# Anti-Imperialist Modernism

## Race and Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War

**Benjamin Balthaser**

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Benjamin Balthaser

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# Introduction • Anti-Imperialist Modernism

## Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War

On a single Harlem night in 1936, down one side of Lennox Avenue marched protestors against the Italian invasion of the last free African state, while across the street, the Federal Theater Project's production of Orson Welles's "voodoo" *Macbeth*, staged as "allegory of an African-American uprising," celebrated its opening.[1] The two acts, a massive mobilization in the United States to protest the European invasion of Ethiopia—including strikes on the West Coast by longshoremen against the loading of Italian vessels—and a modernist rendition of *Macbeth* that also happened to be the first all-black Shakespeare cast in the United States, articulate the decade as a far more complicated set of transnational relationships and practices than the usual domestic focus on labor unions and the New Deal give us. Unintentionally underscoring this fact, the *New York Times* review of *Macbeth*'s opening notes, somewhat smugly, that the play had more attendees than did the protest, suggesting that an anti-imperialist and antifascist protest courted the same audience as a high-modernist performance of Shakespeare. While the reviewer's dismissiveness of protest politics can be ignored as middle-brow posturing, his comment reveals something significant about the relationship of art and social movements in the 1930s: that an anti-imperialist protest not only shares a proximity with Orson Welles's first major directorial debut, these events were seen by a professional critic as coconstitutive and part of the same social world.

Placing an anti-imperialist protest and a modernist rendition of *Macbeth* in the same frame offers a snapshot of an era that places the fusion of modern art, anti-imperialism, and a new representational politics of race at the center of a decade that is often misunderstood as one focused solely on labor rights, poverty, and folk nationalism. The wave of protest against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia as well as countless others against imperialism in the 1930s recorded in radical newspapers, pamphlets, fliers, and other movement ephemera—including massive student strikes in California and New York "against war and fascism," the "Hands off Cuba" and "Hands off Haiti" campaigns, and new organizations for indigenous sovereignty such as the formation of the National Congress of American Indians—suggest that "red decade" of the Great Depression witnessed an upsurge of transnational solidarity based on a radical critique of the United States as an imperial power. While there were and have been anti-imperialist movements prior to and after the 1930s, these interwar years were characterized by a singular internationalist sensibility that cut across racial lines and class lines, and could not be located in a singular subjectivity: multiethnic, multitendency, it existed within networks that included liberal antifascists, socialists, and black nationalists, often linking questions of racial oppression in the United States to colonialism abroad. And perhaps equally surprising for a reader of 20th-century culture, such movements were shaped by and responded to a global language of modernism, an artistic sensibility that brought the spatially dizzying and fragmented experience of imperialism back to the United States, blending avant-garde style with a radical reading of modernity. Coconstitutive with a grassroots movement, there was a vibrant, if not violent, sense of style that located global capitalism as the shock, dislocation, and utopian promise of a socialist modernity. Another way to frame the 1930s might be to ask: when else can we point to a moment in which the liberation of an African nation took center stage in U.S. politics *and* avant-garde culture?

I underscore the anti-imperialism of the era against what I understand to be the most common narrative frame for the Depression, namely that the two decades from the late 1920s to the dawn of the Cold War are often told in a language of national belonging, or as Richard Slotkin puts it, the "rediscovery of America" by left-leaning artists.[2] Traditionally, the Great Depression becomes thus a story of crisis and return, a sudden split or antinomy in the national subject healed by the progressive New Deal state. Works seen as central to the cultural logic of 1930s and 1940s, from Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" to Louis Adamic's *Native Ground*, from Kenneth Burke's evocation of "the people" over the "proletariat" to John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, support this vision, celebrating an inclusive vision of expanding democracy contained within an organic notion of U.S. citizenship. The reach of this cultural work is illustrated by the song "Ballad for Americans," originally sung by Paul Robeson in Communist Party circles but picked up in 1940 by the Republican Party and used in its national convention. The ease with which such works became incorporated within dominant visions of American exceptionalism has often been seen as a major shortcoming of the movement, creating, in George Lipsitz's words, "an impediment to genuinely global and postnational politics."[3] Whether one points to the Farm Security Administration photographs that evoke the myth of the yeoman farmer, the inclusive patriarchy of Frank Capra films, the working-class populism inscribed in wartime propaganda, even the Communist Party's use of the United States. National Anthem to replace the "Internationale" at national congresses, the high point of left politics in the United States has often been interpreted as a by-product of, if not a result of, its embrace of nationalism. Now, nearly a century later, as we are ending over a decade of two imperial wars that witnessed significant support from segments of the Left, understanding and critiquing this formation remains a compelling intervention.[4]

In recent decades, there has been a great deal of revisionist history of the Popular Front era that complicates this nationalist narrative.[5] Perhaps more than any other single work, Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front* opened us to new ways to think about the relationships among social movements, the state, and radical culture. Arguing against a narrow focus on political parties, unions, and governmental policy, as well as the periodization of history that dates the Popular Front as the three years from 1936 to 1939 when the Communist Party and liberal antifascists formed a common alliance, Denning identifies the Popular Front era as a long social movement beginning in the late 1920s and lasting until the late 1940s. Rather than argue for a totalized portrait of the Depression, *The Cultural Front* proposes a more diffuse understanding of historical moments, formulating the Popular Front as a "bloc" within the Depression, a moment in which an "alternative hegemony" articulated itself through social movements, proletarian cultural production, and aspects of state and mass culture.

As groundbreaking as Denning's work is to opening up fields of meanings with which to read the 1930s and 1940s, *The Cultural Front* often remains within the bounds of what Gramsci terms "the national-popular," the attempt to forge a democratic culture within the bounds of a populist, national frame.[6] And while no reading of the anti-imperialist culture of the Great Depression years would be possible without Denning and other revisionist cultural historians, to the extent that these works remain within a national frame, they implicitly reinforce the "national-popular" reading of the Depression years. While African diaspora studies have opened new spaces in which to think of the trans-American and even global revolutionary networks of black scholars, artists, and activists, I would like to think of ways in which transnational and international political networks including communists, socialists, avant-garde artists, labor activists, and third-world revolutionaries were coconstitutive. As this book will show, a Nez Perce scholar and activist traveling to the Soviet Union, a Jewish playwright and an Anglo-American novelist sailing to Cuba to protest U.S. imperialism, and a growing awareness of the way Manifest Destiny constructed U.S. capitalism were central to the social movements as well as the artistic production of the 1930s and 1940s. In conducting my research, what I found to remarkable is not the anti-imperialist sentiment expressed by a small avant-garde, but just how pervasive anti-imperialist thought was among broad swaths of cultural workers and activists. Many of the central U.S. ideologies of race, empire, and national identity were challenged not only by marginal groups and movements, but by an entire social and cultural imaginary. I have come to see that much of the period was infused with a Gramscian "common sense" that privileged international solidarity, anticolonial self-determination, and cross-race and cross-border alliances that cannot be located in a single movement.[7] Anti-imperialism, in so many words, was constitutive of the Popular Front and modernist imaginary.[8]

Reading history through the lens of contemporary theory, it's clear that new work in transnational hemispheric and American studies can help us to understand the implications of these cultural workers, whether they are labor activists in California fighting the long shadow of annexation, Native American intellectuals looking to global Marxism as a way to build an anticolonial framework in the United States, or filmmakers wishing to narrate the imperial infrastructure of the Cold War by telling the story of Mexican American miners in the Southwest. These movements created a counterculture of anti-imperialism in the United States, often mapping their work onto the very contours and layers of U.S. imperial history, noting the way conquest and expropriation are masked by the language of the unified nation. As Amy Kaplan suggests in her volume *The Anarchy of Empire*, the U.S. nation-state is produced through (not despite) its global reach, often defining its borders, ideas of citizenship, and racial notions of national belonging in a dialectical relationship with its imperial commitments on the American continent and abroad.[9] The U.S. writers who comprise this study take Kaplan's insight as their starting point, self-aware of how their citizenship in the United States is a product of a hemispheric imperial project. As Clifford Odets writes in his play about U.S. imperialism in Cuba, the Cubans experience a "New Deal of terror," as the very programs designed to help working-class Americans were predicated on U.S. imperial alignments. Such an analysis not only exposes how the nation-state conceals imperial commitments, it suggests the way domestic politics are always already a part of the transnational and hemispheric scope of U.S. power.

As Shelley Streeby argues about an earlier generation of activists, the nation was "called into question" as "the horizon for utopian hopes of justice," noting as well how the nation-state severed movements for justice from each other.[10] Citing Rebecca Schreiber's "critical transnational perspective," Streeby narrates how the early 20th century socialists, members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and Mexican revolutionaries defined themselves across borders, nationalities, language groups, and unified ethnic histories to build a radical global sensibility that targeted both state power and global capitalism. In doing so, these anti-imperialists went far beyond John Hobson's early 20th-century critique of imperialism, a question of one nation-state expanding into the territorial boundaries of another.[11] The writers and artists in my study shared a continuity with earlier transnational and borderlands intellectuals, as their work highlights the dislocations, migrations, and global flows that expose the nation itself as a construct of global capital. If there is any difference in perspective between the artists and activists of the Popular Front period and earlier radical movements, I would suggest it may only be in scale: the scope of the Communist International, a U.S. state willing accommodate, partially and often only rhetorically, the goals of anticolonial self-determination, and an upsurge in civil rights militancy brought forth a working-class, anti-imperialist cultural politics that exceeded in size and reach anything that had come before.

It should be stressed however, that there is nothing inherently radical or critical about *transnational* as a term or concept.[12] As Masao Miyoshi points out, "the transnational" emerged within cultural studies at the very moment the corporation no longer took the form of a national bourgeoisie.[13] In one sense, the rise of the term within the academy can be seen as an adaptive strategy the humanities employs to remain relevant, offering cultural capital and mastery to an increasingly globalized elite.[14] Michael Denning abandons the term for "international," noting how "internationalism" was used to suggest a language of working-class, third-world solidarity.[15] Yet one can also consider the way in which all criticism must, by definition, work dialectically within its dominant social formation; one must turn "the transnational" on its head, so to speak. The smooth, global flow of capital carries with it always the possibility—perhaps inevitability—of an unruly global flow of bodies, ideas, culture, and social movements. "Anti-imperialist modernism" can be read as part of a "transnationalism from below," denoting both the historical formation of "the modern" and a particular mode of artistic and intellectual critique. Anti-imperialism marks a specific claim on the global capitalist order, one that, as Frantz Fanon articulates, was formed out of generative acts of racialized violence and domination.[16] And as a form of modernity, modernism carries with it the peril and promise of the modern world, one born out of contradictions of the avant-garde party, mass mobilizations of industrial workers, the hope of an anticolonial revolutionary state, and the novel and photograph as modes of immanent critique. "Anti-imperialist modernism" thus implies a particular historical moment, a revolutionary global vision, a "whole way of life," to use Raymond Williams's phrase.

Indeed, as the *New York Times* reviewer of *Macbeth* unwittingly makes clear, aesthetics were also an integral part of the anti-imperialist movement in the 1930s and 1940s. Modernism was by its nature a global artistic movement in terms of its actual practice, but also in the imperial origins of its construction. As I will discuss in greater detail, not only was modernism's obsession with otherness, spatial and temporal dislocation, polyphony, and radical forms of alienation a break with Victorian formalism, but such forms were language by which global capitalism came to be expressed. As Michael Denning points out in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*, "subaltern modernism" was born out of global revolutionary movements, from the Bolshevik Revolution to third-world nationalism, giving rise to a global radical novel as global circuits of migration, thought, and representation increasingly saw the U.S. empire as its target.[17] To the extent that modernism may have been the first truly global art form, it comes as little surprise that imperialism and its other, colonial liberation, exist in its DNA.

And more than just an appendix of tropes and styles, I would suggest modernism, as a movement, is a self-reflexive argument about the meaning of modernity. For radical cultural workers, modernity is both at the nexus of liberation and oppression, and the dialectic between a negative present and a utopian future. As Herbert Marcuse writes of the avant-garde, the role of radical style is to "break the power of facts" with the possibilities of language.[18] For Marcuse, style is a way of representing the present while also negating it; radical style is always a dialectic between reality and possibility. The question of radical style is also, as Frederic Jameson notes, a marker of the imperial moment in Western history, while also an expression of the many contradictions of the global capitalist imperialism: the sabotage of productive forces by social relations, the "false universalism" of equality, the rhetoric of freedom, and the oppressive particularities of race and gender. One can see these contradictions expressed in such works as Tillie Olsen's *Yonnondio*, between the avant-garde style of the authorial voice and the realism of the narrator, or in Richard Wright's *Native Son*'s dialectic style, between literary realism and pulp fiction.

For anti-imperialist writers, this dialectic of modernity has particular implications for both style and content. For Nez Perce anthropologist Archie Phinney, occupying the negative racial identity imposed by his colonizer—

"Indian"—becomes the way forward for pan-Indian organizing; for Clifford Odets, writing about U.S. imperialism requires that he subvert conceits of realism that produce the democratic identity of "American"; for Orson Welles, the modernist style of alienation is necessary to remind viewers that they are both subject and object of imperialism simultaneously. Another way to say this would be that modernism of the Popular Front was a language of the global Left, its radical style a way to signify bonds of solidarity while also recognizing that the very global order that connects them is the one that they oppose.

I formulate this as a project of cultural recovery and cultural memory. I do not propose to prove that other studies of the Great Depression that privilege the continuities with earlier racialized structures of power are incorrect, or that nationalism shared no part in left politics of the 1930s. I will argue, however, that such analyses implicitly participate in the Cold War construction of the Popular Front, which entails a kind of collective forgetting of the social formations and movements of the previous decades. What has not been taken into account is the extent to which the Cold War has shaped our cultural memory of the Popular Front era, beyond anticommunism to the erasure of a whole fabric of political and cultural anti-imperialism. Recent Cold War cultural history has brought to light the extensive anti-imperialist movements that existed within communities of color before the Cold War, as well as the (successful) efforts by the FBI and House Un-American Activities Committee to discredit, harass, and forcibly suppress activists and intellectuals questioning U.S. imperialism.[19] Equally, Cold War historians have pointed out the extent to which the State Department and major Hollywood studios enlisted the cultural logic of international solidarity movements in the cause of U.S. supremacy, reshaping earlier commitments into a language that met with State Department goals.[20] This is not to mention the extensive documentation of labor union suppression of members and labor organizations that fostered international solidarity.[21] Together these often isolated pieces suggest the active presence of such movements, and the way in which institutional and cultural forces during the Cold War both suppressed and refashioned the Popular Front in its own image, not to mention the way English departments have shaped our understanding of modernism. Remembering is always already embedded in the process of forgetting—re-creating the Depression New Deal for the Cold War also meant the suppression of those elements that challenged the postwar social order.[22] To the extent the Cold War spoke through a new, muscular language of race, frontier, and empire, it relied on the collective forgetting—and forcible suppression—of earlier artistic and social movements that questioned such projects. Given this record of erasure, anti-imperialist modernism offers the view that the political *and* aesthetic contours of 1930s and 1940s transnational movements thus remain as radical now as they were then.

## No More (Bosses') Imperial War: Rethinking 1930s and 1940s Social Movements

Clifford Odets's one-act play of the "1935 blues," *Waiting for Lefty*, is seldom remembered as an anti-imperialist text. As the darling of the Left, Odets's play is often taken as a shorthand for the entire "red decade" of the 1930s, seen as a summation of the "ethnic Americanism" of the Popular Front: a strike tale by a plebian Jewish author, it takes place in a working-class, white-ethnic community, features American popular culture and American accents, and imagines less a traditional union than a popular working- and middle-class movement that unites the many ethnicities of the city into a single democratic action. And yet, among the short, often domestic, vignettes of would-be strikers, "The Young Hack and His Girl" centers on the refusal of a young taxi driver, Sid, to join the army to solve his economic woes and marry the girl he loves. Speaking of his brother, Sid laments that the navy will "send him down to Cuba."[23] Rattling off a list of racialized enemies his brother believes "a real American hero" should fight, "Japs, Turks, and Greeks," Sid concludes that the navy only teaches working-class soldiers to "point the gun in the wrong way," at fellow workers rather than at their officers.[24] In an earlier vignette, a lab technician turns down a job making "poison gas" for the military by sarcastically telling his manager that he's "not the civilized type," responding to his manager's appeal that the United States should be ready when be expecting "those goddamn Japs start a ruckus."[25] Reversing the savage-civilized binary, the lab tech smartly points out the barbarism behind the high-tech weapons of "civilization." Both acts in the play underscore the ways in which workers are conscripted into imperial designs by big business and the state, either through appeals to racism against the "goddamn Japs" or through the masculine patriotism of becoming an "American hero." And in both scenes, to be an agent of the U.S. empire is also to be a class enemy—the young lab tech is asked to "spy" on fellow workers as part of his job, and Sid's brother Sam is sent to Cuba to "point the gun in the wrong way."

That the anti-imperialism of Odets's play is a forgotten element of its cultural legacy suggests a great deal about the contemporary invisibility of such movements. Given the centrality of anti-imperialism to the Depression's most famous play, it's useful to reconstruct what organizations and cultural formations produced and supported such critique. Anti-imperialist thought from the 1920s to the 1940s in the United States is frequently understood by historians through the lens of Communist Party doctrine, emerging in the late 1920s with the inauguration of the Commintern's revolutionary "third period" and ending with the "Popular Front" policy, during which the Communist Party worked with Western colonial "democracies" and liberal antifascists to contain the Axis threat.[26] Even within this simplified narrative, the Communist Party is acknowledged to have played a crucial role in shaping and supporting anti-imperialist movements in the United States and abroad, forming, in Hakim Adi's words, the "era's sole international white-led movement . . . formally dedicated to a revolutionary transformation of the global political *and* racial order."[27] Unlike the earlier Socialist Party or Anti-Imperialist League of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the global reach of the Communist International frequently engaged U.S. labor activists with anticolonial intellectuals from around the world, including Sen Katayama, Jacques Roumain, and Cedric Dover, and in the United States, the party included a great many high-profile members from the colonized world, including George Padmore, H. T. Tsiang, and Cyril Briggs. The Communist Party's ability to export U.S. activists around the world, as well as to introduce activists of color to global anticolonial intellectuals, gave a cosmopolitan and transnational scope to what were before considered local struggles. Working-class communist activists of color in the United States such as Emma Tenayuca, Harry Haywood, and Karl Yoneda all reported in memoirs or interviews that attending Communist Party conventions allowed them to see civil rights and labor rights struggles in the Southwest, the Deep South, and California in global and anticolonial terms.[28]

And while one can certainly trace a shift not only in official policy but in practice from the early 1930s to the official Popular Front period, even within Communist Party publications—especially regional CPUSA newspapers such as the *People's Daily World* (formerly the *Western Worker*)—many of the same critiques of U.S. empire were simply reformulated. Denunciations of U.S. imperialism (while often still openly made) were changed to more "Americanized" critiques of Manifest Destiny and Indian Removal, for instance, replacing "Hands off Cuba" with an interview of a surviving Lakota veteran of Little Bighorn.[29] Or, in another instance, the "Hands off Haiti" campaign of the "third period" was transformed into a critique of the U.S. comprador regime of Stenio Vincent and agitation for the release of Haitian novelist Jacques Roumain. While the agitation for the release of Roumain carried an echo of the "democracy" and "free speech" rhetoric of the Popular

Front, it's clear that Roumain's imprisonment was at the hands of a U.S.-backed regime. And two of the central antifascist crusades of the Popular Front period, the protests against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and fascist coup in Spain had clear antiracist and anti-imperialist overtones, some of which I'll detail below. As Communist organizer Dorothy Healey recounted in her memoir, when the "Popular Front" policy was communicated from the New York City, it "made sense in practical terms" and "fit in with my own sense of the kinds of corrections that needed to be made," and thus seemed merely a continuation of the work she and other party members were already doing.[30] Healey's attitude and practice in regard to the Communist Party "line" is revealing in many ways, suggesting local practice and immediate needs often trumped centralized objectives, also suggesting far greater fluidity than the commissar-cadre model often describes.[31]

As Michael Denning argues, the "peripheries were the center," noting both that Cold War history tended to fetishize membership in the party, and that membership was often far more fluid and transient than a single-minded focus on the party would suggest.[32] The American League Against War and Fascism (ALAWF) may be thought as a typical anti-imperialist organization of the 1930s. Founded in 1933 by the Communist Party against the rise of fascism in Europe, its concerns and its reach went far beyond the Communist Party and Nazism in Europe. Open about its anti-imperialist politics, in the founding document of the first nationwide antiwar organization, drafted a year after its organization, the ALAWF resolved

> to oppose the policies of American imperialism in the Far East, in Latin America and throughout the world; to support the struggles of all colonial peoples against the imperialist policies of exploitation and armed suppression.[33]

The League enjoyed a broad constituency that included civic, labor, religious, and ethnic organizations, in large part because critiques of U.S. imperialism were often combined with bread-and-butter issues of redirecting military budgets to relief programs and the arts. The League organized mass meetings, demonstrations, and pickets, and often organized within strategic unions to call for strikes against war materials. Perhaps most spectacularly, the League coordinated with the American Student Union one of the largest "antiwar" student strikes in U.S. history, one that shut down the entire University of California, State University of New York, and City University of New York systems and was estimated to have involved over million students, including 15,000 in Los Angeles alone.[34] As one historian writes, by the late

1930s, the League had registered the support of over four million people at its annual conferences.[35]

For the generation still fresh with the memory of World War I and the Mexican Revolution, "war" had a context that to a contemporary audience would not be available. By the 1930s, it had become a kind of left-liberal common sense that inter-imperialist rivalry between nation-states made war an inevitable by-product of imperialism. Vladimir Lenin argued in his classic work on imperialism that the competition for world markets and the internationalization of finance capital within national economies made conflict between world powers inevitable. Modern "war," to put it simply, was a result of capitalism expanding beyond national borders; war was simply empire by another name. In this sense, the "antiwar" movement was not an antiwar movement in the current sense of the word, as it merely objected to the causes and beneficiaries of war, rather than the notion of armed conflict per se. As one editorial in a Communist newspaper stated without any sense of contradiction, the "antiwar movement" must "fight pacifism" to avoid "imperialist war."[36]

In this sense, CIO president John L. Lewis and United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA) president Donald Henderson's stance against early U.S. entrance into World War II had little to do with the union presidents' general preference for peace. "The Yanks Are Not Coming" campaign is often interpreted as U.S. "isolationism," yet I would suggest it was a response to a decades-long antiwar campaign that argued war conducted between imperial powers only benefited monopoly profits. In an insert distributed in UCAPAWA unions, joining the war in Europe would be understood as fighting for the side of "imperialist powers" and, like all imperialist wars, against the interests of working people.[37] The common 1930s slogan, "No more bosses war," as one *Western Worker* headline put it, suggested that opposition to war was in defense of the working class, not a larger pacifistic vision of diplomacy or conflict resolution. Imperialism and fascism, one could argue, were as much targets of the antiwar movement as the notion of "conflicts between nation-states." With the German invasion of the Soviet Union, spokespeople for the antiwar movement argued that their support for U.S. entrance was consistent with their understanding of war. "The war changed," activist and author Mike Quin wrote in the *People's Daily World*: "Yesterday it was a war between rival slave-drivers . . . protecting the foreign interests of Wall Street," whereas today "It's fascism against socialism."[38]

(Imperialist) "war" and "fascism" were, of course, also inextricably linked within a left lexicon in the 1930s. The ALAWF did not create, but merely named itself after, the Popular Front slogan. While the antifascist movement today is remembered largely as opposition to Nazis, Black Shirts, and Spanish Falangists, work by Alan Wald, Mark Naison, Glenda Gilmore, Mark Solomon, Paul Buhle, and Michael Denning discusses ways in which antifascist discourse was far broader than a narrow critique of European governments. [39] While many historians notice that antifascism was used to battle U.S. racism, the stretch to U.S. and European imperialism was often not difficult to make. Germany's, Japan's, and Italy's fascism was seen as an inevitable outgrowth of a global capitalism system. The three states were understood by many on the 1930s Left as historical "latecomers" to the project of empire building, and their aggressive militarism a way to seize necessary colonies from competitors. To be against "war and fascism" for a certain segment of the more radical Left meant, in short, that one supported a critique of capitalism and imperialism, a kind of commonsense reading of Lenin's volume by the same name. This is not to suggest that all antifascists were anti-imperialists, but rather that anti-imperialism was a major strand within the movement that up to this point has been marginalized. Not nearly enough has been made of the fact that the largest antifascist and antiwar organization in the 1930s called for an end to U.S. imperialism in the Far East, Latin America, and "especially Cuba."[40]

The focus by historians on a Moscow-led anti-imperialist campaign downplays the constitutive nature of imperialism in the production of a U.S. national identity, as well as the very specific and dramatic shifts in military expenditure and policy in the 1930s to which activists responded. As Perry Anderson notes, the "prehistory" of the global, postwar U.S. "imperium" came to an end during the Great Depression, prior to which time the financial center of the globe was still London, the pound sterling was the international currency, the United States retained a relatively small standing army, and the United States produced and consumed primarily for a domestic market.[41] This is not to suggest that the United States was not an empire prior to the late 1930s—Anderson is clear that the United States went through at least two prior imperial convulsions, transforming from a continental power during which the expansion of the empire was also the expansion of a settler-colonial nation-state, to a commercial empire intent on "opening" markets to the East, culminating with the invasion of Spain's remaining colonies.[42] Yet prior to the U.S. emergence as an "imperium" after World War II, two crucial shifts emerge from the 1930s. Congress's decision to begin "rearmament" as a form of militarized domestic spending not only increased the size and readiness of the military, but also for the first time joined "the internal fortunes of the American economy and external postures of the American state as they never had been before."[43] Combined with Cordell Hull's championing of single "free trade" global market, the new U.S. militarism set the stage for the major imperial expansion after World War II, when the United States took over the global imperial mantel from Britain and western Europe. The radical press quite accurately predicted war with the Japan as early as the mid-1930s, and ALAWF frequently critiqued the hypocrisy of the Good Neighbor Policy. While we cannot ignore the importance of international social movements in building an anti-imperialist movement in the United States, it should be remembered that the anti-imperialist movement in the United States stood at the cusp of the United States' emergence as a truly global superpower.

Culturally speaking, the anti-imperialist movement reflected both internationalist support for global revolutions, as well as a transnational and hemispheric critique of U.S. particular role as the regional hegemon and a settler-colonial state. The site of the 1933 antiwar demonstration witnessed the crowd of one thousand refuse to drop their hats at the U.S. national anthem, yet "95% of the audience removed their hats when the International was sung."[44] The *Western Worker* frequently ran stories ridiculing imperial masculinity, such as the grinning caricature of Teddy Roosevelt above the caption "100 men swore Roosevelt's a liar," detailing not only that TR "did not make that charge" up San Juan Hill, but that "Negro troops rescued Teddy from an ambush" earlier in the day.[45] Not only does the cartoon puncture timperial masculinity as a mythic construct, it also points out that white manhood is threatened by a black masculinity it both suppresses and relies on. Other figures like Captain Bakcsy and Los Angeles police chief Hynes also received scathing denunciations. In one *Western Worker* article, the career of National Guard major general David Barrows is traced from his role as a "butcher" in the Philippines, to commander in the expeditionary force in the Soviet Union, to his current role in the proposed formation of a military police in California to "put Communists against the wall to be shot."[46] Also cited as giving speeches endorsing Hitler, Barrows is a figure who travels from the colonial periphery of the Philippines to the center of San Francisco, visiting the violence once used against a colonial population against an urban metropolis in California, in which his "shoot to kill" orders left two waterfront strikers dead.

Given that the narrative of antifascism is often told through the lens of the growing threat of Nazi Germany as well as the Communist Party's shifting position from anti-imperialism to supporting imperial "democracies" as against Axis powers, it should be remembered that the two major national antifascist organizations, the ALAWF and the National Negro Congress (NNC), had membership and leadership far beyond their party begin-

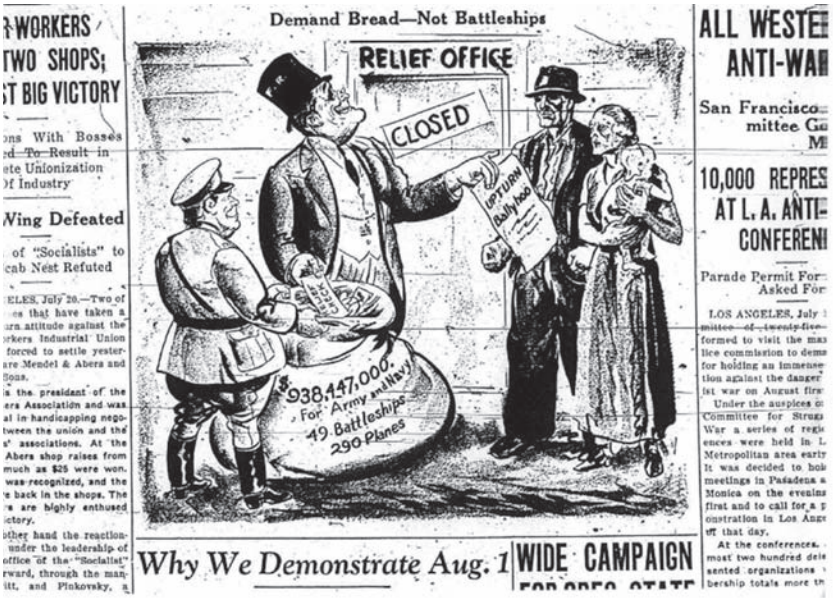
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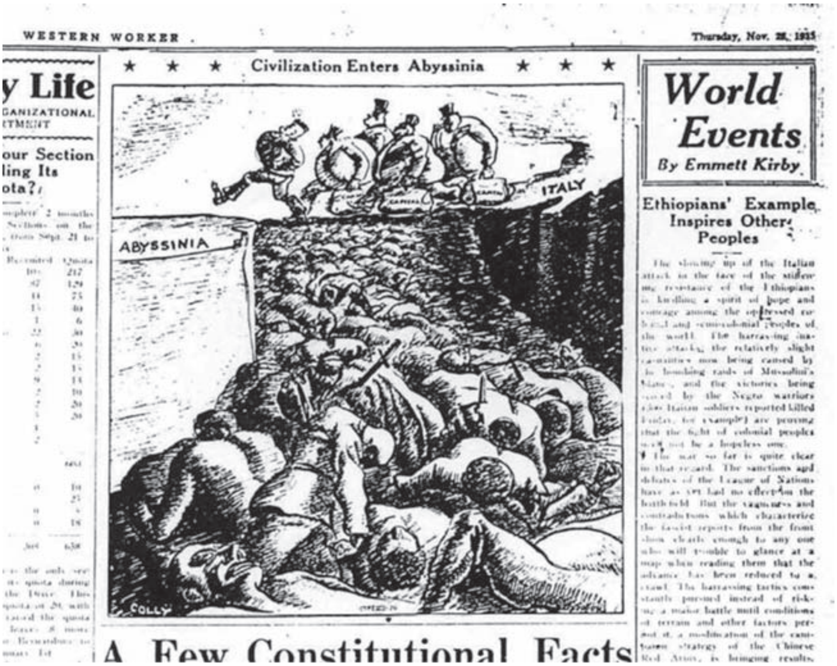
Fig. 1. "Demand Bread—Not Battleships." Where bread-and-butter and anti-imperialist politics meet. (*Western Worker*, July 31, 1933.)

nings.[47] The NNC's opposition to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the ALAWF's continued opposition to U.S. military spending carried with them an anti-imperialist sensibility that went beyond just anti-Nazism. The question of Ethiopia's independence and the continued critique of military spending—while part of a larger antifascist vision—were also very much questions of U.S. and European colonial dominance. Indeed, long after the Popular Front policy formally called for unity among liberals and leftists against fascism, implying a strategic "peace" with imperialist powers, the ALAWF continued to call for U.S. disarmament and an end to U.S. imperial domination in Latin America, and to equate Italy's invasion of Ethiopia with European colonialism. In a summer 1936 pamphlet published by ALAWF's journal *Fight*, "Billions for Bullets," the League continued to call for an end to U.S. imperialism, an abolition of the ROTC, and an end to U.S. military spending.[48] Indeed, nearly all of the major antifascist campaigns in the 1930s are not easily disentangled from campaigns that were more explicitly anti-imperialist, such as the "Hands off Cuba" or "Hands off Nicaragua" campaigns of the early 1930s.

