating feminism as static and unchanged when the editors engaged with, though they did not always agree with, other approaches than their own.

Like Augusta Strong, Maude White Katz espoused a Black Left feminist politics when assessing Black women's historical struggles for the magazine. Between 1962 and 1979, she made eight contributions that also consolidated the magazine as a site where Black Left women's ideas could find continued expression. She was a Communist activist and intellectual who had been part of the 1930s Popular Front milieu with Cooper Jackson, Burnham, and Graham Du Bois. She joined the CPUSA after her high school teacher took her to a lecture by Marxist economist Scott Nearing and became active in the CPUSA by organizing in Chicago after she finished school.[17] Like many other activists of her generation, Katz travelled to the Soviet Union and in 1927 went to study at a communist university in Moscow: The University of the Toilers of the East.[18] Dayo F. Gore argues it was here that she became "versed in Marxist philosophy, communist history, and theoretical debates about the nationalist question," as well as "immersed in a community of young black and Third World radicals."[19] She returned to

[15] Strong, "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," 315.
[16] Strong, "Negro Women in Freedom's Battles," 314.
[17] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads,* 25.
[18] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads,* 25.
[19] Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads*, 25.

Chicago in 1930, and in the 1950s moved to New York where she became involved in the Black Left intellectual community.

In 1962, Katz penned two articles on the history of Black women in the US in which she emphasized the economic roots of Black women's oppression. In the first, "She Who Would Be Free—Resistance," she contended that it was Black women's "unpaid labor" that "built the family fortunes of New England and the South" and "provided the profits of accumulation of private capital for the nascent economy of the country."[20] Black women's resistance to enslavement was, she posited, resistance to the capitalist system. She traced the different forms of resistance that Black women pursued, including poison, arson, and insurrection during slavery. Like Strong, she positioned Black women at the center of the long struggle for freedom and traced a long Black feminist tradition for how it informed contemporary struggles, averring on behalf of "the Black woman" that, "her hope now, as in the past, lies in resistance. She will oppose the ideas and customs of the slave plantation that have set the pattern for her inferior status in the social, economic, political, legal, and cultural life of the nation."[21] In "The Negro Woman and the Law," Katz elaborated on how the "ideas and customs of the slave plantation" endured into the twentieth century to shape Black women's continued exploitation. She focused on Black women's experiences of injustice under the legal system: "the laws and practices of the slave plantation have molded legal opinion and set the pattern for the treatment of the Negro woman today."[22] For her, injustice in the face of violence was an issue central to slavocracy and to women's Popular Front organizing.

In the 1940s, Black Left feminist activists joined forces with other leftist and more liberal civil rights groups, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Council of Negro Women, and in organizations such as the

[20] Maude White Katz, "She Who Would Be Free—Resistance," *Freedomways* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1962): 60.
[21] Katz, "She Who Would Be Free—Resistance," 70.
[22] Maude White Katz, "The Negro Woman and the Law," *Freedomways* 2, no. 3 (Summer 1962): 284.

Congress of American Women in campaigns for women's rights and against economic exploitation, incarceration, and sexual violence.[23] The editors continued to engage the same thought and praxis, as Strong and Katz's essays attest, and published editorials on legal cases in which Black women were involved, including defences of Angela Davis (Summer 1970, Winter 1971, and Spring 1972) and Joanne Little (Spring 1975).

In 1941, SNYC women led by Ethel Goodman, in collaboration with the NAACP and Southern Committee for People's Rights, campaigned on behalf of Nora Wilson, a teenage domestic worker who had been convicted by an all-white jury on the charge of using profane language against a white woman, and, at the end of her sentence, she would face a charge of assault and battery with attempt to murder.[24] SNYC learned of the case after Wilson's mother described the incident to the organization's Caravan Puppeteers when they performed in Elmore County. After an investigation, they launched a mass campaign to free Wilson. Local clubs held mass meetings to discuss how to support her, including raising funds for a lawyer, and the case was publicized in *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Youth.* After less than a year of organizing, *Cavalcade* reported that "Nora Wilson walked out of Wetumpka jail […] as a result of popular protest led by the Youth Congress."[25] SNYC women organized strategic campaigns and fostered local and national support on behalf of Black women who were wrongfully convicted.

Women in SNYC also worked with Rosa Parks, Field Secretary of the Montgomery branch of the NAACP, on the Recy Taylor case in 1944. Taylor was walking home from church in Abbeville, Alabama on September 3, 1944, when she was abducted and raped by six young

[23] The Congress of American Women was an interracial Left feminist organization launched in 1946, lasting only four years. See Weigand, *Red Feminism.*
[24] "Rural Club Aids Nora Wilson," *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Negro Youth* (May 1941) Box 11, Folder 29, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York (Hereafter cited as ECJ Papers).
[25] "National Negro Youth Conference Called," *Cavalcade: The March of Southern Negro Youth*, October 1941, 3, Box 11, Folder 29, ECJ Papers.

white men.[26] The rape was reported to the NAACP branch office and E.D. Nixon sent Parks to investigate. Parks organized the Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Taylor, and Cooper Jackson, Burnham, and other SNYC women worked with her to spread Taylor's story. Cooper Jackson remembers that "when I first met her, we embraced and I told her we were going to fight to make sure justice was won."[27] She took Taylor's case back to SNYC and made it "one of our major projects, using her as an example of what happened to so many Black women […] it was dangerous for all Blacks but particularly women," because "women were often attacked like Recy Taylor, raped or sometimes disappeared."[28] After meeting with Taylor and hearing the details of her story, Cooper Jackson recalled that "the first thing I did was start writing press releases about her case to be distributed in all of the Black presses. I also sent it to the regular press, but it just wasn't published."[29] And while efforts to prosecute the men who attacked and raped Recy Taylor ultimately failed, the case saw civil rights, labor, and women's organizations working together for the indictment. SNYC women worked across political and organizational lines in defence of Black working-class women failed by the criminal justice system which denied them the right to self-defense in the face of sexual and physical violence.

Black Left women's organizing against wrongful incarceration and sexual violence was promoted in *Freedomways* because the editors drew on their previous experience to shape the magazine's content. Katz's Spring 1979 essay, "Learning from History—The Ingram Case of the 1940s," was published in the context of the magazine's wider print history of criticizing the US prison system that included editorials, poetry, and essays on the Attica prison uprising, on prisoner Frank E. Chapman, the Angela Davis Campaign, and Joanne Little's case.[30] Katz

[26] Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), xv.
[27] Nancy Buirski, dir., *The Rape of Recy Taylor*, (USA: Augusta Films, 2017).
[28] *The Rape of Recy Taylor*.
[29] *The Rape of Recy Taylor.*
[30] Tom Ashburn, Ellsworth R. Johnson, and Frank E Chapman Jr., "Writings from Prison," *Freedomways* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 226-245; The Editors, "Angela Davis," *Freedomways* 10, no. 3 (Summer 1970): 197-198;

had been the administrative secretary of the National Committee to Free the Ingram Family, and in 1979 *Freedomways* reprinted the Committee's "Ingram Brief," drafted by W.E.B. Du Bois, that was presented to the United Nations Secretariat on September 21, 1949 in order to keep such cases in view.

A Georgia share-cropper and single mother of twelve children, Rosa Lee Ingram and her two eldest sons were sentenced to be hanged for murder after defending her from a neighbouring white farmer who beat her with a shotgun "until the blood ran," and had previously threatened her with sexual assault.[31] Katz argued that the Ingram case was "historic because it had within it the struggle against the oppression of black people, the struggle for the rights of women and human rights."[32] The essay's title, "Learning from History," expressed her thinking and the magazine's ethos whereby the Ingram Case should be seen as part of an ongoing history of Black women's oppression and that the younger generation could learn by looking back through the long history of feminist organizing. The National Committee's brief emphasized Black labor's foundational role in petitioning the UN "to place on the agenda of its next meeting and publicly discuss the relation of democracy in the United States of America to its citizens of Negro descent."[33] The Committee wanted to bring international attention to "a case of callous injustice," and the "typical treatment which thousands of our fellows received, who have slaved and toiled and fought for this country and yet are denied justice in its courts or consideration in its deeds."[34]

The Editors, "Attica Remembered," *Freedomways* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1971): 329-331; Franke E Chapman Jr., "Pages From the Life of a Black Prisoner," *Freedomways* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1971): 332-345; Eugene Perkins, "Parchman, Mississippi," *Freedomways* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1971): 369-369; Keith E. Baird, "Attica—U.S.A.," *Freedomways* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1971): 371; Aaron Kramer, "Attica in the Suburbs," *Freedomways* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1971): 372-373; The Editors, "Joanne Little: America Goes on Trial," *Freedomways* 15, no. 2, (Spring 1975): 87-88; Franke E Chapman Jr, "Do Prisons Rehabilitate?," *Freedomways* 15, no. 2, (Spring 1975): 96-100.

[31] Maude White Katz, "Learning from History—The Ingram Case of the 1940s," *Freedomways* 19, no. 2, (Spring 1979): 83.

[32] Katz, "Learning from History," 82.

[33] Katz, "Learning from History," 86.

[34] Katz, "Learning from History," 83.

The brief highlighted systemic discrimination against Black women in the US criminal justice system and the systematic denial of protection for Black women that had been woven into the fabric of the society, often most brutally in the South:

> It is clear that the part of this nation which boasts its reverence for womanhood is the part where the women of Africa were slaves and concubines of white Americans for two and a half centuries; where their daughters in states like Virginia became human brood mares to raise domestic slaves when the African trade stopped; and where their granddaughters became mother of millions of mulattoes. Today these colored women and their children bear the chief burden of the share-cropping system, where Southern slavery still lingers. The women work the fields for endless hours and their children are driven from their poor schools into the cotton fields under labor contracts which disgrace humanity.[35]

The National Committee's brief reflected Katz's view that the roots of Black women's oppression in the capitalist system of slavery. The brief made clear that perpetration of sexual violence during the era of slavery for the exploitation of Black women's reproductive labor had been sustained into the twentieth century in different ways. Black feminist theorist bell hooks has analyzed Black women's exclusion from the nineteenth century "cult of true womanhood" that extolled white women as "virtuous, pure, innocent, not sexual," while depicting Black women as "the embodiment of female evil and sexual lust," which had led to "a devaluation of black womanhood that permeated the psyches of all Americans and shaped the social status of all black women once slavery ended."[36] The publication of hooks' *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981) two years after Katz's essay demonstrates how Black women in the Old Left were engaged in contemporary feminist thinking about sexual violence and incarceration, and asserted earlier feminist praxis as relevant to continuing debates.

Katz's essay should also be read and understood in the context of the Joanne Little case that editors featured in the magazine in the Spring 1975 issue, which elucidates how as Black

[35] Katz, "Learning from History," 84.
[36] bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism,* 2nd edn (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 31-32; 52.

Left feminists, the editors contributed to activist debate. Joanne Little was sentenced to death in 1974 after killing a jailer who entered her cell in the Beauford County jail in North Carolina and, armed with an ice pick, attempted to rape her. The editors declared that "once again, the issues are discrimination against the poor and the nationally-oppressed, contempt for women and continued sanction of a prison system which strips the accused of all human rights and puts them at the mercy of frequently biased and irresponsible officials."[37] They criticized the state-sanctioned contempt with which self-defence was (dis)regarded and situated a Black Left feminist analysis of the class contours of Black women's experiences of sexual violence in a similar way to that of Cooper Jackson and Burnham's previous SNYC activism. The editors continued to shape *Freedomways'* content to maintain the applicability of their reasoning and beliefs to contemporary feminist debates.

"Only in the Capitalist World": The Roots of Women's Oppression

The magazine also featured much younger Black feminists' views on sexual violence. Angela Davis wrote "Racism and Contemporary Literature on Rape" for the Winter 1976 issue in response to the publication of Susan Brownmiller's *Against Out Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975). Davis was among Black feminists who condemned the "decidedly racist edge" of anti-rape literature produced by the white women's movement and charged Brownmiller with having "capitulated to racism by failing to alert white women to the urgency of combining a fierce challenge to racism with the necessary battle against sexism."[38] She concluded that Brownmiller did not acknowledge "the connection between the deteriorating character of

[37] The Editors, "Joanne Little: America Goes on Trial," 87.
[38] Angela Y. Davis, "Racism and Contemporary Literature on Rape," *Freedomways* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1976): 30. She was particularly outraged with Brownmiller's discussion of the lynching of fourteen-year-old Black boy Emmett Till, who was murdered by two white men in 1955 after allegedly whistling at a white woman. Brownmiller suggests that "Till's action was more than a kid's brash prank,' and that 'it was a deliberate insult just short of physical assault."

capitalist society and the rising incidence of rape," and "cannot understand that rape can ultimately be eradicated only by the eradication of a society which encourages and nourishes both the male supremacy and the real frustrations which lead men to rape."[39] While Davis skillfully argued for the interaction between race, gender, and class oppression in Black women's experiences of sexual violence, and the myth of the Black male rapist in the US, her argument that the "real frustrations" men suffer under capitalist exploitation explain the pathology of rape, runs dangerously close to excusing them for their actions. Her suggestion that rape can be eradicated solely through the destruction of the capitalist system presents a clear example of a class-first Marxist analysis of gender oppression that is as much open for debate as Brownmiller's gender-first examination.

Davis' political affiliations were manifest in her suggestion that the rising rate of rape was occurring "only in the capitalist world," and that in socialist countries "one can walk the streets at night without fear."[40] In *Women Race & Class* (1981) she expanded the analysis laid out in *Freedomways* and suggested that "once white men were persuaded that they could commit sexual assaults against Black women with impunity, their conduct toward women of their own race could not have remained unmarred," because "racism has always served as a provocation for rape, and white women in the United States have necessarily suffered the ricochet fire of these attacks. This is one of the many ways in which racism nourishes sexism."[41] She continued to insist that the cause of rape could not be found in gender oppression alone. Author Leith Mullings gave Davis' book a rave review in the magazine's Spring 1982 issue, particularly her "outstanding chapters" on rape, reproductive rights and housework, and concluded that "fact by fact, Davis gently leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the women's

[39] Davis, "Racism and Contemporary Literature on Rape," 32.
[40] Davis, "Racism and Contemporary Literature on Rape," 32.
[41] Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class,* Women's Press edn (New York: The Women's Press, 2001), 177

liberation struggle must have as its basic premise the abolition of the capitalist system."[42] Her analysis represents a sustained cross-generational Black Left feminist politics and it built on the activist work of her mother, Sallye B. Davis, who was member of SNYC's local leadership in Birmingham and who worked on the Recy Taylor, Nora Wilson, and Rosa Lee Ingram cases. Davis mirrored arguments that underlined class struggle and socialist revolution as the route to women's liberation. As a red-diaper baby with a pre-existing relationship to *Freedomways'* editors, she shared a political outlook despite generational difference.

While Davis' socialist politics chimed with the editors', other writers were criticized in the magazine for how they presented women's oppression in both fiction and academic writing. Though she was a contributing editor whose short stories were often featured, and she had previously received praise for her writing, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) came under attack by members of the Old Left and younger leftists.[43] Maryemma Graham, an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Mississippi, reviewed the novel for the Fall 1983 issue in which she criticized Walker's "relatively narrow view of the source of black women's oppression," that "identifies men as the sole source," and ignores how "gender oppression cannot be separated from racial and economic oppression that Black people experience and that Black women face in a very special way."[44] The novel follows the life of Celie, a poor, uneducated, young, Black woman living in rural Georgia who is beaten and sexually abused

[42] Leith Mullings, "Sharp Analysis: Women, Race and Class by Angela Y. Davis," *Freedomways* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 109-110.

[43] Walker's *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* was reviewed by associate professor and poet, Carolyn Fowler for the Winter 1974 issue. Fowler stated that the collection of short stories "is a glimpse of essential human condition," that is "uneven at the edges but solid at the core," and that "leads us to expect truly significant work from this young black woman writer." Carolyn Fowler, "Solid at the Core," *Freedomways* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 61-2.
Freedomways was not the only publication to criticize *The Color Purple* which became a controversial book for its representation of Black women's victimization and Black male violence.

[44] Maryemma Graham Du Bois, "The Color Purple," *Freedomways* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 278-179.
Old Left writer Loyle Hairston also posited that after reading Walker, "one begins to get the picture of the human race being divided, not into the hostile camps of haves and have-nots, but of males and females," and blamed young Black writers' attempts to "find mainstream recognition," for what he saw as "a shallow, mediocre literature that rivals the vapid products of their white counterparts." Loyle Hairston, "Alice in the Mainstream," *Freedomways* 24, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 183; 188.

by her stepfather, giving birth to two children by him before she becomes barren. Later, she is married off to a man she calls Mr. _____ who continues to abuse her. Through her interaction with a network of women in the novel, including her now daughter-in-law Sofia, who defies men's attempts at treating her as inferior, and Mr. _____'s mistress, Shug, with whom she strikes up a romantic sexual relationship, Celie undergoes a journey of self-discovery. After growing in confidence, she leaves Mr. _____ and moves to Tennessee with Shug where she develops a sewing business. When she returns to Georgia years later, she finds Mr. _____ has reformed his behavior towards women and her stepfather has died, leaving his house and land to her.