Many within the African American Left criticized the antifascist support for western European imperial democracies, exemplified by a cartoon in the *Chicago Defender* that gives backhanded praise to the Nazis for "picking on everyone equally," while England, France, and the United States "pick on the darker races only."[49] And yet many more on the left used popular opposition to Nazism to explore links between racism in the United States and the racial eugenics of the Nazi regime. Langston Hughes called the Spanish fascists "Jim Crow people," thereby explicitly linking the struggle in Spain with civil rights struggle in the South. Paul Robeson called on Congress to enact anti-lynching legislation in the name of opposing fascism in the United States as well as abroad. In California, the Popular Front Left often connected the fight against fascism with the Mexican and Filipino workers' movements, arguing that California was the state in the union "closest to a perfect fascist set-up" for its brutalization of farmworkers and immigrants.[50] As one black veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade related in the video documentary *The Good Fight*, he became involved by going to rallies "against war and fascism" that, more often than not, were rallies in support of the last free African nation. As Robin Kelley writes in *Race Rebels*, fighting the Italian and German fascists in Spain was not just a fight against racist powers for African American activists but also a way to strike back at the German-backed Italian invasion of Ethiopia.[51] According to historian Richard Seymour, the International Brigades organized for the defense of the Third Republic were "the logical extension of the anti-imperialist movement," with its commitment against militarism, racism, and the imperial legacy of the Right in Spain.[52]

It should also be remembered that "race" was understood as a transnational term, linking slavery, colonialism, Jim Crow, and capitalism into a single frame of analysis.[53] The Council on African Affairs and the Communist Party frequently sponsored meetings between civil rights leaders in the United States and independence figures from Africa and Latin America, raised money for and awareness of the colonized world within the United States, and sponsored labor union and community members to travel abroad. Likewise, both organizations recruited and were comprised of members that participated in Garveyite movements and transnational negritude movements that preceded the Popular Front, but also formed an important component of it.[54] Equally, the Communist Party's rhetoric of "self-determination for minority peoples" implicitly connected nationalist claims in overseas colonies with African, Mexican, and Native American struggles in the United States.[55] In part, this was due to the Soviet Union's own policy on "minority peoples" within its borders, and efforts to gain influence in the third world, but as critics such as Anthony Dawahare and Robin D. G. Kelley have argued, it was also a response to grassroots pressure within the party to develop



WESTERN WORKER

Thursday, Nov. 28, 1935

★ ★ ★ Civilization Enters Abyssinia ★ ★ ★

**World Events**

By Emmett Kirby

**Ethiopians' Example Inspires Other Peoples**

A Few Constitutional Facts

Fig. 2. "Civilization Enters Abyssinia." Notice the satire of imperial discourse, as well as the column to the right of the cartoon, celebrating Ethiopia's resistance. (*Western Worker,* November 28, 1935.)

a coherent policy on race, capitalism, and imperialism, and to respond to members' articulations of the centrality of race and empire to the development of capitalism.[56] The connection between racism and imperialism implies that these scholars and activists understood black Americans as an "internally colonized" population, that there was more than a relation by analogy between the regime of South Africa and the southern United States.

Anti-imperialist feminist activists and intellectuals also articulated their own global politics in the 1930s and 1940s, both inside and outside of left institutions such as the Communist Party and the National Negro Congress. Feminist writer and Communist Party activist Meridel Le Sueur envisioned a global network of women connected by a shared experience of a gendered body and expressed as a culture of feeling. Describing a Polish immigrant to the United States, Le Sueur articulates how "she feels the hunger and suffering of Chinese women and feels as if she is in Flint in the Women's Brigade," locating the "feeling" in her gendered embodiment, "the making of the body, the feeding and nurturing of it day in and day out."[57] This internationalist advocacy for solidarity among working-class and peasant women is reflected in Communist Party journalist and theorist Claudia Jones, a Trinidadian who helped the CPUSA formulate its policies on the "woman's question." Writing a weekly column, "Half the World," Jones ironically signified on the common experiences among women globally, united by marginalization and yet also not a minority. And yet Jones complicates the idea of a unified gendered subject by reminding readers of the axially segmented labor market, structured by gender and race dialectically. Jones applies Lenin's theory of "superexploitation," developed to describe the relative relationship of workers in the colonies to the metropole, as a way to describe the experience of black women globally.[58] Black women, according to Jones, are not only exploited as racialized workers, they are also exploited as women in both the homes where they work and the homes where they live—paid lower wages and often working far longer hours. As Cheryl Higashida argues in her book *Black International Feminism*, Jones (and I would add Le Sueur) were part of a larger movement of women's groups and intellectuals who understood the theorized the role of women and women's movements to fashion an anti-imperialist politics but also critique the masculinity and patriarchy often implicit in anti-imperialist nationalism.[59]

Many historians have looked at these various tendencies on race in the 1930s and minimized the role of anti-imperialism and black nationalism, noting that even the Communists in the 1930s fought for integration, not black self-determination. I would suggest there is nothing inherently contradictory about such stances, and yet I draw attention to them because they complicate a discursive reading of the era. Social movements are never solely questions of discourse—often claims for freedom and equality exist within but are not contained by dominant cultural expression. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, politics is an "articulatory process" in which meaning is always mediated, unable to be fixed, and situated within various dimensions that lack the ideological closure of dominant institutions.[60] To the extent that forms of knowledge are functions of power, the ability or desire to construct a stable discourse is questionable when applied to subaltern and marginal groups. Any reading of anti-imperialist culture within the 1930s and 1940s requires one to appraise the whole social environment, not as isolated statements or organizations, but in terms of what Raymond Williams calls "structures of feeling," in which social forms do not necessarily articulate themselves in explicit public discourse.[61] Keeping readings of oppositional culture open in this way avoids the frequent pitfalls in which movements are read as a sum total of discursive acts, ignoring the complex, dialectical relationship among oppressed groups, public statements, "on the ground" organizing, institutional pressures, and compromise with hegemonic forces to achieve immediate ends that often complicates any understanding of how people actually thought, felt, and acted. To put it simply, there is no contradiction between advocating for racial separation as a theoretical horizon and fighting for integration as a daily praxis, given that no oppositional force wields the social or discursive power to implement its program, internally or externally.

Reading "anti-imperialism" this way, as both a radical praxis and an oppositional discourse, may thus allow us to stitch together many threads of radical thought in the 1930s and 1940s, bringing transnational social movements, black liberation struggles, strands within Native American self-determination movements, antifascism, and socialist critiques of global capitalism together under a single unifying rubric, without reducing any of the particular movements to a sum total of their parts. By reviving the term "anti-imperialism," these movements can be seen as inhabiting intersecting fields of theory and praxis, often within overlapping organizations. We can also consider the significant damage done by Cold War academic institutions, constricting radical history within narrowed fields of analysis, often sidestepping the ways in which lived praxis and political radicalism emerge within intersecting terrains of struggle. Considering how, for instance, labor activists in California came to see the large growers as the logical conclusion of Manifest Destiny offers ways to rethink not only the coordinates of anti-imperialist and transnational thought in the 1930s, but the labor movement within a transnational anti-imperialist framework as well. "Anti-imperialism" also offers ways to think about slower and longer tectonic shifts in policy and popular thought from land management in the U.S. West to popular revulsion against the occupation of Vietnam as having antecedents and starting points in U.S. history, tethering contemporary reality to a longer radical past.

## Anti-Imperialist Modernism and the Popular Front

In 1932, critic Edmund Wilson reached San Diego at the end of his yearlong trip across the United States to "study the present crisis," the roots and meanings of the Great Depression. Reaching his destination in California, he constructs his first image of the state from a singular and remarkable source: the turreted peaks of the John Spreckles's Coronado Hotel. He comments that Spreckles made his fortune in "Hawaiian sugar" and, just so the reader knows what that means, adds "in 1887 . . . he guaranteed to the Americans the exclusive use of Honolulu Harbor."[62] He completes the thought by further noting that the same year saw the rise of the great "robber barons" as well as "the last attempt of the Indians to assert their independence" until they were "put down by the government and the Apaches penned up in a reservation."[63] It is a compelling construction, and one made with the typical modernist understatement for which Wilson was well known, but one that nonetheless forces the connection among the overseas empire, the great industrial fortunes of the post–Civil War era, Indian Removal, and, I would add, the California shore. He completes the picture by noting that the hotel is "white as a wedding cake," suggesting both "an ocean liner" and "a colonial mansion," and "dominate(s) the last blue concave dent in the shoreline before the United States gives way to Mexico."[64] This picture, one of whiteness, domination, colonial pretense, national boundaries, and tourism as well as a subtle reference to the "great white fleet of San Diego" that marked the U.S. expansion on the world stage as a Pacific power, manages to locate the West as a midway point between a continuous imperial arc, rather than an end point of the frontier. The overseas colonization of Hawaii and the internal colonization of the Native Americans are collapsed into a single image in which the hotel and the shoreline it dominates become the physical embodiment or objective correlative for imperial conquest.

In Fredric Jameson's essay "Modernism and Imperialism" he writes of the way imperialism creates a problem of perception, as "colonialism means that a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the homeland."[65] This "meaning loss" is compensated within high modernism by an inward and aestheticized style—the impossibility of representing the totality of empire is itself represented by the "tenant-lieu" of an impregnable style.[66] Indeed as Masao Miyoshi points out, "Hardly any Western writer from Jane Austen to Thomas Mann, from Balzac to D.H. Lawrence could manage to escape from the spell of modern expansionism."[67] And of course, Edward Said made a similar point about the entirety of modern Western culture.[68] While Jameson, Miyoshi, and Said crucially point out that imperialism is constitutive not only of modernity but the modernist literary movement, their crucial theoretical foundation does leave out another possible alternative: that many modernist writers responded to the crisis of representation created by modernity in a very different way, as a mode of self-reflexive critique and even revolutionary aesthetic expression.

As one such modernist, Wilson was one of a large number of prominent intellectuals of the "red decade" to take a "turn to the left" in the 1930s, and his *American Jitters* was seen as his response to the social movements and epochal changes of the Depression. He, like Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Josephine Herbst represented a kind of literary patrician class formed in the movements of literary modernism in the previous decade. Wilson, Ivy League educated and Anglophile in his literary tastes, wrote from the cultural center. Thus Wilson's modernist construction—in which the shoreline is transformed into a perceptual vantage point from which to see into the "infinity" of empire both spatially and temporally—presents a way to think about not only modernism but how *anti*-imperialist work is another form through which modernism was expressed.

In addition, there has been a growing attention to the way in which modernism itself is constructed around a patrician, Anglo-American sensibility. Responding both to poststructuralist critics who label all modernism as totalizing, hierarchical, formal, and phallic as well as to New Critics who wish to reassert the primacy of the aesthetic, intellectuals such as Paul Gilroy, Suzanne Clark, Michael Denning, and Laura Doyle suggest that we replace modernism with working-class, colonized, woman, and writers of color at the "center" of modernity.[69] Such a view puts into stark relief the way in which the high modernism of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, and others within the same circle represents less a universal truth than a particular subject position: the "globalized privacy" of the modern self, anxious to master the "global surround" and assert racial, classed, and gendered power over an increasingly transnational world.[70] Such a critique also aesthetically and politically recovers the cultural production of a whole generation of working-class, left-wing, black, colonial, and woman writers within a comparative and historical context that suggests their own engagement with a modernist project while not limiting their contribution to an identity formation. Laura Doyle's "em-placement" of modernity or "spatialization" of modernism thus not only forces the question of what lay on the other side of "infinity," it also gives voice to those faceless members of the colonies described as the "hooded hordes / swarming over endless plains" in Eliot's *Waste Land*.[71] Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" is thus a refiguration of key modernist tropes, suggesting the "homelessness" of the modern subject be thought not so much as a spiritual condition, but as the culture produced in the multiple dislocations of the globalized world that began with slavery. Eliot's horror at the impurity of modern culture is precisely where Gilroy begins, in the "contact zones" between culturally rootless subjects, the violent articulations of an expanding capitalist horizon.[72] We can think then of C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* or Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* as "modernist" within this frame, as both narrate the conflict/contact of race, nation, and empire through the transformative subjectivity of a hybrid voice.

In literary history, the shift from modernism to postmodernism marked the Popular Front as a sort of interregnum, an unfortunate gap in the cultural order between avant-gardes. Dominated by "social realism," the Popular Front was regarded by several generations of critics as a return to the 19th-century verities of realism, including its middlebrow sensibility, its positivism, its reification of capitalist social relations—despite its ostensible social critique—and its frequently linear, transparent narrative form. In this sense, 1930s "social realism" is read as a kind of antimodernism. It is seen as a rejection of the aesthetic and its radical indeterminacy for the stable "truth" of social class and the determinism of an equally outdated philosophical materialism. As Barbara Foley points out, much of the 1960s postmodern literary criticism that came out of the legacy of the New Left—skeptical of theories of totalization, materialism, and binary oppositions—reproduced a narrative of Cold War anticommunism by discarding most proletarian fiction as "ideological" and thus retrograde.[73] Yet for Denning, the proletarian fiction of the 1930s forms a "third wave" of modernism that fused radical elements of surrealism, mass culture, and the grotesque to create a working-class or "proletarian avant-garde."[74] Citing Kenneth Burke's 1935 address before the American Writers' Congress, Denning suggests we take Burke's call for a "revolutionary symbolism" as one of the clearest theoretical statements made at the time about the Popular Front modernist project.[75] As Denning notes, Burke's formulation of a modern "symbolism" with revolutionary politics marked both a rupture and a continuity with artistic forms of the previous decades. Framing Burke's address in more contemporary literary terms, Denning refers to Popular Front "social modernism" as a way to periodize and theorize the sensibility of writers as diverse as Richard Wright, Erskine Caldwell, Muriel Rukeyser, and James Agee.

Denning's formulation not only recovers the aesthetic value of Popular Front literature, but, as importantly, it recovers the revolutionary potential of the modernist project. Denning's category of "social modernism" suggests that perhaps the binary values encoded in David Harvey's table—opposing the mastery, hierarchy, logos, and phallocentrism of modernism with the exhaustion, anarchy, silence, and androgyny of postmodernism—is an incomplete story.[76] While one could suggest that Denning's formulation of "social modernism" is another attempt to add an unlisted or uncounted group to the modernist canon, I would suggest that it has far more extensive implications for the way we think of both modernism and political movements "from below." If African American, working-class, Mexican American, Native American, and other multiethnic artists and organizations found within the cultural logic of modernism a liberatory potential, then perhaps we can think of modernism as less the product of one particular subject position than the attempt to construct a subjectivity within a discursive framework of the modern world. The "waste land" of the modern city onto which Eliot imposes his own formal order thus becomes a mobile trope—the abandoned buildings of Wright's *Native Son* or the silica mine of Rukeyser's *Book of the Dead*—a site for possible transformative visions of a new collectivity. By reclaiming the modernism of socially committed art, Denning shifts the debate about modernism from specific aesthetic characteristics to the question of an avant-garde, a self-conscious artistic project of social transformation. As Joseph Entin and Paula Rabinowitz suggest, it was the self-conscious use of popular, pulp, grotesque and "sensational" material that marked Popular Front era literature as uniquely modern and modernist.[77]

Burke's address was, however, considered controversial at the 1935 Writers' Congress. Calling for a "revolutionary symbolism," Burke argues that radical writers adopt a "mythic" rather than a "scientific" approach to cultural struggle, dropping the language of "class" for a "national" myth of "the people."[78] Suggesting a "politics of inclusion," Burke encourages radical writers to borrow the language of "bourgeois nationalism" in order to reappropriate it for a democratic project.[79] As Denning and others have noted, Burke's address was not well received at the Writers' Congress, and many within the audience criticized what they felt to be an open embrace of fascist rhetoric. Noting that "the people" was often the term deployed by right-wing populists, it was Burke's *nationalism* and not his modernism that upset the crowd.[80] Indeed, rather than find Burke's use of nationalist rhetoric more inclusive, as Burke had hoped, it was his use of nationalism that the audience, including *New Masses* editor Mike Gold, found the most alienating. It is thus telling that Burke's address has been adopted by literary and cultural scholars as the theoretical blueprint of "social modernism," as it has shaped and in turn been shaped by the discourse around nationalism within the Popular Front. If one defines "social modernism" as a "national-popular" movement, key texts are thus remembered: John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," Dorothea Lange's FSA photography, and Paul Robeson's performance of "Ballad for Americans"—those texts that speak directly to the formation of a new national mythology. The misreading of the Writers' Congress rejection of Burke—as antimodernist rather than antinationalist—unfortunately reproduces one of the more lasting narratives of modernism and the Popular Front, and its most ugly political legacy, its nationalism.

We can think of "anti-imperialist modernism" as thus an attempt to re-make modernity by going through, rather than around, the modern categories of race, nation, and empire. As C. L. R. James described modern slaves and proletarians as violently "conscripted" by modernity, and Nez Perce anthropologist Archie Phinney came to argue that indigenous people had no choice but to take the ideas imposed upon them by modernity and convert them to their own purposes.[81] Native Americans, wrote Phinney, must claim for themselves and proudly inhabit their modern racial identity as "Indians" rather than as members of tribes, as it is only by doing so can they—like workers and like other people of color—attain political power. Modernity, as Phinney saw it, is a form of radical dispossession, yet one to which indigenous people may lay claim and which they must refashion in their own image to survive. Phinney's question, then, is not whether Indians can choose to be modern—they already are. It is how they may enter into relations with an imperial nation-state as "alert, modern communities, struggling for their own interests."[82] Like James's *Black Jacobins*, Phinney saw the violence and dislocations of modernity as also producing their opposite, a means toward a collective vision of self-determination. Langston Hughes's poem "Letter from Spain" "looked across to Africa" from Loyalist Spain and "seed foundations shakin'"—suggesting that the anti-imperialist struggle inside a fading colonial power has the possibly to free not only Spaniards but the entire colonial world.[83] We can think of Hughes's global vision—"seeing" both the metropole and the colony in a single act—as a liberatory version of Wilson's gaze across the Pacific at the San Diego shore, seeing the layers of imperial history through the future of Pacific conquest. Both acts of sight—critique and utopian possibility—are the coordinates of a radical anti-imperialist modernist vision.

The anti-imperialist character of 1930s modernism included but also went well beyond the writings of the African American intellectual and political community. Like Wilson's and Hughes's gaze into the "infinity" of the Western imperialism, Clifford Odets and Josephine Herbst traveled to Cuba to witness and document firsthand revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements as a way to call into question the limitations of a national framework for political writing. Like C. L. R. James's *Mariners* which celebrates the international proletariat aboard *Moby Dick*'s *Pequod*, Herbst also celebrates the multiracial "castaways" of Cuba's cooperative sugar plantation, Realingo 18, in a series of articles for the *New Masses* that later became her novel *Rope of Gold*. In fictional form, Odets creates a similar multiracial and anti-imperialist army in his unperformed play *Law of Flight* ("The Cuba Play"), based on revolutionary movements in Cuba. *Law of Flight* suggests that subjects on the colonial periphery may fulfill the promise of full democracy in a way the metropole cannot. *Law of Flight* also produces a radical estrangement for a U.S. reader, as Odets suggests that much of what "Americans" consider domestic—including what we eat—is constructed beyond the national borders and that U.S. citizens produce their national identity based on their presumed otherness from the countries U.S. financial capital directly or indirectly controls.

Part of what has obscured the transnational affiliations of the Popular Front, however, is that Europe was largely displaced as a site of identification. With the bold and crucial exception of Spain, European governments were either fascist or soon to become fascist; intellectual exiles for a change were steaming to New York, Havana, Leningrad, and Los Angeles rather than Berlin, Paris, or Rome. In this sense, the transnational character of the Popular Front was shaped as an identification and solidarity with what would come to be called the third world. Rather than, as Laura Doyle suggests, a modernism constructed between imperial capitals, such anti-imperialist modernism looks south and east not only in gestures of solidarity, but for another vision of modernity itself. James's *The Black Jacobins* situates anticolonial resistance within a much longer trajectory; it also locates the origins of the modern world in the colonial peripheries, naming the deracinated African slaves as the world's first modern proletariat. Fused with James's sensational style, *Jacobins* reorients modernity within an anti-imperialist modernism, that is, rewrites the modern world racially and spatially, locating the revolutionary future in the global South. In much the same way, Archie Phinney's and Langston Hughes's travels to the Soviet Union looked east to find another model for modernity not based on the racial hierarchies of the West, locating modernity within a revolutionary socialist project. Shifting their gaze away from Europe was not just a political act for these writers, it was also an attempt to construct a different path for modernity—an "attempt," wrote Phinney about the Soviet Union "of men to intelligently direct their own history"—precisely the goal of modernity itself.[84]

## Arise, the Transnational Working Class: The Making of an Anti-Imperialist Working-Class Culture

The idea of an international working class is, of course, not new. Recent studies of transnational culture often discount the importance of international socialist movements in shaping thinkers now considered central within a growing subcanon of transnational U.S. literature, including Langston Hughes, C. L. R. James, Américo Paredes, W. E. B. DuBois, and Carlos Bulosan. In the first half the 20th century, Communist parties, left unions, socialist publications, and other radical organizations provided the structure as well as the capital necessary to facilitate publications and arrange for travels; they also provided an intellectual paradigm in which to locate oneself within a global world. As one former Communist Party activist I interviewed in his late eighties explained, “You could be raised in the Bronx, show up in the Philippines, and without speaking a word of Tagalog or anything else, suddenly have hundreds of brothers in arms who would do anything for you.”[85] And yet socialist internationalism, with its emphasis on working-class movements, relations among states, and seizing state power, cannot necessarily account for or adequately describe the multiple hybrid points of identity shaped by migrant flows, contact zones, borderlands, or the way in which the unequal relationship between colony and center is key to the production of identity. As Donald Pease writes of C. L. R. James’s imprisonment on Ellis Island due to the Cold War’s “state of emergency,” James’s detention was a “colonial encounter” within the borders of the United States, neither between states nor within one.[86] As a deterritorialized subject, James belonged to neither class nor nation, but was rather with a “federation of diasporas,” a delocalized exile that belonged neither to one place nor another.[87]

Intellectuals and activists such as Salish author D’Arcy McNickle and Chicana labor organizer Emma Tenayuca both wrote that their racialized communities were able to neither constitute independent nations nor constitute abstract citizenship. For McNickle in particular, the Salish reservation was a site of racial violence, exile from which only meant another form of cultural death. In this sense, the reservation is constructed like James’s INS facility as deterritorialized space, neither within the nation nor independent from it, a site caught between a colonial history and a not-yet-becoming hybridity. As one of the tribal elders says in McNickle’s *The Surrounded*, “That’s the way it goes now; the old law is not used and nobody cares about the new.”[88] And yet for Nez Perce activist and intellectual Archie Phinney, this insight—that indigenous peoples are caught between a past they cannot revive and a modernity they cannot master—is his impetus to found the National Congress of American Indians and to travel to the Soviet Union to explore alternative modes of existence with modernity. Neither rooted to the West nor free of its legacy, Phinney looked to both global socialism and indigenous theories of self-determination to find a “way out” for tribes conscripted into modernity.

On the West Coast, the brutal history of California’s annexation became a crucial frame with which to narrate a violent wave of labor strikes in the agricultural fields of the San Joaquin Valley. Rather than interpret the conflict as solely a question of labor and capital, many, including Carlos Bulosan, Emma Tenayucam and Carey McWilliams, as well as anonymous writers and photographers for labor and socialist newspapers such as *Lucha Obrera*, *Agricultural Worker*, and *Western Worker* saw the pattern of landownership and vigilantism as a continuation of histories established by the seizure of the Southwest from Mexico in the 1840s. California as a space is thus rendered as a contact zone, a site of power not resolvable through the national-democratic means of citizenship. Many of the photographers and writers for labor and socialist newspapers explicitly tied the violence of the strikes to the violence of lynching, the occupation of the Philippines by the United States, and other imperial expressions of racial power. This narrative frame at once formed a counterdiscourse to the conservative sentimental nationalism of the New Deal, as well as reimagined labor in the U.S. West as inherently transnational, part of immigrant flows and colonial dislocations.

Indeed, the West became a major site of reevaluation in the 1930s. As Richard Slotkin notes in the third volume of his trilogy on the U.S. West, the high-budget film Western fell into a precipitous decline during the 1930s, to be replaced by the urban noble savage, the white-ethnic gangster.[89] Yet even as Slotkin suggests the A Western fell into decline, the emergence of the B Western focused on a West ruled by corrupt and powerful white men—“crooked bankers or politicians, or wealthy ranchers”—rather than “savage” Indians or desperate gangsters who must be subdued by the law.[90] This new West could be seen as a kind of anti-Turnerism, in which the individualistic “pioneer concept” is seen as merely the “saccharine frosting” to the “hysterical brutality” of conquest, or is transformed into a new collective man, as with John Steinbeck’s Tom Joad.[91] The blacklisted 1954 film *Salt of the Earth* was the culmination not only of the Popular Front anti-imperialist movement, but also of two decades of critical writing about the West. Taking place in rural New Mexico, Mexican and Native American miners constitute the collective center of the film, challenging the land theft, racism, individualism, and private property on which U.S. settler colonialism relied. In focusing on miners who embody the many dispossessions of Spanish colonialism, Manifest Destiny, and the Cold War, *Salt* undermines the “U.S. West” as a discrete place or concept. Prefiguring José David Saldívar’s *Trans-Americanity*, the film marks the West less as a finite place or privileged site of U.S. nation building, than as a marked sector within a hemispheric system of capital formation.[92] The many layers of development and dispossession in *Salt*—from the dispossessed Native American miners, to the Mexican American family on whose ranch the mine was illegally built, from the white sheriff and mine executive who speak the language of colonial paternalism and violence, to the image of the West as a hub within the Cold War expansion of capital during the Korean War—these many expressions of hemispheric capitalism are shown as simultaneous, transnational, and ongoing. There is little coincidence that the reemergence of the "West" as a site of cultural identification in the 1950s—with high-profile Westerns, a politicized suburbia, and the return to frontier narratives of expansion and conquest—coincides with the political defeat of the Popular Front, and the erasure of its more radical anti-imperialist wing.

Emma Tenayuca's 1939 essay "The Mexican Question in the Southwest" is perhaps the apex of theoretical writing on the U.S. West in the 1930s, fusing socialist internationalism and the transnational politics of the U.S./Mexico borderlands.[93] While Tenayuca is primarily remembered as a Tejana labor activist, her writings reflect a dual consciousness as one organizing simultaneously as a Mexican American and within movements that defined themselves as internationalist and working class. Published in *The Communist*, the Communist Party's theoretical journal, "The Mexican Question" positions the Mexican American population as an internally colonized people and calls for cultural as well as political and economic recognition. As she outlines the dispossession of Mexican land, the marginalization of Mexican culture, the policing of Mexican citizens regardless of citizenship status, the deportation of labor organizers, and the lack of political representation and economic opportunity, she makes the deliberate argument that Mexican Americans, like other colonized peoples, suffer repression as a whole people in both cultural and economic terms, outside of the safeguards of citizenship and nationhood at all levels of identity formation. Yet the article stops short of calling for an independent nation for Mexican peoples in the Southwest, and argues that the fate of working-class people, regardless of race, is inexorably linked. Thus the essay identifies her as a colonial subject, a subject in exile, at the same time that it calls for full democratic rights and an alliance across race and citizenship status. To claim to be a citizen and a colonial subject is not a contradiction, but rather a precise analysis of the liminal and transnational space of an empire within a nation.

In this sense, anti-imperialism is not merely another name for internationalism, yet it does not eclipse it either. This double dislocation of the national subject was a key part of constructing an anti-imperialist modernist vision of stateless and multiethnic solidarity. Rather than the cosmopolitanism of the previous generation of modern writers, the images of grotesque and often violated bodies framed modern exile as one that emerges within conditions of imperial violence. Yet as Pease points out, such statelessness may also presage a utopian future, a "federation of diasporas" that challenge state power in the name of a new collective vision. Anti-imperialist modernism includes both in its frame—the violence of the present and the possibility of a utopian future. We can think of anti-imperialist modernism as a kind of third term between the transnational and international—a utopian future in which to be both modern and free is no longer seen as a contradiction.

## Lost Texts, Rough Drafts, Unassembled Archives: The Transnational as Countermemory

As historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminds us, what is remembered in a historical narrative is largely a function of power. Exercise of power not only dictates what narratives will or will not remain within the public sphere, but what accumulates as "fact": archives, let alone histories, are produced at multiple points into which lasting and even permanent silences may be introduced.[94] The simple truth that one of the best single sources of information about the political, ethnic, and geographic depth and breadth of the Popular Front is the FBI's 1948 list of subversive organizations says much about how power has shaped the history of that particular movement. Perhaps because of this, much of the post–Cold War recovery has naturalized the Popular Front's own narrative about itself, developed at the same time most of its foremost figures were silenced, jailed, exiled, or forced to recant: that it was an "American" movement celebrating the United States' most egalitarian traditions. As the narrative of C. L. R. James's exile from the United States emphasized by Donald Pease suggests, not all subversions were blacklisted equally.

Numerous scholars of African American history, including Mary Dudziak, Glenda Gilmore, Penny Von Eschen, Thomas Borstelmann, and Carol Anderson, have noted that it was precisely the internationalism of the previous decade that the FBI and state department found so threatening. While mainstream rights organizations like the NAACP were able to gain short-term benefits from giving tacit support to U.S. foreign policy objectives, ultimately, these historians argue, this policy effectively severed black American struggle for civil rights from issues of anticolonialism and racism abroad. Indeed, as Penny Von Eschen points out, "race" and "racism" ceased to be, as they were earlier understood, global terms.[95] Labor underwent a similar revision of definition, as "international" unions and left political parties equally faced systematic repression, and international solidarity movements were shut down or reformulated to suit State Department and Pentagon needs, so much so that the AFL-CIO often became an active agent in CIA campaigns in Latin America, Africa, and eastern Europe. Travel itself became suspect; to the Soviet Union naturally, but also travel to Spain, to the Caribbean, to Latin America, China. Perhaps the most telling fact about the Cold War red scare is that the McCarran Act of 1950 not only revoked the passport and citizenship of anyone belonging to "subversive organizations," but tightened the alien exclusion and deportation laws to include "subversives" as well.

Of course, silence is not merely a negation; it is also generative. As Barbara Foley describes in *Wrestling with the Left*, Ralph Ellison did not merely efface his earlier commitments to the Left when he (re)wrote *Invisible Man*, they were refashioned into an entire discourse that privileged "complexity" over "reductionism," "ambivalence" over "commitment," "fluidity" over oppositional categories such as "race" or "class," embracing many of the Cold War narratives about socialism.[96] Early Cold War films repeatedly touched on Popular Front themes such as the dignity of labor, inter- and transnational solidarity, democracy, antifascism, and racial pluralism through Westerns such as *Shane* and *The Magnificent Seven*; latent anticommunist films such as *Viva Zapata!* and *On the Waterfront*; and epics such as *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben-Hur* to reinscribe such themes within a nationalist and patriotic frame. Film noirs such as *They Clash by Night*, *Asphalt Jungle*, and *Out of the Past* often represented such values only to suggest that they belong to a lost and nostalgized past, reimaging the Popular Front era as a white, rural, laboring subject, projecting a repressed utopian desire for the Lincoln Republic, for an age that now deems it out of reach. Even left-wing filmmakers such as Orson Welles recast anti-imperialist bonds of solidarity in films such as *Touch of Evil* and *The Lady from Shanghai* as sites of danger and/or forbidden desire.

Alan Wald refers to the process of external repression and internal revision as "deradicalization," the generative way in which conversions from left to right generate new narratives and new analyses.[97] One of the most surprising examples—if not the most telling—was blacklisted filmmakers Herbert Biberman and Paul Jarrico's heavily redacted *Salt of Earth.* A film that documents a miners' strike at the peak of the Cold War, it represents the resistance of a Mexican American community to the racism, sexism, and class oppression intensified by the onset of the Cold War's emergent security state. In addition to removing scenes that mineworkers felt either improperly portrayed their community or reinforced negative stereotypes (scenes of the lead mineworker drinking or having an affair, for instance), the committee also removed references to the anticommunism of local officials and the mine executives, as well as to references to the Korean War and U.S. imperialism. While no record is left as to exactly why these changes were made, it is likely that the pressures felt by civil rights activists and labor unions to prove their patriotism were also felt by the mineworkers' union, a union that had been recently thrown out of the CIO and repeatedly raided and redbaited by other unions for refusing to make its officers sign Taft-Hartley anticommunist oaths.

Examining the way in which even radical filmmakers and a left-wing union felt compelled to revise a film along less international lines powerfully suggests the way in which such international commitments of a previous generation were revised. Such a consistent and pervasive revision of the Popular Front not only reinforced state department and FBI suppression of left-wing internationalism, it reframed a particular memory of one of the most constitutive features of the Popular Front imaginary. The silence entered into the historical record of the Popular Front was, in a Foucauldian fashion, also a proliferation, not merely a repression.[98] By "remembering" the Popular Front as a lost Lincoln Republic, a reactionary figure such as Ronald Reagan may invoke heartland populism in the name of a more aggressive security and military state. In this way, he came to be seen by many left intellectuals as the inheritor of the Popular Front at the same time he set in motion the destruction of its remaining social legacy.[99]

In the context of Cold War repression, we can take such works as Michael Denning's *Cultural Front*, Barbara Foley's *Radical Representations*, and Robin Kelley's *Hammer and Hoe* as not merely new theories on the long 1930s, but the construction of a new archive, the interruption of the process of historical narrative. *Anti-Imperialist Modernism* is the attempt to produce a similar interruption in the historical sensibility of the 20th century. As Foley notes, written into much postmodern and New Left theory is a latent anticommunism. Yet also written into the assumptions of postmodern and post–New Left theory in the United States is the belief in social progress, that cultural and political movements in the United States have become *more* egalitarian, *more* transnational, *more* open to questions of difference, *more* sophisticated in the way questions of whiteness, empire, power, and sexuality are addressed. While there is no question that the United States has become more open to many questions of difference within the public sphere since the 1930s—especially along fault lines of race, sexuality, and domesticity—there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that contemporary social movements along questions of race, militarism, and empire have lost a focus on inter- and transnational solidarity, as well as institutional and material means to connect these issues to the daily lives of working people and the imaginary of artists and intellectuals.

*Anti-Imperialist Modernism* is thus in part a collection of lost texts—newspapers with brief print runs, pamphlets, rough drafts, and books long out of print that I hope can do more than simply fill in gaps in history. They are rather attempts to restore an entire web of connections, an imaginary of a generation of social and intellectual activists. That Cuba was a major site of the cultural imaginary of the 1930s is simply not available within the currently circulating texts from the 1930s. And yet the "darling of the Left" in the 1930s, Clifford Odets, visited Cuba as part of a delegation of activists, labor officials, and church groups; authored a pamphlet with well-known journalist Carleton Beals; and went on a speaking tour with ACLU president Roger Baldwin and poet Archibald MacLeish after his arrest by Cuban authorities, all of which became the basis for an unpublished play he worked on from 1936 to 1938. And Josephine Herbst's last novel in the Trexler trilogy, *Rope of Gold*, ends in Cuba, with the final chapters largely based on a series of articles she wrote for the *New Masses* about a revolutionary sugar cooperative in the Sierra Maestra. And the "Hands off Cuba" campaign staged rallies and passed local resolutions condemning U.S. intervention, after the election of Rámon St. Grau was met with U.S. warships and a velvet coup. Considering these facts also allows us to reconsider why the only novel Hemingway publicized as "political" was set in Cuba and the Florida Keys. Or more centrally to the multiethnic coalitions of the Popular Front, why Langston Hughes might credit his collaboration with Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén with changing his perspective on the global roots of African American poetry; or for Clifford Odets, why going to Cuba seemed a necessary part of his political awakening after he had already established himself as the preeminent playwright of the U.S. Left.

More than encourage us to reconsider a few authors, a site like Cuba alters the entire narrative of the Popular Front. Locating a site of political desire, multiethnic solidarity, and national critique outside of U.S. national borders in an unofficial colony of the United States does more than simply construct transcultural connections. It radically questions the national frame proposed by theorists like Kenneth Burke, and radically alters the cultural memory of the decade that is based on themes of national belonging. To locate a movement in Cuba is not to align with another country so much as to suggest the United States was always already there, and the colonies must be recognized and included. Much like C. L. R. James recentering the Enlightenment in the Haitian Revolution, so recentering an antifascist movement to the colonies suggests that "the fight for democracy" may indeed be the global fight against imperialism that begins not with European democracy but with European imperialism. For authors like Odets and Herbst as well, such works also crucially interrogate their own racial identities. Odets's "Cuba play" implicitly criticized the assimilation of Jewish Americans by questioning whether ethnic American dialect—so recognizable a part of the "new American culture" of the 1930s—may be part of the imperial project just as much as weapons or sugar. For Herbst, the last chapter of *Rope of Gold* is not just a statement of solidarity with Cuban socialists; it is also an excavation of her own family history intertwined with myths of Manifest Destiny. By going south to Cuba, she is forced to retrace her own family's footsteps from the West and confront her own implication in the U.S. imperial project.

*Anti-Imperialist Modernism* thus rethinks the intersecting histories of cultural modernism and the Popular Front, and in doing so, asks how these histories also help us to rethink the legacy of transnational and anti-imperialist thought in the United States. Framing such historical and cultural connections can help in the formation of a comparative multiethnic approach to U.S. literature, providing conceptual bridges among African American, Native American, Asian American, and Mexican American literatures, especially along shared lineages of empire and transnational racial affinities. Looking at the way in which African American writers and activists saw the Spanish Civil War in the context of European colonialism can help us to reconsider the ways in which people of color in the United States claimed the discourse of antifascism for their own critiques of Western empire: Mexican American antifascists who saw the agribusiness vigilantes within the tradition of U.S. colonialism of Mexican land, or Filipino American activists who saw the violence of the growers' associations in the light of the U.S. occupation of the Philippines. Tropes such as racial violence, migration, and militarism can also be seen as attempts to theorize the ways in which multiethnic literature and transnational anti-imperialism can be linked. Again, considering the violence in a novel like *Native Son* as a way to theorize African American nationalism has implications for how we read a Native American text like D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*.

For whatever faults and shortcomings the Popular Front period may have had, it should be remembered that it is to date the only U.S. social movement to raise an integrated socialist army to fight overseas—the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Yet the meaning of that event has still to be fully recovered. When the global justice movement exploded onto the streets of Seattle and into the public discourse over a decade ago, it was with optimism but also distress that the sudden focus on empire and the transnational flows of labor was perceived as "new." Or when activists traveled to Chiapas to work with the Zapatistas in the late 1990s, there was little if any memory of the decades of cross-border cultural and political exchange that had gone before. Considering anti-imperialist modernism as a possible site of past examples to learn from can guide current and future activists who wish to create bonds of solidarity across spatial and cultural borders. The absorption of postmodern organizing strategies, based on affinity groups, action networks, and social technologies, avoids many of the problems of hierarchy and statism of which Popular Front movements have been accused. Yet such strategies also construct the fiction of a permanent present, in which movements spring up as their own *causa sui*, without the need for a complex history or the difficulties of institutional presence. And yet the fiction of the political present is almost a necessity, considering the violence to history the Cold War security state has forced upon our cultural memory. While the transnational movements from the late 1920s to the Cold War were far from perfect, the scope, ambition, and the transformational power of the long Popular Front can be appreciated in the current absence of such movements. For cultural producers, considering the way these intellectuals imagined transnational bonds of affinity can provide examples and solutions for the representational problems of empire and spatial fragmentation that face us now.

Chapter 1 begins *Anti-Imperialist Modernism* with Clifford Odets's journey to Havana in 1935 to document labor abuses on U.S.-owned sugar plantations in Cuba, during which he was arrested before he even stepped onshore and was held for nearly two days in a military prison. As the most famous playwright of the 1930s and one of the founders of U.S. proletarian theater, that Cuba loomed large in his imagination—spurring him to write a play, numerous articles, and engage in a speaking tour—suggests a great deal about the prominence of anti-imperialist thought among the "populist" Left. Inspired by Cuba's long history of antiracist and anti-imperialist movements, Langston Hughes and Josephine Herbst also traveled to Cuba to envision a mestizo America based on egalitarian multiethnic solidarity—Herbst writing about socialist farming collectives on the island, and Hughes collaborating with Nicolás Guillén to formulate a postnationalist radical politics. For all three writers, Cuba emerged as a way to reconceive of their national and racial identities in relationship to a U.S. imperial project.

For a time at least, Odets engaged in a critical dialogue with what is his artistic calling card, U.S. white-ethnic identity, locating ways in which this ethnic Americanism so central to the "Age of the CIO" was conscripted into a U.S. colonial project. Herbst equally reconceives of her "American" identity, writing in *Rope of Gold* about how a "Mid-Western farm girl" could see that the same processes of capital accumulation that removed Native Americans and entrapped Cubans in poverty also ended up foreclosing her parents' farm. Rather than see Cuba as a site that she must "save" as an Anglo-American, she emerges with a narrative of self-reflexive mutuality and solidarity. For Hughes, traveling to Cuba culminates in a process that at once reaffirms his diasporic sense of racial identity—he sees the world through "negro eyes"—yet also destabilizes his faith in American-centered black nationalism. This dual racial sensibility, at once affirming a unique racial subjectivity while also denying it a privileged space, blood quantum, or body, echoes Paul Gilroy's formation of racial "routes" rather than "roots" and Michelle Anne Stephens's conception of an empowered black imaginary that has a hemispheric rather than national site of identification.[100]

In chapter 2 I consider how the large volume of texts in the 1930s and 1940s on the Haitian Revolution and the global protests over the imprisonment of Haitian novelist Jacques Roumain became a way to reorient, literally and figuratively, a modernist aesthetic that was formed on the backs of African bodies. By imagining African-descended bodies as the "other" to both modernism and modernity, modernist artists and intellectuals imagined an escape from the hyperrationality of modernity through an exoticized (and often eroticized) primitive body. C. L. R. James contradicts this "modernist primitivism" by locating the origins of modernity not in western Europe but in the colonies, and thus the African-descended slave as the "most modern" worker in an increasingly globalized proletariat. Deploying textual strategies of sensation, estrangement, dialectical imagery, and temporal dislocation, James authors the Haitian Revolution as a modernist text to reconstruct an anticolonial vision of "subaltern" modernity. Pairing James's text with Orson Welles's unmade *Heart of Darkness*, I examine how Welles reappropriates the "ur-text of modernism" to argue that fascism is not an aberration but rather the colonial logic of race and power collapsed back upon the metropole. Thus both texts locate the origins of modernity in the colonial project, and suggest that fascism—not democracy—is the end point of a modern world founded on exploitation and racial hierarchy.

Continuing to think about questions of modernity within the context of the U.S. empire, my third chapter engages with the way Native American radicals both incorporated and also reinvented ideas of radical modernity for their own claims of self-determination. Nez Perce anthropologist Archie Phinney traveled to the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s, looking as many writers and intellectuals of color did at the time for a modernity not based on the racial exclusions of the West. Examining his published and unpublished writings on the Soviet Union while he studied Soviet indigenous policy both in Leningrad and in Siberia, I suggest that Phinney, like many intellectuals of color in the 1930s, saw transnational socialism as a possible means to achieve both racial and national liberation, as well as a methodology to understand his contradictory relationship with the modern world. Putting Phinney's work in the context of both the small number of Native American Communists in the 1930s and other modern Native American writers such as D'Arcy McNickle, I suggest that an anti-imperialist modernism became the way for both to work through a modern social order that both excluded and yet demanded their presence. McNickle's 1936 novel *The Surrounded* focuses on a biracial character who is both a successful model of postcolonial hybridity and a victim of the racial-carceral state, staging a narrative of multicultural inclusion and white racial violence as simultaneous if unresolved outcomes to the new state apparatus of the New Deal. Rather than see Native American writing as separate from political movements of the 1930s, I argue that both writers were crucially informed by other socialist and minority discourses on black nationalism and alternative modernities. Or rather, for victims of U.S. empire, the national is always already the transnational.

In Chapters 4 and 5 I think about how concepts of Manifest Destiny were thoroughly revised in the 1930s. Focusing on social movements and representations of California, I explore how visual and literary stagings of sensational racial violence in California were employed to critique the sentimental nationalism of John Steinbeck and the Farm Security Administration photographs of Dorothea Lange. Employing photographs of "terror" in English- and Spanish-language labor and socialist newspapers such as *Lucha Obrera* and *UCAPAWA News*, these photographs linked acts of violence against farmworkers in the United States with antifascist and anti-imperialist struggles abroad. Such images formed a central counterdiscourse to the patriarchal and nationally and racially bound images produced by the Farm Security Administration and Hollywood film studios. And like the play authored by Odets, these images of violated and wounded bodies created a sensational and experimental language to describe transnational affiliations and bodies, linking violence in the United States to colonialism abroad.

Rather than read California as part of the American nation, I continue in the following chapter to focus on the way three intellectuals, Emma Tenayuca, Carey McWilliams, and Carlos Bulosan framed the state as imperial space, a site of conflict intersected by transnational flows of capital and labor. Bulosan constructs California through travel, writing of the contact with the Pacific Ocean as a continuous imperial arc of U.S. power that stretches from Washington, D.C., to the Philippines. For McWilliams and Tenayuca, California and the Southwest are still "outposts of empire," to use McWilliams's phrase, in which the conquest of Mexico and the industrial scope of agriculture function to render the "Lincoln Republic" of a producers' democracy impossible. This visual and rhetorical system of representation allowed both English- and Spanish-language activists in California to link their local struggles with struggles by connecting forms of violence directed against workers in the United States with those inflicted on raced subjects abroad. In doing so, these writers, activists, and scholars produced a transnational, modernist subject that shared a common history united through dislocation, migration, and rupture.

Chapter 6, my final chapter, investigates the way the Cold War both suppressed and reshaped the public imaginary of the transnational Popular Front, using film to explore the production of a sanitized, nationalist 1930s nostalgia. My argument centers on archived revisions of the blacklisted film *Salt of the Earth*, citing the way the constraints of the Cold War limited what was initially a film that was transnational in scope. Thus we can consider the ways the Cold War erased the anti-imperialist commitments of the Popular Front era through HUAC and other state and corporate apparatuses, and we can see how the very adherents of the movement themselves rewrote Popular Front to defend against attacks of "un-Americanness." I also argue that film noir, while critical of Cold War domesticity, reified a conservative vision of the Popular Front era, often by representing Popular Front themes of labor, collectivity, and anticapitalist modes of existence as sealed off in the past or as fragments of an agrarian American past.

At stake is a historical question about the meaning of the Popular Front as a political and aesthetic movement. Rewriting the cultural history of the 1930s and 1940s allows us to consider both the lineages and the precursors of current left movements, suggesting ways in which the Occupy Wall Street movement and opposition to the Iraq War and the World Trade Organization may have broadened analysis in some areas while narrowing them in others. Such a reading also allows for often isolated or differentiated strands of analysis—the literary, the political, race, capitalism, the nation—to be placed within the pressure and test of political praxis. And recovering such movements also allows us to consider larger questions about the meaning of empire, precisely as many of the intellectuals and activists in this era were debating whether empire was reducible to capitalism; if fighting racism was equivalent to or a precursor to fighting empire; if the changing role of the U.S. empire in the 20th century required different strategies of resistance; if there is a privileged body or site of resistance; what role the Left plays in national liberation movements and Native American self-determination—questions we are still grappling with seventy years later. That these questions were spoken through the language of transnational socialism, Marxism, and the lived experience of the Soviet Union doesn't suggest that they are better questions, just perhaps different ones than are commonly asked today, and thus provocative. And the same could be said for modernism—that it was an artistic language of global liberation can suggest a more dialectical approach toward art and literature, and ask us if other aesthetic movements can also be seen as products of and responses to their imperial context.

# 1 • This Land Is My Land

## Cuba and the Anti-Imperialist Critique of a National-Popular Culture in the United States

In 1935, Clifford Odets was imprisoned by the Cuban national police. As perhaps the most famous playwright in the United States at the time and often cited as the "darling of the Left," Odets was elected as the chair of the American Commission to Investigate Social Conditions in Cuba in order to publicize the labor conditions on U.S.-financed sugar plantations.[1] The group included veterans of the Spanish-American War, representatives from churches, socialist parties, labor unions, and antiwar groups, and they departed with great fanfare from New York City for what was to be a week of publicity tours on the island. Held by armed guards and refused consular attention, communication, or food for over twenty-four hours while being watched by an entire company of soldiers, Odets later reported that it was the experience of seeing the U.S. consular representative collude with the Cuban authorities to detain the delegation that led him several years later to write "The Cuba Play," a feature-length production set in Havana. Finished in 1938 for the Group Theatre, it was never performed or published. While there is no one clear reason why the play disappeared—although the Group Theatre's lack of funds, Odets's uneasiness with its perceived faults, and Cuba's official status as an "ally" in World War II have been offered as answers—the play's first act gives insight into what it meant for the United States' preeminent proletarian playwright to set a story in Cuba.

Titled after Cuba's *ley de fuga* in which the National Police or *porra* reserved the right to shoot anyone resisting arrest, the play centers on the life and death of Antonio Lorca, a Cuban revolutionary figure recently released from prison. "A Cuban Tom Mooney," as Odets writes in his treatment, Lorca struggles to form a Popular Front social movement against a corrupt

U.S.-backed regime, until he is finally betrayed by an old college friend and shot by the National Police.[2] In the period between Lorca's release and his final execution, the play introduces us to the multiracial movement built by Lorca's organization, Young Cuba, which attempts to enlist broad working-class and international support for the organization. The play also includes long monologues and scenes featuring otherwise peripheral figures who represent various levels within the power structure that governs life on the island: U.S. businessmen, criollo liberals, arms traders, informants, and fascist police offers.

Yet the play does not begin its mise-en-scène in Havana. In a rare move by a cultural movement that prized the conceits of realism, "The Cuba Play" opens with a remarkable scene that draws into sharp relief the contours of literary production in the 1930s and its often complicated and contradictory engagement with the politics of U.S. anti-imperialism. Beginning in New York City, we are introduced to a left-wing writer who is listening to a "pitch" by two exiled Cuban revolutionaries who are staying with him. The Cubans want a play about their national hero, Lorca, and the writer—something of a stand-in for Odets himself—becomes increasingly impatient with their demands. He argues that he has no time, that he's under no obligation to write anything for anyone, that during the Depression there is no privileged site of suffering, until he finally erupts:

> AUTHOR: Why not? I'll tell you why not. . . . What do I know about Cubans? I'm a New York man: I walk down the street and I tell you everything. I look at a face and I know them all. I know how he speaks, the American male. I know what he reads, what he eats, how he works. I know his opinions, I know his language. He's got a wife—I know her. He doesn't like the boss—I'll tell you why. I'm up on that—I know that stuff. They go in the cafeterias—I know what they eat. What the hell does a Cuban eat—I don't know. I'm not a Cuban. Chekhov wrote about Russians. He was a Russian. Ibsen wrote about Swedes. He was a Swede. I'm an American—I write about that. I want you to go home. Go to your committee. Tell them what I said. Miss Upjohn is going to make out a check for a hundred dollars.[3]

The Author's speech suggests an interesting set of epistemological limitations around the nature and purpose of social realism in the 1930s. Given that Odets was considered, both in retrospect and at the time, the preeminent writer of realist drama of the Depression, his representational claims are more than just the idiosyncrasy of a particular writer.[4] Central to the Author's claim of authenticity as a writer is the sensual knowledge of the world about which he writes. To "know" about New Yorkers, the Author goes for a "walk down the street" to "look at a face": both the interaction and the process of seeing are registered as necessary in order to understand the social and political world of his subject.

As Amy Kaplan writes in *The Social Construction of American Realism*, realism was imagined by its 19th-century practitioners to be a genre that mediated between classes that were bound by spatial and national proximity. As a self-consciously democratic genre, realism represents an ocular world in which the members can and often do confront one another on the historical stage and, as importantly, on Main Street.[5] While the realism of the 20th century is far less self-consciously middle class than in the era of William Dean Howells and Mark Twain and far more integrated within mass-culture industries, the set of shared assumptions and lineages are profoundly similar.[6] The attention to minute detail, the position of an omniscient narrator who can see into bedrooms and minds, and the emphasis on Howells's "phrase and carriage of everyday life" in the public spaces of "streets" and "cafeterias" suggest that Odets intends his Author to be very much self-consciously within the tradition laid out by a previous generation of socially progressive writers. A few moments later in the conversation, the Author compares his work to "poetic plays" for which the writer only needs "to know a man's a hero, nothing else"—not, as he demands, what "a man eats for dinner."[7]

While the Author does eventually write his play for the Cuban revolutionaries, he tries to make clear that his objections are not political. He offers to give the activists money, says that he understands that "such a play is needed," and adds that "he likes" that the two men have been sleeping at the Author's house for the past three weeks, and also "likes" that he and the Cubans are "anti-fascists together."[8] In many ways, their political relationship embodies the many cross-race and internationalist relationships of the Popular Front, joined by a concern for labor and democracy, as well as a global imaginary that saw imperialism and fascism as intrinsically linked. The implication that the two Cuban revolutionaries would have an automatic home, and the relationship of "smoking cigars and drinking rum while talking politics" that the Author wishes to maintain, suggest the common—if now often forgotten—bonds bridged across spatial, territorial, racial, and imperial boundaries that often connected movements.

What is thus significant is the extent to which realism is posed here as a genre of *national* belonging. The Author poses his intimate knowledge of New York working-class life—people who have bosses and eat in cafeterias—

against "poetic plays" of worlds he doesn't know: the other nations of Sweden, Russia, and Cuba. Realism, argues the Author, is a national project, one based on the imaginary community of a coherent people who share a set of culturally specific values, habits, and language that are not easily translatable without site-specific knowledge. The revolutionaries' answer suggests that they disagree less with the aesthetic prescriptions of realistic drama—they offer to tell the Author what their hero eats (rice and beans)—than with the political and cultural implications of the Author's art. The two Cubans point to a candy the Author unwraps, and tell him that the sugar produced for his candy was not only made in Cuba, but on a farm owned by U.S. financial interests. In this way, the two Cubans destabilize the presumption of knowledge articulated by the Author: He does not "know" where his food comes from or how it is produced, or anything about the international connections and entanglements of the nation he proposes to represent that are part of sugar's production. The Cubans suggest the way in which the U.S. empire destabilizes regimes of knowledge necessary for the realist project that equates a coherent and unified "people" with the discursive boundaries of the nation.

In complicating the relationship among genre, literature, and U.S. empire, Odets joined several other artists who traveled to Cuba in the 1930s. Four of the most famous, and perhaps representative, writers of the 1930s spent time in Cuba between 1927 and 1939: Josephine Herbst, Clifford Odets, Ernest Hemingway, and Langston Hughes. While their collective accounts differ in important ways, Cuba became a way for all four to narrate their relationship to the United States and their identities as subjects of a sovereign empire. For Odets, Herbst, and Hughes, Cuba offers a problem of representation and forces them into a self-conscious relationship to their own work and their role as writers—creators, one could say—of representative acts, acts that are to represent a particular political and literary constituency. This question of the dual meaning of representation is drawn most forcefully in Odets's "The Cuba Play" by the demand of the Cuban independence activists for a play about their leader. Yet the question of representation also forces Hughes and Herbst to consider the ways in which their work was based on racial and imperial notions of U.S. citizenship. For Ernest Hemingway, the novel *To Have and Have Not* was his one attempt, in his own words, to write a social protest fiction. At the same time, the novel is deeply implicated in reifying the racial, national, and gendered identities produced by the U.S. hegemonic domination of Latin America. In doing so however, Hemingway's text reveals the centrality of empire and race in the production of a white working-class subject. And all of these texts reveal the extent to which imperialism shapes the literary field in the 1930s, and the way its articulation in U.S. national discourse disrupted U.S. claims about itself as a democratically defined republic. All works, even those that tacitly embrace conceits of U.S. empire, reveal the generic considerations of the Popular Front as ones that demand both a national and a postnational imaginary. The question of realism, therefore, is also the question of who will be represented as "Americans": "Americans" who are citizens or, as these authors suggest, all those within the range of U.S. imperial sovereignty.

For many of these writers, Cuba became an important site in an antiracist, Popular Front social imaginary. Inspired by Cuba's long history of antiracist, anti-imperialist nationalism, Odets and Herbst saw in the progressive movements an alternative to a racially bound U.S. nationalism as well as a model for multiracial and transnational movements in the United States. As historian Ada Ferrer writes in her history of the Cuban insurgency against Spanish colonial rule, "racial equality" was a "foundation of the Cuban nation" against a slaveholding Spanish empire.[9] Not only did Cuban nationalism pose an alternative to a racial nationalism of the United States, but the insurgency itself presented a model of a "mulitracial fighting force that was integrated at all ranks."[10] At a time in which the U.S. military was still segregated and the AFL was only beginning to consider integrating its own locals, such an army provided an important historical model for movements in the United States, underscoring the urgency of breaking racial barriers for a resurgent labor movement within the left wing of the CIO. Equally, the play can be read as an allegory and celebration of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, as the racially integrated and trans-American Young Cuba bears many striking resemblances to the International Brigades of Spain. Herbst writes of the racially integrated sugar workers' commune of Realengo 18 that crucially dated its deed to the land they worked to the Ten Year's War settlement with the Spanish and thereby suggests another possible outcome for the South's ongoing problem of tenant farming and debt peonage.

Additionally for Odets, Cuba stands as a site of racial defamiliarization. While Odets and other white-ethnic American writers like Louis Adamic, James Farrell, and Nelsen Algren actively wrote and campaigned against racism in the name of multiethnic working-class culture, many of these writers themselves were embodiments of class advancement for certain segments of the working class. Odets was hailed by a *Time* magazine cover story as the new American voice in theater, the tellingly labeled "white hope."[11] Yet the "whiteness" of Jews and other "white ethnics" was provisional at best during the 1930s. As Michael Rogin points out, the "whiteness" of Jewish Americans was constructed in relation to African Americans and often at their expense.[12] Odets was highly aware of the way ethnic outsiders were encouraged to participate in racialized structures of power in order to secure class advancements to end their own racial persecution. Odets's story, from outsider to ultimate insider, from a conception of Jewish American culture that was seen as foreign to one increasingly interpreted as an example of the expanding middle class, is a kind of metonym for the process of inclusion itself. As Michael Denning writes, these "second generation immigrants" were the center of the Popular Front movement, and as Matthew Frye Jacobson reminds us, despite some of their best efforts, they became its most visible beneficiaries.[13] We can thus read Odets's decision to go to Cuba, and his subsequent difficulty writing a play based on his feelings of solidarity with the Cuban revolutionaries, as an attempt to further expand the fight against racism within his work and, as importantly, his life. Yet as his own work in Hollywood—which I will discuss in greater detail below—attests, such attempts also met with larger structures of racialization from which Odets would ultimately not be able to escape.

Langston Hughes's experiences in Cuba are more ambivalent. Hughes presents Cuba as a place in which African American writers and intellectuals can receive recognition that is denied them in the United States. He also represents Cuba as a site from which U.S. imperialism can be denaturalized. Rather than seeing U.S. race relations as inevitable, Hughes's engagement with Cuba's mestizo culture offers Hughes an implicit contrast to the more rigid racial lines in the United States. Subverting the colonial trope of the "metropole" exporting "civilization," Hughes notes that the most visible import from the United States is segregation: beaches and other vacation facilities segregated at the request of white tourists who use them. Yet Hughes is also skeptical of the claims made by largely mestizo and creole Cuban nationalists about the color blindness of Cuba. While Hughes emphasizes the respect for Afro-Cuban and mestizo culture in Cuba, he also recognizes the limits of Cuba's "race blindness." He observes that most property is held by white creoles, and most government positions and even opposition parties are run by whites or light-skinned mestizos, while many ordinary Cubans find these implicit racial hierarchies to be "natural." Cuba for Hughes emerges as a site of both belonging and homelessness, and I would argue his ambivalence acts to undermine *both* U.S. and Cuban claims to equality. Yet Cuba is also key for Hughes, and it is not an accident that he begins his transnational journey there in *I Wonder as Wander.* While he may feel disappointed by the mulatto elite, he also breaks with the Harlem Renaissance formula of race/roots for a far more transnational vision of race and rootlessness.

As much as Cuba becomes a site of a Popular Front political imaginary, there was still a great deal of disagreement on the left about the best way to build an international, multiethnic socialist movement. Odets's Author becomes a kind of stand-in for a range of Popular Front positions promoted by intellectuals within the Communist Party. The same year Odets began taking notes for the play, there emerged a heated debate within Popular Front literary circles about the roles of nationalism and genre for committed writers. Inspired by the Comintern's statement that the Communist Party should forge alliances with left-liberal groups to fight fascism, the party responded to a deep desire in progressive circles to find a common front to fight growing threats in Europe. This turn had drastic implications for cultural production, both within and outside of party circles. In Kenneth Burke's famous address to the American Writers' Congress, he argues that revolutionary writers should "borrow the advantages of nationalistic conditioning" and replace the international, Marxist language of "workers" with the "folk" expression of "the people."[14] This shift from internationalism to nationalism also coincided with U.S. Communist Party chairman Earl Browder's phrase, "Communism is 20th century Americanism," in which he argued that Marxism is the realization of a country's cultural heritage.[15] Likewise, the pages of the *Daily Worker* began running weekend inserts about the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and Sitting Bull as examples of the progressive, even revolutionary heritage of a uniquely American tradition, replacing the earlier internationalist Soviet iconography of Lenin, Marx, and Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern Communist parties around the world. As Burke argues in his address and as is clear from other CP publications, national cultural heritage was to be deployed strategically as a way to "appeal through inclusion" to a broader swath of the culture while at the same time challenging both the limits and the assumptions of national identity.[16] Still, markers of national unity at socialist and labor gatherings were hard to miss: the "Star Spangled Banner" replaced the "Internationale" at Communist Party national conventions and leading left intellectuals like Granville Hicks and Louis Adamic and the Federal Writers Project published books entitled *I Like America*, *My America*, and *American Stuff*, all attempts in one way or another to render a multiethnic socialist United States within an American grain.