Graham praises the novel for how Celie achieves "total self-realization—emotional, intellectual, professional and, above all, sexual," but suggests that Celie's experience is "rather unique."[45] Through Celie's evolution from poor, uneducated, victimized woman to successful, independent businesswomen, Graham argues "Walker has imbued her rural Georgia females with the strivings and potential for self-indulgence of the urban middle class," and crafted a narrative "not hardly possible" for most working-class women because the "causes of their oppressions are much more systemic."[46] In assessments of new Black feminist literature, a political conflict emerged in *Freedomways* between socialist analyses and those who presented oppression as resultant from, and liberated by, individual experience within the capitalist system.

Old Left writer Loyle Hairston similarly suggested that Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), that tells the stories of several poverty-stricken Black women whose lives intertwine by virtue of their residence in the urban ghetto of Brewster Place, like other "recently published Afro-American fiction," confines its concerns to "the warts and cankers of

[45] Graham, "Skillful but Disturbing Novel," *Freedomways* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 278-280.
[46] Graham, "Skillful but Disturbing Novel," 280.

individual personality, neglecting to delineate the social conditions which so strongly affect personality and behavior."[47] And journalist Zita Allen challenged academic Paula Giddings' discussion of Black male-female relations in her history of Black women's activism in the US, *When and Where I Enter* (1984). Allen declared that "we simply to do not need another diatribe, no matter how academic and in some ways sound, on the conflicts between Black men and women," because getting "bogged down in the same kind of rhetoric heard from a large segment of the white women's movement (such as the notion that just having women at the helm will change the course of the ship)," and neglecting "the class issues black women must confront in order to progress politically […] is doing a disservice."[48] Allen posited that the "sexual skirmish is a diversion from the major war," and this was an argument presented in the magazine against women writers who were seen to be taking a single-issue approach to feminism—attributing Black women's oppression solely to gender politics and personal relationships. Consistent in the magazine was the insistence that the editors' Black Left feminist viewpoint was the correct one—the only one that would bring an end to Black women's oppression in the US—and that young Black feminists could learn from women of the Old Left.

In her review of Claudia Tate's collection of interviews with Black feminist writers *Black Women Writers at Work* (1983) for the Fall 1983 issue, New York teacher and leftist Carol E. Gregory suggested that "conspicuously absent […] and much missed [were] the voices of Paule Marshall and Sarah Wright, as well as those of playwrights Alice Childress and Aishah Rahman."[49] All were writers of the Black Left and the latter two, she argued, had a "more developed outlook," that would "have added something."[50] Of Marshall and Wright she asked,

[47] Loyle Hairston, "A Good First Shot," *Freedomways* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 284.
[48] Zita Allen, "Ambitious Effort, Partial Success," *Freedomways* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 286-287.
[49] Carol E. Gregory, "Black Women Speak," *Freedomways* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 288.
[50] Gregory, "Black Women Speak," 289.

"must we ignore women who are not on the MS crowd's list of Who's Who?"[51] Through the magazine, leftist women critically engaged with current trends in Black feminist literature and the broader feminist movement in an increasingly conservative era that made options for publication of their leftist analyses limited, and continued to promote a Black Left feminist politics that stressed the inextricability of class oppression with that of gender and race.

"Maybe It Was a Generational Thing": An Editor Critiques New Feminist Writing

In some ways, disagreements about feminist approaches were generational and Jean Carey Bond's editorial contributions are pertinent to exploring the debates taking place. Bond was the youngest member of the magazine's founding collective, in her mid-30s amidst the later 1960s and 1970s resurgence of Black women's literary production, in contrast to Cooper Jackson and Burnham who were in their 50s. It was in this decade that Bond became an associate editor and more involved in decisions about what would be published in the magazine.[52] Her youth might suggest that she was more readily in touch with the ideas and concerns of younger feminists, but her Black feminist thought was grounded in her contacts with the Old Left. In 2001, Bond said that while she had "understood the reasons for the alienation between black and white feminists," she did not identify with "those people who were aggressively asserting their feminism and who were very much involved in the movement."[53] For Bond, "feminism [was] part of my politics" and she was still calling for an expansive expression of feminist politics "above and beyond the bounds of feminism."[54] Her feminism was an aspect of a wider political outlook simultaneously concerned with race, class,

[51] Gregory, "Black Women Speak," 289.
[52] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith, May 29, 2004, New York, interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
Bond suggested that in the last years of the magazine's existence, "I really worked on a daily basis at the office and was effectively the managing editor." Although she still asserted that this was under Cooper Jackson's supervision who was "really the senior person in terms of decision making."
[53] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[54] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, November 9, 2001, New York, NY, Erik S. McDuffie Personal Papers, interview shared with me by email by Erik S. McDuffie.

labor, imperialism, colonialism, and peace and this was expressed in her writing and her editorship.

In a review of Michele Wallace's *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (1979) for the magazine's Winter 1979 issue, Bond argued that feminists who were "promoting the very conflict between men and women they profess to abhor by peddling perspectives which obscure the socioeconomic causes of male/female antagonism," were "functioning more as part of the problem than as an instrument for its solution."[55] Bond's opposition to how Black women were condemning Black male sexism was grounded in the idea that it derived from the capitalist socioeconomic order and that if feminists forged a narrow analysis of sexual conflict by ignoring its origins in the "warfare of the marketplace," they would find themselves fueling the chauvinist attitudes and actions they sought to protest.[56] Cheryl Higashida argues that rather than adopting "the hostility to feminism a number of Black nationalists and Marxists later displayed," Bond did not dismiss feminism, but called for an "intersectional materialist feminism that would provide definitive analysis of how the forces of sexism and racism interacted in our economic structure."[57] But Bond did dismiss "white bourgeois feminism recycled for Black consumption," for its inability to account for the multiple dimensions of Black women's oppression.[58] She acknowledged that Black women's liberation was inherently tied to Black men and emphasized that "the theoretical framework of any movement by [B]lack women to improve their own condition must contain the reality of both the black female *and* male conditions."[59]

---

[55] Jean Carey Bond, "Two Views of Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman," *Freedomways* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 20.
[56] Bond, "Two Views of Black Macho," 20.
[57] Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 15-16.
[58] Bond, "Two Views of Black Macho," 18.
[59] Bond, "Two Views of Black Macho," 18.

Bond's review of Wallace's book suggested a clash in approaches between women of the Old Left and some of the younger feminists emerging out of the 1960s social movements.[60] She also argued that the Public Theatre production of Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide* (1976) on Broadway promoted "a kind of Black female chauvinist manifesto."[61] Her criticism was directed not at the play's subject matter, but at the performance as an "aggressive interpretation," that rendered the choreopoem "a liturgy of despair which virtually celebrates the victimhood of Black women."[62] As in her criticism of Wallace, she criticized writers who were depicting the abuse of Black women by Black men as opposed to the product of systemic racial and economic oppression. She also criticized the liberatory potential of Shange's vision for Black women's self-love as a "last resort substitute for the elusive love of men," rather than "an essential prerequisite for experiencing the world fully."[63] Bond contended that the oppressive structure of the capitalist economic system extended to "social intercourse," including race and gender relations, which led the Black women in Shange's play to "take care of Number One."[64]

Bond's denunciation of what she read as individualism in *For Colored Girls* paralleled how Loyle Hairston reviled what he saw as a "new trend in Black writing" that had "quite simply taken the man-woman relationship out of its social context and opened fire on the "n****r" man as both the real and symbolic enemy of black women!"[65] Bond's antagonism in this context, should be understood as issuing from an Old left style of analysis that was typical of the majority of activists who contributed to the magazine. In hindsight in 2001, Bond reflected, "maybe it's a generational thing, that I did not take as seriously as in retrospect I

[60] *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* was a controversial book and *Freedomways* was not the only magazine to publish critiques.
[61] Jean Carey Bond, "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide," *Freedomways* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 189.
[62] Bond, "For Colored Girls," 189.
[63] Bond, "For Colored Girls," 189.
[64] Bond, "For Colored Girls," 189.
[65] Loyle Hairston, "Class Consciousness in an African Novel," *Freedomways* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1976): 100.

would now, the extent to which sexism and chauvinism were very, very prevalent within the black movement, and should have been aggressively challenged."[66]

There were generational variations in Black feminist thought that are evident in the magazine, but it was not just, as Bond suggested, "a generational thing." Carole E. Gregory was the same generation as Bond and had previously criticized the gender-first trend of younger women's writing. But after proclaiming "that a socialist revolution is the prerequisite for women's liberation," she praised Wallace's evaluation of "where black women and black men are in relation to one another […] the black woman has become a social and intellectual suicide; the black man, unintrospective and oppressive."[67] Angela Davis' scathing indictment of Wallace, in contrast, echoed Bond when she argued that, "it is impossible to project definitive solutions to the problems of racism and sexism however those forces manifest themselves, without envisioning and struggling for the elimination of the monopoly capitalist system."[68] These reviews establish a flow of ideas between and across different generations of Black women thinkers. Some younger thinkers espoused a Black Left feminism that reflected the beliefs of the editors, while others rooted women's oppression solely in patriarchy. Black women's differing approaches to feminism also influenced their conceptions of "the personal is political" as it related to motherhood, marriage, the family, and sexuality.

"Not Until I Myself Was a Mother": Motherhood as Organizing Praxis

Women's feminist thought and praxis in Freedomways, like their wider political approach, was grounded in their lived experience, and women drew on their motherhood to make claims about oppression, imperialism, war, and peace. The editor's Black Left feminist politics challenged the conservative tenets of maternal feminism and combined motherhood with activism,

[66] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.
[67] Carole E. Gregory, "Two Views of Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman," *Freedomways*19, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 24.
[68] Angela Davis, "Black Writers' Views of America," *Freedomways* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 158.

upending the dichotomy of the public and private spheres in which women operated. As discussed in Chapter One, Cooper Jackson invoked motherhood to call for an end to the FBI's surveillance of her family and to forward a critique of US anti-communism. And Shirley Graham Du Bois often situated her claims about the plight of Black women and the liberation of all people, in her experience as a mother. At the founding convention of the Progressive Party in 1948, she declared that "I am only one Negro mother who has seen the doors of a great hospital closed against her dying son; I am only one of the thousands whose sons fought in distant lands for freedom and democracy which they did not have at home."[69] She grounded her message about the incompatibility of US racism and its project of international democracy in her personal experience as a "Negro mother," who had lost a child to a racist healthcare system, highlighting the lack of "freedom and democracy" that was supposedly being fought for by her younger son David abroad. For the women editors, motherhood was an organizing praxis; a shared experience among women that could promote solidarity and political action, and this component of feminist activism was analogous with women's writing in the magazine.

Maternal rhetoric in Black women's activist writing and speeches demonstrates a continuation in the Black feminist tradition across generational and political difference in the magazine that challenged more conservative approaches to feminist activism. Black Clubwomen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century crafted motherhood as part of a wider program of uplift that promoted (white) middle-class values and behaviors among Black working-class women in the belief that assimilation to middle class expectations of women would create an environment and opportunity for racial progress. Paula Giddings has pointed out that while they believed women should "not be forced into traditional roles," that "their

[69] Shirley Graham, "Address to the Progressive Party Founding Convention," July 23, 1948, Papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois, Box 25, Folder 21, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts (Hereafter cited as SGDB Papers).

ideas about marital relations could be quite traditional."[70] Similarly, contemporary right-wing conservative (often white) women's groups led by Phillis Schlafly against the Equal Rights Amendment, often couched their position as guarding against the special protection women received in their ascribed roles as wives and mothers.[71]

The way *Freedomways'* women formulated motherhood upended maternalist calls to sustain the separation of spheres and the promotion of women's innate and proper roles through their activist intellectualism. In her speech "I Have Seen China," Graham Du Bois alleged, "not until I myself was a mother and saw the daily heartbreak of my two dark sons did I know the full extent of pain. And ours was the lot of millions more."[72] She suggested motherhood prompted her activism and offered further examples of the Rosa Lee Ingram case and Emmett Till's murder to stress the inherently political nature of Black motherhood.[73] Kate Weigand argues "many progressive women defined themselves and their interests around motherhood and the family and adopted a maternalist style of activism that valorized features of traditional femininity," acknowledging how "on the surface, progressive 'women's work' looks old fashioned and very different from contemporary notions of feminist activism."[74] But for Graham Du Bois motherhood offered a political framework that could encourage international solidarity among women along socialist lines.

After establishing her authority to "know the full extent of pain," as a mother, she told her "dark Sisters in all the Americas, in the West Indies, in Africa" that there was "something

---

[70] Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), 108-109.
Giddings highlights the contradiction of club women who advocated for assimilation to white middle-class ideals while their own activism and public speaking defied ideas about the importance of the home and women's moral influence within it, 95; 109.
[71] Interestingly, the CPUSA and progressive women condemned the equal rights amendment in the 1920s. For them, it served the interests of white middle-class women rather than focusing on securing protective legislation for women workers. Weigand, *Red Feminism*, 7.
[72] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "I Have Seen China," Box 29, Folder 12, SGDB Papers.
[73] Graham Du Bois's employment of maternal feminism is also interesting in light of Gerald Horne's suggestion that, despite being 'plagued by a solemn concern,' she was 'an absent mother.' Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 50.
[74] Weigand, *Red Feminism*, 5.

new in the world, something to inspire your hearts and fill you with hope."[75] She rooted her advocacy of Chinese socialism in having visited the country and used the language of sisterhood and motherhood to connect women living under capitalist imperialism to argue that women's liberation in China demonstrated the way forward for "dark Sisters" across the world. Shared experiences of mothering at the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression under global imperialism were the basis for developing international ties among women needed for liberation. Motherhood as an organizing praxis was part of her Black Left feminist activism that reconciled the public and private by stressing the inherently political nature of motherhood and how it was affected by the context of intersectional oppression.

At the same time as promoting women's roles as mothers in China's socialist revolution, she celebrated "women engineers, women professors, women artists and of course, women doctors, and their role 'in the Liberation Army."[76] She saw no contradiction between advancing women as mothers and as professionals in the public sphere and workplace as central components of feminist progress. Her ideas brought together sometimes competing conceptions of feminism and motherhood that were rooted in her lived experience as a Black mother and an activist intellectual, and how this was central to building women's solidarities while embedding acknowledgement of women's familial and social positions in larger conversations about socialism.

Graham Du Bois' reconciliation of the public and private was not always consistent. She credited Chinese women for her feminist development and attributed her decision to become the editor of *Freedomways* to her encounters with them: "those Chinese women laid me right out! I went back home and hired a housekeeper and immediately I became editor of a magazine!"[77] Here, she reinforced the tension between domestic life and public work. Hiring

[75]Shirley Graham Du Bois, "I Have Seen China," SGDB Papers.
[76] Shirley Graham Du Bois, "I Have Seen China," SGDB Papers.
[77] Horne, *Race Woman*, 160.

a housekeeper, a form of productive labor that Marxism contends fuels capitalism, could be considered hypocritical given the exploitative nature of domestic work and its reinforcement of the gendered and racialized division of labor detailed in studies by Black Left women in the 1930s and 1940s.[78] But she and Du Bois were not the only activists to employ domestic help. Eslanda and Paul Robeson employed a cleaner while living in London, and further research into the class dynamics of middle-class Black Leftists who espoused socialist ideals is needed.

Younger activists would continue to advance feminist analyses of imperialism in the 1960s and 1970s from a maternal perspective. *Freedomways* published SNCC activist Diane Nash (Bevel)'s travel account, "Journey to North Vietnam" in the Spring 1967 issue. Nash was part of an interracial group of women from the US who travelled to Hanoi at the invitation of the Women's Union of North Vietnam.[79] She travelled with Mrs. Grace Mora Newman, a Puerto Rican woman residing in New York and the sister of one of the "Fort Hood Three"; Mrs. Barbara Deming, a white lesbian feminist peace activist who had taken part in a number of peace walks and a peace mission to Saigon to protest the war, and Mrs. Patricia Griffith who had been active in the peace movement at Cornell University.[80] The delegation was part of an interracial, international, feminist network in which activists from varying backgrounds came together against the war.

---

[78] Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," *The Crisis* (November 1935); Esther Cooper, "The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism," Master's thesis, Fisk University, 1940; Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!," *Political Affairs* (June 1949): 51-67.

[79] Diane Nash Bevel, "Journey to North Vietnam," *Freedomways,* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1967): 118.

[80] Nash Bevel, "Journey to North Vietnam," 118.
The 'Fort Hood Three' were three US soldiers, Dennis Mora, David Samas, and James Johnson, who refused to be deployed to Vietnam in June 1966. They were the first to do so and served time in federal prison for their actions. Their case was widely publicized and became a cause célèbre by the growing antiwar movement. Barbara Deming was an activist and writer who advocated for nonviolence in all spheres of life and was active in several peace organizations in the 1960s, including the War Resisters League, the Committee for Nonviolent Action and Women Strike for Peace. She demonstrated for peace and civil rights and in 1967 was arrested for her activism at the Feminist Walk of the New York City Women's Pentagon Action against the Vietnam war.

Nash's analysis of the imperialist war in Vietnam focused on Vietnamese women and children which included the account of a pregnant mother whose two children had been killed by American bombs:

> Since I had no work this month due to my late pregnancy, I had brought my two children from the place to which they had been evacuated so I could enjoy having them home with me. On that day (Dec. 13, 1966) my street was bombed while I was making my prenatal visit at the medical center. My son's body was found under the rubble. My girl was blown to bits. The only part of her body we could find was a piece of her head and hair. This is a deep hurt against the aggressors. It is too much suffering for me.[81]

Her account exposed the suffering women endured at the hands of the US military and underlined the personal loss inflicted on women and children by a political war. The woman's children were murdered in their home, demonstrating the inseparability of the personal and political when the home becomes the site of imperialist violence.