For those interested in questions of empire, the problem was as much one of patriotism as geography. As Michael Denning notes, there was a renewed desire to take up "American subjects and themes" working on the "chords of 'native' and 'ground'"—including such titles as John Dos Passos's *The Ground We Stand On*, Alfred Kazin's *On Native Grounds*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Paul Strand's *Native Land*, Louis Adamic's journal *Common Ground*, and his memoir, *The Native's Return*.[17] The focus on "land" and "ground" means, as Odets's Author points out, the imaginary of intimacy and physical geographical proximity is necessary for cultural production. The nation in many ways became one of the primary touchstones for imagining revolutionary struggle, and indeed, became part of a radical common sense as a way to find solidarity with common people. As Meridel Le Sueur writes of her decision to stay in the Midwest, she contrasts herself to other writers who go to "Paris or Morocco or Venice," and vows to remain in the United States instead, "staying with you, bent upon understanding you, bringing you to life."[18] This progressive evocation of the nation makes an aesthetic of working-class political commitment depend on remaining in the United States and attempting to salvage a progressive meaning from its inherited mythology.

Given that the Popular Front era is often remembered for its folk nationalism, Americana, and populism, the international concerns of central Popular Front figures like Odets, Hughes, and Herbst complicate dominant memories of 1930s culture. Woody Guthrie's famous ballad "This Land Is Your Land" is often taken, as Michael Denning notes, as symbolic shorthand for the entire movement, and became a kind of alternative national anthem—one that emphasized a broad, working-class sensibility of national belonging. Key to the ballad's meaning is the ability for the narrator to see and move from one end of the country to the other. However, the centrality of sites like Cuba, which are not officially part of the United States and yet remain within U.S. circuits of capital and political control, troubles such evocations of a unitary and contiguous republic. Acts of transnational solidarity decenter the "nation" as the primary site of identification for these cultural workers.

For despite these signature "nationalist" works of the Popular Front, the movement was constitutively internationalist in outlook and action. The same year that Burke issued his address at the American Writers' Congress, Odets, as representative of the same organization, chaired a Provisional Committee for Cuba charged with investigating conditions under the Mendieta-Batista regime. The Provisional Committee ran its own weekly newspaper, *Cuban News Week*, and put out a 1935 pamphlet authored by Odets with the help of well-known Latin America journalist, Carleton Beals, entitled *Rifle Rule in Cuba*, in which Odets called for an end to U.S. imperialism and detailed the ways in which his imprisonment was facilitated by U.S. attaché Jefferson Caffrey. The commission sent by the Provisional Committee read like a cross section of the Popular Front: it included representatives from the Food Workers Industrial Union, the American League Against War and Fascism, the National Students League, the American League of Ex-Servicemen, the Congregationalist Church of New York, the Commission on the Condition of Negroes in Cuba, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the All-Americas Anti-Imperialist League, the Unemployed Teachers' Association, the International Workers' Order, and the International Labor Defense (ILD).[19] After his return to the United States, Odets immediately went on a speaking tour with members of the Communist Party as well as prominent liberals such as poet and congressional Librarian Archibald MacLeish and Roger Baldwin, the chair of the ACLU.[20]

As part of a larger anti-imperialist movement in the United States that at its height saw millions of students strike against militarism and imperialism and counted over three million members of the anti-imperialist League Against War and Fascism, Cuba held a special place in the imaginary of writers and journalists. *Problems of a New Cuba* by the Foreign Policy Association, *The Crime of Cuba* by Carleton Beals and Walker Evans, *Our Cuban Colony* by Leland Jencks, and *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press* by Joseph Wisan were all published within a year of each other, while "Rifle Rule in Cuba" and the ILD booklet "Blood on the Sugar" came out within months of each other. An earlier pamphlet by the Anti-Imperialist League, "Who Fights for a Free Cuba," also circulated widely.[21] Ernest Hemingway, Josephine Herbst, Langston Hughes, and Clifford Odets were some of the major writers who based works on social movements on the island. *The New Masses* ran several front-page special issues on Cuba, including one authored by Josephine Herbst, "The Soviet in Cuba," about her reportage in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra with an interracial collective of former sugar workers. And the antifascist journal *Fight*, the publication of the League Against War and Fascism, also carried numerous articles and editorials denouncing U.S. intervention in Cuba. On the ground, the "Hands off Cuba" campaign led local protests and won resolutions in town governments to oppose U.S. intervention, especially during the short-lived Ramón Grau San Martin government.[22]

While Haiti, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Nicaragua all had anti-imperialist or independence movements that attracted public support, Cuba remained pressing, in the popular imagination, as the United States' largest unacknowledged colony. As historian Louis Perez writes, the history of Cuba has been very much shaped by how the United States chooses to represent itself as both a benevolent world power and a republican democracy. The narrative of the Spanish-American War, told as a "selfless struggle" to "liberate the Cubans from the 'yoke of Spanish tyranny' and set them on the road to 'mature self-governance,'' is central to ideas about U.S. nation-formation in the 20th century.[23] Not only is there a racial logic implicit in the assumption that the mestizo nation cannot govern itself, according to Perez, the U.S. narrative of

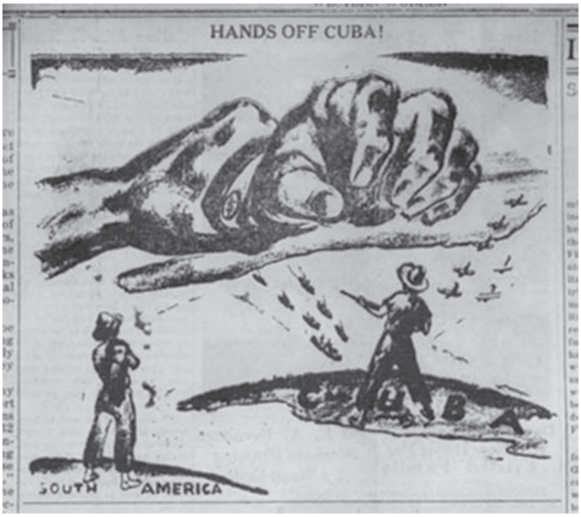


Fig. 3. "Hands off Cuba!" (*Western Worker*, September 25, 1933. Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

benevolence is further constructed on the absence in U.S. historiography of Cubans' own role in the island's liberation from the Spanish. The absence includes exclusion of Cubans from key roles in the final battles of the war, the treaty ceding Cuba from Spanish to U.S. hands, and the real meaning of the Platt Amendment. All of these points contradicting the U.S. narrative were deliberately obscured or deleted from discussions of the island. As opposed to the long and bloody occupation of the Philippines, resistance movements in Haiti and Nicaragua, or continued colonization of Puerto Rico, Cuba was supposed to stand out as a counterexample of U.S. benevolence, moral and racial superiority, and democratic virtue.

Despite or perhaps because of this, U.S. finance capital controlled both the sugar and tobacco industries as well as the major sources of hard currency in the island other than tourism, either through financing or absentee landholdings.[24] As Marifeli Perez-Stable writes, U.S. finance capital owned half the sugar mills in Cuba and over half of the cultivated land.[25] Thus Cuba, more than any other country in Latin America, revealed that the Good Neighbor Policy had failed to change U.S. imperial and hegemonic relations in the region. In Mexico, Nicaragua, and Haiti, it was possible to show that the United States had either removed troops by 1934 or had resisted the exhortations of investment capital to intervene when the Cardenas government nationalized Mexican oil production. The election of Ramón Grau, a progressive reformer who promised to legalize labor unions and tax foreign exports, brought swift U.S. intervention and the threat to land U.S. Marines;

Balthaser, Benjamin. *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture From the Great Depression to the Cold War.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7381040.

equally, it was broadly acknowledged that the hated Mendieta-Batista regime had U.S. support.[26] Economically, New Deal reforms in the United States, such as agricultural subsidies and the stability of the banking sector, were designed to keep Cuba in a state of dependency both for the maintenance of markets for U.S. goods and for flows of finance capital needing profitable investment.

According to Beals and Odets, what the Roosevelt government brought Cuba was in many ways simply a more sophisticated form of colonial control that relied on empty practices of sovereignty. Despite the overturning of the Platt Amendment, Batista, with the support of the United States, engineered puppet presidents throughout the 1930s, giving the necessary veneer of democracy.[27] As Beals reports in "Rifle Rule in Cuba," and as Odets includes in his play, the most galling for the U.S. solidarity movement was the fraudulent petition delivered to Roosevelt with 300,000 signatures in support of the Batista government, to which Roosevelt responded without irony that it was a "splendid demonstration" of what the Good Neighbor Policy could inspire.[28] The title of Odets's play is a reference to the new rule of law under Batista, the *Ley de Fuga*, in which political prisoners could only be shot if they were caught trying to escape—and of course, this was claimed any time a body showed up in the street with bullets in its back.[29] The *Ley de Fuga* or "law of flight" acted as a symbol for the way in which the new liberal foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration enabled and even intensified the colonial brutality of Cuba's comprador government. Thus the retort of the Cuban revolutionaries who ask the Author to write a play, that they live under a "New Deal of terror," is more than just a way of contrasting life in the United States with life in Cuba, for it calls attention to the way in which the New Deal itself was predicated on imperial alignments.[30] Cuba serves as a kind of shorthand for transformations in imperialism that work not only through changes in administration but through changes in U.S. foreign policy as well. In the same way that antilynching campaigns served to highlight how liberal progress during the New Deal era produced an ever-returning same for many African Americans, so, too, the claims to the universality of democracy and self-determination were exposed as another conceit of modernity by these activists and writers.

The selection of Cuba as a site to represent U.S. citizens has implications not only for U.S. national identity but also for relationships to the Americas broadly conceived. In the collection *José Martí's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies*, the editors single out Cuba as a site of transnational cultural formations that privilege hybrid and diasporic views of culture over an Anglo-American view of monolithic national origins. They cite Cuba's nationalism from the Ten Years' War to post-Castro formations as a mestizo and mulatto racial formation, a "borderlands" of cultural interaction among the Spanish, Native American, and English peoples of the Western Hemisphere.[31] Likewise, in Janice Radway's 1998 presidential address to the American Studies Association, she argues for the centrality of José Martí's essay "Nuestra America" for rethinking a "different America, the America of those who claimed South and Central America, the America of the Caribbean basin, as their home," including Haiti and Cuba as "sites of important revolutionary movements opposing European *and* United States imperialism."[32] Thus it's clear that these writers' choice of Cuba as central to their political and cultural work does more than simply recenter a cultural movement that sought to gain legitimacy by embracing elements of U.S. national culture. In greater and lesser terms, these writers, with the exception of Hemingway, sought to privilege an alternate form of national definition that critiqued the United States as an empire. As importantly, they also made multiethnic Cuban nationalism a model for their own social movements. In other words, these writers were part of a movement that tried to make transnational cultural connections as part of a self-consciously revolutionary project of international liberation. As a consequence, they self-consciously raised questions about the meaning of national identity within transnational bonds of affinity. Cuba thus offers to U.S. Popular Front writers both a site of racialized, spatial dis-ease with the political frame of the nation and a site of new forms of solidarity. The only way to "see" the United States and understand its role in identity formation, their writings suggest, is to radically alienate oneself from the origins of the Lincoln Republic and the myth of U.S. populist democracy.

For the authors I will discuss in this chapter, Clifford Odets, Langston Hughes, Ernest Hemingway, and Josephine Herbst, Cuba emerges as a site that threatens to destabilize cultural modes of representation, the left project of what Michael Denning refers to as the "national-popular," a progressive, even revolutionary, politics that exists within and attempts to reform the national definition.[33] Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* defines the U.S. working class both racially and nationally, foreclosing any bond of solidarity among workers outside the United States, but in doing so, reveals many of the national boundaries around which visions of labor and struggle are defined: Cuba is that which must be contained in Hemingway's "social protest" novel of the working class in order for the fiction of their whiteness to be maintained. Odets, Herbst, and Hughes use the same basic structure of Popular Front narrative, opening from a point of view that recognizes the United States as the immediate frame of reference—and yet that does so to draw attention to the limitation and artificiality of such a frame.

Looking first at Odets's antifascist "yellow peril" film *The General Died at Dawn*, one can draw a contrast between the "internationalism" of the Hollywood Popular Front and the anti-imperialist Popular Front of the Group Theatre. Herbst's novel *Rope of Gold* features Victoria Chance, the daughter of pioneers turned revolutionaries, to untangle the imperial lineages of her own family's journey west. As importantly, she articulates Cuba as a site of multiethnic or mestizo racial formation as against the racially bound United States. For Langston Hughes, Cuba marks the beginning of an exploration of the diasporic meanings of race in *I Wonder as I Wander* and allows him to examine the ways in which the United States shapes his experience in the West Indies as a raced subject, as well as how easy binaries between black and white break down in the complex racial formations of the island.

In this way, these four authors also suggest that Cuba destabilized the *literary* narrative as well. For Odets, his position as a social realist must be reexamined as Cuba reveals the national limits of his genre. For Hughes, the instability of the category of race also played an important role in his changing poetics of the 1930s and 1940s. Ultimately, the presence of Cuba in all of these Popular Front narratives, outside of the borders of the United States and yet cited within circuits of U.S. capital, ownership, trade, and tourism, explodes the republican ideal advocated and memorialized by Guthrie's song, as the "land" in Cuba neither "belongs to you and me" nor is visible within the ocular sensibility that locates the migrant/viewer within the home-space of the nation.

## Mr. Odets Goes to Hollywood: Antifascism as Racial Masquerade

At the same time Odets worked on drafts of "The Cuba Play," he wrote the Hollywood script for a film that also takes place outside U.S. borders and features an underground organization working to overthrow a tyrant: Lewis Milestone's *The General Died at Dawn.*[34] The film and play, about underground revolutionaries and popular revolt and at great pains to construct their conflicts as against global fascism, act as doubles of each other, suggesting contrary and contradictory meanings of Popular Front internationalism and its relationship to U.S. imperialism. *The General Died at Dawn* celebrates the heroism of John O'Hara, an "American abroad," posing his U.S. ethnic American working-class democratic values as against those of Western businessmen, Chinese warlords, and European fascists. Yet implicit in the democratic activism of O'Hara is the Orientalist assumption, backed by cues, traditional dress, and the Asiatic despotism of General Yang, that modernity can only be achieved by U.S. intervention.

While the film was nominated for several Academy Awards, Odets's "The Cuba Play" would be canceled by the Group Theatre. "The Cuba Play" poses an inverse relationship of the United States to the world—rather than "democracy activists" abroad, "The Cuba Play" suggests that U.S. interests keep Cuba in a state of dependency, indicting the cultural, economic, and political control the United States has over the island. The United States is presented as a promoter of pornography, racism, sexual tourism, political fraud, violence, and a plantation-style economy that maintains its hold on the island through antilabor violence: in short, "The Cuba Play" frames the United States as an imperial power and is a call to arms against a U.S.-backed puppet regime. While *The General Died at Dawn* was a large-budget Paramount film and "The Cuba Play" a response to a grassroots movement that was scheduled for New York's radical Group Theatre, the fact that both spoke a Popular Front lexicon of internationalism, global solidarity, and revolution suggests the range as well as the divisions within a movement that recognized both anti-imperialism and U.S. intervention under a shared signifier of antifascism. Likewise, the two works pose the question of representation: why, even though he regarded "The Cuba Play" as more important, did Odets feel comfortable writing *The General Died at Dawn* and not *Law of Flight*?

As Odets's "real work," in his own words, "The Cuba Play" functions as a kind of "ghost in the machine" in relation to *General*, and asks us to consider the multiple forms of international global solidarity—and sovereignty—that can exist not only within a single author's work but also across an entire field of cultural production.[35] While "The Cuba Play" made sense within a Popular Front framework of anti-imperial and antifascist global solidarity, it also fit very specifically within a social movement that sponsored speaking tours, trips, pamphlets, and protests as part of its cultural production. *General* makes no such claims for itself and indeed was labeled by film executives and critics as an "adventure romance" rather than an explicitly political "social problem" film. But as Michael Denning points out, the lines between popular cultural production and "movement literature" were often deliberately blurry, as many social movement artists not only sought larger audiences through Hollywood, but felt that they could exert influence over the kinds of films that could be made.[36] During the 1930s, cultural producers denounced the "unholy alliance" between "the Popular Front and image factories . . . as a betrayal of radical culture," yet it's also clear that many of the same activists and publications expressed optimism about what they could accomplish in

Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley.[37] One signal of the change in perspective came as the *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker* began covering Hollywood films with increased seriousness and expectations in their film review section, though only seldom with unguarded approval.

The initial *New York Times* review of *The General Died at Dawn* gets at some of the complexity of the relationship between "grassroots" left-wing movements and Hollywood, as well as the establishment media in relation to both. In Frank Nugent's famous review, "Odets, Where Is Thy Sting," he remarks that "Odets takes a holiday" and has abandoned stories of "strikes and unemployment" to join "The No Offense League" of Hollywood.[38] Yet the piece is more about the audience than the film, the "left-wing claque" who came to hear "their prophet of social reform give his first sermon from a cinema pulpit." Nugent is correct to say there was a great deal of anticipation around the film, and the *New Masses* even ran excerpts from the script six months in advance of its showing. No enemy of Hollywood, Nugent seems skeptical less of the film than of what he perceives as the left's overinflated sense of its own importance. Nugent heaps scorn on the audience for "being prepared to recognize social philosophy at long range," as "it broke out the bunting at Mr. Odets' hint of class struggle," suggesting that the audience was more in love with the idea of a radical film than what was actually delivered. Nugent is relieved when "the claque" finally realizes the picture "continued as . . . an interesting and compelling adventure tale" and not "the fires of the class war" the audience presumably arrived to see. Nugent predicts that "Odets will be made to pay" by this same audience once they realize their error, suggesting that the "claque" only comes to see films to hear the party line, rather than to see a film the reviewer admires for its craft and pacing. Nonetheless, it's worth considering why a "left wing" audience might cheer at what Nugent dismissed ironically as the "vital public issue" of "Oriental robber barons and their victims."

Set in China, the story follows a working-class Irish American adventurer/revolutionary John O'Hara, who runs guns for Chinese peasants battling a corrupt and brutal dictator, General Yang. In many ways, it's a classic Popular Front tale, telling of an oppressed people who "pay taxes through the nose" and are killed "in the thousands" for the profit of Yang and "international commerce." Yang's tyranny as a "head-breaker, a heart-breaker, and a strike-breaker—a four star rat" in O'Hara's words, conveys precisely, in a phrase, the goal of the film: to connect the Popular Front concern with "strike-breaking" and fascist violence with the romance of "heart-breaking." The two are fused as Yang ensnares the attractive Judy Pierri to work for him as bait for O'Hara by promising Yang that he will help the heroine's ailing father. The story ends as O'Hara and Pierri fall for one another, and O'Hara convinces the general to free them as his dying wish. Done as an act of self-promotion—O'Hara offers to tell Yang's story—Yang's vanity is juxtaposed to O'Hara's and Perrie's ultimate selfless willingness to sacrifice their lives for a cause, as a greedy American gun-seller and the general accidentally kill each other in a melee over a hoard of found cash. As an allegory, it's hard not to compare the story with the 1936 uprising of General Franco in Spain, another "four-star rat" who, like Yang, employed German "military advisors" supported by "international commerce" and opposed adventurer/revolutionaries who traveled from the United States to help supply and fight for the Spanish "People's Republic."

While O'Hara was dismissed as a "lone wolf adventurer" by *New Masses* critic Bob White, the film was recognized by Sidney Kaufman, also of the *New Masses*, and Robert Stebbins in *New Theater* as indicative of a new direction for film, the "use of the thriller to convey some unpalatable truths," and represented part of the turn in Popular Front criticism toward mass culture.[39] O'Hara clearly sees himself as more than just someone in it for money or adventure. When asked by Judy why he cares, he responds, "You ask me why I'm for oppressed people? Because I've got a background of oppression myself, and O'Hara's and elephants don't forget. What's better work for an American than helping to fight for democracy?" Clearly, O'Hara, who ran away from an orphan asylum, sold newspapers, and boxed ("I didn't like smackin' other kids around, so I quit"), is a proletarian hero turned to political activism abroad. Orphan, worker, and boxer, O'Hara's character, played by Western actor Gary Cooper, displays a sympathy for the oppressed based on his own experience with the hardships of capitalist competition. His decision to quit boxing and help the Chinese peasants can be read as a Hollywood rendition of many proletarian novels, in which the masculine, often white hero—Jack Conroy's Larry Donovan or John Steinbeck's Tom Joad—embraces revolutionary struggle at the end of the novel over an isolated life of competition.

Reading the antimilitarist struggle in *The General Died at Dawn* as a stand-in for other Popular Front concerns—especially the Spanish Civil War—is possible in part due to the fact that Odets proposed several films dramatizing the Civil War, all of which were rejected. In the years in which he was in Hollywood, Odets worked on and eventually dropped "Castles in Spain," "The River Is Blue," and an adaptation of "The Love of Jeanne Ney," all of which were to be set in Spain as a way to address the conflict.[40] Odets strained the plot to suggest Yang had fascist ties, used Hitler's speeches for Yang's lines, and gave him a German adviser, a mechanized army, and a military insurgency in China.[41] What is more, Yang, according to O'Hara, is not only a murderer but a "strikebreaker," further dislocating the context from China to Europe, where German advisers, strikebreaking, and military coups were part of the newsworthy political landscape and would easily render him as a stand-in for Franco.

I would argue that Nugent was not altogether incorrect for chastising the "left-wing claque" for reasons I'll get to later, but he missed—perhaps deliberately—the larger context in which *General* exists. Stories about Americans abroad assisting peasants against military aggression were welcome to an audience that resisted Roosevelt's "neutrality" policy on Spain, especially coming from an antifascist writer who had written about Nazi oppression of political dissidents in Germany before coming to Hollywood. Given Hollywood's silence on the Spanish Civil War up to that point and the difficulty of getting studio executives to "take sides" (*Blockade* was notoriously apolitical), the audience's initial enthusiasm for *General* is not surprising.

Contrary to the Hollywood "yellow peril" film, *General* does suggest the possibility of solidarity between Chinese peasants and Western progressives. Yet it's clear throughout the film that the Chinese peasants are incapable of action, and must rely on O'Hara not only to buy weapons, but for basic organizational tactics. Likewise, General Yang is portrayed as a fascist, complete with German advisers and mechanized troop transports, yet his final act—aboard a Japanese junk—is the cultish collective suicide of his entire band as he lies dying of a gunshot wound. Rather than suggest the modernity of fascism, Yang is portrayed as an Asiatic despot, ordering the death of his own soldiers and promising torture if he does not receive the information he desires. Stylistically, the film's "Asianness" is rendered authentic by the Chinese-style Roman alphabet with which the credits open as well as by traditionally dressed men sailing junks through Shanghai harbor. While the film is to be commended for casting Chinese and Japanese Americans in many of the lead roles, Yang and many of his crew speak Charlie Chan English, and the lead partner to O'Hara is played by a white actor who performs ethnic difference by speaking broken English. To resolve the tension of Hollywood's silence over the fascist uprising in Spain, Odets and Milestone deflected the conflict onto a mythologized China. Yet one must also ask—if Odets felt uncomfortable writing a play for Cuban revolutionaries on the premise that he was unfamiliar with their lives, why did he agree to write a film about China?

Odets's and Milestone's acts of racial masquerade were made largely possible by the fact that few of the Chinese characters were more than one-dimensional stage props for a love story between O'Hara and Perrie. Mr. Wu, the friend of O'Hara, and General Yang are opposites, as examples of Chinese Confucian wisdom and Asiatic despotism. Wu, clothed in traditional Han robes, displays clever calculation but lacks courage and decisiveness. Yang and his army, the only "modern" Chinese characters in the film, are dressed in uniforms that appear curiously Japanese, suggesting that the cost of modernity in Asia is fascism and tyranny. Of course, this may also be a reference to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, but given the rendering of China as premodern, the contrast only serves to reinforce the ultimately imperial message: that O'Hara's presence is necessary to prevent the Chinese from slipping into barbarism.

Odets does work to puncture the conceit of an honest West posed as a binary opposite to a degraded Orient. He poses Brighton, the American weapons dealer, as a double to Yang, as both are willing to trade lives for money, and do so through the sale or acquisition of modern weaponry. True to their pairing, Brighton and Yang kill each other wrestling for a suitcase of money in the hold of Yang's junk. Many of the Asian characters were also played by Asian actors, which at the time was a rarity. Yet it's also clear that Perrie's father, who dies trying to make his fortune in the labyrinth of Asia, is destroyed by the barbarism of a country the danger of which he and Brighton are ill-equipped to face. O'Hara and Perrie may desire to help the Chinese peasants and rebels, but they are also clearly regarded as separate. Thus, *New Masses* critic Sidney Kaufman does have a point: *General* was a "new type of film," as it sought to smuggle an antifascist politics into a "yellow peril" melodrama. Odets managed to tone down some of the worst elements of the genre, but at heart it is still a genre film that poses racial difference as the center of political meaning.

Perhaps more than any other single individual, Odets represented the complex racial and social politics around inclusion and belonging of the United States during the Great Depression. As a writer of the 1930s and 1940s, he was part of a generation of socially progressive intellectuals who saw an assault on white supremacy as important—or a necessary precondition for—a left-wing class consciousness. As Lizabeth Cohen writes, labor organizers who formed the backbone of the CIO and the Communist-led Trade Union Unity League were acutely aware of the way in which racial and ethnic tensions contributed to the failure of the post–World War I union movement, and were determined to aggressively combat racism in new union drives.[42] And as Barbara Foley and Michael Denning write, civil liberties campaigns in the 1930s drew links between lynching and antilabor violence, drawing together violence against workers with violence against minorities as a way to create bonds of solidarity between white and black workers. As I suggest in my second chapter, left-wing labor unions would often use the rhetoric of “terror” and “vigilantism” to describe attacks against both, visually and metaphorically comparing campaigns against so-called criminal syndicalist laws with campaigns to pass antilynching legislation.[43] As a playwright, Odets makes very clear that he sees individualistic class advancement for white ethnic Americans as tied to racism. As critic Chris Vials points out, Joe Bonaparte’s final fight in *Golden Boy* is framed both as the murder of Kid Chocolate, the black boxing champion, and as Bonaparte’s greatest triumph.[44] As Bonaparte’s rise is linked to his ultimate self-destruction, it’s easy to see how Odets’s morality play stands for the way white supremacy leads to at best only short-term benefits.

As Mathew Frye Jacobson writes, southern and eastern Europeans occupied a liminal position within the dominant culture, not quite deemed Anglo-Saxon, yet not suffering the marginalization and violence often reserved for African, Native, Asian, and Mexican American residents. For Popular Front writers from white ethnic backgrounds, constructing a movement for class-consciousness was intimately bound up with acculturation within U.S. society. As labor unions have often been racially circumscribed by gaining benefits for white workers at the expense of workers of color, the racial character of the union movement ultimately begged the question of who won the desserts of class struggle.[45] While Odets and other white ethnic American writers like Louis Adamic, James Farrell, and Nelsen Algren actively wrote and campaigned against racism in the name of multiethnic working-class culture, many of these writers themselves represented the very kind of class advancement often warned about in their work. As his own work in Hollywood would attest and his failure to produce *Law of Flight* suggest that the process of racialization may be stronger than his own individual efforts could address.

In a sense, then, *General* is everything the Cuba play is not, and says a great deal about not only the limits of Hollywood but also how the complex politics of identity are wrapped up inside representations of empire. Odets remarked to a friend that he changed the name of the gun-runner to John O’Hara because he was worried that the real-life figure—the Jewish Morris Cohen—would sound too “un-American” for the part.[46] Clifford Odets, no less “un-American” by the same estimation, thus also sheds his difficult ethnic identification with other racialized groups as the price to paid to be heard by a Hollywood studio. As Rogin points out, an earlier generation of Jewish filmmakers and actors facilitated their passing for white at the expense of enforcing the color line for Asians and blacks, most notably in films like *The Jazz Singer* and *Old San Francisco.* While *General* employs Asian actors and does not pose Yang’s malevolence as a uniquely racial phenomenon, it does suggest O'Hara's implicit racialized superiority as part of his role as an American democracy activist. The film contains the internationalism of its antifascism within a racial masquerade that ensures the film speaks to American superiority, not global solidarity. If the world is to be saved from fascism and imperialism, according to *General*, it is not the people in their own countries who will save them; rather it is up to the United States to help out. While this message may have had the short-term benefit of supporting U.S. intervention in Spain, it would also be easily translatable into a Cold War struggle for hegemony in the third world.

## "The Cuba Play" and the Politics of Realism

Thus "The Cuba Play" poses a very different sort of international solidarity, one set not only on forging links between Americans and Cubans, but also one that questions what it means to be an American: as one of the Cuban revolutionaries points out, the playwright's cozy sense of familiarity with U.S. ethnic workers is estranged by the realization that those "American" meals the Author is so concerned about are produced through colonial plantations in another country. In "The Cuba Play" "a Cuban Tom Mooney" is sent to jail and is released due to a combination of popular pressure and the hope on the side of the government that Lorca will lead them to the resistance so its members can be imprisoned or executed. He reorganizes Young Cuba, a cross-class alliance dedicated to overthrowing the Machado government and freeing the island of U.S. domination, but he is ultimately betrayed by an informant, and his former college friend, now an officer in the secret police, watches as he is gunned down in a ravine. In one sense, *General* and "The Cuba Play" follow similar narrative arcs. They are both adventure/espionage tales that take place abroad, focusing on a Popular Front hero who opposes a fascist tyranny in what is strongly suggested to be an allegory of—or at least a reference to—the Spanish Civil War. Indeed, it is also very similar to Odets's antifascist drama *Till the Day I Die*, in which informants, underground communist cells, and eventual death meet most of the socialist protagonists in Nazi Germany. Yet what separates "The Cuba Play" from *General* and even *Till the Day I Die* is more than its indictment of U.S. imperialism or the fact that it focuses on Cubans rather than American adventurers abroad. As the first act of the play suggests, it is marked by a self-consciousness about both its role as a drama and what it means for a writer from the United States to write such a play. As Amy Kaplan writes in *The Anarchy of Empire*, U.S. high culture is formulated by the presence and absence of empire in daily life in the United States, both as a matter of style and as content.[47] Not only does "The Cuba Play" expand the "ground" on which one can be "authentically" American, it also suggests that the "authentic" American voices for which Odets is well known are products of U.S. empire. Rather than Kenneth Burke's return to innocence with a usable past of progressive American values, Odets makes the point that American voices, authentic ethnic American voices, are also *imperial* voices.

The play opens as a debate about culture that continues into the first scene set in Cuba. In a dialogue between Rojas, the chief of police in Havana, and an American who wants to show pornographic films in the city, Rojas demands five hundred dollars as a license fee. The American is outraged, and protests that he can't be treated this way, until he sees the policeman is serious—it's not a bribe but rather an intentional attempt to shut him down. The scene demonstrates the complexity of Rojas, who has fierce nationalist pride at the same time he implicitly works for the Americans, and suggests from the beginning that Cuba is culturally located by U.S. Americans as a site of excess, a place in which libidinous desires illegal or immoral can be fulfilled. It also functions to distinguish among imperial modes, suggesting that imperialism is more than simply a system of capital accumulation, markets, or mercantile extraction. It is also an imaginary, a way of relating and orienting questions of identity and desire. Rojas is comfortable with imperialism as a form of economic exploitation, yet he is disturbed by Cuba becoming an object within the U.S. libidinal economy.

There are two parallel narratives in "The Cuba Play." There is a diegetic story of the revolutionaries of Young Cuba who are eventually executed by the police and there is the exegetic story of U.S. culture shaped by and shaping Cuba in its gaze. In the diegetic story, there are many references to the way in which Cuba is dominated by the United States. In addition to pornographic film distribution, there is also a petition to Roosevelt distributed on the behalf of U.S. sugar growers in Cuba and the presence of weapons from the United States that are used ultimately to execute Lorca. Thus the play points out that in terms of culture, politics, and military force, the United States controls the island, though it does so more often than not through a comprador class of Cubans who may or may not know the precise nature of the interests involved. Puncturing this "story" of Cuban dependence and revolution, there are two scenes—a tour guide advertising the exotic lures of the island, and businessmen discussing the island from a ship—that break the narrative of the story.

The dialogue is what a reader would expect of an Odets play: full of slang, street talk, and the casual hyperbole of advertising language. Especially since the play is unpublished, it is worth quoting at some length:

> THE TOURIST AGENT (very suggestive): And now, ladies and gentlemen, in a half an hour you are gonna be in Havana and you are gonna see some marvelous things. We have the little nigger boys there and they will sell you coconuts there for five cents as you never seen them in the cold cities in the north. Now don't you be impatient—I'm getting to those night clubs and the girls. But first I'm gonna tell the ladies about the fine embroideries and those French perfumes which are imported without duty. You can get them in the shops for a song and a dance, and don't you forget it. Well, don't waste words, as the American men like to get to the point as soon as possible. Brass tacks! Yes sir, we know them words down here. When you get off this boat you are gonna have a time of your life! Havana! The playground of two continents! We have it here—the flirtatious, color-loving Latin soul in all its manifestations and abandonment of revelry. the bright-eyed senoritas, they are wearing their most alluring smiles. You can bet your last dollar on that fact. Then we have the *La Playa* beach where it is sunshine all the time. Laugh and chat in sidewalk cafes. Do the rumba in native cabarets. You are gonna see those tropic flowers in the breeze. We are the originators of the many rum drinks as you don't have them nowhere. In the night time, when you wear them evening clothes, the casino and jockey club where the god of chance whispers in your ear—roulette, baccarat, 21 . . . you don't know what to do at first. It is one long carnival spirit in Cuba, as long as you are here, and it start the minute you get off the boat—Cuban nights are not celebrations staged for tourists. They are part of the natural life, the continual and natural bubbling over waiting for you when you wash up at the hotel. It is all on the ticket. Have those tickets ready. Yes sir, you are gonna see the modernized senoritas—she gives herself with the heart! An invitation to the cocktail, a bid to dance the night away—ah, oh, she is willing to listen, and don't you forget it![48]

Unlike Lorca, Hevia (Lorca's doctor and friend), Rojas, and the many guerrillas and informants who all speak in standard English with the occasional punctuation of a Spanish word or intonation. The Spanish-speaking voices often speak in nearly formal tones, without any slang or inflection. The above passage, on the other hand, is American slang rendered by one of best writers of ethnic American dialect on stage. This dialogue punctures the text in several ways. It constructs an American imperial gaze that is racist and exploitative, seeing Cuba as merely as the production of exotic authenticity. Yet, like the dialogue between businessmen, it itself is the product of Odets's own performance of working-class, U.S. authenticity. Unlike the Spanish voices throughout the text that speak in ways that recall the flattening of a translation, this voice and the voices of the businessmen are rendered in, for lack of a better word, realist dialect.

The two registers in the play, like the two levels of action, the "translation" of Spanish speech and the realist dialect of the tourist agent and businessmen, suggest that, contrary to the claims of some of its practitioners, realism facilitates U.S. empire. That is, the exegetic action of the tourist agent and the businessmen reminds the reader that no "story" can happen in Cuba without the literal intervention of U.S. voices puncturing the action. More than this, the voices also remind the audience that this dialect, declared authentic by the author at the start of the play, is in the service of the act of looking at and interpellating a colonial possession. Given the importance of language to the construction of the national-popular imaginary within the world of the play—the emphasis on being able to name what a person eats, knowing how a person speaks—it is not an overstatement to suggest that these authentic "American" voices are also voices of U.S. empire. That the act of interpellation by these figures does not disturb, but rather seems to elicit, a U.S. American vernacular poses a problem for the construction of the republic on "native ground," as the more conservative Popular Front writers would have it. As Kenneth Burke argues for the "suasive appeal" of the American vernacular, so this language of "the people" is deployed in an act not of socialist redemption but of overseas conquest. More than implicate national identity, the scene also suggests the way in which U.S identity itself is predicated on colonial pleasure.

Indeed, in the monologue by one of the businessmen, we learn that his knowledge of blacks in the United States allows him to understand what his role is to be in Cuba:

> VOICE TWO: (indignantly) Always coming at you, like the slide of a trombone. I don't like it, I told the hotel clerk—it goes against my sense of jurisprudence. He give me a look, the clerk. "What're you looking at," I says. He shut up like a clam. I know how to handle those fresh guys. I know—in my experience I met all walks of life. Old Home Week in a bed with a girl, that's all they know.[49]

The metaphor, "always coming at you like the slide on a trombone," suggests, of course, the trombone in a swing band, even as it implies that the blacks in Cuba are too familiar and too casual in their interaction with the unnamed merchant. It also suggests a familiarity with the same black culture from which his Americanness provides him a safe distance. Thus one of the "dangers" of Cuba for American tourists, the scene suggests, is precisely the relative racial integration that Odets and Herbst celebrate. When we learn that he is a weapons dealer at the end of the scene, his entrance to the island does more than simply reflect back upon the United States. Shaping the island by his weapons sales, he also imposes Jim Crow culture from the United States. In an ethical inversion, Odets points out that the "native ground" in the United States is also one heavily divided by a global discourse of race, one that the United States shapes and from which it benefits. More importantly, it also suggests that the "native ground" of the United States is far from a space of redemption; rather it is an exporter of a harsh and relentless form of racial domination.

John Dos Passos's final novel in the *USA* trilogy, *The Big Money*, opens by arguing that "USA is mainly the speech of the people," and closes with the figure of Vag, who travels the continent as the representative of the vernacular. Michael Denning argues that Dos Passos's *USA* is the "ur-text of the Popular Front," the "master-narrative" of the fall of American democracy and "the Lincoln Republic."[50] As a construct in Dos Passos's work, the Lincoln Republic offers a new version of a democratic, working-class America that he poses against "the great imperial steamroller of American finance" by reaching into the fictive past of an egalitarian nation. Thus the voices in Odets's play offer an ironic commentary on this use of language as the cornerstone of a progressive American counterculture. In the *USA* trilogy, the ideals of the foundational republic, as literally voiced by Dos Passos, serve as an antidote for the new United States based on commercial success and financial capital. Given the centrality of the *USA* trilogy to the Popular Front, one can thus see how Odets's "Cuba Play" unsettles many of the central assumptions of the work. Odets doesn't disagree with Dos Passos's argument about the role of finance capital but rather disputes the idea that there is something redemptive in a U.S. past rooted in the cultural memory of language. For Odets, the cultural past as it's evoked by working-class slang is as much a part of finance capital as the commercialized speech of Madison Avenue that Dos Passos critiques.

Against the speech of the United States, represented by the voices of tourist agents and businessmen, the Cuban revolutionaries create their own radio broadcast, which they believe reaches the entire Caribbean and mainland of

Mexico and the United States. Yet unknown to the broadcasters, their signal is disrupted by the Cuban national police, and the radio itself is a plant by a police informant to track the revolutionaries' whereabouts and to give them a false sense of connection to the outside world. As a metaphor for the inability of the Cuban anti-imperialist discourse to silence or rebut the exegetic voices from the United States, the silent radio underscores the power of the United States not only to literally silence subaltern speech but also to use that speech as a means of control. Thus Odets not only implies that "the speech of the USA" is dependent upon an imperial gaze, but also that it is by design only partial: it silences the other Americas for the inclusion of which the play argues. In this way, the play also fuses both forms of representation: the inability of Cubans to "represent" their interests in an imperial regime is fused with silencing of their representation within the genre of U.S. realism.

In this sense, the content of the radio broadcast is also key to Odets's message. Spoken by Delgado, a member of Young Cuba who fought against U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua "with Aponte," and "against Rivera in Mexico," he represents a borderless, transnational figure of solidarity against the reactionary nationalism of Rojas and the American(ized) imperialism of the United States:

> DELGADO (seriously, into the mic in a low rapid monotone): Hello in the west, hello Mexico—Young Cuba is on the air! Hello Florida, hello Cuban exiles in Miami, Key West and Tampa—Young Cuba is on the air! Come home Cuban fighters, come home fighters against Yankee imperialism, come home! Help us make the united front. Learn lessons from the sad events in Germany. It is no longer enough to unmask the dictatorship—no longer enough to enlighten liberal North American opinions. Come home swiftly you Cuban exiles and fight with our side. Wherever you may be listening, Cuban homeless, join us in the united fight. Come home you homesick. Bring money—money is needed. Bring guns—guns are needed. Bring hearts—hearts are needed. Key West hello, hello Miami, hello cigar workers of Tampa—Young Cuba is on the air. Remember Mella. Remember Guiteras. Come home and fight for Cuba![51]

At once transnational and bound within a struggle defined by the national boundaries of Cuba, Delgado articulates a far different sense of belonging than Dos Passos or the national-popular forms of the Popular Front. Addressing himself to a Cuban political and economic diaspora, he links the struggle for Cuba's independence with a global struggle against fascism and imperialism.

It is also impossible to miss Lorca's connection to the Spanish Civil War. The name was deliberately chosen by Odets to make that connection, and Odets's "Author" mistakes Lorca at first for the Spanish poet assassinated by the Civil Guards. Likewise, it's very clear that Odets intended Lorca's Young Cuba to serve as a vehicle to discuss various factions within the Spanish Left. Primo, one of the members of Young Cuba who presses for action, is degraded as a "sick romantic infant . . . anarchistic and individual."[52] In Odets's archived papers, there is also a long description of anarchism by Waldo Frank, followed by a character sketch of Primo and a treatise on why Marxists are more capable revolutionaries:

> [Primo] _knows_ nothing . . . the anarchist is a tangential force from the social center, but in his naive egoism he conceives himself as the center . . . as anarchism evolved, however, it became an unrealistic fixation on the end, whereas the Marxists assumed the task of establishing the ideological and technical means that bring the end into existence.[53]

This analysis is remarkably close to the Communist Party analysis of the anarchists in Spain: that they lacked a coherent and totalized program for Spain's liberation. Equally, the character of Hevia, Lorca's doctor and friend, is a thinly veiled critique of liberals who see the possibility of reform as the answer to fascism, and who don't believe that violence will solve any problems. And perhaps most telling is Lorca's insistence on a "united front" against the "fascist" Batista. Like the film *General*, *Law of Flight* is also in some ways a racial masquerade, commenting on the politics of Europe through the cover of Latin America. Yet of course, unlike in *General*, the United States is not the hero, and the revolution in Cuba was quite real.

While we may never know the exact reason Odets and the Group Theatre never performed "The Cuba Play," the very fact that he doesn't refer to his own work by name (*Law of Flight*), but rather by the problematic of location suggests that the issue derived from the way Cuba troubles not only white ethnic identity formation as against an Orientalized other, but that its politics of transnational solidarity troubles the working-class Americanism that was the signature of the Popular Front. That "The Cuba Play" uses the very aesthetic touchstones of 1930s social art—realism and a celebration of U.S. folk culture—in order to trouble them and ultimately argue for their complicity with an imperial project suggests how difficult the play would have been for his central audience. Also, several biographers, who presumably read the manuscript, cite what they discuss as its doubtful quality as art.[54]

While it is certainly not one of Odets' best plays, it is also no worse than his agitprop theater pieces such as *Till the Day I Die* and Hollywood films such as *The General Dies at Dawn.* Yet it is also plausible that "The Cuba Play's" meaning was not apparent to early biographers of Odets precisely because it questioned the premise on which other works are based, as well as the "working-class ethnic Americanism" upon which the Popular Front built the broadest consensus.[55] While the consensus around what definition of working class would be used was never as uncontested as some later critics asserted, especially along racial and national lines, it's very clear that *General* and "The Cuba Play" formulate precise examples of both its most reactionary and radical forms. In *General*, a formerly Jewish character is "whitened" in order to act as a representative of working-class values abroad, while in Cuba, the same act of racial working-class representation abroad is critiqued as complicit with U.S. empire. More than anything, the silencing of "The Cuba Play" may point to the inability of Odets to solve the problems of his critique of the same realism for which he was considered the prime emblem. As a figure who represents the contradictions as well as the most radical goals of the Popular Front, Odets would eventually solve them by renouncing both in his testimony before HUAC as a friendly witness some fifteen years later.

## Cuba as an Indian War: Hemingway and Herbst

Given the cultural memory of the working-class movements in the 1930s as white ethnic, it's not surprising that the best-known representation of Cuban revolutionaries in U.S. literature is Ernest Hemingway's racially charged 1937 novel *To Have and Have Not.* While critical writing about the novel doesn't explore the issue of empire, I would suggest that the meaning of Harry Morgan's death is inseparable from the U.S.-Cuban imperial relationship and the imaginary of conquest that precedes it. *To Have and Have Not* is also Hemingway's most filmed novel, with five productions made from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. However, not a single one of these films references Cuba or locates any portion of the plot on the island. The location of the film versions cannot be explained by the fact that Cuba is not cinematic; indeed, the location of the first adaptation, Howard Hawks's 1944 wartime action-drama, was changed from Cuba to Martinique for the explicit reason of making the film seem "more patriotic."[56] While Hawks does not explain why setting a film in Cuba would seem less patriotic than a film set in Martinique, it seems that it may have to do with changing definitions of antifascism from 1937 to 1942. While antifascism frequently carried with it a critique of imperialism, by the middle of World War II, including the United States within that critique, however obliquely, was seen as undermining the war effort. Martinique was (and many would argue still is) a French colony, ruled at the time of the film by the Nazi-controlled Vichy government. Despite the fact that Hemingway's novel reifies national and racial borders between the United States and Cuba and clearly criticizes the revolution for its willingness to use violence to achieve its ends, it was feared that the evocation of Cuba in any context might destabilize national definition and question the legitimacy of the U.S. government—even though the island was officially counted as "an ally" during the war.

Given the troubled historical memory of Cuba in the Popular Front, that Hemingway's only attempt at the 1930s genre of social protest literature is also a novel set in Cuba must not be seen as merely incidental. It was likewise his one attempt to include not only working-class characters, but references to strikes, the WPA, proletarian fiction, unemployment, and in particular the 1930s phrase "the economic situation," told through a story of maritime adventure and third-world revolution. Rather than see this as peculiar to Hemingway, I would argue that despite Hemingway's politics, these issues lay at the center of cultural production during the time period. Like Odets writing antifascist cinema through a B grade action story, so Hemingway reporting that this was "his most important work" at the time he wrote it does not necessarily contradict its status as an adventure novel, as much of the Popular Front's cultural production engaged with mass culture forms.[57]

The novel tells the story of Harry Morgan, who runs a charter service with his fishing boat until the Depression ruins his business and he turns to smuggling. It chronicles a successive number of trips that become increasingly dangerous and violent, until his boat is confiscated by the U.S. government, forcing Harry to earn money in a desperate act of smuggling Cuban revolutionaries from Florida to Havana after a bank heist. Unlike Hemingway's earlier work in which his heroes struggle against forces that are either psychological or eternalized within nature, nature is replaced by the economy. In addition to the financial ruin of his fishing tours, Morgan's poverty is set against a backdrop of the wealthy U.S. elite who vacation in Florida (including a proletarian novelist and his estranged wife), to whom he is invisible. Harry is an "ordinary man," and the construction of his "ordinariness" is posed against the morally isolating wealth of the elite and the savagery and moral expediency of the Cuban revolutionaries.

Yet while the "ordinary man" in the United States may feel humiliated and taken advantage of, in Cuba he must defend himself against ideologically driven and often brutal revolutionaries against whom Harry can—and does—exercise a kind of imperial mastery. Thus the novel is at once the story of a Depression-era "ordinary man" struggling against circumstance and an imperial adventure in which his racialized masculinity gives him the means to wrest a living from Cuba when he is not able to do so in the United States. The novel has been criticized for its construction of racial boundaries between Morgan and the Cubans with whom he comes into contact and in front of whom Morgan repeatedly proves his physical and intellectual mastery.[58] Yet this racial critique does not take into account the imperial relationship between the United States and Cuba, nor its location within a broader social movement in which the question of the United States as an empire was subject to great debate. That the novel takes place as a question of transnational flows of bodies, money, and violence is not an accident and, as I've argued, is a central feature of culture in that era.

The value of the work from the standpoint of anti-imperialist international movements lies less in what Hemingway wants to say with the character of Harry Morgan than in how the novel exposes the tensions within the Popular Front around whiteness and national belonging. The novel's location in Cuba is central, as the recurring motif of "crossing over" from the Keys to Havana structures Morgan's experiences: Cuba is a space of fluid identity and possibility for Morgan, whereas the United States is a site of immobile class stratification. In Morgan's wife Marie's epilogue, she remembers her and Harry's first trip to Cuba as a space in which her femininity is defined and developed in relation to displays of Morgan's white masculinity. When she is accosted by a black man, "Harry smacked him . . . and sent his hat sailing," which inspires Marie to get her hair done in an expensive salon.[59] Not only does Cuba offer a racialized valorization for her white sexuality, but also her own possibility for transformation: after she dyes her hair light blond in a beauty salon directly after Morgan assaults a black man in the street, Harry's "voice was thick and funny when he said 'Jesus Marie, you're beautiful.'"[60] Thus Havana acts as a space of white identity construction in which Marie's blondness and Harry's racial act of violence form gendered parallels in the narrative and cement the bond between the two characters.

This imperial balance of stratification in the United States and possibility abroad is disrupted at the beginning of the novel when Morgan is recruited by a group of young Cuban revolutionaries who request passage to the United States. Morgan refuses, but later is forced by economic circumstances to give in. This smuggling of bodies, what Morgan separates into "what can talk" as against "what can't talk," is possible only if Morgan is able to contain the migrants' travel away from the island. When he hires out to smuggle Chinese immigrants, he is careful not only to execute the Cuban contact but to return the Chinese immigrants to the Cuban shore. While his own body is highly mobile, and indeed, the ship serves as a kind of symbol for Morgan's white masculinity, the mobility of bodies of color is seen as an uncontrollable threat by which Morgan is eventually overtaken. Indeed, it is the revolution in Cuba against the Machado regime that renders Morgan's masculine prowess impossible. The revolutionaries are neither afraid of Morgan nor care about the possible financial consequences of breaking a deal. Thus the novel argues that the mobility of Morgan is predicated on—and indeed only possible—if bodies of color are rendered equally immobile.

In the United States, Morgan occupies a liminal status, both as a man of means and mobility and as a man who, in his own words, "has no cash, no education, and only his *cojones* to peddle."[61] He is framed on either end of the class stratum by Albert, his first mate in his final voyage, who works for seven dollars a week on the WPA and who recently went on strike against wages "I can't eat on," and by the idle rich who vacation in Key West, typified by the glib irony of the well-heeled writer of proletarian novels.[62] Albert, working class in a Marxian sense (with only his labor to sell), and looking only for a square deal, is also representative of the Popular Front "common man," not asking for charity nor a radical, as he says to Morgan over drinks, but also willing to unionize to get a fair wage. Gunned down immediately by the fleeing Cuban revolutionaries as they board Morgan's boat, his murder can be read as a symbolic sacrifice by the U.S. working class for the needs of anticolonial liberation. What is equally important is that Albert, unlike Harry, is an unknowing "victim," passively shot without offering resistance. Unlike Odets, who identifies the Cuban struggle for freedom as part of the larger Popular Front struggle against fascism, it is clear that the threat of mobility posed by the Cuban revolutionaries is not against the wealthy, who are pictured sleeping as Morgan's bullet-riddled boat is tugged back into the harbor, but the heroic "common man" of *Waiting for Lefty*.

Morgan's standard reception as, in literary critic John Cobb's words, Hemingway's only "genuinely common man, a true proletarian," is complicated by his status as a frontier hero.[63] Critic Philip Durham points out Hemingway's characters' connections to U.S. Western heroes in the frontier tradition, especially because of their physical courage and their attitudes toward people of color.[64] The slipperiness of the definition points out the extent to which Popular Front discourses of class representation could move easily from proletarian to a frontier tradition of republican virtue, in which "class" is defined less by relations of production than through cultural markers of labor, masculinity, and race. Thus Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* functions in much the same way Wendy Kozol argues the FSA administration photographs did, in defining the "worthy subject" for federal aid racially and sexually as a white, heteronormative mother, who appears to be capable of self-reliance within a normative bourgeois framework.[65] The novel therefore functions to pathologize social issues by containing poverty and rebellion within a racial-gendered-national framework, in which the Cubans—unlike Morgan—are not worthy subjects and, indeed, undermine efforts of those worthy subjects to become self-reliant. For both Morgan and Albert, the Cuban attack on their boat acts as a kind of "fall of the white republic" as the "common men" are defeated by a government relief program that emasculates the worker ("we had to go back to work anyway," says Albert after the strike fails, forcing him into crime like Morgan) and by a porous border between the United States and the third world in which such dangerous revolutionaries can operate.

While framed as a social protest novel, *To Have and Have Not* is ultimately about reinforcing the racial boundaries of the nation, in which the imperial gaze of Morgan is dangerously reflected back by the murderous rage of Roberto, the gunman of the revolutionary gang. It is not without meaning that after his arrangement to carry the Cubans to Havana, he notices a "picture of Custer's Last Stand on the wall" as "though he'd never seen it." While this bit of kitsch, along with the "nickel machines and quarter machines" in a bar, is merely local color, the significance of the painting as Morgan is gunned down by contemporary savages with "faces like Indians," would not be lost on a contemporary reader.[66] Framing Morgan as a pirate and cowboy, the novel acts as what Richard Slotkin refers to as the "social drama Western," a subgenre that came of age in the late 1930s as studios responded to the popularity of social themes and the celebration of bandits over the "law-men" of a previous generation.[67] As such, it is not the only Hemingway novel to deploy the metaphor of "the frontier," as the Gypsies in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* remind the "cowboy" narrator in several instances of "cigar-store Indians" and of "Indian customs."[68] When compared with Odets's framing of Lorca as not only an anticolonial figure but as a Popular Front figure fighting fascism, the political implications of Hemingway's socially themed adventure stories become apparent. By constructing the fight against fascism and for the "common man" as an extension of the frontier myth, the racial and imperial lineages of that mythology are extended as well. Thus Odets's suspicion about the Popular Front as a strictly *national* cultural movement, ironized by his fictitious "Author," finds its justifications in Morgan's appearance as a "common man" enduring the Depression.

There is a scene in Josephine Herbst's *Rope of Gold* that strangely recalls, and I would even say informs, a dialectical opposite of the barroom recognition of Custer by Morgan. The novel, about Victoria Chance's coming into political and gendered awareness, not only situates her political transformation in Cuba, but does so by locating her own identity within the arc of U.S. imperial conquest. Seated at a bar in Havana, Victoria Chance, the estranged wife of a Communist Party farm organizer who travels to Cuba to write about the anti-Batista/Mendieta movement and general strike, gazes at a wood figurine of a Sidoney native. Unlike Morgan, whose gaze at the painting of Custer's Last Stand refers back to an epic race war in which he figures as a masculine white hero, Chance identifies with the figurine, musing that her own father was "no Cortez, skulking on the shores of Cuba," but rather, like the girl in the figurine, one of the losers of history, cut down "by the hunt for gold."[69]

Herbst traveled to Cuba in 1935 to write a series of articles for the *New Masses* about the growing resistance movement against Machado and his replacement, the Mendieta-Batista regime. The series, "Cuba on the Barricades," reports on the general strikes as well as the sugar workers' conditions in rural Cuba. The longest of these—detailed in *Rope of Gold*—describes an agricultural workers' collective in the Sierra Maestra mountains, Realengo 18. The article is titled "The Soviet in the Interior of Cuba," but her reporting makes it clear that formal Communist Party ideology and membership has little part in the stories or the lives of the agricultural workers. The claim to the land made by the workers stems rather from the Ten Years' War for independence from Spain, "in which the soldiers who had fought were supposed to be rewarded with land in Realengo 18," and yet the land was never delivered to the workers, despite their ownership of Spanish deeds.[70] Thus the commune Herbst discovers is as much "the first Soviet in the Americas," as the editor of *New Masses* described it, as a continuation of the independence struggle waged from the 19th century and delayed by the U.S. invasion in 1898. These two traditions, the international socialist movement and the Cuban independence movement, find articulation in the former sugar workers' invocation of Sandino and Pancho Villa, and in their articulation of a pan–Latin Americanist vision of anti-imperial sovereignty, free from the United States and foreign capital.[71] Unlike Odets, who fits the struggle within a largely Western framework—his hero is the very Europeanized Antonio Lorca—Herbst locates the international dimension of Cuban socialism within Cuba's own long history of liberation.

The importance and emphasis on the possibilities for racial harmony within Realengo 18 can thus be read within Cuba's own *mulato* tradition. As historian Ada Ferrer writes, "all rebellions" against Spanish rule "were waged by an army unique in the history of the Atlantic world . . . a multiracial fighting force that was integrated at all ranks."[72] True to this history, Realengo 18 is led by a black Cuban who is married to a white farmworker. As Herbst says bluntly in the article, "There is no race problem here."[73] The last word in the sentence of course emphasizes that elsewhere in Cuba, and to the readership in the United States, this could not be said to be true. As José Martí writes in "Nuestra America," his vision of a free Cuba was of a "mestizo republic," a national-popular Cuban culture that was a mixture of European, African, and Native influences.[74] The presence of an interracial commune on land promised after the first war for independence from Spain is more than just an example of socialism in the Americas; it is also a fulfillment and beginning of the dream laid out by Martí in his manifesto. The fact that it's a farming commune, largely of the descendants of slaves, is also significant. As W. E. B. Du Bois points out in his magisterial social history of black life after the Civil War, *Black Reconstruction*, the utopian struggle for communal land rights by the newly freed slaves silently defined both the Civil War and its aftermath. Thus while the *New Masses* articulates the commune as the beginnings of socialism in the Americas, it is not incorrect to suggest Realengo 18's significance for liberation movements in the Americas. Not only does the site represent the working-class mestizo consciousness advocated by Martí and later Nicolás Guillén, it also represents to a U.S. audience the unfulfilled promise of emancipation.

In this context, it's not surprising that for Herbst/Chance, her trip to Cuba serves as an excavation of her own past and her own implication within U.S. westward expansion. In her novel *Rope of Gold*, as she journeys farther into the rural fields of Cuba—and further away from the racial codes of the United States and Havana—the further back within her own memory she travels. She remembers that her own family's journey west over the Mississippi ended badly, her grandfather returning bankrupt and penniless for his refusal to submit to the ruthlessness of capital accumulation and land theft. "He had been led back," she remembers, "without a cent, staring out at the river as the train rumbled across . . . his mind a lost and broken toy."[75] Like FSA photographs, *Rope of Gold* relies on the logic of sentimental identification with the other—for Chance is granted access as a reporter only after she is seen crying over the photo of an imprisoned Communist the local revolutionaries know. Yet the identification exists within a complex dialectic in which Chance does not identify with Cuba so much as unlock the meaning of her own imperial legacy, finding structural connections between the loss of land by her own family and the dispossession of Cubans by U.S. agricultural interests.

It is not an accident that Chance's final destination as a reporter also coincides with her excavation of personal memory, the failed journey west by her grandfather. Forming a parallel, Chance is granted full political awareness of her own past at the same time the farmers she interviews expose the trans-American reach of U.S. capital. Comparing themselves to Sandino and Villa, revolutionaries and nationalists who struggled against the United States, the farmers display a historical awareness of their own position fighting U.S. empire, while at the same time fighting for their own essential connection to the land. "Lino was no politician. . . . He knew his people owned the land, and they meant to keep it . . . they wanted guns."[76] The farmers are very aware that "Sandino was shot in the back" and if they resisted, "There would be no guarantees."[77] This awareness of a trans-Caribbean anti-imperialist resistance as well as an essential rootedness in the land complicates an easy attempt at sentimental identification. Chance is welcomed as a supporter, but also acknowledged to be an outsider. This tough dialectical stance does not allow Chance to claim to represent the Cuban revolutionaries and forces her to acknowledge her own position of relative privilege. Her task at the end of the novel is not to stay in Cuba, but to return to the United States and work against U.S. empire there. The promise of racial harmony in Realengo 18 does not function as an escape for Chance, but rather as a reminder of what political tasks have yet to be accomplished.

*Rope of Gold* is significant not only because it suggests possibilities for transnational solidarity but also because it is also a metanarrative about the Popular Front. Chance is contrasted with her husband, who works as a Communist Party organizer among small farmers, and her editor and friend, who works in the WPA administration, promoting public works with publicity campaigns. Both men are seen as dissolute and unfulfilled in their political work, and more than anything, harbor a feeling of emptiness for no reason they can discern. "Of all things he had wanted not to be, it was a 'Front' . . . in his fine clothes, with his good looks and charm, he was an ace of a 'Front.'"[78] The question of being a "front," as opposed to having an organic connection to the real, applies at least in part to Victoria Chance's travel to Cuba, in which she not only finds an occupation for herself as a radical journalist, but is able to piece together her own history with the imperial history of the United States and form anti-imperial, transnational connections of solidarity. As Fredric Jameson writes, empire creates by its very nature a problem of representation, that the individual cannot "see" and cannot spatially locate herself within the totality of the system of exploitation.[79] Their political acts of representation are empty, for the absent signifier of the U.S. empire renders their actions devoid of meaning. Given the importance of direct, firsthand experience for the politics of the Popular Front—Guthrie's emphasis on "seeing" the system he wishes to transform—Victoria Chance's dream of fulfilling political action is made possible only by her physical presence in Cuba.

The two works, *To Have and Have Not* and *Rope of Gold*, retell the story of Cuban revolutionary movements through the lens of westward expansion. As Richard Slotkin writes in his trilogy of the cultural and political impact of the U.S. frontier, imperial conflicts throughout the 20th century were understood as continuations of "Indian Wars," the battle between European settlers and the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas.[80] Hemingway articulates the frustrations of white working-class inheritors of this mythology, many of whom were the targets of Native American resistance and whose landholdings were later taken over by large financial interests. In such a tale, we can understand Harry Morgan as perhaps a pirate version of Tom Joad, re-creating the myth of westward expansion through a racialized working-class sensibility. Thus the importance of Herbst's novel is that it not only refuses this racially bound metaphor, but does so from a site of late 19th-century U.S. colonial expansion. Her work suggests that it is not enough to simply "walk away" from what Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz refers to as the "grid of history," but that she is able forge bonds of solidarity through her understanding of her own ideological and material complicity. Cuba is a necessary site, therefore, to undo the legacy of colonial conquest, but also to expose its conceits and its absences.

## Langston Hughes and the Politics of (Dis)location

Clifford Odets was not the only writer to find his entrance to Cuba blocked during the 1930s. Langston Hughes was initially refused passage on the Ward steamship line to Havana in 1930, and it wasn't until the NAACP intervened that Hughes was able to arrange passage on another ship.[81] Hughes explains his treatment in a story entitled "Little Old Spy," in which the narrator suddenly finds himself followed by a government operative on his second day in Havana. Unlike Odets and Herbst, neither Hughes nor his fictionalized writer-narrator in the story were in Cuba to join a revolutionary struggle. Putting the refusal of the Ward steamship line to grant him a ticket and the presence of the spy together, he muses on the fact that "at home in Harlem, I was a nobody," and yet in Havana, "I was suddenly of governmental importance."