Nash's focus on how personal experiences could not be separated from politics was representative of her previous activist work. In 1962, she underlined how her pregnancy was inextricable from political action in her commitment to a jail-no-bail strategy which saw her begin a two-year jail sentence for teaching nonviolence to young people while four months pregnant.[82] Lindal Buchanan argues that motherhood enabled Nash to "create a stirring and unforgettable message," but that her maternal rhetoric led to "narratives that commemorate her as a Mother, rather than a strategist or leader."[83] Buchanan also suggests that after the birth of her daughter in 1962, Nash "relinquished direct public involvement," and that her then husband, James Bevel, "typically coordinated their projects in the field while Nash remained home with the children."[84] Buchanan ignores Nash's continued civil rights activism and her anti-war activism, and ultimately upholds the dichotomy between motherhood and politics because she is unable to recognize it as a component of Nash's activist strategy and praxis.

---

[81] Nash Bevel, "Journey to North Vietnam," 120.
[82] Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists,* 3rd edn (Cambridge: South End Press, 2002) 80.
[83] Lindal Buchanan, *Rhetorics of Motherhood* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 65.
[84] Buchanan, *Rhetorics of Motherhood*, 80.

"Journey to Vietnam," in contrast, demonstrates how Nash's motherhood was salient for how she promoted support and affinity for Vietnamese women.

Jessica Frazier in *Women's Antiwar Diplomacy During the Vietnam War Era* (2017) suggests that "U.S. and Vietnamese women used maternalism to justify their entrance into the international realm," despite their actions having "less to do with mothers' domestic duties […] than with strategizing with one another to gain influence over U.S. foreign policy decisions."[85] Frazier includes Nash in this evaluation, contending she had decided to visit Hanoi after seeing a photograph of a "distraught [Vietnamese] mother holding a wounded or dead child." [86] But Nash's focus on motherhood in her *Freedomways* report was less a justification of her activism to others than the lens through which she could promote identification and solidarity with Vietnamese women who were fighting for survival against racial imperialism in a similar way to women in the US.[87] For Nash, motherhood could be an organizing praxis and a form of propaganda that could shock readers, promote solidarity, and encourage movement mobilization against the war. Testimony gave further emotional weight and credibility to her claims as a witness and chimed with Cooper Jackson's editorial ethos and sociological approach of listening to voices at the grassroots. Women reading the report could empathize because they shared the experience of mothering in a context that devalued them and their children and understood the political contours of motherhood.

Nash also told the story of a mother whose four-year-old and sixteen-month-old sons were crushed to death, how a woman who was eight months pregnant "had her unborn child blown out of her body," and how a 29-year-old woman's reproductive system was damaged

---

[85] Jessica M. Frazier, *Women's Antiwar Diplomacy During the Vietnam War Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 6.
[86] Frazier, *Women's Antiwar Diplomacy,*18.
[87] Patricia Hill Collins argues that survival is a central theme in women of colors' 'motherwork' in the US as women struggle for the lives of their biological children and of their wider Black communities in the face of the devaluation of Black children and attacks on their reproductive rights. Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood," in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency,* eds. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (New York: Routledge, 1994), 49-56.

"so severely by torture" that doctors had been unable to stop continuous bleeding.[88] Figure 7 is a photograph taken by Nash that was featured on the inside cover of the Fall 1967 issue in which "Journey to Vietnam" appears. It depicts the "Obstetric ward of Phan Hao Hospital after U.S. bombing" in June 1966 and is visual evidence of the violence against women and children she described in her essay, and the non-military targets of US imperialism destroyed under the guise of protecting democracy.



Figure 7: Diane Nash Bevel, Obstetric ward of Phan Hao Hospital after U.S. bombing, June 1, 1966, *Freedomways* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1967): inside cover.

Nash's report reflected a belief in motherhood's ubiquity for building solidarity against a common oppressor in a similar way to how sisterhood was promoted in the magazine as discussed in Chapter Three. Like Graham Du Bois, she credited motherhood as an impetus for action and reconciled the personal and political. The magazine was a platform from which young Black activists could criticize US foreign policy in Vietnam at a time when civil rights organizations were fractured over the subject. Moderate Black activists continued to capitulate to Cold War liberalism and that was heightened in the context of domestic legislative gains of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965). Daniel S. Lucks argues that as part of the New Left, the younger generation of Black activists "embraced a new politics that

[88] Nash Bevel, "Journey to North Vietnam," 120-121

transcended Cold War dichotomies," and they "preached a similar vision of the interrelatedness of the struggle against racism at home and imperialism abroad," as their Old Left predecessors.[89] Nash did not steep her criticism in Cold War dichotomies of East versus West, but her analysis nonetheless fit an editorial approach that consistently criticized US imperial expansion and signaled continuity in Black feminist understandings across the Old and New Left of motherhood's potential as a framework for promoting solidarity among women and as a form of propaganda to garner support for the anti-war effort.

Motherhood was also a theme in poetry by young Black women writers. Hazel Carby has shown how Black women challenged and sometimes subverted "dominant ideological codes" of motherhood that were rooted in the "cult of true womanhood" through slave narratives and fiction in the late nineteenth century.[90] Women authors and poets in the magazine similarly took up the theme to think through the gendered impacts of racist imperial expansion. In her poem "The Twentieth Spring" for the Spring 1973 issue, student Constance E. Berkley suggests that it is the responsibility of mothers to become involved in political action against the Vietnam War and the broader US capitalist imperial project. She shifts from the first person, representing US Black women, to third person, signifying Vietnamese women, to argue for how mothers' experiences of imperial violence abroad are inherently connected to US mothers' complacency about the war:

My infant's hunger squalls
Picking up the lower tone-call
Of that baby over there — dying.
His life promise broken
Before his eyes could open

[89] Lucks, *Selma to Saigon,* 11.
[90] Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 21.

Upon the bewildered countenance
Of his mother — diminutive widow,
Aged beyond her twentieth spring,
    Watching her only son
    His flesh peeling off…
Everywhere I try to hide
I see the pain on her face
I hear her angry agony,
    Her screams stop my sleep
    My dreams see her slim eyes
Mark me with the accomplice's cross —
Mark me condemned — If I too continue
    Standing like a stealthy coward
    In the hangman's shadow — me too
Watching her infant become consumed
Like so many faggots upon a fire
    What manner of mother am I,
      Standing
    Waiting for the moment to come…[91]

Berkley depicts the link between the hunger of "my infant"—a comment on the diversion of funds from domestic antipoverty programs—to the violence being perpetrated against children of color globally and alludes to the common source of their pain. She portrays the war in Vietnam as a broader war against people of color and advances a socialist critique that

[91] Constance E. Berkley, "The Twentieth Spring," *Freedomways* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 149.

highlights the economic motivations for US militarism in Vietnam: "Why am I waiting, petrified…/Watching them—promiscuous merchants […] In the marketplace of death…"[92] Throughout the poem, questions attempt to stir the moral consciousness of women, asking "what manner of mother am I, to sit back and do nothing?" They are a call to action and rather than "waiting for the moment [of revolution] to come," Berkley urges mothers to become active participants, warning that if a Black US woman stands "like a stealthy coward," in the shadow of American imperialist violence, then "mark me condemned."[93]

While their political approaches were not homogenous and Nash did not explicitly promote socialism through her activism, women from the Old and New Left approached the political contours of Black motherhood in similar ways. Each saw in their motherhood a framework from which to build international solidarities based on ideas of shared experience and resisted dichotomies of public and private spheres, imbuing their motherhood with political power.

"You Can't Be a Political Revolutionary and a Social Conservative": Sexuality and Liberation

While the Old Left editors appreciated that "the personal is political" as it pertained to romantic and interpersonal relationships in the family, they were uncomfortable with the public discussions of women's sexuality and sexual freedom that were occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. An exploration of SNYC's romantic relationships reveals how Cooper Jackson and Burnham thought about the subject and how this differed from the attitude taken by younger women reviewed in the magazine.

A primary way in which SNYC women enacted a Black Left feminist politics was by keeping their maiden names upon marriage.[94] Cooper Jackson "took very seriously the fact the

[92] Berkley, "The Twentieth Spring," 147-148.
[93] Berkley, "The Twentieth Spring," 149.
[94] Dorothy Burnham married Louis Burnham prior to her activism in SNYC and while she took his surname, she also retained her maiden name, going by Dorothy Challenor Burnham in activist and professional settings.

women and men were equal in the struggle […] it was an integral part of the whole struggle to change society. Therefore, we kept our own identities."[95] Her politics did not always chime with her husband's and keeping her maiden name enabled her to distinguish her activism from his. This practice was also taken up by younger writers, including Alice Walker, who continued to use their maiden names professionally after marriage. Shirley Graham Du Bois also intially forwent her married name in professional undertakings, publishing biographies and editing *Freedomways* under her maiden name. Her subsequent adoption of "Du Bois" after her husband's death affirmed her understanding of the political ramifications of her personal relationship. It afforded her access to political and activist spaces she might otherwise have been excluded from, including political leaders such as Kwame Nkruah, Egypt's General Nasser, and Mao Zedong, as well ensuring that speaking engagements at international conferences could be opportunities to consolidate her husband's (and her own) legacy.

Cooper Jackson suggested that men in SNYC viewed the eradication of women's oppression as an essential component of socialist revolution and that Louis Burnham, James Jackson, and Edward Strong "always shared the work, always cared for the kids equally […] they thought to be a good communist you struggled on the woman question […] they weren't free of male chauvinism, but they were remarkable men.?"[96] In the late 1940s and 1950s, communists in the US began to "insist that progressive men guard against male chauvinist attitudes and behaviour in their role as husbands and fathers as well as in political settings."[97] They were encouraged to transform their personal relationships to reflect gender relations that could be achieved after socialist revolution. While men in SNYC did not always live up to the ideals of egalitarianism, Old Left activists did apply intersectional ideas of race, gender, and

[95] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Mary Helen Washington, March 30, 1998, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Box 8 Folder 25, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York.
[96] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Robin D.G. Kelley, June 22, 1988, *Robin Kelley Hammer and Hoe Oral History Collecti*on, Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, New York, https://wp.nyu.edu/tamimentcpusa/esther-cooper-jackson/. (Hereafter cited as RKOH Collection).
[97] Weigand, *Red Feminism*, 115.

class to their everyday lives and personal relationships. Nevertheless, the editors' thinking diverged from 1960s and 1970s formulations of the "personal is political" in important ways.

While Old Left women promoted their idea of personal politics in the rhetoric of motherhood, marriage and the family, and this was evident in younger feminists too, like Nash and Berkley, they were largely silent on sexuality and tensions on the issue are marked in reviews of younger writers in the magazine. Maryemma Graham, though too young to have been a member of the Old Left, presented the classic Marxist-Leninist position on sexuality and feminism in her review of Walker's *The Color Purple,* in line with the editors' politics. As well as arguing that the novel ignored the class dynamics of Black women's oppression, she suggested that Walker's portrayal of Celie's lesbian relationship as "the alternative to poor Black women's victimization," represented the "type of distortion feminism sometimes produces."[98]

The idea that liberal feminism and issues of sexuality more broadly are a distortion or deviation from class struggle is language derivative of Lenin's position on the subject forwarded in a 1920 interview with German communist women's activist, Clara Zetkin. In the interview, focused on women's preoccupation on issues of sex and marriage relationships, Lenin concluded that "no matter how rebellious and revolutionary," challenges to accepted modes of sexuality "may be made to appear, it is in the final analysis thoroughly bourgeois."[99] This is because, for Marxists, sexual desire is ultimately a personal need benefiting the individual rather than the whole society and to treat sex and gender politics as the main social problem for securing liberation from patriarchy, dulls class-consciousness among women that is required for real social revolution. For Lenin, proletariat revolution would "lay the foundation, among other things, for the necessary revision of material and sexual relations."[100]

[98] Graham, "Skillful but Disturbing Novel," 280.
[99] Clara Zetkin, "An Interview with Lenin on the Woman Question," in *My Memorandum Book*, Trans. Sally Ryan (International Publishers, 1920), https://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1925/lenin/zetkin2.htm.
[100] Clara Zetkin, "An Interview with Lenin on the Woman Question."

While younger liberal Black feminist writers saw sexual liberation as an aspect of women's freedom, it stood at odds with how Black Left feminists understood women's liberation to be undergirded by class struggle and the need for working-class unity across race and gender lines to achieve revolution.

Toni Morrison's fiction was also reviewed in the magazine for its representation of Black female sexuality. The editors published reviews of four of Morrison's novels: *The Bluest Eye* (1970); *Sula* (1973); *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Tar Baby (*1981). I focus on Barbara Smith's review of *Sula* for how it diverges from the magazine's special project director, Norma Rogers' review of *Song of Solomon* and freelance New York writer Nieda Spigner's review of *Tar Baby,* despite each woman professing to have socialist politics. Doing so emphasizes the generational as well as the political disagreements among women in the magazine.

Smith was a Black lesbian socialist feminist activist and writer who co-founded the Combahee River Collective in 1974. She co-authored the collective's statement which advanced an intersectional Black feminist manifesto rooted in the socialist belief that "the liberation of all oppressed peoples necessitates the destruction of the political-economic systems of capitalism and imperialism as well as patriarchy."[101] But the collective also reconciled the lesbian identity of its founders with their socialist politics, finding "any type of biological determinism a particularly dangerous and reactionary basis upon which to build a politic," and questioned "whether Lesbian separatism is an adequate and progressive political analysis and strategy, even for those who practice it, since it so completely denies any but the sexual sources of women's oppression, negating the facts of class and race."[102] Sexual identity was a central tenet of Smith's Black Left feminist politics and this was reflected in her review of *Sula* for the Winter 1974 issue.

[101] The Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," (1970) in *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective,* eds. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 19.
[102] The Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," 21.

Sula tells the story of two young Black girls from contrasting family backgrounds who meet and become friends at the age of 12 in 1922: "Nel comes from a home that is rigidly respectable and Sula from one that is permissively free […] Nel chooses the conventional path of home and babies, while Sula leaves their small town for education and adventure."[103] Smith considers marriage, the family, and women's sexual freedom in her analysis of Sula's open sexual activity, which renders her "frightening because […] she absolutely refuses to settle for the 'colored woman's' lot of marriage, child-raising, labor and pain."[104] For Smith, Sula's sexual freedom represents liberation and she uses the novel as a platform from which to extrapolate more widely: "I can verify the validity of Morrison's analysis," because "I saw firsthand the demoralizing effects of stymied intelligence and creativity.''[105]

To contrast, she analyzes a passage from the novel that details Nel's husband's attraction to marriage because "whatever his fortune, whatever the cut of his garment, there would always be the hem—the tuck and fold that hid his raveling edges."[106] The passage depicts the role of a wife as subservient to her husband, existing principally to support and care for him. Morrison's metaphor presents wives as part of their husband as opposed to a full person in and of themselves. Smith suggests that this depiction is "chilling, but accurate in terms of many women's lives."[107] She formulated a Black Left feminism inclusive of sexuality as a principal component of Black feminist thought, with Sula's sexual freedom and autonomy representing the rejection of the "colored woman's lot."

Smith's identification with, and celebration of Black women's sexuality stands in stark contrast to how Norma Rogers and Nieda Spigner review *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Tar Baby* (1981), respectively. Rogers posits that in *Song of Solomon* "women are depicted as

[103] Barbara Smith, "Beautiful, Needed, Mysterious," *Freedomways* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 70-71.
[104] Smith, "Beautiful, Needed, Mysterious," 71.
[105] Smith, "Beautiful, Needed, Mysterious," 71.
[106] Smith, "Beautiful, Needed, Mysterious," 71.
[107] Smith, "Beautiful, Needed, Mysterious," 71.

lonely, sexually deprived, mentally disturbed people," and this opinion was shared with associate editor, Ernest Kaiser, who postulated, "Morrison started with the terrors of *The Bluest Eye*; then gave us a group of strange, half-crazed, stereotyped black women and men in *Sula*; and now we have another bizarre, stereotyped cast of characters out of her fantasy in *Song of Solomon* supposed to be a chronicle of four generations of the black experience."[108]

Spigner in her review of *Tar Baby* similarly disparages Morrison's depiction of the character Jardine as a bourgeois seductive Black woman who traps Son, a young Black man, with her sexual wiles. She advances a similar critique to Hairston's argument for the "shallow, mediocre literature," being produced by young Black writers who are seeking success in the mainstream, positing that the novel is "a dazzling example of marketability" and a "lesson in how to survive as a writer under capitalism."[109] From her summation that the characters "appear superficial and farfetched," Spigner questions "whether the author intended that we experience the work in this way. Or did she, rather, intend to make a serious statement about the twentieth-century black woman? If so, her notion appears to be that the 'new' black woman is a tower of strength who has advanced far beyond her male counterpart."[110] In this way, Spigner disagrees with the middle-class aspirations of Jardin, who chooses complicity in white capital and uses her sexuality for her own benefit at the expense of the wider Black community in the US.

In 2001, Jean Carey Bond looked back on these conflicts in approaches to sexuality and asserted "you can't be a political revolutionary and a social conservative. I don't think the two things go together […] if we're talking about transformative politics, well then we're also talking about transformative social mores and social codes."[111] McDuffie summarizes the

[108] Norma Rogers, "Song of Solomon," *Freedomways* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 108; Ernest Kaiser, "Recent Books," *Freedomways* 17, no. 3 (Summer 1977): 187.
[109] Loyle Hairston, "Alice in the Mainstream," *Freedomways* 24, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 183; Niega Spigner, "A 'Best' Seller," *Freedomways* 21, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 269.
[110] Spigner, "A 'Best' Seller," 269.
[111] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie.

context: "While they often practiced non-normative sexualities, most Black Left feminists viewed sexuality as a private affair and lacked a discourse and space for interrogating these issues."[112] Bond is particularly pointed in addressing generational differences, including between her and Cooper Jackson's approaches to sexuality, noting that Cooper Jackson's "sexual attitudes could be very traditional," but that in her own view Bond has stated that "if you're a revolutionary, if you want changes in society, profound and fundamental changes, then you have to look at everything."[113] The editors' different approaches to sexuality are marked in the Lorraine Hansberry special issue that was put together by Bond and in which white lesbian feminist Adrienne Rich addressed Hansberry's sexuality after conducting research of her personal papers.

Rich revealed that Hansberry wrote "several letters to the early lesbian publication, *The Ladder,* in 1957 on the economic and psychological pressures that impel many conscious lesbians into marriage, on the connections between anti-homosexuality and antifeminism, and on the need for a new *feminist* ethics."[114] She suggested that this was evidence that indicated the late playwright had concealed her sexuality, in her own words, as an "act of agitation" against the oppressor; an example of "the thousand and one ways [women] devise with and without consciousness to alter their condition."[115] Rich's article reveals that Hansberry's lesbianism was a component of her politics, even if privately, and subsequently nuanced in Black Left feminism. With the advent of the contemporary gay liberation movement after the 1969 Stonewall riots and an increased feminist focus on sexuality and sexual liberation, Rich questioned, "Where would Hansberry have placed herself, had she lived till now, in relation to the feminist movement of the present? […] what would she have made of Barbara Smith's

[112] Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 211.
[113] Jean Carey Bond, interview by Erik S. McDuffie, November 9, 2001.
[114] Adrienne Rich, "The Problem with Lorraine Hansberry," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 252.
[115] Rich, "The Problem with Lorraine Hansberry," 253.

declaration that 'I want most of all for Black women and Black lesbians somehow to not be so alone. This…will require the most expansive of revolutions as well as many new words to tell us how to make this revolution real?"[116] *Freedomways* largely neglected lesbianism and sexuality in 1970s Black feminist circles, despite the number of Black queer and lesbian women who contributed to the magazine.[117] Smith's promotion of depictions of Black women's sexual freedom in new feminist literature, and Rich's discussion of Hansberry's sexuality stand out because they contrast with the general editorial silence. Voices that departed from the Old Left viewpoint highlighted nuanced approaches to Black Left feminist politics.

"For Hansberry, Jackson & Bond": Building A Nurturing Space and Inter-Generational Relationships

Despite differing and sometimes conflicting approaches to feminist issues among women, *Freedomways* was a nurturing space for emerging Black women writers. Ruby Dee asserted that the magazine "continued the tradition of uniting art, politics and social experience that dated back at least to the Harlem Renaissance movement."[118] Cooper Jackson had always championed literary production and continued to support young writers after doing so while in SNYC. While working for the Civil Rights Congress in Detroit in the late 1940s, she wrote to W.E.B. Du Bois:

> Enclosed are a group of poems which have been ready by a number of people here in Detroit and which we feel have great merit. I have known Oliver LaGrone for two years since coming to Michigan and have found him to be a person of real ability—as a sculptor and a poet. He is indeed one of the best of the relatively unknown younger Negro poets who certainly deserved recognition […] the Civil Rights Congress and a

[116] Adrienne Rich, "The Problem with Lorraine Hansberry," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 253.
[117] Barbara Smith and Nikki Giovanni both identified as lesbians during the time they were writing for *Freedomways*, though this not addressed in the magazine. There has also been evidence to suggest that Lorraine Hansberry and Beah Richards/Beulah Richardson had queer identities, thought whether that was common knowledge at the time is unknown.
[118] Ruby Dee, "Culture and the Cause of Black Freedom," in *Freedomways Reader*, ed. Esther Cooper Jackson (Colorado: Westview Press, 2003), 290.

> number of other organizations plan to promote the poems both in Michigan and throughout the country.[119]

Her drive to promote the writing of the younger generation was part of her activist ethos and as managing editor for *Freedomways*, she was in prime position to publish it, rather than having to commend it to others in the hope that they would recognize the quality.

In the editorial for the Spring 1962 issue, the editors emphasized that, "the Negro's cultural identity cannot be divorced from a general theory of the freedom cause of the Negro people in the United States."[120] The principal role young people played in creating this cultural identity was stressed when they proclaimed, "FREEDOMWAYS is happy to introduce to our readers a number of heretofore unpublished young talents in prose and verse. We believe that they represent a small part of the new creative activity now stirring among Negro Americans throughout our land."[121] The editors were not the only ones to support young writers and Sharon Monteith has noted that Hoyte Fuller in his position as editor "was instrumental" in creating *Negro Digest/Black World* as an outlet for young Black voices, particularly championing women such as Jean Wheeler Smith and Jane Stembridge, whose fiction was published in the magazine and who were celebrated alongside Alice Walker, Carolyn Rodgers, and Nikki Giovanni as "the most talented writers 'spawned by the Black Revolution.'"[122] But Cooper Jackson's engagement with Black youth movements and her understanding of art and

---

[119] Letter from Civil Rights Congress of Michigan to W.E.B. Du Bois, April 8, 1949, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

[120] The Editors, "Culture in the Cause of Freedom," *Freedomways* (Spring 1962): 118. Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson argue that disagreements over art and propaganda resulted in the function of black artis becoming "a central theme running through the journals, as well as in black literature generally, from the beginning of the century to the present." Black magazines of the Twentieth Century "carried a double function," because they "provided black writers with an outlet for their work and thereby participated in the shaping of black literature and culture," and at the same time "have recorded basic concerns of each period and become historical documents in their own right." Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of African American Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), 201-204.

[121] The Editors, "Culture in the Cause of Freedom," 117.

[122] Sharon Monteith, *SNCC's Stories: The African American Freedom Movement in the Civil Rights South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020), 159-163.
For a summary of publications that published young writers see Howard Ramsby, *The Black Arts Enterprise and the Production of African American Poetry* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011).

fiction as central sites of Black resistance, paved the way for inter-generational feminist relationships at *Freedomways*.

The editors' support of Black women writers was a consequence of its female-headed editorial board and Black Left feminist politics. The inter-generational relationships established between women at the magazine that were both personal and political, distinguished it from other Black publications at the time. As well as reviewing the work of younger Black feminist writers, the magazine was a place for these young thinkers when options for Black creatives, particularly on the Left were limited because other publications shied away from content that could be interpreted as promoting socialism in the context of the ongoing Cold War. Cooper Jackson was particularly committed to this feature of *Freedomways* because "there were very few spaces for these types of serious black writers to publish their work; 'Freedomways' acted as a bridge for them and introduced their work to a wider audience."[123] This was especially the case for young Black women including Alice Walker, Nikki Giovanni, Barbara Smith, Constance E. Berkley, June Jordan, and Audre Lorde who all published in the magazine.

In October 1974, for example, Barbara Smith wrote to Cooper Jackson after "reading Angela Davis' autobiography with much excitement and found out that you knew her."[124] She had just received an offer to become book editor at *The Observer* and wrote "to give you an idea of how reactionary the *Observer* is, we aren't reviewing her book because it's 'too controversial.' Good reason to quit."[125] Instead Smith told Cooper Jackson that she "would like to review/write for 'Freedomways' in the future."[126] Smith's letter suggests *Freedomways'*

[123] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Samantha Willis, November 22, 2016, Massachusetts, *Richmond Magazine, https://richmondmagazine.com/news/features/esther-cooper-jackson/.*
[124] Letter from Barbara Smith to Esther Cooper Jackson, October 28, 1974, Box 7, Folder 44, ECJ Papers.
[125] Barbara Smith to Esther Cooper Jackson.
Instead of taking the job as book editor at *The National Observer*, Smith returned to Boston where she had previously taught Black women writers at Emerson College.
[126] Barbara Smith to Esther Cooper Jackson, October 28, 1974.

more open editorial focus and how it appealed to a younger generation of feminists. While Smith and Cooper Jackson's feminism may not have been completely aligned, as well as reviewing *Sula*, Smith also reviewed Henry Dumas' posthumously published *Ark of Bones and Other Stories* (1970) and *Play Ebony, Play Ivory* (1974) for the Winter 1977 issue.[127] And in the Summer 1974 issue, she reported on a Boston University sponsored symposium on "Black Image in Films, Stereotyping and Self-Perception" and condemned stereotypes of Black women in Black and white filmmaking. She argued for the importance of creating "a positive and realistic conception of the Black community as a whole," and reported that Black actresses, decried how "Black women have been portrayed in the visual media," and the "one dimensional treatment of Black female characters in the white media."[128] In *Freedomways,* Smith was able to engage with Black poetry and art, protest, and community, and put forward a Black Left feminist analysis of current trends.

Young women writers also engaged with the work of the Old Left in *Freedomways,* not only through their relationships with the editors, but in poetry published in the magazine. Nikki Giovanni remembered "being so pleased and feeling so—well—grown up when *Freedomways* published my poetry for the first time."[129] Between 1970 and 1980, she published two poems, an essay, and a book review for the magazine. She wrote about writers and artists whose careers developed in the 1930s and 1940s and who were members of the Black intellectual left, celebrating the life and work of Paul Robeson, Lorraine Hansberry, and Charles White. For the Winter 1971 special issue "Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner," Giovanni contributed "The Lion in Daniel's Den":

on the road to damascus

[127] Interestingly, as senior editor at Random House in the 1970s, it was Toni Morrison that shepherded the publication of Dumas's poetry. Toni Morrison, "On Behalf of Henry Dumas," *Black American Literature Forum* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 310.
[128] Smith, "Black Women in Film Symposium," 266-267.
[129] Nikki Giovanni, "Advance Praise for *Freedomways Reader,"* Box 7, Folder 44, ECJ Papers.

to slay the christians

saul saw the light

and was blinded by that light

and looked into the Darkness

and embraced that Darkness

and saul arose from the great white way

saying “I Am Paul

who you slay you

but I saw the Darkeness

and I am that Darkness”

then he raised his voice

singing red black and green songs

saying “I am the lion

in daniel’s den

I am the lion thrown to slaughter

do not fear the lion

for he is us

and we are all

in daniel’s den.[130]

Giovanni invokes the biblical tale to present a leftist analysis of oppression in which the lion and Daniel are both captive in the den and forced to fight each other. The den represents capitalism, whose structural imperatives place groups in conflict, and Giovanni suggests that

[130] Nikki Giovanni, “The Lion in Daniel’s Den,” *Freedomways* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1971):102.

different groups must come together and destroy the den to secure liberation. The poem's message chimes with that of Graham Du Bois' in "Return After Ten Years," (Spring 1971) that struggles between "factions seem to have taken precedence over the struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.'"[131] The "red black and green songs," in Giovanni's poem are the colors of the pan-African flag and point to her understanding of the diasporic connections between Black people living under capitalist imperialism that necessitates that the revolution be global. The poem has the same message of a common enemy as seen throughout the magazine's rhetoric of solidarity. Giovanni's essay on Hansberry and poem on Charles White also explore how thinkers and artists of the Old Left influenced her to become a writer: "Charles White and his art were introduced to me/ through magazines and books—that's why I love them."[132] The editors' commitment to the Left in support of young creatives evidenced how the magazine acted as the "bridge" Cooper Jackson had intended it to be.[133]

The editors also developed personal, mentor-like relationships that facilitated wider exposure for young writers in the magazine. In 1977, student Constance E. Berkley wrote to Cooper Jackson, "to share with you the fact that I have completed my comprehensive doctoral exams and am now working on the beginning of my dissertation proposal."[134] Berkley wanted to shared her news "because it is people like you, Jim [James Jackson] and all the others associated with the Afro-American Freedom Movement and the cause of world peace who have not only given me the impetus for study but have also believed in me and my work.|[135] The letter reveals a more intimate cross-generational relationship that was not only intellectual but also very personal to Berkley: "this lonely period of intensive work has been made possible by the warmth of people like you," and this relationship helped sustain the development of a

[131] Shirley Graham, "Return After Ten Years," *Freedomways* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 161.
[132] Nikki Giovanni, "Charles White," *Freedomways* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 156.
[133] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Samantha Willis.
[134] Letter from Connie Berkley to Esther Cooper Jackson, March 17, 1977, Box 7, Folder 44, ECJ Papers.
[135] Connie Berkley to Esther Cooper Jackson, March 17, 1977.

younger generation of activist writers. In *Freedomways*, Berkeley could share her ideas on motherhood, war, imperialism, capitalism, and Blackness. She published four poems in the magazine—"Glow Child" (Spring 1967), "Why Should" (Summer 1967), "To Sleep—To Dream" (Spring 1970) and "The Twentieth Spring" (Spring 1973).

Angela Davis' relationship with Esther Cooper Jackson and her husband James began in childhood and she described how "in thinking about my connection with them over the years, I realize that I cannot undo the entanglement of the personal and the political."[136] This inter-generational relationship was the result of a sustained network among Black women in SNYC. Davis' mother Sallye Bell was a local leader in the organization and helped Cooper Jackson with childcare for her daughter Kathryn and Harriet, whom Angela played with as a child. She was exposed to socialist ideas that were further developed in adulthood and the editors supported her writing and became involved with the Free Angela Davis movement after a gun registered in her name was used in a courtroom shootout that led to her arrest in 1970. Headed by other Black Left feminists, of collective Esther Cooper Jackson, Alice Childress, Beah Richards (Beulah Richardson), and Ruby Dee sponsored the group and Dorothy Burnham's daughter Margaret was one of the lawyers working on Davis' case, attesting to the lasting relationships developed in childhood.[137] Editorials in the Summer 1970 and Spring 1971 issues declared "what has now become the Angela Davis case" is the result of a "prison system in America [that] is rotten to the core. Graft, sexual perversion and racism are the everyday experiences of the inmates […] Angela Davis is just another victim of the 'Crusade against Communism' psychosis and the law-and-order backlash."[138] The editors published a poem "For Angela Davis" written by Henri Percikow, and a drawing of her featured on the cover of the Spring 1971 issue. After her acquittal in 1972, the editors hailed her "remarkable

[136] Angela Davis, "James and Esther Jackson: Connecting the Past to the Present," *American Communist History*, vol. 7 no. 2 (2008): 274.
[137] McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom*, 198.
[138] The Editors, "Angela Davis," *Freedomways* 10, no. 3 (Summer 1970): 197.

contribution to the peoples cause against racism, for democratic rights and social progress, for an end to the barbarous U.S. war in Indochina," which "stands as an inspiration to take up the good fight until the final victory of the people is won."[139] The editors' consistent public support for her throughout the trial and after her acquittal stemmed from not only a shared political outlook, but also Davis' personal relationship with Cooper Jackson and other members of the collective. Later, Davis contributed three essays and became a contributing editor for the magazine in 1981.

Alice Walker made by far the most contributions of any of the young women writers, publishing fifteen short stories and poems between 1968 and 1984, and she became a contributing editor in 1974. Cooper Jackson proudly asserts that Walker "had her first poetry and short stories published in the magazine."[140] Her first publication was the short story, "The Diary of an African Nun" (Summer 1968), that tells of a young Ugandan woman who, after attending a mission school as a child, decides to become a nun. Walker depicts religious mission as a weapon of Western colonizers and a Black African nun as, "the incarnation of civilization; anti-heathenism."[141] The anti-colonial message chimed with the editors' approach, but Walker also imbued the story with a feminist analysis of how Western religion regulated Black women's bodies. As the African nun contemplates "my husband, who came down bodiless from the sky […] and claimed the innocence of body," a young girl joins people dancing and "the whole night is a repetition of the dance of life and the urgent fire of creation."[142] When dawn breaks, it is to "the acclaiming cries of babies."[143] The life-giving freedom of the girl "hidden in black" and the forced celibacy of the nun "shrouded in whiteness," suggest how the "civilizing mission" also upheld gender oppression.

[139] The Editors, "Free at Last," *Freedomways* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1972).
[140] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.
[141] Alice Walker, "The Diary of an African Nun," *Freedomways* 8, no. 3 (Summer 1968): 226.
[142] Walker, "Diary of an African Nun," 227-8.
[143] Alice Walker, "Diary of an African Nun," 227-8.

The editors received a response to Walker's story from a Reverend Donald J. O'Leary condemning her "violent attack on virginity undertaken for the love of God and mankind."[144] They gave Walker the opportunity respond in the magazine where she stated simply, "I stand by the conviction expressed in my short story," and criticized religion "not indigenous to Africa," that demands "conversion, celibacy, or the shunning of artificial methods of birth control."[145] Walker was unequivocal that "virginity should be a personal choice, just as having fifteen children should be."[146] The editors gave her the space to defend her writing against criticism and explain the feminist politics driving her fiction. Walker used the opportunity to promote women's reproductive rights and the right to control her own body while highlighting how Black women had been denied this fundamental right. No other writers were given the opportunity to defend their work against detractors in the magazine, attesting to the closeness between Walker and the editors.