> And I knew pretty well why. The government of Cuba had grown suddenly terribly afraid of its Negro population, it black shine boys

> and cane field hands, its colored soldiers and sailors who make up most of the armed forces, its taxi drivers and street vendors. . . . the Negroes had begun to rise with the students and the others to drive the dictator from Cuba.
>
> For a strange New York Negro to come to Havana might mean—quién sabe?—that he has come to help stir them up. . . . Had not Marcus Garvey come out of Harlem to arouse the whole black world to a consciousness of its own strength?
>
> "They," the Cuban dictatorship, were afraid of Negroes from Harlem. The American steamship lines at that time would not sell colored persons tickets to Cuba.[82]

In a perverse way, the Cuban government recognized the politics of the black transnational tradition as articulated by Hughes and other radical black writers of the 1920s and 1930s. For Hughes, travel to Cuba was more than just a visit to a foreign country; in Cuba, Hughes was hailed by the artistic community as one of the United States' most important writers. Langston Hughes had "a profound impact" in shaping the literary work of many Afro-Caribbean writers, probably none more so than Cuba's nationalist poet Nicolás Guillén.[83] Hughes published a translation of Guillén's poems and is often credited with influencing the young Guillén to include Afro-Cuban rhythms, content, and language into his work, as something of a parallel to Hughes's own commitment to using black speech and jazz in his own poetic voice. It would thus seem that there was a certain truth to Hughes's statement that in the United States a "Negro writer was nobody" and that in Cuba he was "suddenly of importance." Not only for Afro-Caribbean culture was Hughes considered an important poet, but for Cuban national culture as well. As Hughes critic Antillano Scott writes, "For Guillén—as with other Cubans—blackness was not a 'social problem,' rather being of mixed heritage was part of social/cultural pride."[84] As Guillén went on to be widely read, so Hughes would be credited with being a crucial influence and shaper of Afro-Cuban poetry.

In this sense, the very presence of Cuba in Hughes's work, and Hughes's presence in Cuba as a writer, destabilizes the United States as the center of the literary world and the arbiter of American culture. Hughes's relative marginalization in the United States and his profound importance in Latin America suggests a rethinking of the U.S. literary landscape, in literal and figurative terms, as part of his project in contrasting his reception in the United States and abroad. To include, for instance, Langston Hughes's poem "Let America be America Again" as part of 1930s national culture begs the question of *which* America Hughes addressed: the national boundaries of the United States or the "Americas" in which Cuba would emerge as an important site of U.S. literary production. In that sense, it is telling that Hughes's memoir of the 1930s, *I Wonder as I Wander*, is a memoir of travel rather than the national belonging called for within mainstream Popular Front texts. And yet, unlike nationalist figures like Marcus Garvey, Hughes does not privilege the Caribbean as a site of racial belonging, a "home" as an equal opposite to the "homelessness" in the United States. Like Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, *I Wonder* argues against the construction of a stable or "rooted" identity, holding out instead for the notion of a hybrid, rhizomorphic identity based on the memory of exile and displacement, a double consciousness born of a diaspora that sees modernity through a distinctive black perspective.[85] The memoir and travelogue traces his travels from the Caribbean, the U.S. South, Soviet Central Asia, Mexico, China, Japan, and finally to the International Brigades in Spain, offering his perspective as both a deracinated viewer on socialist uprisings and resistance, and yet one who sees, as Hughes writes, "with *Negro* eyes." As the memoir ends on a note of racial solidarity and exile, as he and another socialist writer drink in Paris on New Year's Eve, the work would seem to reject the foundationalism of land and nation as guideposts of identity or social movements. The "return" of the book is an image of both political kinship and political exile, both solidarity and rootlessness. Whatever home Hughes has is almost lamented: he can go back to the United States "even when I don't want to."[86]

This may explain the strange sense of irony around much of Hughes's writing about Cuba. While he deploys his travel in Cuba to highlight U.S. racism and imperialism—and to show the ways in which black writing and writers are accepted elsewhere in world—his writing consistently undermines any possibility of having a permanent home there. That *I Wonder as I Wander* begins in Cuba suggests a special role for the imaginary of the island to Hughes's conception of a black transnational consciousness: it is the site in which he realizes both the possibilities and the impossibilities of black transnational consciousness. As pointed out by critics such as Michelle Ann Stephens, Penny Von Eschen, and Robin D. G. Kelley, writers and intellectuals including W. E. B. Du Bois, Claude McKay, C. L. R. James, and Marcus Garvey imagined an international black community linked by concerns of racial identity, anticolonialism, and national self-determination. And yet imperialism creates a dialectic that at once gives rise to "the material conditions for black solidarity," as Stephens writes, and creates the primary source of black exploitation and alienation.[87]

As a visitor to Cuba, Hughes contrasts two scenes: one in which he is invited to the Club Atenas, the “leading club of color” in Havana, and another in which he is refused access to the beach by Cuban authorities working for the United States. The first scene suggests an attitude of cultural belonging: Hughes is impressed with the “taste and luxury” of the club, commenting that it had no equal in the United States.[88] Equally, his description of Cuban music is laden, as one critic puts it, with “organicist and romanticist” views about black culture, the “hip-shaking . . . roll of drums” that “speak of . . . life bursting warm from the earth . . . in steady rhythms of procreation and joy” that suggest some of the culturalist positions of the negritude movement.[89] And as Hughes comments toward the end of the night, the songs translated for Broadway consumption in the United States are cleansed of their references to black women, “plainly described as such in racial terms,” seeming to celebrate the frank appreciation of women of color.[90]

Yet Hughes’s feelings of racial ease are quickly broken in Cuba. He points out in the following section, “Cuban Color Lines,” that the shop clerks in the “bigger shops are white or near white” and the political establishment, for the most part, is run by whites.[91] He also chronicles his experience with overt racism as he and his traveling companion, Zell Ingram, are refused entrance to a U.S.-run beach in Havana. Explaining that the beach had been leased to a U.S. company, it now enforced Jim Crow policy on all of its patrons, at the request of U.S. tourists. Hughes asks the bouncer—a U.S. former boxer, “white of course”—if “you mean to tell me that you’re drawing the color line on a *Cuban* beach against *American* citizens.”[92] The bouncer’s refusal to answer the question suggests the answer is quite clear: that Cuba cannot enforce its own laws, and its tradition of *mulato* nationalism and “flexible” view on race, as Hughes calls it, are not outside of or immune to U.S. racism. In one sense, this story serves to bitterly ironize the central conceit of imperialism, that civilization is the “export” of the colonial mother country. Rather, the most visible export of the United States is segregation and a retrograde form of racial antagonism. Ingram and Hughes are arrested, and it is the fact that the police and judge both apologize, but are powerless—or unwilling—to stop the practice of segregation, which suggests that even Cuba is not a place isolated from the racial and imperial practices Hughes found in the United States.

As mentioned, the story “Little Old Spy” also frames the question of imperial domination of Cuba by the United States in racial terms. Paid to track Hughes for political considerations—anyone from the United States who was not obviously a tourist was considered suspicious—it’s also clear that the government enforces racial codes at the request of U.S. interests. Given that most of the cane workers are black, Hughes’s friend argues, “foreign dividends" determine whom the Cuban government decides might be dangerous.[93] And yet the story suggests a kind of pathos for the "little old spy," an overdressed drunkard who once trafficked in women until his age rendered him unable to compete. Hughes decides to invite him for a drink to get his story—and to get him drunk enough so Hughes can slip out unnoticed—during which time the spy discoursed a great deal on Cuban women. "Sweetest are the mulattoes of Camgüey," the spy says,

> because they are a mixture of two worlds, two extremes, two bloods. You see, señorito, the passion of blacks and the passion of the whites combine in the smoldering heat that is *la mulata.* The rose of Venus blooms in her body.[94]

This racialized portrait of the women the old man once trafficked is, however, in ontology, not altogether different from the racially sexualized portrait of the rhumba given in Hughes's description of Club Atenas. Rendered as a grotesque, it serves as a subtle critique of the Cuban myth of racial transcendence in Cuban national culture. This trafficker in women "appreciates" the racial beauty of Cuban mixed ancestry, while it is Hughes's blackness that paradoxically blocks his free movement to Cuba, and then assigns him this spy once in the capital. Mestizo, the "old spy" points out, creates a commodity value for sale to tourists and sailors, while it is Hughes's own color that marks him as dangerous to the authorities. As a statement of racial value, this scene suggests the way in which color and racialized assumptions of identity can work as floating signifiers of value in ways that Hughes cannot necessarily control.

Hughes's two poems about Cuba also suggest a certain kind of irony with respect to his relation to the land. As in Langston Hughes's poem "To the Little Fort in San Lázaro," written shortly after his first visit with Nicolás Guillen, the fort—while once able to stop pirates—can no longer defend against U.S. finance capital that knows neither borders nor defenses. Against the pirates of a previous moment of capital accumulation—"DRAKE / DE PLAN / EL GRILLO"—the watchtower "served quite well— / When times and ships were slow," but in an era of neocolonialism in which the "ship" no longer has material existence, the poem calls for the watchtower's destruction.[95] Equally disembodied is a poem written in 1931, "Havana Dreams," which chronicles the uncertainty of imagination:

> The dream is a cocktail at Sloppy Joe's—
> (Maybe—nobody knows.)

The dream is the road to Batabano.
(But nobody knows if that is so.)

Perhaps the dream is only her face—
Perhaps it's a fan of silver lace—
Or maybe the dream's a Vedado rose—
(*Quien sabe?* Who really knows?)[96]

Calling it a poem of "despair," Hughes biographer and critic Arnold Rampersad also notes that it was written shortly after Hughes's experience with the "little old spy" of his "most verbatim" story.[97] The suggestion that Hughes's treatment by the Cuban *porra* as well as the sight of "American tourists" ignoring the poverty and agitation in Havana could lead Hughes to a mood of uncertainty implies that imperialism is in some ways a uniquely disembodying experience. As opposed to the "rooted" metaphors of Woody Guthrie's "This Land" or the bounded space of what Stephens refers to as "black sovereignty," imperialism for Hughes suggests a crisis of identity that emerges either in spatial-temporal dislocation—asking the fort to "tumble down"—or dreams that do not come to fruition.[98] As Hughes critic Edward Mullen writes, Hughes's trip to Cuba made him conscious "that the black experience with its attendant feelings of alienation and subjugation is an international phenomenon."[99]

As critic Sheila Lloyd suggests, Hughes was beginning to feel alienated from the easy binary inherited from the Harlem Renaissance, that "all things black were more desirable than all things associated with whiteness."[100] While Hughes's politics had always been more complicated than this easy binary, one cannot help but notice that much of his writing in Cuba and Haiti is also directed toward a U.S. audience that may harbor oversimplified ideas about racial harmony outside of the United States in predominantly black American nations. In *I Wonder*, Hughes writes of the "colored visitors who are looking anxiously for a country where there is *no color line*" and of the "wonder" in the black imaginary for the Citadel, the fortress begun by Haitian head of state Dessalines.[101] Citing the obvious color codes in Cuba and the way the black elite in Haiti "scorn those below them," Hughes writes of the way "class lines may cut across color lines in a race" and of the way the Haitian elite even resembles the *gens de couleur* of St. Domingue, living off the labor of their fellow black workers.[102] Thus Cuba functions as a kind of double displacement. It complicates a black transatlantic vision based on a single definition of blackness or a question of a priori solidarity. And it complicates the role of the United States as well. Not only is imperialism defined by the extent to which the United States can impose its own racial codes on the Americas, but it also renders the black experience disembodied, subject to the alienation of dreams or unreality.

In this sense, it seems telling that *I Wonder* is a book about *looking*, a particular sensibility based on Hughes's own mobile and racially conscious perspective: Hughes writes, "I observed changes in Soviet Asia with *Negro* eyes" to contrast his enthusiasm for previously colonized peoples' advancement over Arthur Koestler's criticism of the Soviet Union.[103] Traveling is thus a metaphor for a particular kind of gaze that is mobile and yet based on a political and cultural ontology of anti-imperialism. It is no accident that the memoir is structured to end during the Spanish Civil War, in which he interviews a number of black soldiers serving in the International Brigades. In a conversation with a Guinean volunteer in the International Brigades, the volunteer makes it clear that he is fighting for a new colonial policy and against the Italians who invaded Ethiopia.[104] Equally, many of the African Americans Hughes interviews discuss the connections among fascism, racism, and the invasion of Ethiopia. One of the black soldiers refers to a captured Falangist as a "Spanish Klansman" he wishes he could execute.[105] In all of his interviews, Hughes privileges a particular way of seeing that the black troops have. In Hughes's poem "Letter from Spain," quoted in full in his memoir, a black Abraham Lincoln volunteer offers a dying Moroccan conscript solidarity, on the basis that if a "free Spain" wins the war, "the colonies, too are free."[106] The fact that from the narrator's vantage point in the Spanish Civil War he "looked across to Africa" is intended as more than just a suggestion of geographical proximity, but is rather a reference to pan-Africanist decolonization: a socialist victory in Spain would liberate African colonies and set "foundations shaking" of the entire world.[107] While it is hardly to be taken literally that the narrator in the poem could "see" Africa from Spain, it is precisely the intervention the poem and poet hope to make. By focusing on an African American gaze, Hughes argues that supporters of the Spanish Republic should "see" Africa in the conflict.

Yet it must also be remembered that while Hughes began writing many of the sketches in *I Wonder* in the 1930s, it is a Cold War text, published in 1956, three years after Hughes's testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Hughes's testimony before the House was considered to be compromised, even supine. While he didn't "name names," he also appeared to grant the committee legitimacy and at least partially apologize for his former radical stances. As Arnold Rampersad writes, "Hughes' dignity had largely been passive," especially when compared to other leading black voices such as Paul Robeson and Doxey Wilkerson, who engaged in "spirited acts of resistance" to the committee's questions.[108] In this sense, *I Wonder*, as well as the publication of "Little Old Spy" in the 1952 edition of *Laughing to Keep From Crying*, function as both provocation and cover. Entitling the journey to Cuba and Haiti "In Search of Sun," it disguises as a tourists' journal, complete with exotic parties and long stretches on the beach, an exposé of U.S. imperialism. Such subversion is winked at in "Little Old Spy," when the narrator leaves the drunk former pimp to deliver "all the messages that exiles in the Latin-American Quarter of Harlem had sent by me to their revolutionary co-workers in Havana."[109] While the narrator insists he's not in Cuba to do political work, he allows his own relative mobility—partial though it may be—to speak for exiled bodies of color in Harlem who do not even have such permission to travel. Thus the story is at once a parody of a certain kind of nationalism based on the transcendence of race as well as a story about how solidarity between the United States and Cuba can only be represented through acts of subversion.

The subtext of both *I Wonder* and "Little Old Spy" is as much transnational bonds of affinity as it is governments' attempts to prevent black bodies from moving freely. In *I Wonder* not only is Hughes prevented from using a white-leased beach in Havana, but he and Ingram are also detained as Haitian migrants on their return to Havana from Haiti some months later. Given they had almost no money and were traveling on a freighter, the Cuban authorities assumed that they were black sugar workers and detained them for days on Cuba's "Ellis Island" until the U.S. consulate—three days later—rescued them.[110] In this sense, there is a bitter irony to Hughes's "spy" story. The spy is, as Hughes points out, a trafficker in women of color. While Hughes was dogged by government spies, restricted by Jim Crow practices on U.S. steamships, prevented from entering public spaces, and finally detained as an undocumented migrant laborer, the movement of women's bodies continued unimpeded, insofar as they were moved by their employers for the sex trade. In this Cold War context, the restrictions of movement for intellectuals of color were very much on the minds of writers who had ties to the Left in the decades before, as the fates of Robeson, Patterson, and Du Bois suggest, all of whom had their passports revoked by the U.S. government.

In a 1943 poem "Broadcast to the West Indies," Harlem is imagined as an "Island within an island" in a Caribbean archipelago hailed in the beginning of the "broadcast":

> Hello, Jamaica!
> Hello, Haiti!
> Hello, Cuba!

Hello, Panama!
Hello, St. Kitts!
Hello, Bahamas![111]

The poem is, at the most salient level, an argument with a transnational American black culture about whether or not blacks should side with the Axis rather than the United States in the war. Yet the poem is strangely silent about the question, only to say that both the Axis, as well as U.S. racists, "will end," and that racists do not represent the entire United States. Most of the poem is a celebration that "we care for each other" and "share so much in common." Yet what is shared in common is precisely an identity as imperial subjects, the "certain things we know in common: / Suffering / Domination / Segregation." In a sense, the poem is a rejection of both the Axis and the United States, and rather a statement that Harlem is simply one more island in a transnational archipelago marked by its imagining of solidarity and its conditions of imprisonment.

Thus to begin a story of the black experience in Cuba is to claim allegiance to the United States, yet as a subject of its empire, rather than as a full citizen. The poem "Broadcast" is a statement of the inevitable way in which Hughes is a U.S. subject, but a subject in the same way one from the Bahamas is a subject. Cuba and the greater Caribbean thus stand, unlike Africa or Asia, in a state of in-betweenness for Hughes, part of a greater America at the same time they are states of separation, "domination," and "segregation," both from white America and from each other.

The poem "Broadcast" ends as it begins, with a long list of Caribbean nations the speaker greets, only with the difference that it is "FREEDOM" for which "WE PREPARE." This circular ending suggests the kind of paradox Stephens articulates in *Black Empire*, that U.S. imperialism creates the material conditions for a transnational imaginary yet is also the force preventing its realization as a political project. That is, one must be greeted first as imperial subject, then again as a subject of liberation. Cuba presents both, and thus challenges the narrative of the U.S. republic at the same time it reinforces its centrality. Hughes thus articulates himself as an unwilling subject, someone who belongs "home" in the United States, "even if I don't want to."

## Recentering Cuba / Decentering the United States

For the work of the Popular Front, the decision to place Cuba as central to not only the activism but also the representation of U.S. citizens abroad has profound implications. Not only does it decenter the nation as the primary site of political and cultural identification, it also questions U.S. national narratives as a democratic republic and a benevolent power abroad. As Louis Perez points out, Cuba was not only central to U.S. financial interests, but central to the U.S. image of itself as a benign power, going overseas only to liberate another nation from tyranny. As opposed to the long and bloody occupation of the Philippines, resistance movements in Haiti and Nicaragua, or continued colonization of Puerto Rico, Cuba was supposed to stand out as a counterexample of benevolent power and republican virtue. To the extent that Popular Front works may have participated in the reification of U.S. national identity, the centrality of Cuba as a site of political and cultural interest and exchange suggests a strong countertendency within the cultural movement. Indeed, American studies scholar Michael Denning's formulation of the "national-popular" may need to be revised for another view of working-class multiethnic international solidarity. Perhaps considering the way in which work on Cuba creates a "transnational-popular" imagery, based on the recognition of the importance of anticolonial movements and the centrality of empire in domestic structures of power, more clearly captures Popular Front production.

Cuba stands as both problem and a point of departure for reconstructing the memory of the Popular Front. As with Hemingway's novel *To Have and Have Not*, drawing borders around revolutionary politics can be thought of as also defining the limits of racial identity. Hemingway's novel defines the U.S. working class in racial terms: Harry and Albert are both white, and it is their whiteness, rather than their class status, that is under threat by the finish of the novel. Or rather, it is their status as working-class white men that leaves them vulnerable to attack by Cuban "savages" while the well-to-do sleep safely, not compelled as are Albert and Harry to engage in such dangerous forms of labor. In this sense, Hemingway's novel reframes Cuban colonialism as what Richard Slotkin might refer to as another "Indian war," in which Harry Morgan takes on the role of Indian fighter.

This collapse of racial and national identity in Hemingway's novel underscores the importance of Odets's, Herbst's, and Hughes's gestures of solidarity with the Cuban struggle for independence. As Herbst makes clear in her novel *Rope of Gold*, understanding her own whiteness was only possible if she understood and witnessed U.S. imperialism firsthand. And for Odets, "The Cuba Play" marked a stark point of departure from the politics of racial masquerade of his film *The General Died at Dawn*. Rather than "Americanize" his own identity by casting it in relation to an Orientalized East, "The Cuba Play" intentionally troubles the ability of white, U.S. writers to represent racially and nationally distinct peoples, and represents them only insofar as doing so remains self-reflexive.

One has to ask what it means that Odets's affiliation with Cuban radicals and his desire to write a play about Cuba later became a key point in his testimony as a friendly witness before HUAC. The committee spent nearly half of its time questioning him about his trip and subsequent arrest, despite Odets's frequent statements that he was no longer a member of the Communist Party and considered himself a "friendly witness," willing to "name names."[112] His film *The General Died at Dawn* did not draw so much as an utterance from HUAC, nor did much of his other work in New York or Hollywood, and yet his one-week trip to Cuba was an object of near obsession. While issues of race and ethnicity were not brought up during Odets's testimony, it is interesting that his one attempt at constructing a transnational politics of solidarity was also considered his most "subversive" act by HUAC. For a white ethnic writer like Odets, the politics of global solidarity and his own "Americannesss" are implicitly questioned by this single-minded focus. It was no secret that many Jewish Americans felt during the HUAC hearings that their loyalty to the United States and their whiteness were in question. There is thus a strong suggestion that the suppression of this element of the Popular Front's culture of solidarity also has deep implications for post–World War II racial formations.

For Langston Hughes to refuse an essentialized black culture as well as the binary between diaspora and anticolonial nationalism further suggests that Cuba played an important role in the development of his work. As U.S. imperialism complicates Hughes's relationship to a Cuban black diaspora by impeding a feeling of national belonging in Cuba and Haiti, he also shows the ways in which U.S. imperialism acts to further make blackness a mark of identity. Cuba thus acts to destabilize racial as well as national forms of identity. This is not to suggest that Hughes champions a postracial politics, far from it, but rather to suggest that belonging for Hughes is not grounded in the politics of place or the "rootedness" of a national narrative of origins. As Stephens suggests, Hughes articulates how empire creates a sense of placelessness at the same time it provides the material foundations for a black transnational imaginary. That Hughes ends a memoir that begins in the black artistic community with a transnational multiethnic army fighting for socialism and decolonization suggests that this "placelessness" has a transformative quality and may articulate itself within multiple forms of struggle. Hughes thus apprehends the Popular Front with double vision, as a committed antifascist but also as a figure who sees as he writes with "negro eyes," apprehending each antifascist struggle as part of an archipelago of empire for which Cuba is the first stop.

# 2 • Travels of an American Indian into the Hinterlands of Soviet Russia

## Native American Modernity and the Popular Front

In a 1933 edition of the California Communist Party newspaper *Western Worker*, a letter appeared from a Native American Communist Party member, Vincent Spotted Eagle, framed as a response to gubernatorial candidate Upton Sinclair's accusations that Communism is "un-American" and "from Russia":

> Now Mr. Sinclair, in regard to Americanism. It so happens that I am an American Indian, which is more American than you ever thought of being. We American Indians can truthfully say we are 100% Americans, which you can not.
>
> You are original products of Europe and so is your mode of production and distribution, and since Columbus discovered this Great Nation we have been exploited.
>
> We American Indians are lovers of all humanity, especially the Negroes, who are the most exploited race in this country. As Chief White Calf of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in Montana, whose face appears on the Buffalo Head nickel has often said to me, "The flags of the white men are emblems of intolerance."
>
> Before the white man came, our mode of production and distribution were on a cooperative basis, without any exploitation. This is Communism, which is true Americanism. And this is why I joined the Communist Party.[1]

Spotted Eagle's letter deploys Native American identity in the cause of socialism, underscoring the ways in which the dispossession of Native Americans from their land is also a dispossession of their means of production. It is also redeployment of Popular Front tropes of national belonging: the author of this letter claims a distinctly *American* national identity at the same time that he positions the most salient image of national identity, the flag, as an "emblem of intolerance." It is both a claim to citizenship and a rejection of the ideological grounds on which modern citizenship is constructed. In short, the letter fuses modern discourses about capitalism and nationalism with claims of indigenous heritage and sovereign rights to the land. Two years after this letter was written, Archie Phinney, a Nez Perce student of Franz Boas, embarked on a five-year course of study as an anthropologist in Leningrad, articulating many of the same concepts: by becoming "alert, modern communities," the Nez Perce and other Native American tribes may retain their identity as well as a modicum of power in their relationships with local and federal authorities, all through the lens of a transnational socialist project.

While there is no way to verify Spotted Eagle's claims to indigenous heritage, his letter is nonetheless a concise summary of many of the aspirations and contradictions of radical modernist notions of democratic pluralism and claims of sovereignty by communities of color during the Popular Front era. As Michael Denning articulates in *The Cultural Front*, the "cultural pluralism" of the Popular Front era contained elements of radical ethnic and racial nationalism as well as patriotic cultures of inclusion and belonging.[2] Spotted Eagle's letter draws into sharp relief one singular absence in recent scholarship about the period—the role of Native Americans and Native American issues. The absence of Native Americans from accounts of the Popular Front period is all the more striking considering that the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 not only was a major component of the New Deal agenda but was considered one of the few successes of the New Deal's left wing.[3] And while the IRA fell short of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) secretary John Collier's goals and remains controversial for reasons that I discuss below, its passage was accompanied by both federally and state-funded cultural productions focusing on Native American lives as well as a small explosion of Native and non-Native writers broadly sympathetic to Native claims of sovereignty.

Additionally, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), a pan-Indian political organization dedicated to representing Indian issues to the state and federal government, resembled other Popular Front civil rights organizations of the time, suggesting by its name as well as its purpose the National Negro Congress and Congress of Spanish-Speaking Peoples.[4] The cofounders of the NCAI—D'Arcy McNickle (Cree Métis-Salish) and Phinney—were not only among the most prominent Native American intellectuals of the era, they were, with a greater Popular Front "structure of feeling," members of

Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" coalition, while also trying to create racial forms of expression that challenged and went beyond its reformist programs. Phinney and McNickle were among many Native Americans in the 1930s and 1940s in dialogue with broader social movements in the United States (and indeed, there appears to have been a small cadre of Native Americans in the Communist Party). Indeed, Phinney's and McNickle's centrality as Native American intellectuals and activists suggests that their experiences may be, if not typical, at least exemplary of one current within a wider field of meaning. While Phinney was far more explicit about his engagement with a transnational socialist Left, both writers considered the Popular Front at least one way to reconcile modernity with the retention and promotion of Native American cultural and political identity. By placing Native American struggles for self-determination at the center of radical modern culture, we can ask to what extent the Popular Front helped formulate modern concepts of indigeneity, as well as the ways Native American activists and intellectuals may have helped shaped 1930s and 1940s progressive social movements. The very presence of Native American members of the Communist Party asks us to revise much of what we think we know about midcentury movements for social justice and for indigenous sovereignty.

Of the two figures, the least has been written about Phinney, despite or perhaps because of his formal training as an anthropologist in the Soviet Union and the wide-ranging nature of his critical writings, from studies of Nez Perce oral tradition to essays on Soviet indigenous policy. After returning from a five-year journey to the Soviet Union in the late 1930s, Phinney urged formally educated Indians to go "beyond old tribal horizons toward a racial identity" to link Native struggles for self-determination with racial struggles for justice in the United States and abroad.[5] Pan-Indian, cosmopolitan, and self-reflexively modern, Phinney represented a crucial link between Native American intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s and other intellectuals of color. Framing the Soviet experiment as "the first attempt of men to intelligently direct their own history,"[6] Phinney appreciated what I refer to as "radical modernity," allowing him to search along with other 1930s intellectuals to the east and to the global South for a new social order at home in the technological and cultural world of the 20th century yet not founded on the racial and classed hierarchies of the West. While scholars have documented the way that many African American, Asian American, and Latino/a intellectuals saw in the global Left new possibilities for social transformation, figures such as Phinney suggest how indigenous intellectuals contributed to radical modern movements, and allow current scholars to explore ways that radical modernity contributed to indigenous struggles for self-determination. If the internationalist Left has often been seen as indifferent or even hostile to indigenous claims for sovereignty, Phinney nonetheless articulated his claim to the modern world as a Nez Perce through the modality of a transnational racial and socialist project.[7] Phinney's desire to engage with the modern world—yet to do so on terms of equality, cultural integrity, and self-determination—prefigures Robert Warrior's call not to live "the romantic old days" but to live out a form of "humanism in a new situation."[8]

Rather than read Phinney in the shadow of McNickle's greater literary output, we can ask how Phinney's clear articulations of radical modernity situates McNickle's *Surrounded* (1936) as a Popular Front text, in critical dialogue with other radical writers of color who claimed themselves as part of transnational socialist movements. Considered the first "modern" Native American novel, *The Surrounded* offers a way to read the contradictions between Popular Front modalities of self-determination and democratic pluralism. In some ways, the novel is optimistic about the possibility of cultural and political redemption between the Salish and the white settlers on the reservation. Serving as a kind of metonym, the protagonist's Salish mother and Spanish father are engage in "warfare" with each other, a "warfare" that is resolved by his father's recognition of the wrongs done to the Salish people and his mother's renunciation of Christianity for the "old ways." This view of reciprocal redemption sits squarely within the progressive vision of the original Native American New Deal authored by Collier and several Indian rights organizations that formed out of the fight to save Pueblo lands in New Mexico in the early 1920s: in short, they believed that the way to "save" U.S. democracy was to recognize past inequalities and respect the cultural rights of national minorities. Yet McNickle forecloses this possibility as Archilde Leon, the mixed-race son returning to the reservation, is caught further within the violence inherent to the U.S. racial state. Structurally and thematically, the novel suggests that white racism and settler colonialism cannot be undone by symbolic acts of recognition. Formally, this tension is represented by an inverted bildungsroman structure, in which Archilde's coming-of-age narrative of reconciliation and self-discovery is paralleled by a growing carceral threat, until the two merge in his final surrender—and death—at the hands of the frontier sheriff.

The contradiction between *The Surrounded*'s adherence to the bildungsroman form and its violent end thus functions as a metonym for the contradiction between self-determination and pluralistic democracy that informs this and other 1930s and 1940s texts by writers of color. If one considers the basic political and formal structures of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, and Américo Paredes's *George Washington*

*Gómez*, the radical bildungsroman of personal and political development is often predicated on the protagonist's further fatal entanglement with a racial state, either through racial violence or, in the case of *Gómez*, through cooptation. Rather than understand these novels as wholesale rejections of Popular Front pluralism, I would suggest that they dialectically embrace the radical novel form to expose the racial limitations of its universalist contours, as well as to claim a space within the narrative of modernity—one that, as Paul Gilroy argues, writers of color could mold on their own terms.[9] As Philip Deloria writes, "According to most narratives, Indian people, corralled on isolated and impoverished reservations, missed out on modernity"; they are seen as "largely insignificant cultural and political actors in the reform efforts of the 1920s and 1930s."[10] While Deloria focuses on cinematic representation and technological mobility, Phinney and McNickle add yet another dimension to the ways in which Native peoples engaged with the radical modernity of the Popular Front era. If Phinney's own description of the Soviet Union focused on the modern quest of humanity "to intelligently direct their own history," we might think of McNickle's and Phinney's employment in the BIA, the formation of the NCAI, and cultural modes such as critical essays on racial identity and modern social realist novels as staking a claim on the ulterior modernist modes championed by other radical writers of color, such as Wright, C. L. R. James, Bulosan, Emma Tenayuca, W. E. B. Du Bois, H. T. Tsiang, and Langston Hughes. As there is a growing body of literature linking texts by African Americans to radical modern movements of the 1930s and 1940s, examining how other marginalized communities in the United States shared a common point of departure and even a common cultural and political framework seems long overdue.