Cooper Jackson supported developing voices of a younger generation of feminist activists who placed value on her guidance. She not only promoted Walker's writing in *Freedomways* but also assisted her on external projects. In 1974, Walker wrote to Cooper Jackson asking for help with an essay about Ruby Dee and her film *Countdown at Kusini* for *Ms Magazine*, asking, "Do you think Ms. Dee would grant me an interview? Also, who are the other people I should talk with? Would you call me up on this? I'm really interested and delighted with the solidarity; the Black women who backed 'Kusini.'"[147] Cooper Jackson was a mentor, facilitating wider communication among Black feminists. The value Walker placed on their relationship and on *Freedomways* is evident in their correspondence. Beyond discussion of writing and the magazine, she typically updated Cooper Jackson on personal events, including her move from New York to San Francisco after her divorce, confiding "I

[144] Rev. Donald J. O'Leary, "On "The Diary of an African Nun," *Freedomways* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1969): 70.
[145] Alice Walker, "Reply to Rev. O'Leary," *Freedomways* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1969): 72-3.
[146] Walker, "Reply to Rev. O'Leary," 73.
[147] Letter from Alice Walker to Esther Cooper Jackson, February 16, 1974, Box 8, Folder, 11, ECJ Papers.

never really functioned well in New York […] and San Francisco suits me very well. It is beautiful and slow. Rebecca likes it too, though she misses her father."[148] Walker and Cooper Jackson shared a personal as well as a professional relationship that stemmed from Cooper Jackson's commitment to young activists and her belief in the political power of culture.

Cooper Jackson even put Walker on the cover of the Fall 1983 issue with two other young Black women writers, June Jordan, and Gloria Naylor. Designed by an illustrator and graduate in Fine Art, Carlos W. Byron, the cover art celebrated Black women's efforts "On the Culture Front." The issue stressed "culture and the arts, believing that the infinite resource of human creativity is to be in these times when our spirits may be faltering under the weight of problems both international and personal."[149]

[148] Letter from Alice Walker to Esther Cooper Jackson, November 7, 1979, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[149] The Editors, "Tightropes," *Freedomways* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 211.

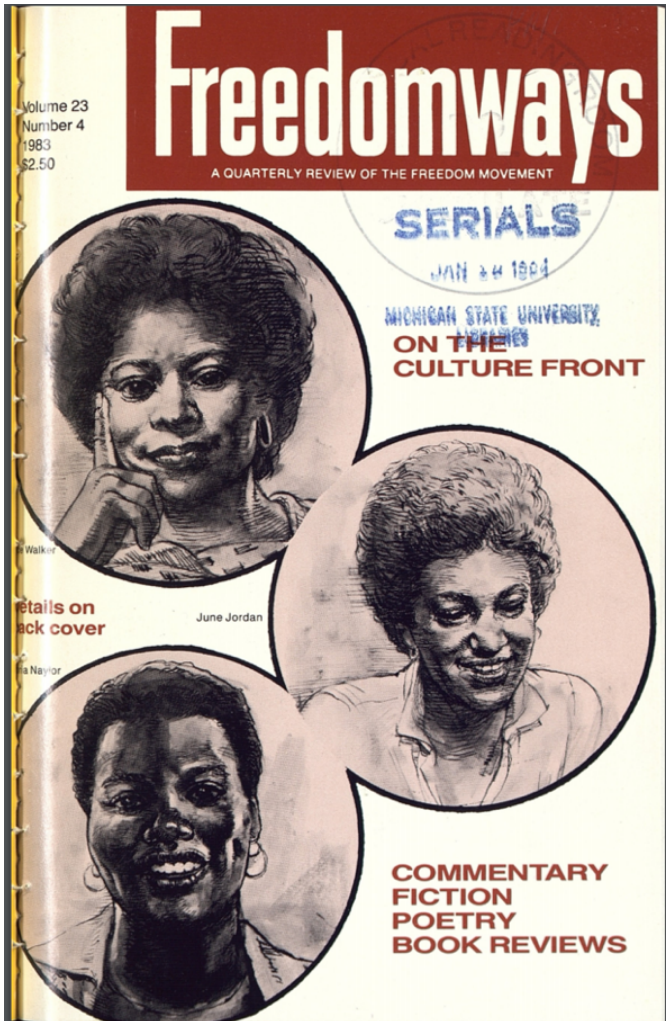


Figure 8: Carlos W. Byron, Cover Art, *Freedomways* 23 no. 4 (Fall 1983).

The editorial positioned young Black women writers as figures of hope in a "dramatic, challenging and dangerous year," of street demonstrations, new nuclear weapons and conflict in the Middle East.[150] By this point in the magazine's history Jean Carey Bond and Esther Cooper Jackson were the primary editors and cast Black fiction and poetry as a motivating force in their struggle to "maintain our journal's quality while teetering on the brink of financial collapse."[151] The issue featured a poem by Jordan, "DeLiza Spend the Day in the City," the nuclear arms race for imperialist expansion, essays on Black film and theatre, and reviews of

[150] The Editors, "Tightropes," 211.
[151] The Editors, "Tightropes," 211.

work by Alice Walker, Rosa Guy, Gloria Naylor, Faith Berry, Joyce Carol Thomas, and anthologies of Black women's writing. The cover art mirrored the contents which celebrated Black women writers contributing to *Freedomways* when the editors were considering, "for the first time in our 22-year history […] suspending publication."[152]

Despite the editors' intentions for placing Walker on the cover, she did not appreciate the illustration. She wrote to Cooper Jackson to tell her that "the comic drawing of me on your last issue's cover disappointed me and hurt my feelings."[153] This emotional message reflected their closeness and Walker's feeling of hurt stemmed from failing to understand "why you would permit such an obviously malicious caricature unless, of course, it represents your own point of view."[154] For Walker, it reminded her of "how frequently black people […] are pictured in papers like the *Times* with their mouths open."[155] In fact, as Figure 8 shows, Walker is not depicted with her mouth open, but Jordan and Naylor are, and this may explain Walker's pique. But it may say more about Walker's reaction to recent reviews in the magazine that were not entirely positive.[156] The different approaches to feminism detailed in this chapter reflect the range of viewpoints discernible in the magazine and Walker's conception of women's oppression had already conflicted with other writers in the magazine, not least Maryemma Graham and Loyle Hairston.

Despite disagreements between Walker and Cooper Jackson, they enjoyed a strong personal relationship and upon hearing of her retirement from the magazine in 1985, Walker wrote asking, "when you leave, please also 'take me with you' by removing my name from the

[152] The Editors, "Tightropes," 211.
[153] Letter from Alice Walker to Esther Cooper Jackson, April 30, 1984, Box 8, Folder 22, ECJ Papers.
[154] Walker to Cooper Jackson, April 30, 1984.
[155] Walker to Cooper Jackson, April 30, 1984.
[156] The magazine had recently published Maryemma Graham's negative review of *The Color Purple* in the Fall 1983 issue, and Loyle Hairston had penned his criticism of Walker's broader mainstream appeal in the Summer 1984 issue. *The Color Purple* had also received a scathing review in the *Daily Worker* for which Cooper Jackson's husband was editor. Sara Rzeszutek Haviland has written of the estrangement Walker began to feel towards her from members of the Freedomways collective. Sara Rzeszutek Haviland, *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 249-251.

roster of contributory editors. Yours is the only heart I feel in touch with at the magazine."[157] She valued their relationship beyond professional differences, appreciating Cooper Jackson as a mentor and friend. Her poem "Each One, Pull One," published in the Spring 1980 issue, reflects the personal relationships developed. It was written in response to the Lorraine Hansberry Special issue but is dedicated to "Hansberry, Jackson & Bond." It affirms the writer's role to "say it all, and as clearly/ as we can. For, even before we are dead, / they are busy/ trying to bury us."[158] Walker stresses the responsibility of young writers to uphold the memory as well as the activism of those who came before them in light of efforts to silence or undermine them:

> But lately you have begun to help them
> bury us. You who said: King was just a womanizer.
> Malcolm just a thug. Sojourner "folksy." Hansberry
> a traitor (or whore, depending). Fannie Lou Hamer
> merely "spunky." Zora Hurston, Nella Larsen, Toomer:
> Reactionary, brainwashed, spoiled by white folks, "minor."
> Agnes Smedley, a spy.[159]

In the magazine, Walker situate literary activism as part of a long history of Black struggle. She contends that contemporary Black writers' commercial success, comes with the responsibility that "each one must pull one," that is, each Black writer that gains success in the contemporary moment, must shed light on those artists who laid the foundation for their success, and who form part of a long Black literary tradition. Her dedication to Cooper Jackson and Bond suggests Walker credited them as the editors of *Freedomways* for their role in her

[157] Letter from Alice Walker to Esther Cooper Jackson, May 28, 1985, Box 8, Folder 11, ECJ Papers.
[158] Alice Walker, "Each One, Pull One," *Freedomways* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 87.
[159] Walker, "Each One, Pull One," 89. NB Agnes Smedley was a white communist in China.

success and saw the magazine as the bridge between activist generations that Cooper Jackson hoped it would prove to be.

***

Freedomways forged an inter-generational, multi-perspectival approach to Black intellectual history. It represented a space for the editors to sustain their Black Left feminism and for the Old Left to engage with a younger generation with differing political viewpoints and approaches to feminism. The content of the magazine is revealing of how contributors were thinking about sexual violence, motherhood, marriage, the family, and sexuality and that different perspectives and even conflicts were not just "a generational thing," but arose largely from variegations in the political viewpoints of writers and reviewers. With a sustained socialist outlook, the editors and contributors alike criticized writing that did not acknowledge the capitalist roots of women's oppression. While unafraid to offer critique, the editors ensured that the magazine would always be a nurturing space for young women to develop Black feminist thought and analysis. The magazine published work by young writers, promoted their work in review, and even featured them on the front cover. The editors' conception of "the personal is political" extended into their relationships with younger women, notably Constance E. Berkley, Angela Davis, and Alice Walker. Esther Cooper Jackson in particular served as a mentor and an inspiration for younger women both inside and outside of *Freedomways.* Inter-generational debates and cross-generational relationships nuanced ideas, especially on femini st issues as components of a wider Black freedom struggle.

Conclusion

> In this time of constant trial and tribulation for our journal, the nation and humanity in general, we feel compelled to remind ourselves and you, our readers, that no greater challenge confronts us — no more honorable undertaking beckons us — than the task of changing the world. It's an old idea, a sentimental and romantic one to some. To us, it's an imperative, a principle worth living by. Many voices are needed to drown out the incipient roar of fascism, which is still the real enemy as it was 40 years ago. Many instruments are needed to effect change, and FREEDOMWAYS has always tried to be one of them. — Jean Carey Bond for the Editors[1]
>
> In these 25 years worth of ink and paper have been wrought a rich legacy that will endure, a model that will instruct, and an example of commitment that will inspire the freedom fighters of tomorrow. — Jack O'Dell[2]

Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Freedom Movement was a Black feminist intellectual project. Its editors sustained the Black Left feminist politics they developed from their previous activist experience and tested their ideas in print to provide a framework for thinking about feminism along socialist lines that they hoped might influence a new generation of activists. Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Jean Carey Bond worked alongside other women in the collective, including member of the board Dorothy Burnham, special projects director Norma Rogers, and assistant managing editor Brenda L. Jones to shape the magazine as a platform for Black Left women to continue their activism, express their ideas, and through which to nurture inter-generational relationships. The three tenets of Black Left feminism that structured this thesis—socialist politics, internationalism, and intersectional feminism—formed the basis of their editorial approach and the way they promoted their socialist ideas in the magazine. Their political viewpoint was consistent and sustained, from their activist-intellectualism of the 1930s and 1940s, to their work crafting *Freedomways* as an "instrument to effect change" and to "inspire the freedom fighters of tomorrow."

[1] Jean Carey Bond, "Of Wars and Birthdays," *Freedomways* 25, no.2 (Spring 1985): 68.
[2] Jack O'Dell, "Tracing the Freedom Way," *Freedomways* 25, no.3 (Summer 1985): 133.

As thinkers, Black women have often been marginalized in histories of the twentieth century Black freedom struggle that rarely appreciate the connection between theory and praxis, and the personal and political. Some women's ideas and analyses have been overlooked, particularly those of working-class women at the grassroots, but also educated, middle-class women who worked alongside and were close to well-known male intellectuals. The editors of *Freedomways* were such women: all were (and are) educated women who worked as activist-intellectuals from the Popular Front period of the 1930s and 1940s, through the 1960s, to the 1980s and beyond.[3] This thesis has traced some of the different ways in which the women can be considered intellectuals: as writers, journalists, activists, academics, playwrights, composers, and as editors.

Cooper Jackson developed a sociological approach and put forward a Black Left feminist analysis of Black women domestic workers in her MA Thesis. She argued for the efficacy of trade union membership for securing their rights as Black women workers and stressed how interlocking systems of race, gender and class placed them at the locus of oppression. Similarly, Dorothy Burnham applied her background in science to her analysis of interlocking oppressions in academic essays for the magazine, including "Biology and Gender: False Theories About Women and Blacks" in which she argued that attacks on women of

[3] The editors continued their activist-intellectualism after the end of *Freedomways* in 1985. All have given interviews to scholars, shaping histories of the Black Left, and have taken part in symposiums on SNYC and *Freedomways*. Cooper Jackson lectured at a summer institute for college teachers at Harvard University, sharing her experiences of 1930s activism with younger generations. In 1989, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Association of Black Journalists, and in 1990 a Mary Church Terrell award from Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn for her outstanding contributions to the African American Community. In 2003, Cooper Jackson was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Long Island University in recognition of her pioneering efforts as an editor and activist, and in 2010 she was honored at "A Phenomenal Women in Media" awards ceremony at the Von King Cultural Arts Center in Brooklyn for her lifelong commitment to telling the stories of the African American experience and connecting young people to their history and legacy. Dorothy Burnham continued her career as a college science teacher and organizing with the Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE), The Sisters Against South African Apartheid, and the Genes and Gender Group. Later in life she also embarked on a career as a painter in which she sought to capture her experiences of travel and life in Brooklyn, and in 1999 she was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the State University of New York. Jean Carey Bond was also active in WREE, served on the board of *The New Crisis* newspaper, and was a founding member of Black Radical Congress in 1998.

color's reproductive rights were rooted in efforts to build and sustain the capitalist system. In this way, Cooper Jackson and Burnham were intellectuals working firmly in academe, producing theses and essays that analyzed oppression from a Black Left feminist viewpoint with a sociological and scientific approach.

They were also activist intellectuals whose work in the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) was an example of what Farah Jasmine Griffin terms the "extra-academic origins of Black women's intellectual work."[4] Their promotion of women's and grassroots leadership was shaped by, and developed, their thinking about collaborative working, leadership, race and gender oppression, and class struggle, and this influenced magazine content and the gendered contours of the editorial board twenty years later. And ideas about women's liberation as an equal component of the freedom struggle were reflected in Old Left women's coalitional activism against sexual violence and wrongful incarceration. Cooper Jackson explained the relationship between theory and praxis when she averred that she "knew what terror was in the South," and this was "one reason we sort of stuck to what our goals were […] because we know that capitalism as it was going was not the road for liberation of African Americans. We'd seen through working in the South."[5] The women editors of *Freedomways* brought their ideas to bear on their activism in the Popular Front period that shaped how they led SNYC and the issues they addressed, and their activism affirmed their thinking that socialism was needed to "change this society," from which they crafted the editorial outlook of the magazine.[6]

The women grounded their political views and intellectualism in lived experience: it was empirical and drew on what they witnessed, felt, and understood at different moments in their lives. It is an example of Patricia Hill Collins' framework for a Black feminist

[4] Farah Jasmine Griffin, "Conflict and Chorus: Reconsidering Toni Cade's The Black Woman: An Anthology," in *Is It Nation Time? Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 122.
[5] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro, August 31, 2006, Box 27, James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University, New York.
[6] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by John Munro.

epistemology in which lived experience is a criterion for meaning making and the way Black women justified the claims they made. Cooper Jackson's experience listening to guest talks by Anna Louise Strong while at Oberlin, observing the Black women who cooked and cleaned at the college's dormitories, and living in a Methodist settlement house while at Fisk University, convinced her that "some major change had to be taking place in this country in order to really advance the people who were the most oppressed," and sparked the idea for her MA thesis.[7] Similarly, Jean Carey Bond credited her family background and attendance at the Little Red School House for her leftist politics that she would bring to her writing and editorship of *Freedomways,* and she explained how her experience of living in Ghana from 1964 to 1968 affected her thinking about her American identity.

The editors used international travel to maintain their Black Left feminist politics during the height of Cold War anti-communism in the US, seeking out like-minded activists who shared their socialist approach to liberation. In journalistic reports, memoirs, and public speeches, they grounded their promotions of Soviet socialism, and in Graham Du Bois' case Chinese socialism, in what they saw, often with disregard for the manufactured nature of their trips. The weight they placed on lived experience for analyzing the global struggle for liberation, and for making claims about socialism, was presented in the magazine with the inclusion of travel writing and reports from people who had visited the countries they wrote about, and in advertisements for guided tours of "Socialist Europe." Shirley Graham Du Bois also invoked her experience of motherhood to argue for the connection between women of color's liberation struggles internationally, and motherhood continued to be an organizing praxis for the younger generation in their writing against the Vietnam war as seen with Diane Nash and Constant E. Berkley.