## Native American New Deal or Native American Popular Front?

Much of the confusion regarding Popular Front era pluralism relies on evocations in U.S. cultural memory of a moment of progressive "national belonging," emphasizing a "multi-ethnic Americanism" summarized in Paul Robeson's "Ballad for Americans" or the Communist Party's decision to sing the National Anthem instead of the "Internationale" at conventions after 1935.[11] Such a memory obscures not only its partialness; it also neglects to consider its partiality—the way in which such a construction was formulated during the Cold War, fashioned by the victims of the red scare and the perpetrators alike who wished to sanitize the movement.[12] As historians such as Mark Naison, Robin D. G. Kelley, and Penny Von Eschen have suggested, the pluralist cultural and political movements of the 1930s were also intersected by anticolonialist and black nationalist movements that shared space in the same publications, and often within the same organizations. With the decline of the Garvey movement in the late 1920s, as historians Mark Naison and Anthony Dawahare elucidate, the Communist Party not only recruited former Garveyites, but in many ways took up the torch of the black nationalist cause within the United States and much of the colonized world. Beginning with the Sixth Communist International Congress in 1928, the Communist Party declared a set of policies that would dramatically shape intellectual and political currents in the United States for the next decade. Abandoning a pure class critique, the Sixth Congress built upon the writings of Lenin and Stalin to declare anticolonial nationalist struggles to be a legitimate part of global revolution, and to state that the Comintern should support national liberation struggles of both "national minorities" within states and subjects of colonial powers. This policy not only dramatized the Soviet Union's own policy of self-determination within the former Russian empire, it opened the door for U.S. party leaders to develop a "self-determination" thesis for the "Black Belt" within the United States, declaring African Americans to be "internally colonized" and in need of their own state. While this policy has been criticized as an example of Communist orthodoxy, both Dawahare and Kelley have suggested that it was a concession to black radicals from within the party and the Comintern.[13]

African Americans were not the only racial minority in the United States to consider Lenin's and Stalin's writings on nationalism in relation to their own claims for justice. Many on the left also supported the self-determination of colonial subjects, and antiwar and antifascist groups carried explicit messages condemning both European and U.S. imperialism. Groups such as the three-million-member American League Against War and Fascism (ALAWF) often cited connections between U.S. military spending and U.S. imperialism in Latin America, including U.S. support for right-wing Brazilian dictator Getúilo Vargas and the destabilization of the democratically elected Popular Front government of Ramón St. Grau in Cuba. Labor organizer and Communist Party member Emma Tenayuca coauthored an article titled "The Mexican Question in the Southwest" for *The Communist* shortly after a victorious pecan-sheller strike in San Antonio that involved tens of thousands of workers, mostly of Mexican descent. Beginning the article with the U.S. invasion of Mexican territory in 1846, Tenayuca frames Mexican American identity as a product of a colonial conquest. She argues that "the treatment meted out to the Mexicans as a whole has from the earliest days of sovereignty of the United States been that of a conquered people," citing the economic and cultural "penetration of Anglo-Americans" in Mexican territory that "has practically segregated into colonies" the original Mexican inhabitants.[14] She describes the process of colonial alienation provoked by separating communities from their land, enclosing public spaces, repressing the Mexican and mestizo language and culture, denying political representation, enforcing second-class wages, and targeting whole communities with state repression. The outlining of forms of oppression has a culminating logic, as she makes the deliberate argument that Mexican Americans, like other colonized peoples, suffer repression as "a whole people" in both cultural and economic terms, outside of the safeguards of citizenship and nationhood at all levels of identity-formation.

As C. L. R. James writes in the "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the U.S.A.," many of the pluralistic attempts to include African Americans within a more democratic U.S. national narrative merely incorporated them within a larger narrative that privileges whiteness. Critiquing a series of new histories of the Civil War, James writes that "in the . . . Marxist writings of the 1930's, the Negro is present, but only as a soldier, an officer, as deserving of 'recognition' for their bravery, service, etc."[15] He argues that instead, revolutionary movements in the United States need to recognize the particular subjectivity of black struggle that is at once outside of the national, class-based frame of the Popular Front and, likewise, has an important if neglected role within it.[16] One can thus read James's portrait of Toussaint-Louverture and the Haitian Revolution as also recentering the history of the Enlightenment with New World Africans at the center, who took the French Revolution and "constructed it in their own image."[17] James suggests that the slaves' appropriation of the hypocritical universalism of the Enlightenment did not undermine it, so much as fulfill it—or rather that, to fulfill the Enlightenment, one must first focus on the margins rather than the center. This realignment of modernity in relation to a new world, black subject has profound implications for the Popular Front, as James was well aware, informing the reader that "this book is of the age."[18] Locating revolution in the colonies rather than the urban metropole, understanding the dialectical way those denied their Enlightenment subjectivity are precisely the ones who must fulfill its meaning, and bringing out the way in which the black subject fuses folk tradition with modernity, suggests that the colonies are not merely backwaters awaiting the revolution to bring them modernity. Rather a revolutionary modernism locates liberation, the forward motion of history, in the very colonies seen by Europe to be backward, outside of history.

James's revisioning of New World history and black subjectivity is furthered in W. E. B. Du Bois's epic history of slavery and emancipation, *Black Reconstruction.*[19] For Du Bois, black labor in the South is less a "question" than a bloc, with its own historic capacity and agency. It is one thing to suggest that blacks played an important role in the Civil War, but it is quite another to suggest that the meaning of the war, and hence the nation-state, rested on the actions of a black general strike. This suggests that black labor and activism are not a perspective to be incorporated, but have a unique and particular subjectivity that has a determining effect on the whole. The implications for the Popular Front are global. Not only did the labor movement not fully comprehend the importance of black—and especially southern black labor—but Du Bois's comparison of colonialism with southern plantocracy was not incidental. The marriage of convenience among abolitionists, progressive unions, and industry that led to universal suffrage (and no more) was echoed by the coalition of unions, antifascists and capitalist-democracies to destroy fascism, and no more—at the expense of preserving colonialism as part of the "democratic" West. While many antifascists were anti-imperialists, others read imperialism outside of the discursive field of labor and capital: the colonial subject may be an "other" deserving sympathy, but not necessarily the bond of solidarity. Opposing fascism for colonial democracy became—to Du Bois and others like C. L. R. James and Paul Robeson—like opposing slavery for Jim Crow freedom. Inclusion in a new multiracial CIO or within a Federal Writers' Project (FWP) guidebook was not enough. But the mere fact of Native Americans who identified as members of the Communist Party raises the question that up to now has not been fully addressed: what, if any, connections can be made between the social formation of the "long Popular Front" and Native American activists, cultural production, and federal policy? These concerns open up a broader question that also has yet to be examined, specifically how questions of race, transnational anticolonialism, and nationalism in the long Popular Front engaged questions of U.S. indigeneity.

While this discursive and political battle over pluralism, nationalism, and colonialism raged on, another battle over the question of race and sovereignty occupied a significant part of the New Deal agenda: the Indian Reorganization Act, or Native American New Deal.[20] And while the IRA fell short of true sovereignty, its passage was accompanied with both federally and state-funded cultural productions focusing on American Indian lives as well as a small explosion of Indian and non-Indian writers broadly sympathetic to Native claims of sovereignty. Perhaps most importantly, tensions within the New Deal Indian reforms were also a concise expression of many of the contradictions around questions of race and nationalism within the

Popular Front. In one sense, the IRA and the FWP represented a break with government assimilationist policy and promoted a "pluralistic" view of U.S. history, yet a pluralistic version of U.S. history that as often denied direct expression and cultural power to those same communities it was said to represent. Like the Popular Front itself, these tensions were not resolved, and often more dominant cultural strains that privileged whiteness and liberal democracy prevailed in public policy as well as recorded history. However, such contradictions of public policy and cultural production also opened spaces for more radical voices to be expressed and, one could argue, created valuable precursors for later liberation movements.

I would like to suggest that the participation of Phinney and McNickle with the reforms of the 1930s must be seen not only in the light of their own developing politics of sovereignty but also within a larger context of subaltern participation in the Popular Front itself, as marginalized groups participated in, supported, and resisted interpellation depending on the possibilities available to them and the extent to which new discourses of "ethnicity" allowed for political openings previously unavailable.[21] Tensions within the New Deal Indian reforms were a concise expression of many of the contradictions around questions of race and nationalism within the new social movements of the 1930s and 1940s. In one sense, the Indian Reorganization Act and the Federal Writers' Project represented a break with government assimilationist policy and promoted a "pluralistic" or multicultural view of U.S. history. As Kevin Bruyneel suggests, the IRA "promoted indigenous community" by acknowledging collective and individual citizenship as coincident forms of political belonging.[22] In other words, it granted "group rights" to Native American nations while fostering participation in the wider national political life. Yet as Jodi Byrd argues, the IRA can also be seen as merely a new form of "administrative colonialism" in which the limited "self-government" of federally recognized tribes was merely the modern terms under which assimilation into the logic of settler-colonialist multiculturalism would be based.[23] I would argue that both viewpoints accurately describe Collier's policies and suggest unresolved contradictions with the Popular Front and the New Deal era of reform. However, such contradictions of public policy and cultural production also opened spaces for more radical voices to be expressed and created valuable precursors for later liberation movements. While my point is not to reopen debate on the political legacy of the Native American New Deal, I would rather hope to consider how the IRA fit within broader patterns of Popular Front politics. Not only was the IRA accompanied by both federally and state-funded cultural productions focusing on Native American lives as well as a small explosion of Indian and non-

Indian writers broadly sympathetic to Native claims of sovereignty, radical social movements such as the Communist Party, in the U.S. West at least, apparently took an interest in Native issues as part of a broader focus on race and anti-imperialism.

As mentioned above, one missing model from the historical record of Collier's IRA is the Soviet Union's policy on "national minorities." As Anthony Dawahare writes, Joseph Stalin's popular book *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* became highly influential among black intellectuals in the 1930s who were looking for answers to the intractability of racial progress in United States as well as a way to square separatism with integration in a global revolutionary analysis. Particularly attractive was Stalin's proclamation that colonized peoples have the right to "national self-determination," legitimating both national liberation struggles and the cultural independence of colonized peoples.[24] These policies were also popularly understood to be under way in the former colonies of imperial Russia. For instance, Langston Hughes wrote numerous articles for the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses* about life in the former Russian empire during his trip to the Central Asiatic republics in the mid-1930s, which he later published in memoir form in *I Wonder as I Wander* (1956). Rather than see the Soviet model as measured in terms of formal democracy or universal human rights, Hughes assessed the Soviet Union in relation to how it addressed the issues faced by people of color when in contact with the Western world. Explaining the significance of the opening of film schools, arts programs, and economic development, he distinguishes himself from his European companion's distaste for the "primitive" conditions of Soviet Asia by remarking that "Turkmenistan" was less "a primitive land moving into the twentieth century" than a "*colored* land moving into the orbits hitherto reserved for whites."[25]

Hughes also remarked on the speed with which the Soviet Union dismantled Jim Crow policies of the Russian empire, noting that restrictions on Turkmen and Jews had been lifted since the Soviets came to power: "I could not help but remember Atlanta, Birmingham and Houston. . . . I had to sit in the colored section"; in Turkmenistan "Russians . . . Europeans, and natives . . . all went to the same schools, sat on the same benches, ate in the same co-operatives, worked in the same shops and factories . . . gains and defeats were shared alike."[26] This mix of economic development, federal control, and cultural independence—the promotion of Turkic languages and cultures—was attractive for anthropologists who wanted to see what effect the policies would have on indigenous peoples living in Siberia. One can see obvious parallels between the IRA's emphasis on cultural freedom with the economic benefits of tribal incorporation. Boas and Collier openly praised the Soviet policy, and Phinney was hired by Collier at least partly on the basis of his study of Soviet policy while in Leningrad.[27] To the extent that Collier supported federal intervention and transnational—even Soviet—answers to Native policy, he and the IRA should be considered a part of Popular Front culture and policy, and not just an element of the New Deal; indeed, Collier often referred to his opponents as "fascists" and "Nazis," suggesting that he understood his struggle within the frame of contemporary international politics.[28]

Yet far beyond and undoubtedly affecting Collier and the IRA, the 1930s witnessed a cultural resurgence of Native American themes within literature and popular culture. The sheer amount and variety of literature by—and more often about—Native Americans suggests that (re)imagining Native Americans and their relationship to the United States was central to the formation of left-wing culture in the 1930s and to conceptions of modernity in general. From the FWP travel guides to oral histories, to journalism by figures like Carey McWilliams and Edmund Wilson, to novels by well-known left writers like Howard Fast and emergent Native American voices like McNickle, "rediscovering" Native culture resonated powerfully with Popular Front attempts to redefine national belonging along democratic and multiethnic lines. Most prominent among these authors, Fast's novel and 1941 Readers' Club selection *The Last Frontier* narrates the story of one Sioux band's attempt to escape their reservation and make it back to the Black Hills.[29] Wilson's travel memoir of crossing the United States ends by noting the "robber barons" of the 19th century could consolidate their power only by putting down the last attempt of Native Americans "to assert their independence."[30] And perhaps more optimistically, the newsletter published by the BIA under Collier, *Indians at Work*, seemed like perhaps the most salient and obvious attempt to fuse the politics of Indian representation with the prolabor politics of the Popular Front.

More than other writer of the 1930s and 1940s, the California Left's organic intellectual McWilliams historicized the relationship among fascism, imperialism, and Native genocide in the Far West of the United States. Coining the term *farm fascism* to capture the precise nexus of racial violence and concentrated political power on the West Coast, McWilliams links fascism to a much longer history of mass murder and land theft. In *Southern California Country*, McWilliams gives a uniquely U.S. version of fascism, connecting the colonization of California to fascist genocide and slave labor in the San Joaquin fields. He points out that "the Franciscan padres eliminated the Indians with the effectiveness of Nazis operating concentration camps" and notes that only those Native Americans who successfully resisted the mission system were able to survive the later U.S. invasion.[31] McWilliams's concept of the "concentration camp" is much like Antonio Benítiz-Rojo's "traveling plantation," in the sense that it combines a racial logic with a mode of production that expands through place and time. The U.S. policy, "to extirpate Indian culture . . . to be liquidated as rapidly as possible," while more violent and genocidal than the Spanish or Mexican, merely modernized the hacienda system started under the Spanish.[32] That is, for whatever the differences among U.S., Spanish, and Mexican policy toward California Native peoples, McWilliams sees the beginning of California's oppressive system of agriculture in the enslavement of the California indigenous population.

One could frame McWilliams's intervention a "anti-Turnerism," as McWilliams locates a unique U.S. identity in westward—and genocidal—expansion. While the FWP travel guides cautioned writers to avoid "sentimental" and "dishonest" stereotypes of Native Americans, the "inclusion" of Native Americans in the travel guides does not present contemporary material about Native communities, nor do the guides present any of the massive changes enacted by the IRA. This alone generated the perception that Native communities were "non-historical facts," little different from the vast descriptions of geological formations or other flora and fauna.[33] For McWilliams, however, as well as some writers for *Daily Worker*, the logic of Native genocide continued to inform reactionary political movements, labor suppression, racism, and violence in U.S. culture. Of perhaps greater importance for the antifascist Left was to argue that the United States has its own fascist history, equal in its authoritarian and racist content, but separate in cultural appearance and origin. If, as Du Bois argued, fascism owes its conception to colonial regimes in Africa, so McWilliams argues that American fascism begins in settler conquest.[34] While with Fast's novel and the FWP guides, Native Americans remain symbols of, rather than subjects of, an emergent pluralistic nation, for McWilliams the fate of the United States hinges on the redemption of its relationship with its indigenous peoples.

For writers such as Fast and for journalists in socialist publications like the *People's Daily World*, the image of the Native was reproduced often in romantic ways, yet at the same these images were often accompanied by critiques of Manifest Destiny. In the *People's Daily World*, the West Coast publication of the Communist Party, articles ran in its weekend magazine pointing out that Mount Rushmore was on land claimed by Sioux treaty and that "Sitting Bull should be held in just as much reverence" as the presidents carved into the side of the mountain.[35] Indeed, just to clarify on whose side Sitting Bull would be, the author noted that Sitting Bull pursued a "united front policy" against the Native Americans' common enemy, the U.S. military, linking the fight against fascism with the Sioux struggle to defend their land.[36] A month earlier, an account of the Battle of Little Bighorn appeared, written by "the only living Indian who knew and fought with Sitting Bull at the Battle of Little Bighorn," openly praising the victory over the U.S. cavalry.[37] On the next page, an article titled "This Land Is Ours" told the story of Mexican American farmers who faced the threat of "colonization" by "Anglo-Americans and the Chamber of Commerce" who "conspire to take their land."[38] While stock images of Natives on horseback in the first piece speak to the racial romanticism of the editor who chose the accompanying image, it is clear that the editor also wishes to point out that Manifest Destiny continues to the present, with the enclosure and theft of land held by nonwhites at the center. And it should be noted, there was nothing romantic in the presentation of the Mexican American family losing their farm.

Perhaps because of this greater attention to antiracism and Indian issues on the left, there seem to have been a small number of Native American members of the Communist Party (CP) who had, at least in regional chapters, a relatively high profile. On the West Coast, in the early 1930s, an activist by the name of Joe Manzanares, self-identified as an American Indian, was featured in several headline stories; he also placed an advertisement asking for those "interested in Indian issues" to call a number at the San Francisco CPUSA office.[39] There were also calls by Native Americans to join the Communist Party in the editorial section, framed much like the letter by Spotted Eagle, as a combination of calls for self-determination, communist class rhetoric, and anticolonial questionings of the savage-civilized binary. One letter, for instance, argues that "white bosses stole all the land from us Indians" and "they call us 'natives,' or 'Indians,' or 'wild,' . . . the Indians are not wild. . . . Indians are always friendly to workers who must slave for a living."[40] This letter writer suggests that entering modernity—being "not wild"—is not the same as assimilation. Socialism, described as "solidarity with the proletariat," is reimagined as coincident with the writer's claims to the land and his history of dispossession. Much like Spotted Eagle's letter, communism and indigenous claims for self-determination are articulated as being part of the same project. Or to put it another way, self-determination is reinvented through the language of the transnational Left.

In addition, the *Western Worker* and *People's Daily World* printed five stories about Communist Party members organizing relief drives and unemployed councils on reservations in California, which suggests that on the West Coast at the very least, party activists and Native Americans organized together on reservations.[41] While the extent and shape of these organizing drives remain unclear, that the Communist Party had a presence on western reservations and organized for such things as unemployment relief and land claims suggests a very different picture of not only the Communist Party in the West but also the political engagement of at least some Native groups. And in the *Western Worker* and *People's Daily World*, numerous articles ran on the subjects, including illegal land claims by whites on Indian land, broken treaties, deportations of Native Americans to Mexico, and the "genocidal" policy of Indian Removal in California, suggesting that the party did not merely see Native Americans through the lens of class but understood the specificity of Native claims to injustice.[42] While lacking in the formal party infrastructure that helped vocalize issues of importance to African Americans, such articles and editorials suggest far greater participation and involvement between Native communities and the Far Left than is usually granted. In Montana the CP ran a Native senatorial candidate by the name of Raymond Gray in 1934, and the well-known civil rights activist Hunter Bear (John R. Salter) wrote for the CP publication *Masses and Mainstream* in the 1950s and owed his political education to the Industrial Workers of the World and to the CP-led union Mine-Mill.[43]

As critics like Michael Staub, Deloria, and Mindy Morgan have pointed out, 1930s documentary and literary culture did more than just include Native Americans in more "accurate" ways, as suggested by the FWP travel guides. There was a great emphasis on documenting the lives of Native Americans—collecting oral histories and writing down Native storytelling. As Staub writes, ethnographies such *Black Elk Speaks: The Autobiography of a Papago Woman*, and the "Stone and Kelsey 'Massacre'" were surprisingly self-reflexive texts that gave voice to marginalized perspectives and often-silenced histories in ways that neither sentimentalized their subjects nor privileged the recorders. In addition, other FWP projects such as *Land of Nakoda: The Story of the Assiniboine Indians* and "*I Will Be Meat for My Salish": The Montana Writers Project and the Buffalo of the Flathead Indian Reservation* were projects undertaken by educated members of their respective tribal communities to correct the "failings" of previous ethnographic works as well as to preserve oral traditions within the contemporary context of changing reservation life.[44] Unlike the FWP guides, Native communities had total control over the representation of oral history and contemporary life in these projects. And equally, other FWP projects, such as "Henry Mitchell, Indian Canoe Maker," created an oral history account of a Penobscot who claims Native identity while both criticizing the commodification of that identity and living a "modern" life as a factory worker and urban city dweller.[45]

These "narrative acts of self-determination," as one critic framed them, were also part of a renaissance of Native literature.[46] Nonfiction tracts such as Luther Standing Bear's memoir *Land of the Spotted Eagle* and the avant-garde *America Needs Indians!* by Iktomi Hicala suggested a further boldness in both style and claim during the Depression. Yet memoirs and political tracts remain related more to genres of 19th- or early 20th-century Native writing, like Zitkala-Ša's *Impressions of an Indian Childhood* or William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip*. In a major break with earlier forms of Native writing, John Joseph Mathew's *Sundown* and McNickle's *Surrounded* have been called the first modern Native novels. And while critics have credited *The Surrounded* as being the progenitor of modern Native fiction, it is also useful to consider how the novel engages with major currents of 1930s literature, especially Popular Front literature by writers of color. As I discuss below, *The Surrounded* is a social modernist novel that signifies many generic and cultural currents of the 1930s while exposing the limits of democratic narratives' address to subjectivity and needs of the Salish people. In this sense, not only is indigenous modernity expressed through literature, but literature is the expression and product of it.

## Archie Phinney and the "New Indian Intelligentsia"

More than any other figure, Phinney both theorized and lived the nexus between an emergent Native American politics of self-determination and the cultures of the Popular Front. Born in 1904 in Culdesac, Idaho, Phinney studied at Columbia University with Franz Boas, completing *Nez Perce Texts*, a collection of oral tales narrated by Phinney's mother, along with the first published transcription of the Nez Perce alphabet.[47] After four years at Columbia, Phinney found a teaching and research post at the Leningrad Academy of Sciences from 1932 to 1937 in order to conduct a comparative study of Soviet and U.S. federal policy on indigenous peoples. While there, Phinney not only learned Russian and took numerous graduate seminars on Marxist theory and anthropology, he made several trips to Siberia to research how postrevolutionary policy on "national minorities" changed life for the Native peoples, hoping to find in the Soviet system a model that the United States could emulate. While Phinney never published a book-length text on his experiences in the Soviet Union, it is clear from his published and unpublished manuscripts that Soviet policy as well as his experiences in the Soviet Union deeply influenced his sense of politics and cultural and racial identity, both as an eventual agent of the BIA under Collier and cofounder of the NCAI.

In the few brief scholarly sketches written of Phinney, questions of Phinney's intellectual analysis as well as his political allegiances remain controversial. Phinney earned an extensive FBI file during his tenure at the BIA, and it is clear that the FBI suspected Phinney may have been a Communist Party member, or at least a sympathizer, citing through informants that Phinney "wanted an economy like Russia" and that Phinney promoted "Communistic doctrines."[48] As several commentators have noted, had Phinney not abruptly died at a relatively young age in 1949, he would have undoubtedly been called before the House Un-American Activities Committee and more than likely have lost his position with agency. In what are to date the most thorough assessments of Phinney's contributions as an activist and scholar, both William Willard and David Price suggest that despite Phinney's extensive file, Phinney was alienated in the Soviet Union, found little value in Soviet policy, and rarely mentioned the Soviet Union upon his return to the United States.[49] From the published as well as the unpublished record, Phinney's politics and ideology appear to have been crucially shaped by the Soviet Union and by Marxism, if in often creative and nondoctrinaire ways. Indeed, it appears that the scholars who collaborated in the retrospective either did not read the entire record or were more concerned with clearing Phinney's name of possible Communist affiliation than with exploring Phinney's investment in Soviet policy and socialist culture. While defetishing membership in the Communist Party is crucial to understanding the broad cultural and political alignments of the Popular Front period, suggesting that Phinney went "beyond" communism to promote a pure vision of tribal sovereignty or that his alignment with the Soviet Union or CPUSA was "not relevant" suggests an unfortunate binary between radical modernist politics and questions of Native American self-determination.[50] For Phinney, as with African American intellectuals such as Hughes and James, the Soviet Union suggested an alternative path of development in which questions of radical modernity and self-determination were, in theory at least, necessarily entwined.

In what is perhaps Phinney's best-known essay, "Numipu among the White Settlers," Phinney poses a fundamental challenge after narrating the eighty-year decline of the Numipu (Nez Perce) since the U.S. government's first treaty violation in 1855: "The present task . . . must be to make Indians participate in American life as alert, modern communities struggling for their own interests."[51] The essay was written in 1937 as part of his application for position of agent in Collier's BIA, a job for which Phinney applied repeatedly over the course of two years.[52] It's clear that Phinney wishes to imply his support for the IRA by suggesting "modern" modes of self-determination for the Nez Perce, but Phinney's embrace of modernity as a mode of dispos-

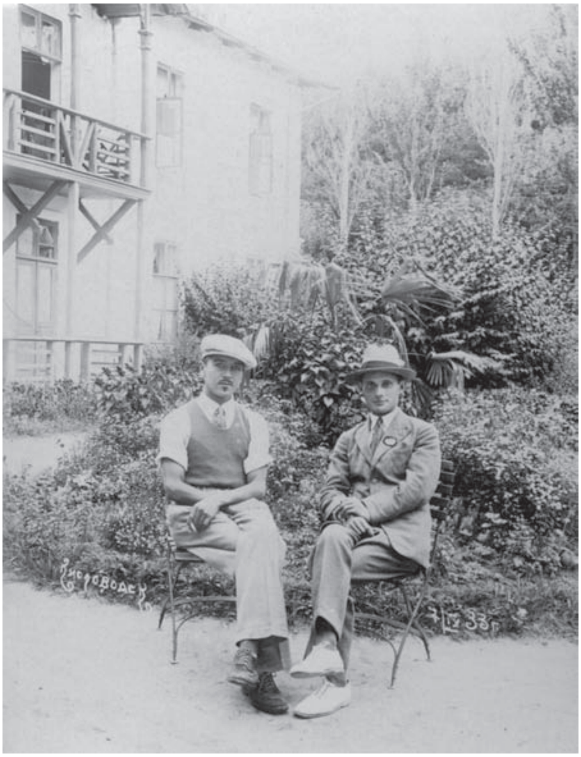


Fig. 4. Archie Phinney (*left*) in Leningrad, mid-1930s. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Nez Perce National Historical Park.)

session *and* empowerment has implications beyond U.S. federal Indian policy. In an essay entitled "Racial Minorities in the Soviet Union" published in *Pacific Affairs* in 1935, Phinney promotes the Soviet Union's policies on "national minorities" as an answer to the centuries of Russian colonialism, as well as "of the deepest importance to every person interested in problems of cultural contact and 'race' relations throughout the world."[53] Yet Phinney is also clear that modernity arrived in the East as a "system of oppression" in search of "raw materials," it continued in the form of a native comprador class of "chiefs, traders, landlords, and government representatives" who "arrested and vitiated growth of native culture."[54]

Colonialism for Phinney was thus not merely the destruction of Native cultures, but their ossification as well. As Frantz Fanon points out in dialectical fashion, colonialism constructs its opposite, the native—and thus produces the very primitivism it defines as its other. As Robert Warrior articulates in *Tribal Secrets*, the goal of cultural liberation is not to revive the "romantic old days," but to live out a "humanism in a new situation."[55] As

Phinney describes it, Soviet policy toward indigenous Soviet citizens would reverse the "Russification" policy of the empire and promote native cultures, as well as reverse the model that developed the "core" metropole and underdeveloped the colonial "periphery." Phinney continually repeats his central thesis, that through the modernization of the native areas, the "Northern peoples" were gaining both cultural and economic agency. In the process of "planning their lives" with "a medical station, cooperative stores and other facilities" and "achieving a new life . . . as technicians, teachers, health workers, social and political organizers, and creators of native art and literature," the tribal areas were also "reanimating the traditional elements and forms of culture" by "bringing them into a new synthesis, consistent with the development of future world cultures."[56] Culture for Phinney is a dynamic process, engaged with the dialectics of modernity and sovereign power. For Phinney, the preservation of native cultures relies on their transformation, their entrance into modernity on their own terms.

This "new synthesis" was in large part rooted in a materialist conception of language. For Phinney, language was that part of national culture most affected by historical condition. In a handwritten essay "On Minority Languages in the Soviet Union," written symbolically perhaps on the reverse side of his translation from Sahaptin into English of *Nez Perce Texts* (Phinney often complained to Boas of a lack of quality paper in Russia), Phinney suggests that language is the cultural medium through which "daily life" and the mode of historical development are most fully expressed.[57] By way of example, Phinney translates Marx's definition of "historical materialism" from English into Sahaptin, noting that in Sahaptin, it takes 151 words, whereas in English it takes only 50.[58] The question for Phinney is not that Marx's concept is untranslatable, but that rather there exists in English a ready-made infrastructure of abstract concepts, a benefit of the English-speaking world's level of historical development. It follows that native cultures in czarist Russia were dominated through language, as language is that mode through which an entire social and historical way of life is expressed:

> One of the most effective instruments of bending national minority life to the devastating economic interests of an outside ruling bourgeoisie was that of language, and . . . the Russianizing process was an outright system of making minor nationalities good subjects for exploitation—a system sustained by ideals commonly proclaimed in other countries, of civilizing a backwards people. They see that Russian Czarist policy, utilizing language as a most effective instrument for Russianizing, was bent towards the substitution of the Russian lan-

> guage for all native languages—a policy which was carried into effect first by constituting Russian as an official language in the conduct of political and business affairs among nationalities and secondly by establishing schools which not only were conducted in Russian language, but followed principles of education, though specially drafted curriculae, that were consistent with the maintenance of exploitation.[59]

Despite this "Russianizing" of native life in Siberia, Phinney refuses to accept the binary opposite, that tribes should learn only their native languages, and that Russian should be removed from educational and civic life. Phinney is aware that it is just the cosmopolitanism of the imperialist that makes the local appear as a site of resistance. As Phinney continues,

> For imperialist expansion . . . it is necessary to break down the barriers of isolation and independence among . . . colonial peoples. Just as economic isolation and independence . . . react against the exploiting interests of oppressor nations so will cultural isolation and independence react not only against the flowering of a high world culture but against the fullest local cultural development.[60]

Thus the problem is not merely to accept a cosmopolitanism and modernity that rejects the provincialism of the local, but to find a radical modernity that can aid in the resistance to imperialism without freezing native culture in an isolated past.