[7] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Della Scott, *Abafazi,* 9, no. 1, Fall/Winter 1998, Box 8, Folder 28, ECJ Papers.

Graham Du Bois advanced her ideas about race, class, colonialism, internationalism, and socialist politics through cultural mediums as a writer-activist. Through her biographical novels published in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly *Paul Robeson, Citizen of the World* (1946), she connected the world's working class and advanced a Black Left analysis on the international contours of capitalism and the struggle for liberation. And her opera *Tom Tom* reflected her thinking about Pan-Africanism and the lasting diasporic connections between Africans and Black Americans.

The women editors communicated their ideas through a range of mediums and highlight how, as Brittany Cooper has suggested, intellectualism must be looked for in unexpected places. The ideas and political views the women developed were brought to bear on their editorship of *Freedomways* and this thesis has argued for how they crafted the magazine from an established set of intellectual and political approaches. Cooper Jackson shepherded the magazine and shaped its content in line with her Popular Front approach to questions of how the tenets of socialism should be applied to the freedom struggle, and the editors crafted Black Left feminism in the magazine in opposition to contemporary women's ideas about the source of women's oppression in their relationships with men.

Analysis of *Freedomways'* women editors reconciles theory and praxis in Black women's knowledge production: the women believed their lived experiences had an impact on their intellectual approaches and political viewpoints, even when these experiences affirmed rather than transformed ideas. Their Black feminist epistemology was applied to their editorship in which they gave space to grassroots activists' voices who, as demonstrated by Jimmy McDonald, Gloria Richardson and Septima Clark, could explain the intellectual underpinnings of their practical activism.

This study was motivated in part by the desire to challenge the "Great Men" paradigm of Black intellectual history that celebrates well-known, well-educated, Black men's political

writing. While women as thinkers are beginning to receive scholarly attention, biography remains the primary medium through which they are acknowledged for their contributions. Brittany Cooper has highlighted the limits of biography as a genre, contending that "rarely among male thinkers is the presence of a critical biography the precursor to engaging the male thinker as theorist. But frequently, Black women have to be established as 'somebody' before the theoretical import of their contributions enters the scholarly narrative in a significant way."[8] It is my hope that the linear progression of how history is researched and told, in which the histories of men, Black and white, in an area of study have to be researched before attention is given to women as part of an expansionist project, can be overcome. My thesis has demonstrated how Black women, thought about issues in the US Black freedom struggle, including education, war, peace, socialism, capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, labor, leadership, grassroots organizing, feminism and women's issues, and internationalism. These discussions were had in collaboration with men and driven by an understanding of gender as an equal component of Black liberation.

My thesis pushes against trends of examining women's contributions in isolation from their personal and professional relationships with male activists, especially when the women are married to, or work closely with men. I argued in Chapter One that women's work on behalf of their husbands can be considered part of their wider activism. Through defenses of their well-known husbands, Cooper Jackson and Graham Du Bois advanced their analyses of communist repression, internationalism, and socialism and worked as mutual comrades. Women at *Freedomways* also worked closely with men on the editorial board, including Jack O'Dell, John Henrik Clarke, and Ernest Kaiser. But by the standards of the time, the collective female voice was a distinctive editorial influence, and this was recognized by men on the board.

[8] Cooper, *Beyond Respectability : The Intellectual Thought of Race Women*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 28.

Cooper Jackson has recalled an instance when she was out of town and the printer called the magazine's office about an error: art editor John Devine, an Irish revolutionary who was the only white member of the editorial board, told the printer "Esther Jackson is the editor. I don't make editorial decisions […] You'll have to get an opinion from her, and call her out of town."[9] And John Henrik Clarke often deferred to Cooper Jackson for editorial decisions; he stated in 1975 that "there is really only one full-time functioning editors at FREEDOMWAYS and she is Esther Jackson."[10] For the men working alongside Cooper Jackson, Graham Du Bois, Bond, Burnham, Rogers, and Jones, the magazine was not a feminist intellectual project, but viewed through the lens of its women editors, particularly Cooper Jackson, this thesis has argued for how they crafted *Freedomways* to sustain and promote their politics through the magazine. They did this by celebrating figures of the Old Left, creating a platform for women's voices, stressing connections between women internationally, and nurturing young feminist talent and inter-generational relationships.

Through the celebration of previous Left activism and figures of the Black Left in the magazine's pages, the editors argued for the enduring relevance and applicability of their politics to the contemporary Black freedom struggle and suggested that young activists could learn from the previous generation. Cooper Jackson stressed that the origins of *Freedomways* "cover[ed] the period from the late 1930s to 1961."[11] The magazine celebrated Old Left activists including W.E.B. Du Bois, Lorraine Hansberry, Charles White, Eslanda Robeson, and Paul Robeson in print. In the Winter 1971 special issue for Paul Robeson, the editors argued for the "rich meaning" his previous activism held "for the present period,"— a drawing of

[9] Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson interview by Erik S. McDuffie, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers.
[10] John Henrik Clarke, letter to Ms. Latham and Ms. McRae, August 4, 1975, Box 30, Folder 37, John Henrik Clarke Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library, New York.
[11] Esther Cooper Jackson ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in their Own Country* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), xxii.

Robeson even featured on the magazine's final Summer 1985 issue.[12] At sponsored events that also celebrated writers and activists of the Old Left, Norma Rogers contributed to the endeavor of making the magazine a vehicle of communication that could not only connect the leftist activism of "old-timers" to young activists of the New Left, but also advance their socialist message beyond print.

The editors promoted the life and legacies of other women on the Left, featuring samples of their writing and assessments of their activist-intellectualism. In Chapter One I illustrated how the editors framed Eslanda Robeson as a writer, anthropologist, and world traveler and how memorialization from other Old Left women emphasized that "she was a complete and separate woman unto herself."[13] And in Chapter Four I showed how activist and contributing editor Augusta Strong was remembered as a "fine scholar, journalist and inspiring organizer."[14] The Fall 1979 special issue on Lorraine Hansberry, edited by Bond also sought to "encourage attention to, and study of, a woman whose understanding and vision have enduring relevance."[15] In this way, the editors recovered and promoted women whose Left feminist politics aligned with their own, who were often their friends, and whose activism was more often overlooked in the context of Cold War liberalism. Cooper Jackson has commented on this phenomenon, stating that she used to "get furious when I'd hear people say that Blacks were sleeping. And they just woke up," without acknowledgement that activists in the 1960s "made a tremendous contribution, but they did it on the backs or shoulders of the people who had gone before them."[16] Through *Freedomways* the editors wanted to make sure that their

[12] The Editors, "Paul Robeson: The Great Forerunner," *Freedomways* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 5.
[13] Alice Childress, "Remembrances of Eslanda," *Freedomways* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 329.
[14] The Editors, "In Memoriam: Augusta Strong," *Freedomways* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 149.
[15] Jean Carey Bond for the Editors, "Lorraine Hansberry: To Reclaim her Legacy," *Freedomways* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 183.
[16] Esther Cooper Jackson and James Jackson interview by Erik S. McDuffie, August 13, 1998, Brooklyn, New York, Box 1, Folder 25, ECJ Papers.

political activism and ideas were remembered and brought to bear on the contemporary moment.

This was also achieved through crafting the magazine as a platform for women's voices. The editors thought about the connections between women of color globally and these ideas were reflected in calls for sisterhood and solidarity in the magazine. Despite differences in political viewpoint, the women editors agreed that women's oppression must be addressed as part of the global freedom struggle. Through editorials, coverage of International Women's Year, artwork, poetry, short stories, and essays, women including Black American activists Elizabeth Murrell, Maude White Katz, Gloria Richardson, Alice Walker, and Charlotte Amévor, and international writers including Ceza Nabaroui, Bessie Head, Lindiwe Mabuza and Nancy Morejón addressed race, gender, class, imperialism, and education in the magazine. I argued that the editors not only celebrated women across the world who were making advancements towards ending oppression in their countries, but also carefully curated a particular kind of Black international feminism in the magazine's pages that privileged women's voices in line with their own socialist politics and that promoted socialism as the route to liberation of all oppressed people.

Women in the magazine often criticized liberal feminists of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s who located the source of women's oppression solely in patriarchy and their relationships with men. *Freedomways* gave leftist women a platform from which to argue instead for the capitalist roots of sexism and stressed class struggle as a prerequisite for women's liberation. Women including editor Jean Carey Bond, communist scholar Angela Davis, academic Maryemma Graham and other leftists were able to critically analyze emergent feminist literature, including Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975) and younger Black feminists such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, to promote Black Left feminist counter-ideas when opportunity to do so was limited.

While the editors sustained their Black Left feminist politics through their own writing and created a platform for their Old Left colleagues to continue their activism in the magazine—and while this included critique of some emerging feminist writers' liberal views of women's oppression—they also nurtured young women and fostered inter-generational feminist relationships that could influence younger writers and activists. Championing young writers was part of Cooper Jackson's activist ethos and she sought to craft *Freedomways* as a "bridge for them"—not only to connect their work to the older Black Left feminist generation, but also to introduce "their work to a wider audience."[17]

Writers including Barbara Smith, Nikki Giovanni, and Constance E. Berkley engaged with work of the Old Left and valued having the magazine as an avenue for publishing and a support system. Intergenerational feminist relationships were sometimes the result of sustained activist networks and friendships. Angela Davis' mother was a local leader in SNYC, and Davis formed friendships with Cooper Jackson's and Dorothy Burnham's children into adulthood. She described how she could not "undo the entanglement of the personal and the political," in her relationship with Cooper Jackson, revealing how different feminist generations reconciled the public and private through multigenerational relationships.[18] Alice Walker's relationship with Cooper Jackson illustrates how the editors supported developing feminist activists and writers by not only promoting their writing in the magazine but also assisting them with external projects. Walker dedicated her poem "Each One, Pull One," for the Spring 1980 issue to "Hansberry, Jackson & Bond," and the poem stressed the responsibility of young writers to remember, uphold, and continue the work of those who came before them. In this way, she exemplifies how inter-generational relationships led to a sustained engagement with the Black

[17] Esther Cooper Jackson, interview by Samantha Willis, November 22, 2016, Massachusetts, *Richmond Magazine, https://richmondmagazine.com/news/features/esther-cooper-jackson/.*
[18] Angela Davis, "James and Esther Jackson: Connecting the Past to the Present," *American Communist History*, vol. 7 no. 2 (2008): 274.

Left feminist politics of the editors by the younger generation as part of a Black women's intellectual history.

Freedomways ceased publication in the summer of 1985, and although the editors hoped the magazine would "re-emerge in a new, updated form," increasing production costs, problems of funding, and the exhaustion of its editors, made this an impossibility. But with the digitization of the *Freedomways* archive comes hope for its editors' desire that "in these 25 years of ink and paper have been wrought a rich legacy that will endure, a model that will instruct, and an example of commitment that will inspire the freedom fighters of tomorrow."[19] It is my hope that this thesis can serve as a springboard for further research into the magazine and the activist-intellectuals in its collective.

The final editorial for *Freedomways* Summer 1985 issue summarized how the editors wanted the magazine to be remembered and understood: "FREEDOMWAYS was an expression of the new awakening and vitality characterizing the peace and justice movements which emerged during that time. Its birth was the fruit of many discussions in which seminal ideas and long experience were wedded. What was needed was a magazine that endeavored to illuminate the highway of freedom."[20] Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, and Jean Carey Bond, alongside Dorothy Burnham, Norma Rogers, and Brenda L. Jones, worked on the editorial board to ensure women's ideas were heard on that highway. The Black Left feminist politics these women crafted from their lived experience was brought to bear on their editorship. Through editing and writing for *Freedomways,* they collaborated on a platform that should be recognized for how it has contributed to Black women's intellectual history. A Black Left feminism was always at the center of that project, and in print it sustained them and other women as thinkers and activists.

[19] Jack O'Dell for The Editors, "Tracing the Freedom Way," *Freedomways* 25, no.3 (Summer 1985): 134.
[20] O'Dell for The Editors, "Tracing the Freedom Way," 131.

Bibliography

Archives and Manuscript Collections

African Americans and the Left. American Left Ephemera Collection. University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Clarke, John Henrik. Papers. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division. The New York Public Library. New York, New York.

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Washington DC.

Du Bois, W. E. B. Papers. Special Collections and University Archives. University of Massachusetts. Amherst Libraries. Amherst, Massachusetts.

Du Bois, Shirley Graham. Papers. Schlesinger Library. Radcliffe Institute. Harvard University. Boston, Massachusetts.

Du Bois, Shirley Graham. Files. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Washington.

Horne. Gerald. Papers. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The New York Public Library. New York, New York.

Jackson, James and Esther Cooper. Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York.

Murphy Jr., George B. Papers. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Howard University. Washington DC.

Persinger, Mildred E. Papers. Wyndham Robertson Library. Hollins University. Roanoke, Virginia.

Southern Negro Youth Congress. Papers. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Howard University. Washington DC.

Strong, Edward. Papers. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Howard University. Washington DC.

Student nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Papers, 1959-1972. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. Atlanta, Georgia.

Women's International Democratic Federation. Women and Social Movements International 1840 to Present. Alexander Street. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/wasi.

Oral Histories and Interviews

Binh, Nguyen Thi. "Vietnam: A Television History; Interview with Nguyen Thi Binh." February 16, 1981. The Vietnam Collection. GBH Archives. https://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_0A9E5D4D3F0A495395A0272C2A15AFAC.

Bond, Jean Carey. Interview by Erik S. McDuffie. November 9, 2001, New York, interview shared with me by email by Erik S. McDuffie

Bond, Jean Carey. Interview by Women's Voices for Change. July 22, 2009. https://womensvoicesforchange.org/memories-of-max-bond-the-real-master-builder.htm,.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Laura Flanders. January 20, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_Hwtv7ZM54

Cooper Jackson, Esther. “Esther Cooper Jackson on Freedomways Magazine.” May 24, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_VTBuYo3-w.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by David Levering Lewis. Box 20, Folder 15-16, David Levering Lewis Papers. University of Massachusetts. Amherst, Massachusetts.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Della Scott. Abafazi 9, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 1998). Box 8, Folder 28. James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Dr Greene, July 13, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-6sK838Q44.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Ian Rocksborough-Smith. May 28, 2004. interview shared with me by email by Ian Rocksborough-Smith.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by John Munro. August 31, 2006. Box 27, Folder 5. James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Mary Helen Washington. March 30, 1998. Box 8 Folder 25. James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Robin D.G. Kelley, June 22, 1988. Robin Kelley Hammer and Hoe Oral History Collection, The Tamiment Library. New York University, New York.

Cooper Jackson, Esther. Interview by Samantha Willis. Richmond Magazine. November 22, 2016. https://richmondmagazine.com/news/features/esther-cooper-jackson/.

Jackson, James and Esther Cooper. Interview by Erik S. McDuffie. April 10, 1999. Brooklyn, New York. Box 1, Folder 25. James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York.

Jackson, James and Esther Cooper. Interview by Erik S. McDuffie. August 13, 1998. Brooklyn, New York. Box 1, Folder 25. James and Esther Cooper Jackson Papers. The Tamiment Library. New York University. New York, New York

Newspapers and Magazines

Cavalcade: March of Southern Youth

Chicago Bee

Chicago Defender (National Edition)

Freedom

Freedomways: A Quarterly Review of the Freedom Movement

Kansas City Plaindealer

People’s Voice

Political Affairs

The Crisis

Published Primary Sources

Anderson, Mary. "The Plight of Negro Domestic Labor." *The Journal of Negro Education* 5, no. 1 (January 1936): 66–72.

Cooper Jackson, Esther., ed., *Freedomways Reader: Prophets in their Own Country*. Colorado: Westview Press, 2000.

Cooper, Esther. "The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism." Master's thesis, Fisk University, 1940. https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/10/31/the-negro-woman-domestic-worker-in-relation-to-trade-unionism-1940/.

Davis, Angela. "James and Esther Jackson: Connecting the Past to the Present." *American Communist History* 7 no. 2 (2008): 274.

Du Bois, Shirley Graham. *Du Bois: A Pictorial Biography*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1978.

Du Bois, Shirley Graham. *His Day Is Marching On, A Memoir of W.E.B. Du Bois.* New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *In Battle for Peace: The Story of My 83rd Birthday,* by W.E.B. Du Bois. Masses & Mainstream: 1952.

Graham, Shirley. *Paul Robeson, Citizen of the World.* Connecticut: Negro University Press, 1946.

Ibrahim, Fatima Ahmed. "Sudanese Women's Union: Strategies for Emancipation and the Counter Movement." *Ufahamu: Journal of African Studies* 24, no. 2-3 (1996): 3-19.

Jones, Claudia. "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!" *Political Affairs* 28, no. 6 (June 1949): 51-67.

Lewis, Hylan. *Blackways of Kent*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955.

Malcolm X. "Message to the Grassroots." November 10, 1963. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0147.html.

Sojourners for Truth and Justice. "A Call to Negro Women." 1951, in *A Call to Negro Women; A (Little Known) Black Feminist Manifesto with an introduction by Mariame Kaba and an essay by Ashley Farmer*. 2019. https://issuu.com/projectnia/docs/2019.02.03_a_call_to_negro____women.

Strong, Anna Louise. *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American.* New York: Garden City Publishing, 1937.

The Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement." 1970.

Thompson, Louise. ''Toward a Brighter Future.'' *The Woman Today* (April 1936): 14 – 30.

Zetkin, Clara. "An Interview with Lenin on the Woman Question." In *My Memorandum Book*. Trans. Sally Ryan. International Publishers, 1920. https://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1925/lenin/zetkin2.htm.

Secondary Sources

Adi, Hakim. *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2013.

Adi, Hakim. *Pan-Africanism: A History*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

Adi, Hakim, and Marika Sherwood. *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora since 1787*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Adi, Hakim, and Marika Sherwood. *Manchester and the 1945 Pan-African Congress Revisited*. London: New Beacon Books, 1995.

Aikau, Hokulani K., Karla A. Erickson, and Jennifer L. Pierce, eds. *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Allman, Jean. "Nuclear Imperialism and the Pan-African Struggle for Peace and Freedom: Ghana, 1959–1962." *Souls* 10, no. 2 (2008): 83–102.

Anderson, Michael. "Lorraine Hansberry's Freedom Family." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 259–69.

Andrews, Gregg. *Thyra J. Edwards: Black Activist in the Global Freedom Struggle*. University of Missouri Press, 2011.

Aptheker, Bettina. "The Passion and Pageantry of Shirley Graham's Opera Tom-Tom." *Souls* 18, no. 2 (2016): 263–70.

Aptheker, Bettina. "Red Feminism: A Personal and Historical Reflection." *Science & Society* 66, no. 4 (2003): 519–26.

Archer-Straw, Petrine. *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2000.

Armstrong, Elizabeth. "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation." *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publication* 41, no. 2 (2016): 305–31.

Arnesen, Eric. "No 'Graver Danger': Black Anticommunism, the Communist Party, and the Race Question." *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 3, no. 4 (2006): 13-52.

Arthur Johnson, Abby, and Ronald Maeberry Johnson. *Propaganda & Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of African American Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1979.

Asante, S.K.B. *Pan-African Protest: West Africa and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934-1941*. London: Longman, 1977.

Atwater, Deborah F. "Editorial: The Voices of African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement." *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 5 (1996): 539–42.

Autio, Sari, and Miklósy Katalin, eds. *Reassessing Cold War Europe*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Azaransky, Sarah. *This Worldwide Struggle: Religion and the International Roots of the Civil Rights Movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Badger, Tony, and Brian Ward, eds. *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996.

Banks, William M. *Black Intellectuals: Race and Responsibility in American Life*. London: W.W Norton & Company, 1997.

Barnett, Bernice M. "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race and Class." *Gender & Society* 7, no. 2 (1993): 162–82.

Bay, Mia, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, eds. *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Beaulieu, Elizabeth Ann. *Writing African American Women: An Encyclopaedia of Literature by and About Women of Color*. London: Greenwood Press, 2006.

Beeching, Barbara. "Paul Robeson and the Black Press: The 1950 Passport Controversy." *The Journal of African American History* 87, no. 3 (2002): 339–54.

Beins, Agatha. *Liberation in Print: Feminist Periodical and Social Movement Identity*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017.

Berg, Allison. "Reconstructing Motherhood: Pauline Hopkins' Contending Forces." *Studies in American Fiction* 24, no. 2 (1996): 131–50.

Biney, Ama. *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Biondi, Martha. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Blain, Keisha N. "'[F]or the Rights of Dark People in Every Part of the World': Pearl Sherrod, Black Internationalist Feminism, and Afro-Asian Politics during the 1930s." *Souls* 17, no. 1–2 (2015): 90–112.

Blain, Keisha N. "Writing Black Women's Intellectual History." Black Perspectives, 2016. https://www.aaihs.org/writing-black-womens-intellectual-history/.

Blain, Keisha N. *Set the World on Fire Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

Blain, Keisha N. "'We Want to Set the World on Fire': Black Nationalist Women and Diasporic Politics in the New Negro World, 1940-1944." *Journal of Social History* 49, no. 1 (2015): 194–212.

Blain, Keisha N., Christopher Cameron, and Ashley D. Farmer, eds. *New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2018.

Blain, Keisha N., and Tiffany M. Gill, eds. *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism*. *To Turn the Whole World Over*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2019.

Blackwell, Joyce. No Peace without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915– 1975. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

Bogues, Anthony. *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Bookman, Ann, and Sandra Morgen. *Women Politics and Empowerment*. Temple University Press, 1987.

Boyce Davies, Carole. "Sisters Outside: Tracing the Caribbean/Black Radical Intellectual Tradition." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 13, no. 1 (2009): 217–29.

Boyce Davies, Carole. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Boyce Davies, Carole. "Living the Conjuncture Pan-Africanism, Transnational Black Feminism and the Limits of Culturalist Analyses in African Gender Discourses." *Feminist Africa 19*, no. 1892 (2014): 78-93.

Boydston, Jeanne. "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis." *Gender and History*, 2008.

Breines, Wini. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962 - 1968: The Great Refusal*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

Brewer, Rose M. "Theorizing Race, Class and Gender: The New Scholarship of Black Feminist Intellectuals and Black Women's Labor." *Race, Gender & Class* 6, no. 2 (1999): 29–47.

Brewer, Rose M. "Black Women and Feminist Sociology: The Emerging Perspective." *The American Sociologist* 20, no. 1 (1989): 57–70.

Brick, Howard, and Christopher Phelps. *Radicals in America: The US Left Since the Second World War*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.

Brown, Anthony L., Keffrelyn D. Brown, and Carl A. Grant, eds. *Black Intellectual Thought in Education: The Missing Traditions of Anna Julia Cooper, Carter G. Woodson and Alain LeRoy Locke*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Brown, Keisha. "Blackness in Exile: W.E.B. Du Bois' Role in the Formation of Representations of Blackness as Conceptualized by the Chinese Communist Party." *Phylon* 53, no. 2 (2015): 20–33.

Brown, Leslie Jacqueline Castledine and Anne Valk, ed. *U.S. Women's History: Untangling the Threads of Sisterhood*. 1st ed. London: Rutgers University Press, 2017.

Brubaker, Pamela K. "Sisterhood, Solidarity and Feminist Ethics." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9, no. 1–2 (1993): 53–66.

Buchanan, Lindal. *Rhetorics of Motherhood*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013.

Buirski, Nancy. *The Rape of Recy Taylor*. United States: Augusta Films, 2017.

Burden-Stelly, Charisse. "W.E.B. Du Bois in the Tradition of Radical Blackness: Radicalism, Repression, and Mutual Comradeship, 1930–1960." *Socialism and Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 181–206.

Burgin, Say. "Understanding Antiwar Activism as a Gendering Activity: A Look at the U.S.'s Anti-Vietnam War Movement." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13, no. 6 (2012): 18–31.

Burke, Joanne. *Paris Noir – African Americans in the City of Light*. New York: Blue Lion Films, 2016.

Burke, Roland. "The Compelling Dialogue of Freedom": Human Rights at the Bandung Conference." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2006): 947–65.

Buschendorf, Christina. "Freedomways: Transnationalism in the Work of Shirley Graham Du Bois." In *Obama and Transnational American Studies*, edited by Alfred Hornung, 494–516. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2016.

Cammaerts, Bart, and Nico Carpentier. "Hegemony, Democracy, Agonism and Journalism." *Journalism Studies* 7, no. 6 (2007): 964–75.

Cappelli, Mary. "Decolonizing Female Consciousness in Bessie Head's A Question of Power." *Journal of the African Literature Association* 11, no. 2 (2017): 159–68.

Carby, Hazel. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Carreon, Michelle E, and Valentine M Moghadam. "Resistance Is Fertile: Revisiting Maternalist Frames across Cases of Women's Mobilization." *Women's Studies International Forum* 51 (2015): 1-12.

Carter, Dan. *Scottsboro, A Tragedy of the American South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969.

Chafe, William H. *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Clark Hine, Darlene, ed. *Black Women's History: Theory and Practice*. New York: Carlson Publishing Inc, 1990.

Cohen, Robert. *When the Old Left Was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Collier-Thomas, Bettye, and V.P. Franklin, eds. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Cooper, Brittney C. *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017.

Crawford, Vicki L., Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods, eds. *Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941 - 1965*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139–67.

Cruse, Harold. *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1967.

D'Emilio, John. *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Danky, James P., and Wayne A. Wiegand, eds. *Print Culture in a Diverse America*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Davidson, Basil. *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York: Westview Press, 1989.

Davis, Angela. *Women, Race & Class*. Women's Pr. New York: The Women's Press, 2001.

Davis, Angela. "James and Esther Jackson: Connecting the Past to the Present." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 271–76.

Haan, Francisca de. "The Women's International Democratic Federation: History, Main Agenda and Contributions, 1945-1991." In *Women and Social Movements International (WASI) Online Archive*, edited by Thomas Dublin and Sklar Kathryn Kish, 1–34, 2012.

Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Verso, 1997.

Derfler, Leslie. *The Fall and Rise of Political Leaders: Olof Palme, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Indira Gandhi*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Dill, Bonnie Thornton. "Race, Class, and Gender: Prospects for an All-Inclusive Sisterhood A." *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 1 (1983): 131–50.

Djagalov, Rossen. “The Afro-Asian Writers Association and Soviet Engagement with Africa.” Black Perspectives, 2017. https://www.aaihs.org/the-afro-asian-writers-association-and-soviet-engagement-with-africa/.

Dolinar, Brian. The Black Cultural Front: Black Writers and Artists of the Depression Generation. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.

Draper, Theodore. *American Communism and Soviet Russia*. New York: The Viking Press, 1960.

Duberman, Martin. *Paul Robeson: A Biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Edwards, Brent Hayes. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Edwards, Erica R. *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Eschen, Penny Von. *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, n.d.

Esedebe, P. Olisanwuche. *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991*. Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1994.

Evans, Sara M. *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Evans, Sara M. *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in American*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Farmer, Ashley D. “In Search of the Black Women’s History Archive.” *Modern American History* 1, no. 2 (2018): 289–93.

Farmer, Ashley D. *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Felber, Garrett. “Harlem Is the Black World: The Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Grassroots.” *The Journal of African American History* 100, no. 2 (2015): 199–225.

Fish, Cheryl. “Voices of Restless (Dis)Continuity: The Significance of Travel for Free Black Women in the Antebellum Americas.” *Women’s Studies* 26, no. 5 (1997): 475–95.

Fitzgerald, Tracey A. *The National Council of Negro Women and the Feminist Movement, 1935-1975*. Georgetown University Press, 1985.

Foster, William Z. *History of the Communist Party of the United States*. New York: International Publishers, 1952.

Franklin, V.P. *Living Our Stories, Telling Our Truths: Autobiography and the Making of the African- American Intellectual Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Frazier, Jessica M. *Women's Antiwar Diplomacy During the Vietnam War Era*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Frazier, Jessica M. "Collaborative Efforts to End the War in Vietnam: The Interactions of Women Strike for Peace, The Vietnamese Women's Union and the Women's Union of Liberation, 1965-1968." *Peace & Change* 37, no. 3 (2012): 339–65.

Frazier, Robeson Taj. *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Friedman, A. "The Strange Career of Annie Lee Moss: Rethinking Race, Gender, and McCarthyism." *Journal of American History* 94, no. 2 (2010): 445–68.

Fryner, Paul. "Affirmative Action in American Labor Unions: Necessary but Problematic for the Cause of Civil Rights." *Revue Française d'études d'Amérique* 111, no. 1 (2007): 73–87.

Frystak, Shannon Lee. *Our Minds on Freedom: Women and the Struggle for Black Equality in Louisiana, 1924 - 1967*. Louisiana State University Press, 2009.

Fuentes, Marisa. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Gabriel, Deborah. "Racial Categorisation and Terminology." Black British Academics. Accessed October 1, 2021. https://blackbritishacademics.co.uk/about/racial-categorisation-and-terminology/.

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

Gaines, Kevin. "African-American and the Expatriates in Ghana Black Radical Tradition." *Souls* 1, no. 4 (1999): 64–71.

Gallicchio, Marc S. *The African American Encounter with Japan and China; Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

Gao, Yunxiang. "W.E.B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois in Maoist China." *Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 1 (2013): 59–85.

Gardner, John L. "African Americans in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s: The Development of Transcontinental Protest." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 3 (1999).

Geiss, Imanuel. *The Pan-African Movement*. London: Methuen, 1974.

Gellman, Erik S. Death Blow to Jim Crow: The National Negro Congress and the Rise of Militant Civil Rights. repr. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

George, Edward. *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991: From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale*. London: Frank Cass, 2005.

Gibson Robinson, Jo Ann. *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*. Edited by David J. Garrow. The University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1984.

Gilmore, Glenda. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2008.

Gilmore, Stephanie, ed. *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Gilyard, Keith. *Louise Thompson Patterson: A Life of Struggle for Justice*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Glasrud, Bruce A., and Merline Pitre, eds. *Southern Black Women in the Modern Civil Rights Movement*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey, eds. *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, Agency*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Gore, Dayo F. "'The Danger of Being an Active Anti-Communist': Expansive Black Left Politics and the Long Civil Rights Movement." *American Communist History* 11, no. 1 (2012): 45–48.

Gore, Dayo F. *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War*. New York: New York University Press, 2011.

Gore, Dayo F., Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Want to Start a Revolution? Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Gradskova, Yulia. "Women's International Democratic Federation, The 'Third World' and the Global Cold War from the Late-1950s to the Mid-1960s." *Women's History Review* 29, no. 2 (2020): 270–88.

Gradskova, Yulia. *The Women's International Democratic Federation, the Global South and the Cold War: Defending the Rights of Women of the 'Whole World'?* London: Routledge, 2021.

Grant, Nicholas. *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans and Apartheid, 1945-1960*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Gray White, Deborah. *Too Heavy A Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994*. W.W. Norton, 1999.

Greene, Christina. *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Grey, Mary. "Claiming Power-In-Relation: Exploring the Ethics of Connection." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no. 1 (1991): 7–18.

Griffin, Farah Jasmine. "Conflict and Chorus: Reconsidering Toni Cade's The Black Woman: An Anthology." In *Is It Nation Time? Essays on Black Power and Black Nationalism*, edited by Eddie S. Glaude, 113–29. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Gross, Kali Nicole. *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Gruesser, John C. "Afro-American Travel Literature and Africanist Discourse." *Black American Literature Forum* 24, no. 1 (1990): 5–20.

Guimaraes, Fernando Andresen. *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Gyant, LaVerne. "Passing the Torch: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement." *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 5 (2017): 629–47.

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–64.

Hall, Simon. *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements in the 1960s*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Harris, Trudier. *From Mammies to Militants*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.

Hartman, Saidiya. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2019.

Haviland, Sara Rzeszutek. *James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015.

Haviland, Sara Rzeszutek. "'All Those Rosy Dreams We Cherish': James Jackson and Esther Cooper's Marriage on the Front Lines of the Double Victory Campaign." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 211–25.

Haynes, John Earl. "The Cold War Debate Continues: A Traditionalist View of Historical Writing on Domestic Communism and Anti-Communism." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000): 76–115.

Haynes, John Earl, and Harvey Klehr. "Revising Revisionism: A New Look at American Communism." *Academic Questions* 22, no. 4 (2009): 452–462.

Haynes, John Earl, and Harvey Klehr. “The Historiography of American Communism: An Unsettled Field.” *Labor History Review* 68, no. 1 (2003): 61–78.

Hewitt, Nancy A. *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Higashida, Cheryl. *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left,1945-1995*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. London: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Hill, Rebecca. “Fosterites and Feminists, or 1950s Ultra-Leftists and the Invention of AmeriKKKa.” *New Left Review*, no. 228 (1998): 67–90.

Hine, Darlene Clarke, Tricia Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, eds. *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Holland, Patrick, and Graham Huggan. *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998.

hooks, bell. “Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women.” *Feminist Review* 23, no. 1 (1986): 125–38.

hooks, bell. *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. 2nd ed. London: Pluto Press, 1982.

Hoover, Alice. “Pan-Africanism: A Selective Bibliography.” *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 4, no. 1 (1971): 10–24.

Horne, Gerald. *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.

Horne, Gerald. Communist Front?: The Civil Rights Congress, 1946– 1956 . Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988.

Horne, Gerald. *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Houck, Davis W, Dixon, and David E. *Women and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965*. Edited by Houck, Davis W, Dixon, and David E. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009.

Howard, Walter T. “Forgotten Radicals: Black Left Feminists and American Communism.” *American Communist History* 11, no. 3 (2012): 299-303.

Howe, Stephen. *Afrocentrism: Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes*. London: Verso, 1998.

Hribar, Charon. “Radical Women in the Struggle: A Review of Recent Literature on the Civil Rights and Black Freedom Movements.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (2013): 95–115.

Hughes, C. Alvin. “We Demand Our Rights: The Southern Negro Youth Congress, 1937-1949.” *Phylon* 48, no. 1 (1987): 38–50.

Hutchinson, Earl Ofari. *Blacks and Reds: Race and Class in Conflict 1919-1990*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995.

Intondi, Vincent J. *African Americans Against the Bomb: Nuclear Weapons, Colonialism, and the Black Freedom Movement*. Stanford: Standford University Press, 2015.

Isaac, Larry. “Movement of Movements: Culture Moves in the Long Civil Rights Struggle.” *Social Forces* 87, no. 1 (2008): 33–63.

Isserman, Maurice. “Three Generations: Historians View American Communism.” *Labor History* 26, no. 4 (1985): 517–545.

Jackson, Maurice. “James and Esther Jackson: A Personal Perspective.” *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 239–42.

Jain, Devaki, and Shubha Chacko. “Walking Together: The Journey of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Women’s Movement.” *Development in Practice* 19, no. 7 (2009): 895–905.

James, Joy. *Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics*. New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1999.

Janken, Kenneth R. “African American and Francophone Black Intellectuals During the Harlem Renaissance.” *The Historian* 60, no. 3 (1998): 487–505.

Jewell, Sue K. *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond: Cultural Images and the Sharping of U.S. Social Policy*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Johnson, Jacqueline. *Stokely Carmichael: The Story of Black Power*. Englewood Cliffs: Silver Burdett Press, 1990.

Johnson, Timothy. “‘Death for Negro Lynching!’ The Communist Party, USA’s Position on the African American Question.” *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 243-254.

Johnston, Timothy. “Peace or Pacifism? The Soviet Struggle for Peace in All the World, 1948-54.” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2 (2008): 259–82.

Jones Royster, Jacqueline. *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1994.

Jones, Trevin. “The Ideological and Spiritual Transformation of Malcolm X.” *Journal of African American Studies* 24 (2020): 417–33.

Keita Cha-Jua, Sundiata, and Clarence Lang. “The ‘Long Movement’ as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom.” *Source: The Journal of African American History*. Vol. 92, 2007.

Kelley, Robin D. G. “‘But a Local Phase of a World Problem’: Black History’s Global Vision, 1883-1950.” *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1045–77.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Kelley, Robin D.G. “The Jacksons.” *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 175–80.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Kelley, Robin D.G., and Betsy Esch. “Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution.” *Souls: Critical Journal of Black Politics and Culture* 1, no. 4 (1999): 6–41.

Kelley, Robsin D. G., and Sidney J. Lemelle. *Imagining Home: Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora*. London: Verso, 1994.

Keyssar, Helene, and Tracy B. Strong. *Right in Her Soul: The Life of Anna Louise Strong*. New York: Random House, 1983.

Kilson, Martin. *Transformation of the African American Intelligentsia, 1880– 2012*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Kirby, James. “‘What Has Ghana Got That We Haven’t?’ Party Politics and Anti-Colonialism in Botswana, 1960–66.” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, no. 6 (2018): 1049–74.

Kluchin, Rebecca. *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2009.

Korstad, Robert. “Civil Rights Unionism and the Black Freedom Struggle.” *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 255–58.

Lamphere, Lawrence. “Paul Robeson, ‘Freedom’ Newspaper, and the Black Press.” Boston College, 2003.

Laughlin, Kathleen A., Julie Gallagher, Dorothy Sue Cobble, Eileen Boris, Premilla Nadasen, Stephanie Gilmore, and Leandra Zarnow. “Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor.” *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 1 (2010): 76–135.

Laville, Helen. *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women’s Organizations*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Leab, Daniel J, Michael Nash, and David Levering Lewis. “Remembering the Jacksons.” *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 183–174.

Leab, Daniel J., David Levering Lewis, and Michael Nash, eds. *Red Activists and Black Freedom: James and Esther Jackson and the Long Civil Rights Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Leab, Daniel J., and Michael Nash. "Freedomways." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 227–37.

LeFlouria, Talitha. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Legum, Colin. *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962.

Levering Lewis, David. *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race*. New York: Henry Holt, 1993.

Levering Lewis, David. "James and Esther Cooper Jackson: A Historical Assessment." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 181–90.

Levy, La Tasha. "Beyond the 'Great Men' Canon of Black Intellectual History." Black Perspectives, 2019. https://www.aaihs.org/beyond-the-great-men-canon-of-black-intellectual-history/.

Lieberman, Robbie. "Does That Make Peace a Bad Word?": American Responses to the Communist Peace Offensive, 1949-1950." *Peace & Change* 17, no. 2 (1992): 198–228.

Lieberman, Robbie. "'Measure Them Right': Lorraine Hansberry and the Struggle for Peace." *Science & Society* 75, no. 2 (2018): 206–35.

Lieberman, Robert, and Clarence Lang, eds. *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: Another Side of the Story*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Ling, Peter, and Sharon Monteith, eds. *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999.

Lockard, Joe. "W.E.B. Du Bois in China – 1959." *Journal of American Studies Eurasian Perspective* 1, no. 2 (2016): 99–109.

Lorenzo, Thomas. "The Need to Speak: Tom Dent and the Shaping of the Black Aesthetic." *African American Review* 40, no. 2 (2006): 325–38.

Lucks, Daniel S. *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014.

Luna, Zakiya. *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: Women of Color and the Fight for Reproductive Justice*. New York: New York University Press, 2020.

Lynn, Denise. "Socialist Feminism and Triple Oppression: Claudia Jones and African American Women in American Communism." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 8, no. 21 (2014): 1–20.

Mahler, Anne Garland. *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism and Transnational Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

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

Malik, Yogendra K. "Indira Gandhi: Personality, Political Power and Party Politics." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 22, no. 3–4 (1987): 141–55.

May, Vivian M. *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

McDuffie, Erik S. "'I Wanted a Communist Philosophy, but I Wanted Us to Have a Chance to Organize Our People': The Diasporic Radicalism of Queen Mother Audley Moore and the Origins of Black Power." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 3, no. 2 (2010): 181–95.

McDuffie, Erik S. "Esther V. Cooper's 'The Negro Woman Domestic Worker in Relation to Trade Unionism': Black Left Feminism and the Popular Front." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 203–9.

McDuffie, Erik S. "'For Full Freedom Of…colored Women in Africa, Asian, and in These United States…' Black Women Radicals and the Practice of a Black Women's International." *Palimpsest: A Journal of Women, Gender and the Black International* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–30.

McDuffie, Erik S. *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism and the Making of Black Left Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

McFadden, Alesia Elaine. "The Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois: A Twentieth Century African American Torchbearer." University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2009.

McGuire, Danielle L. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. New York: Random House, 2010.

McMurry, Linda O. *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

McNair Barnett, Bernice. "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class." *Gender and Society* 7, no. 2 (2012): 162–82.

Meier, August. *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988.

Mezey, Naomi, and Cornelia T L Pillard. "Against the New Maternalism." *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law J. Gender & L* 18, no. 229 (2012): 229-296.

Mimni, Ephraim. *Marxism and Nationalism: Theoretical Origins of a Political Crisis*. London: Pluto Press, 1991.

Monteith, Sharon, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American South*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Monteith, Sharon. *Advancing Sisterhood? Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000.

Monteith, Sharon. *SNCC's Stories: The African American Freedom Movement in the Civil Rights South*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020.

Moore, John Hammond. "The Angelo Herndon Case, 1932-1937." *Phylon* 32, no. 1 (1971): 60–71.

Mudimbe-Boyi, Elisabeth. *Empire Lost: France and Its Other Worlds*. New York: Lexington Press, 2009.

Mullen, Bill V. *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-46*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Mullen, Bill V., and James E. Smethurst, eds. *Left of the Color Line: Race and Radicalism and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Munro, John. *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Naison, Mark. *Communists in Harlem During the Depression*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Nelson, Jennifer. *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Ninkovich, Frank A. *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Noble, Jeanne. *Beautiful Also Are the Souls of Our Black Sisters*. London: Prentice Phall, 1978.

Novack, George. "Malcolm X, Black Nationalism and Socialism." *International Socialist Review* 28, no. 4 (1967): 43–51.

O'Connor, Karen, ed. *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook*. Sage Publi. London, 2010.

O'Kelly, Charlotte G. "Black Newspapers and the Black Protest Movement: Their Historical Relationship, 1827-1945." *Phylon* 43, no. 1 (1982): 1–14.

O'Sullivan, Meg Devlin. "Informing Red Power and Transforming the Second Wave: Native American Women and the Struggle Against Coerced Sterilization in the 1970s." *Women's History Review* 25, no. 6 (2016): 965–82.

Olcott, Jocelyn. *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Ottanelli, Fraser M. *The Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II*. London: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Palmer, Bryan D. "Rethinking the Historiography of United States Communism." *American Communist History* 2, no. 2 (2003): 139–173.

Passy, Florence. "Social Networks Matter. But How?" In *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, edited by Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, 21–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Person-Lynn, Kwaku. "On My Journey Now: The Narrative and Works of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, The Knowledge Revolutionary." *The Journal of Pan-African Studies* 6, no. 7 (2014): 59–166.

Pieper Mooney, Jadwiga E., and Fabio Lanza, eds. *De-Centering Cold War History*. London: Routledge, 2012.

Podair, Jerald E. *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Polack, Peter. *The Last Hot Battle of the Cold War: South Africa vs. Cuba in the Angolan Civil War*. Oxford: Casemate, 2013.

Purnell, Brian, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard, eds. *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle Outside of the South*. New York: New York University Press, 2019.

Radosh, Ronald. *Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, New Left and the Leftover Left*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001.

Ramdani, Fatma. "Afro-American Women Activists as True Negotiators in the International Arena (1893-1945)." *European Journal of American Studies* 10, no. 1 (2015): 1-21.

Ramsby, Howard. *The Black Arts Enterprise and the Production of African American Poetry*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Ransby, Barbara. "Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision." Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Ratcliff, Anthony James. "Liberation at the End of a Pen: Writing Pan-African Politics of Cultural Struggle." University of Massachusetts, 2009.

Record, Wilson. *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Record, Wilson. *The Negro and the Communist Party*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951.

Reed, T.V. *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Reese, Ellen. "Maternalism and Political Mobilization: How California's Postwar Child Care Campaign Was Won." *Gender and Society* 10, no. 5 (1996): 566–89.

Richards, Johnetta. "Fundamentally Determined: James E Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson and the Southern Negro Youth Congress, 1937-1946." *American Communist History* 7, no. 2 (2008): 191–202.

Robinson, Cedric. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Robnett, Belinda. "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership and Micromobilization." *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6 (1996): 1661–93.

Robnett, Belinda. "Formal Titles and Bridge Leaders: Reply to Keys." *American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 6 (1997): 1698–1701.

Robnett, Belinda. *How Long How Long African American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Rocksborough-Smith, Ian. "Bearing the Seeds of Struggle: Freedomways Magazine, Black Leftists and Continuities in the Freedom Movement." Simon Fraser University, 2005.

Rocksborough-Smith, Ian. "'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 (2007): 7–42.

Rogers, Alan. "Passports and Politics: The Courts and the Cold War." *The Historian* 4, no. 1985 (47AD): 497–511.

Rooney, David. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1988.

Rose-Green William, C. "Rewritings the History of the Afro-Cuban Woman: Nancy Morejón's 'Black Woman.'" *Caribbean Quarterly* 24, no. 1–2 (1988): 10–18.

Rosenberg, Jonathan. *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.

Ross, Loretta. "The Origin of the Phrase 'Women of Color,'" 2011.

Roth, Benita. *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Rupp, Leila J. Worlds of Women: - The Making of an International Women's - Movement. Prince- ton, NJ: Prince- ton University Press, 1997.

Ruth McDonald Boyer, by, Barbara Katz Rothman, and Wendy Simonds. "Review: Maternal Bonds: Recent Literature on Mothering Reviewed Work(s): Apache Mothers and Daughters: Four Generations of a Family Rosenzweig; Centuries of Solace: Expressions of Maternal Grief in Popular Literature By" 20, no. 2 (1995): 414–27.

Sartain, Lee. *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915-1945*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007.

Schechter, Patricia A. *Ida B Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Schmalenberger, Sarah. "Debuting Her Political Voice: The Lost Opera of Shirley Graham." *Black Music Research Journal* 26, no. 1 (2006): 39–87.

Schmidt, Christopher W. "Legal History and the Problem of the Long Civil Rights Movement." *Law and Social Inquiry* 41, no. 4 (2016): 1081–1107.

Schoen, Johanna. *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Scholz, Sally J. *Political Solidarity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Scott, Anne Firor. "Most Invisible of All: Black Women's Voluntary Associations," n.d.

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review*, 1986.

Seth, Sanjay. *Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: The Case of Colonial India*. London: Sage Publication Ltd., 1995.

Sharpley-Whiting, Tracy. *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars*. New York: SUNY Press, 2015.

Shepperson, George. "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes." *Phylon* 23, no. 4 (1962): 346–58.

Singh, Nikhil Pal. *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement Writings of Jack O'Dell*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2010.

Singh, Nikhil Pal. *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Sinitiere, Phillip Luke. "'There Must Be No Idle Mourning': W.E.B. Du Bois's Legacy as a Black Radical Intellectual." *Socialism and Democracy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 207–30.

Sinitiere, Phillip Luke. "Black Radicalism and Shirley Graham Du Bois's Curatorial Imagination," 2019. https://www.aaihs.org/black-radicalism-and-shirley-graham-du-boiss-curatorial-imagination/.

Smethurst, James E. *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930-1946*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Smethurst, James E. *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Smith Foster, Frances. "A Narrative of the Interesting Originas and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture." *American Literary History* 17, no. 4 (2005): 714–40.

Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Boston: South End Press, 2005.

Smith, Sharon. "Black Feminism and Intersectionality." *International Socialist Review* 91 (2013). https://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality/index.html.

Springer, Kimberly. *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Stabile, Carol A. "'Red Networks: Women Writers and the Broadcast Blacklist': Morris Fromkin Memorial Lecture." Oregon, 2008.

Stavney, Anne. "'Mothers of Tomorrow': The New Negro Renaissance and the Politics of Maternal Representation." *African American Review* 32, no. 4 (1998): 533–61.

Steadman, Jennifer Bernhardt. *Traveling Economies: American Women's Travel Writing*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2007.

Stovall, T., ed. *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

Swindall, Lindsay R. *The Path to the Greater, Freer, Truer World: Southern Civil Rights and Anticolonialism, 1937-1955*. Tampa: University Press Florida, 2014.

Taylor, Clarence. *Civil Rights in New York: From World War II to the Giuliani Era*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta, ed. *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017.

Taylor, Ula. "Women in the Documents: Thoughts on Uncovering the Personal, Political, and Professional." *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (2008): 187–96.

Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2015.

Thomas, Tony. "Black Nationalism and Confused Marxists." *Black Scholar* 4, no. 1 (1972): 47–52.

Thorpe, Earl E. *The Mind of the Negro: An Intellectual History of Afro-Americans*. Baton Rouge: Ortlieb Press, 1961.

Tinson, Christopher M. *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Tinson, Christopher M. "'The Voice of the Black Protest Movement': Notes on the Liberator Magazine and Black Radicalism in the Early 1960s." *The Black Scholar* 37, no. 4 (2008): 3–15.

Turner, Patricia A. *Ceramic Uncles and Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Tzu-Chun Wu, Judy. *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism and Feminism During the Vietnam Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Umoren, Imaobong. *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.

Vaggalis, Kathryn. "Women, Gender Politics, and Pan-Africanism: An Interview with Keisha N. Blain." Black Perspectives, 2016. https://www.aaihs.org/women-gender-politics-and-pan-africanism-an-interview-with-keisha-n-blain/?utm_content=buffer025b9&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer .

Wade-Gayles, Gloria. "Black Women Journalists in the South, 1880-1905: An Approach to the Study of Black Women's History." *Callaloo* 11, no. 13 (1981): 138–52.

Walker, J. Samuel. "No More Cold War: American Foreign Policy and the 1948 Soviet Peace Offensive." *Diplomatic History* 5, no. 1 (1981): 75–91.

Washington, Mary Helen. *The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Washington, Mary Helen. "Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, and Claudia Jones: Black Women Writer the Popular Front." In *Left of the Colour Line: Race, Radicalism and Twentieth Century Literature of the United States*, edited by Bill V. Mullen and James E. Smethhurst, 183–204. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Waters, Krisin, and Carol B. Conaway, eds. *Black Women's Intellectual Traditions: Speaking Their Minds*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2007.

Weigand, Kate. *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Weiner, Lynn Y. “Maternalism as a Paradigm.” *Journal of Women’s History* 5, no. 2 (1993): 96–98.

Welch, Rebeccah. “Gender and Power in the Black Diaspora.” *Souls* 5, no. 3 (2003): 71–82.

West, Michael O., William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins. *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

White, Deborah Gray. “Mining the Forgotten: Manuscript Sources for Black Women’s History.” *Journal of American History* 74, no. 1 (1987): 237–42.

Wilkinson, Tom. “Student Politics in British India and Beyond: The Rise and Fragmentation of the All India Student Federation (AISF), 1936 – 1950.” *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 22 (2019): 1–22.

Williams, Bianca. *The Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams, and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Yoon, Duncan M. “‘Our Forces Have Redoubled’: World Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Afro-Asian Writers’ Bureau.” *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 2, no. 233–252 (2015).

Young, Kurt B. “Towards a Holistic Review of Pan-Africanism: Linking the Idea and the Movement.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 16, no. 2 (2010): 141–63.

Zinn, Howard. *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: South End Press, 2002.