Given the centrality of language in expressing fundamental cultural and historical modes of existence, Phinney endorses what he sees as the Soviet model, a radical bilingualism in which "national minority languages may not only survive but will develop if . . . native conversation, tradition, mythology, folk tales and songs are glorified" and in which Russian is also taught as a way for native peoples to enter "the new living world of science, technology, philosophy, political science, art and literature.[61] In this double track, Phinney embraces his materialist concept of language as a possible way out for eastern tribes. If each language expresses a "whole way of life," then for those tasks that are necessary for modern development, Phinney encourages the acquisition of a language that has had centuries of exposure to modernity, while retaining a native language for the social and cultural life of the tribe, anticipating that at some point, the native language will eventually overtake Russian or English in wider and wider aspects of native life. For Phinney, socialism becomes a mode by which the power, but not the cultural, national, or even spiritual specificity, is taken out of language. As Phinney writes, it is "only socialism" in such a polynational form "will clean the linguistic air" of both the internalized "inferiority" felt by Native cultures in the use of their language, and erase the "glamour" of the colonizer's tongue.[62]

One might think that Collier's vision of the Indian New Deal would seem like a plausible version of what Phinney admired in the Soviet policy for national minorities, with its emphasis on economic development and cultural pluralism, but it is clear that Phinney had his own vision of Native self-empowerment. As much as Phinney quite eagerly sought out work in the BIA, Phinney felt that he had a greater role in shaping Native identity through the foundation of NCAI.[63] Sending a long, critical letter to Collier over the failures of the IRA to break out of the "rigid guardianship of the government" and objecting to the dominance of white anthropologists and missionaries at the American Indian Conference in 1939, Phinney formed a new caucus of "bona fide Indian leaders" out of which the NCAI grew.[64] While the NCAI may have just seemed like another "Indian" lobbying organization, Phinney felt that the NCAI would represent a new Native identity, one far more "aggressive and militant" than earlier pan-Indian organizations.[65] In an essay entitled "The New Indian Intelligentsia," Phinney sketches out his vision of the NCAI as a way to respond to the meaning of being Indian in the modern world:

> Apart from any considerations of racism or nationalism, there must be ascribed to American Indians not only a tribal status but a racial status. The concept of an Indian "race" derives largely from our modern propensity for classifying groups of people rather than individualizing them. Anciently, Indians identified themselves by local groups or bands, later by tribes and ethno-linguistic stocks, until now they have gained a distinct consciousness of that all-embracing classification—"Indians." . . . This trend is already apparent among Indian tribes as it is among mother minorities throughout the world.[66]

Inhabiting a racial identity would be, paradoxically, the mode in which Native peoples could also inhabit a modern identity. Ever the dialectician, Phinney sees the imposed identity of race as a means to form collective strength and, as importantly, to not allow resistance to "modern" definitions prevent Native peoples from organizing. Anticipating that tribal identity would—and often did—prevent Native peoples from developing a pan-Indian alliance, Phinney stresses that "Indian racial heritage is not a thing that depends for its survival upon a reservation atmosphere . . . , such non-reservation Indians are probably the most capable and aggressive element of the Indian population in the United States."[67] Phinney's last point seems telling—rather than imagine, as John Joseph Mathews or D'Arcy McNickle did in their fiction, that modernity would bring tragedy to those Native Americans brave or foolish enough to face it, just such a deracinated identity will allow them to govern their own affairs.

One could argue that Phinney embraces the "ethnicity paradigm" of the 1930s—that the United States is created out of a diversity of culturally defined ethnic groups each of which have its particular route to full citizenship—yet it is clear that he also rejects the assumption that ethnicity is merely a modern form of assimilation. In Phinney's definition of ethnicity, racial markers should be used to address issues of collective concern to Native Americans, not as a way to erase indigenous identity within what Byrd refers to as the "multi-cultural settler state." In such fashion, the NCAI limited its involvement with white-led organizations, and membership was restricted solely to Native Americans. While not technically a form of "separatism," the foundation of the NCAI considered self-determination and sovereignty primarily political concerns, about advancing Indian interests at the national level, and having means to articulate an Indian point of view, separate from tribal or land-based identities yet not independent from these concerns. As the NCAI founders understood, their interests coincided with those of other people of color, yet they also understood the uniqueness of Native American identity, one with special tribal needs, treaty claims, and legal relationships with the federal government.[68] In other words, the NCAI through Phinney's visionary construction uses an ethnicity paradigm to function politically in the modern world, yet retained a sovereign Native American identity and purpose. The successful fight against termination waged largely by the NCAI a decade later suggests that the foundation of such an organization came not a moment too soon.

As Deloria reminds us, the fixing of Native Americans within discourses of primitivism also entailed freezing them in place, both literally in terms of the carceral reservation and figuratively through antimodern portraits of Indians as romantic savages.[69] Thus for Phinney there is a larger question at stake: how are native peoples to join a cosmopolitan and transnational world culture? Phinney's transnational identity is a question that echoes through nearly everything he wrote, from his several articles on the Soviet Union, to comparisons of Charlemagne and Napoleon with Sitting Bill and Tecumseh. Phinney's perspective is underscored by the title of an unpublished retrospective he wrote for the *Baltimore Sun*, "Travels of an American Indian into the Hinterlands of Soviet Russia."[70] The American Indian, as Deloria reminds us, is supposed to be the most provincial of creatures—and here Phinney is both ironizing the "unexpectedness" of his presence in the Soviet Union and calling attention to his modernity and his internationalism. Yet Phinney also clearly maintains that such a transnational identity is not new: Native Americans visited Russia in the 16th century, and now, he notes with some pride, "an Indian had come to study and understand the Russians."[71] The reservation system is therefore not necessarily inherent to the preservation of culture; rather, as Phinney writes in "The New Indian Intelligentsia," by retaining a reservation identity "we are making the Indian inordinately a reservation denizen rather than a world citizen and the Indian who adjusts himself outside of a reservation ceases to figure in the Indian picture simply because he is no longer an *Indian problem*."[72] In other words, redefining the reservation as a carceral space that both defines and confines Indianness to its status as a "problem," Phinney suggests that a transnational identity as a global citizen is the road to empowerment and self-affirmation.[73]

As a cautious and often critical supporter of the "Indian New Deal," Phinney did hope to see reservations reemerge as sites of cultural and economic development. Yet, as Phinney wrote, many of the tribes in the United States are "moribund," living on small, unsustainable reservations.[74] This is not to say that Phinney supported assimilation or termination. Assimilation, Phinney argued, is often based on a false binary, assuming that one whole culture and way of life will be replaced by another, equally fulfilling. As Phinney writes in "Numipu among the White Settlers," even as the younger generation of Native Americans has already become "indifferent to . . . tribal activities" and "bereft" of their traditional way of life, their "ultimate assimilation by the whites" often means "assimilation on the lowest level of white proletarian existence."[75] Due to their position within the racial formation of the United States, Native Americans would be assimilated at the lowest rungs of U.S. society. Functioning in the world as modern members of a strong community meant not assimilation, but rather a refashioned vision of sovereignty that moved beyond a frozen definition of tradition, as against a false ideal of Western identity.[76] As Robert Allen Warrior articulates in *Tribal Secrets*, moving beyond an essentialized vision of Native identity and a spatially fixed terrain of struggle can be defined as "intellectual sovereignty," a move that Phinney imagined for the NCAI, leading to solidarity and participation with various other struggles for justice.[77]

Rather than understand Phinney as simply a devoted Nez Perce activist who was uninterested in socialism or as a "'white man's Indian'" plagued by "personal and cultural dilemmas" stemming from "having been educated in institutions dominated by whites," as Dolores Janiewski referred to him, I would suggest that Phinney much more like other intellectuals of color of his day—concerned with colonialism, racial identity, and self-determination for his people in a global context.[78] Phinney clearly saw indigenous rights as tied to the fate of other people of color, and understood equally that imperialism and racism were themselves inseparable constructs. Thus adopting a racial identity was not only a way to create a pan-Indian identity, it was a way to, as he put it, be counted "among other minorities throughout the world." For Phinney, as for many writers of the color in the first half of the 20th century, international socialism became a critical lens through which formations of race and ethnic nationalism were refashioned. While the recent upsurge of scholarship on black internationalism between the 1920s and 1950s has done much to shift black political consciousness away from Harlem and Paris to the colonial world, it seems appropriate to consider the ways in which at least some Native American activists and intellectuals addressed their concerns not only across divergent dislocations and diapsoras, but through the lens of the international socialist Left. This makes Phinney no less Native, but suggests that "Native" is a concept, like modernity, that must be changed to address how it shapes, and blinds us to, lives through whom it lives and is lived.

## Returning to the Present: Undermining the Native American Bildungsroman

Like Phinney, McNickle was born on a reservation in the Mountain West and lived many of his formative years as a writer in New York City. Yet despite or perhaps because of this, in addition to writing what is perhaps the most important modern Native American novel of the Popular Front era, *The Surrounded*, McNickle also helped found the NCAI along with Phinney and several other BIA officials in the Collier administration. And while it would be difficult to say that McNickle was engaged in the transnational socialist Left in the same way as Phinney, many of McNickle's attitudes and approaches to both capitalism and American Indian policy speak to the cultural common sense of the Popular Front era. As his biographer Dorothy Parker writes, McNickle became increasingly anticapitalist during the 1930s, and his personal politics of anticapitalism coincided with his own rediscovery of his Indian identity, echoing the ways in which other intellectuals of color expressed an opposition to capitalism within a racialized framework.[79] Equally, McNickle's role within the BIA resembled the attitude of many other Popular Front intellectuals working inside and outside the New Deal administration. As Parker writes, McNickle viewed the BIA reforms with a "pragmatic mind," opposing Collier's "mystical" and essentialist view of Indian identity.[80] At the same time, however, McNickle also felt that Collier's policies in the BIA "moved in the right direction" and, perhaps more importantly, opened up spaces for independent Indian voices and political organizing.[81] Thus it is important not only to read McNickle's novel within the *longue durée* of Native American written literature but also necessary to think of how the novel responds to themes of multicultural belonging and racial nationalism within the Popular Front and radical modernism. Through the experiences of the novel's protagonist, McNickle seems to suggest new forms of hybrid identity as well as the profound extent to which such modern solutions are continually foreclosed by the deep lineages of the racial state.

*The Surrounded* tells the story of Archilde Leon, the son of a Salish mother and a Spanish father, who returns to the Flathead reservation after spending a year in Portland making a living playing fiddle and working in restaurants as a dishwasher.[82] The novel follows a narrative arc of reconciliation and growth, as his mother returns to her forgotten "pagan" roots and Archilde reconciles with his well-intentioned but culturally limited father, who eventually agrees to send Archilde to Europe to play violin. Yet this arc is undercut by a second narrative in which the reservation—and its violence—eventually entrap Archilde, as he faces arrest and possible execution for the death of a sheriff and game warden. Like realist novels such as Richard Wright's *Native Son* or Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, *The Surrounded* ironically signifies on the Popular Front's "cultures of unity," or Denning's formation of the "national-popular." Rather than a culture of belonging based on an inclusive democratic nation, McNickle suggests the land itself is a carceral trap, in which bonds of national belonging and solidarity racially mark the subject as "other" at the same time that "assimilation" is regarded as a kind of cultural suicide. As *Native Son* ironically invokes the folk nationalism of the Popular Front to undercut it—the "native son" of the United States is put to death for an accidental murder (and the murder he did intentionally commit is largely ignored)—so too *The Surrounded* invokes Collier's romantic description of reservations as "islands removed from time" and "red Atlantis" to undermine it. Indeed, the title of *The Surrounded* suggests more the "psychological island" of race Wright describes in *12 Million Black Voices* than the "islands removed from time" of Collier's essays.[83] Such tropes of belonging are further belied by the narrative structure. *The Surrounded*, like *America* and *Native Son*, employs the bildungsroman form only to suggest how the protagonist's reintegration with his family and with Salish culture exposes him as vulnerable to the law. As in *Native Son*, Bigger's progressive vision of community comes only as he's about to be executed by the state.

So too, claims that *The Surrounded* be read as a "high modernist" text suggest we consider the sources not only of the novel's experimentation but also of the narrator's alienation.[84] The protagonist of *The Surrounded* is "culturally adrift" at the outset of the text, yet his alienation is more a product of his exclusion from his white father's "big house" than any form of radical individualism. Modernism and modernity in *The Surrounded* are racialized—the protagonist is not nostalgic for a lost pastoral as in *The Waste Land* so much as trapped between a modernity he's excluded from and a way of life that has been violently exterminated. And likewise are *The Surrounded*'s modernist forms of textuality—the incorporation of mass culture texts, the dime Western and detective story. Yet while these devices suggest the Popular Front's embrace of mass culture, their function in the narrative also suggests a greater skepticism about the liberatory potential of "pulp" forms like the Western and the detective plot.

Like *Native Son*, violence structures the narratives and articulates the individual protagonists' basic relationship with legal authority. Violence also separates the novels from what might otherwise be their basic formal allegiance to Popular Front era social realism, to the extent that the protagonist's realization of self is also linked to their failure and ultimately, their death. While both novels do end with a kind of social integration and a broader conception of political and historical forces that shape their lives, this understanding cannot prevent their demise. Indeed, for both novels, the death of the protagonist becomes inevitable once their encounter with white authority becomes inevitable; the struggle in the novel is as much to escape as to understand the forces that undermine them. For Archilde, the entrance of the game warden and Sheriff Quigley into his life, like Bigger's job at the Dalton's in *Native Son*, functions as a loss of agency. In certain ways, it seems to matter very little that Bigger Thomas is "guilty" of a murder and Archilde Leon is not, for Bigger himself "knew that when they killed him it would be for Mary's death and not Bessie's" and "the death chair . . . seems like just something that had to be."[85] While certainly these novels chronicle the actual violence regularly inflicted on communities of color, violence also serves as a political demarcation between the becoming-democratic telos of the Popular Front bildungsroman and the more skeptical novels by writers of color. As Agamben suggests, the line between citizen and *homo sacer*, the person who is outside of the law, precisely defines the person to whom violence can done. As Denise da Silva writes, the body of color "always-already signifies violence," and it is through violence that the state manages and organizes a racial system of power.[86]

Within the discourse of colonialism, violence has a unique meaning. For

Frantz Fanon, violence is what marks the colony from the metropole; it is the settlers' regime of violence that "must be broken" to restore dignity to the colonial subject.[87] As Immanuel Wallerstein remarks in a retrospective on Fanon's works, violence is the origin and contact point of colonial settlement; it is thus the source of psychological and political transformation in the struggle for liberation for the colonial native.[88] And as Ward Churchill and Aimé Césaire suggest, violence is perhaps too broad a term for the Americas: it is the question of genocide that marks contact between the first nations of the Americas and Europeans.[89] Thus ending *The Surrounded* with the arrest and implied future execution of Archilde Leon has particular resonance. Considering that McNickle was a public supporter of Collier's Native American New Deal and specifically sought employment in the BIA under Collier, *The Surrounded* may suggest a greater sense of ambivalence about what could be accomplished. The novel in many ways supports key elements of Collier's vision: restoration of Native culture, an end to missionary education, boarding schools, and allotment, and the restoration of the reservation as a site of communal renewal. But this narrative is overshadowed by the force of the "Old West," as Archilde calls it, which has far older roots than either modern reforms or his reconciliation with his father.[90] This is not to suggest that Archilde's only experience is one of violence, or that violence formulates his subjectivity in the way it does the desires and fears of Bigger Thomas. Yet the racial violence of Sheriff Quigley and its power to steal the future from the past, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, suggests that as a competing narrative force, it is granted the power of closure. These structural similarities between *Native Son* and *The Surrounded* suggest powerful links between the discourses of Native colonialism and other discourses of minority nationalism in the period and open larger questions about the political and theoretical connections between the two in the "long Popular Front."

Archie Phinney's engagement with radical modernity as well as Popular Front forms of political engagement also invite us to reread the question of genre in McNickle's *The Surrounded.* The novel's fusion of personal development and social critique suggests an affinity with what Barbara Foley refers to as "the radical bildungsroman," perhaps the most popular form for the radical novel of the 1930s.[91] The "radical" bildungsroman rejected many of the individualistic assumptions usually associated with the genre and often promoted oppositional forms of culture, often featuring a hero who embraced the class struggle and an affirmative vision of the world. While *The Surrounded* does not feature stories of collective action or class conflict, the novel does present an affirmative vision of reconciliation as the three central figures of the Leon family, Max, Catherine, and Archilde are reunited. Indeed, Archilde Leon is described by Father Grepilloux as "the "sign of a new day," a hybrid figure, someone who can cross cultural and racial boundaries, and may lead the tribe to a better future. And as at least one critic has suggested, we can read Archilde's hybridity as an embrace of a postcolonial critique of binary modes of thought.[92] Neither fully "native" or "colonist" in perspective, Archilde seems positioned to be able to transcend the carceral trap of the reservation, as well as the worldview established in the opening frame of the novel. Archilde suggests early in the novel that Louis, a horse thief and a brawler who lives as an outlaw in the mountains, has embraced a countermythology as dangerous as Quigley's, and taunts Louis for his bluff to "wait for [Quigley] in the mountains with my gun."[93] Unlike his white father and Salish mother, who live in "separate houses," Archilde is ultimately welcome in both and seems poised to overcome the final binary: to "stay" on the reservation or to "leave" it. By accepting the church's recommendaiton to study music, he remains tied to the history of Sniél-emen while also pursuing opportunities abroad.

*The Surrounded* opens with a stark binary divided between a "Western" and Christian worldview and a "Native" and pagan worldview. When Max Leon, Archilde's Spanish father, asks the missionary priest why he cannot get along with any of his half-Salish sons, Father Grepilloux doesn't answer directly—rather, he responds by telling the story of the Salish conversion to Christianity, their confession that they "had been worshipping false gods."[94] Whatever problems the Salish may have retaining pagan customs, he suggests they had the "hearts of children" and cites their enthusiasm for confession and conversion as proof of their deep faith.[95] As Father Grepilloux speaks, Max Leon reflects that he had never heard the story of the Salish's willing conversion, and realizes—as part of his answer—that, despite living in Sniél-emen for forty years and marrying a Salish woman, "he was ignorant of these people.[96] While the story establishes Max's failing—his inability to see the Salish from their own perspective—it also establishes Father Grepilloux as a "man who knows Indians," in Slotkin's turn of phrase, and as someone whose authority to speak for and about them goes unquestioned.

On the same day, however, Archilde's uncle Modeste offers another narrative of the Salish conversion. Modeste explains that after their tribe had been decimated with the introduction of modern weaponry among their ancient rivals, the Crows and Blackfeet, the "wise men" began looking desperately for answers as to "why the people had lost their power."[97] At the advice of Iroquois who came to Sniél-emen, the Salish sent men looking for "black robed priests" who had a "Somesh, a power" that "if they brought it to us we would be strong again." While Modeste acknowledges that their strategy failed ("we thought they would bring back the power we lost—but today we have less"), the story reveals a far different motivation for conversion than what Grepilloux maintains.[98] Rather than a tale of "false gods" and "true faith," this story suggests a political calculation based on a people desperate for answers that would save their tribe. Rather than a tribe with "the hearts of children," Modeste's story suggests agency as well as sophistication in the way they approached the priests so they would not suspect their motivations. At the heart of Grepilloux's misunderstanding is the colonial conceit that he was, in his own words, "teaching" the Salish the meaning of God, and that the relationship was based on subject-object relationship of unequal power.[99]

This division between conversion narratives is further framed by the two houses Archilde faces upon his return, his father's house and his mother's cabin. In many ways, they can be read as ontological spaces, "the big house, where his [white] father would most likely be sitting," and "the dirt-roofed log cabin" where his Salish mother lived and "which occupied the lower ground."[100] The separation of the two spaces speaks to the "warfare" in his own house and, of course, stands in as a metonym for the continuing and unresolved "warfare" that exists between the two peoples.[101] As a figure, Archilde Leon, the son of a Salish mother and white father, would seem to stand, as Grepilloux himself articulates, as the "place where the road divides": he is someone who has the chance to make a new path and act as a mediator between the two cultures.[102]

Archilde's centrality in the text and inheritor of the bildungsroman form is reinforced by the fact that the narrative is told through Archilde's perspective. In contrast to the father, whose story of the Salish is compromised, and to Max, who anguishes at his inability to understand his Salish family, Archilde listens to Modeste and his mother tell stories of the Salish past. In addition, compared to Modeste and Catherine, who both have poor eyesight, Archilde is associated with birds and flight, often scrutinizing, ironizing, and weighing the value and wisdom of those with whom he comes into contact.[103] His older brother is a "bag of wind" for boasting; his nephews he corrects when they repeat anti-Native stereotypes; his father talks of useless matters of business that reveal his own emotional poverty; the priests he indulges but knows can't teach him anything, and so on.[104] Even many of the omniscient evaluations are delivered through Archilde's eyes, including discrepancies between dress and action among the fathers or how much his mother had aged since he last saw her.[105] Archilde's aloof gaze throughout the novel not only affords the reader the assurance that he has mastery over his own life, it also privileges his hybrid and frequently sophisticated view of the world. The fact the narrative centers on Archilde gives his voice priority and suggests that we should view Catherine, Modeste, Sniél-emen, Max, and Louis through his eyes. Such a narrative construction, of course, also reinforces the bildungsroman expectations, as Archilde seems to be character most capable of growth and development.

Several scenes however, call into question Archilde's point of view. Riding alone in the mountains, Archilde stumbles upon and attempts to save a mare and her kid that are obviously starving in the badlands by forcing the mare to go to water. The mare, weakened but with strength enough to resist, struggles against the rope until exhausted to the point of death, when Archilde is forced to shoot her. "He had to show her kindness in spite of herself," the narrator tells us, and Archilde spends the night "guarding her worthless carcass" from coyotes.[106] Of the many parables throughout the novel, this one speaks most to Archilde's assumptions of superiority over his brother, mother, and two nephews, whom he frequently judges as "superstitious" or "crazy."[107] The mare's "ungratefulness" at Archilde's attempts to bring her food and water can be compared to his nephews' ungrateful response to Archilde's attempt to bring them back to Catholic school, or to Louis's anger at his threats that he will be arrested. It also suggests, in many ways, the attitude of the missionary fathers towards the Salish, and forces one to question whether Archilde's plans—made by Father Grepilloux to study abroad—are merely another version of the benevolent paternalism that marks the father's behavior. In this sense, one wonders how much Archilde actually sees of his own behavior, of the extent to which his own life is shaped by circumstances beyond his control.

In a critique of cultural hybridity, Kenyan author and critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o suggests we consider such forms of cultural synthesis as a kind of "colonial alienation." Defining alienation as an act of identification with the views, perspectives, and life of the colonizer at the expense of the life, views, and perspectives of the colonized, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o suggests that we cannot consider issues of language, custom, or culture as neutral.[108] Throughout the novel, Archilde expresses ambivalence over Salish customs, at times approving and at other times wanting to express his distance. This ambivalence is revealed as Archilde watches his nephew perform the "midsummer dance" at the July Fourth celebration in St. Xavier. As one of the "attractions," along with "bucking contests," "horse races," a "baseball game," and "ragtime music," Archilde was painfully self-conscious, noting "nothing was real in the scene he came upon . . . the idea was a spectacle, a kind of low-class circus."[109] Yet for Modeste and Mike, Archilde's nephew, the dance was transformative. Mike, afflicted with bed-wetting and nightmares since he was locked in a closet by the nuns at Catholic school, did not respond to any cures or punishments inflicted by school officials. Invited by Modeste to participate in the "midsummer dance" as a form of therapy, he and the other tribe members take it seriously, and seem to be unaware of the context. As Modeste calls out, "Let it be as it was in old times," Archilde feels the dancers are "unknowing" and act like "and old grandmother" too blind to see "the chair had been pulled away just before she was to sit down."[110] And yet, as Archilde watches,

> for a moment he felt everything. . . . they made him think of a wild stallion running free—no one could approach him, no one would ever be able to break his spirit. . . . but it was only for a moment. Then he heard the spectators laughing.[111]

This moment suggests Archilde's identification—and more profoundly, his distance—from the Salish. Unlike the Salish dancers, Archilde cannot remove himself from his experiences of double consciousness, his acute awareness of what the white audience perceives.

Despite Archilde's acute social analysis, not long after the dance, Mike ceases to wet his bed, and also ceases to go to Catholic school, hiding in the mountains with his brother Narcisse. For Modeste, the question is one of self-determination. As Modeste articulates to Catherine as she drops her Catholicism, "We know our own affairs."[112] Yet Modeste's gestures of "self-determination" are acutely limited; he is aware that his dance has only been permitted as an "attraction"—it was previously banned, and he is aware that whites will not understand or appreciate its meaning. Yet the dance retains its power, and there is a suggestion that perhaps within the dance there are moments of defiance that cannot be so easily contained: "They echoed the war cry from time to time and made threatening gestures with a feathered carpenter's hatchet, which was fierce enough to cause a white woman to grow pale and draw back—but what a small matter that was!"[113] While the narrator jokes about both the "white woman" and the "fierce gestures," it should be remembered that it was also a carpenter's hatchet that dispatched the warden only some days before.

This radical uncertainty is often reflected in the contradictory descriptions of many of the characters and situations. While the narrative of the Salish conversion clearly reveals the ways in which Father Grepilloux's worldview is circumscribed, we also learn that, as one of the first priests to found the mission in the valley of Sniél-emen (Mountains of the Surrounded), Grepilloux was regarded by the Salish as "the only one who did not speak 'with a forked tongue'" and as someone who felt "tribal laws and customs must be restored and respected."[114] Father Grepilloux is at once a "saint" and, as Max recounts with regret, one of the white men like himself who "brought it on" in the valley, who colonized Sniél-emen.[115] The actions of the Salish display a greater knowledge "of our own affairs," as Modeste puts it, but also an equal uncertainty as to the correct way to perceive what has happened to the tribe, where to go, and who or what should lead them. This division, among language, land, household, family, narrative, and religion divides not only the trajectory of the novel, but severely restricts the reader from finding a single point of view from which to see the events. As Lisa Lowe points out, such refusals of narrative "seizure" can be framed as acts of resistance, refusing the linear teleology of progress, as well as the unitary forms of identity and synthesis that mirror capitalist models of progress.[116]

The novel's affirmative arc is further unraveled by a second sequence of events: the murder of Archilde's brother by a game warden; the (counter) murder moments later of the warden by Archilde's mother; the eventual flight of Archilde and Elise, Archilde's companion and romantic interest; the capture of Archilde by Sheriff Quigley and murder of Sheriff Quigley by Elise; and the capture of Archilde and Elise by the Indian agent and agency police. In the same way the radical bildungsroman informs the initial structure of the text, the murder of Louis, the warden, and the introduction of Sheriff Quigley articulates a second narrative strand. As *The Surrounded* employs and modifies the popular genre of the "radical bildungsroman" in order to mark Archilde as both within and without dominant cultural norms, so too the introduction of the "Western" is not simply a question of another character, but rather the introduction of a separate discursive device. Sheriff Quigley appears only four brief times throughout the text, and yet his presence and what he represents shape the entire contour and outcome of the narrative.

In this sense, I suggest that we refer to the narrative of Archilde's eventual flight and capture as the imposition of one *genre* over another genre. Sheriff Quigley belongs wholly to the Wild West dime novel, and the narrator suggests that Quigley is self-referentially aware of this fact: Quigley was "a sheriff out of the Old West . . . he had read of those hard-riding, quick-shooting dispensers of peace . . . he had made the part his own.[117] In this sense, *The Surrounded* exemplifies what critic Christopher Vials calls the "mass-mediation" of 1930s texts, the mutual incorporation of popular and "pulp" genres within radical protest fiction and vice versa.[118] Yet McNickle significantly alters this format insofar as he arranges the genres hierarchically. The arrival of Quigley in the narrative both foreshadows and forecloses any possibility of Archilde's transformation and further growth. The "sudden" appearance of "horse and rider on the trail" and Quigley's "scrutiny" of Archilde for a "whole list of crimes" halts the bildungsroman as forcefully in its tracks as Archilde is frozen in terror by his chance meeting with Quigley in the mountains.

This secondary narrative also serves a colonial "ordering" function. When Archilde confronts the warden, his instincts are to speak English and do everything the warden asks, yet this instinct merely makes the warden more suspicious, as Louis will not speak English. More significantly, however, that Archilde responds to Louis's murder with confusion suggests the limits of his ontological hybridity.[119] Archilde is not only confused and shocked by Louis's murder, but Catherine kills the warden so quickly that Archilde does not even see it happen. The final phrase, that Archilde could not see what "led up to" his mother's countermurder of the game warden, is highly suggestive of a history broader than merely his mother's silent approach. Catherine has no trouble understanding what took place and acts immediately. The scene ends with Archilde continuing to ponder how "inexplicable" his mother's movements and acts were, suggesting that he is still quite removed from the Salish history of conquest.[120] In this way, Quigley becomes a figure who "racially orders" the text, aligning all Salish characters within the category, as da Silva writes, of bodies to whom violence can be done. Catherine, unlike Archilde, recognizes the fact and can act; Archilde is frozen in paralysis and confusion.

In the same way the presence of the Law serves to "order" complex characters into racial types, the function of violence in the narrative also serves an ordering function, as it puts an end to the radical uncertainty to the novel. Max's long series of unanswered, and perhaps unanswerable, questions after Father Grepilloux's death—"What good came of . . . building a new world here?"—are not so much answered as foreclosed. Equally, the constant shifting among characters and viewpoints comes to a sudden end as the relations between whites and Salish are for once firmly established: the Indian agent stands above Archilde, who "extended his hands to be shackled" in a final act of submission.[121] As Lowe notes, the bildungsroman form contains within it a binary between youth and maturity that critically reproduces the binary between savage and civilized, colony and metropole.[122] That the novel undermines the bildungsroman, even in its radical form, suggests that we refuse the distinction between a "sighted" Archilde and "blind" elder or "crazy" Salish brother, and rather realize the strengths and limitations of an indeterminate and particular (nonuniversal) point of view. Yet the ending reminds us that the power to fix meaning does not belong to all narrators equally. While Modeste may remind the reader of Grepilloux's inaccuracy, Grepilloux's story is in writing. While the novel celebrates the primacy of the oral text and storyteller, it also is not mistaken about the power differentials between them within Western civilization. And for Archilde's hybrid perspective, violence ultimately marks him on one side of the binary without the agency to refuse.

When the Indian agent finally captures Archilde, the agent's line, "It's too damn bad you people never learn you can't run away," is an echo of what Archilde has been saying about the reservation since the beginning of the novel: that one can no longer live in the mountains in the "old way."[123] The irony is less that Archilde was right all along, than that Archilde must realize the extent to which he has embraced the colonizer's logic. In the end, Archilde is transformed from the great hope of the reservation to just another Indian; yet as a question of narrative there is nothing deterministic about it. McNickle's narrative structure, in effect, allows Archilde's potential to become fully affirmed at the same time it both suggests his limitations and imposes a secondary narrative structure upon them. One could say the "Wild West" narrative of the game warden performs the role of an occupation; its coercion is in one sense as totally incapacitating as it is external to lives of the characters. This is not to suggest all the Salish need to do is overthrow the local sheriff; rather it affirms that the Salish "know their own affairs," as Modeste says, even if they have submitted to a greater military and colonial power.

From the point of view of social movements of the 1930s, one could say that the novel performs many of the contradictions of the Popular Front. The novel is in some ways redemptive—that Max and Catherine reconcile and Catherine moves back into the "big house" after Max acknowledges his wrong suggests its parallel as a national story: that integration of a kind is possible, and a form of it that does not require Catherine to give up her rights, dignity, or culture. Yet the novel is also bitterly militant in its depiction of the racial violence that the law inflicts upon the Salish with impunity. As Denise da Silva writes, it is precisely this racial violence that marks the body as other;[124] that Archilde is victim of it as is Louis merely suggests that race is a determining field and that cultural freedom is not enough. That the novel is at once nationalistic and integrationist should not be understood as a problem—it is rather the lived contradiction of a movement and a politics that at once engaged with federal policy and yet worked and imagined beyond its limits.

I would also suggest the novel implicitly performs the problematic articulated by Phinney in "The New Indian Intelligentsia." Archilde is the most sophisticated observer and narrator in the text, in terms of his complex understanding of both the limitations of the reservation and white U.S. culture. Yet he is also the character least able to act in any meaningful fashion. In one sense, that is the "tragedy" of the novel, the uniqueness of Archilde's dilemma. Yet Phinney's formulation turns the reading of the novel on its head. Rather than see Archilde as a lone individual who has a "tragic" flaw that renders him unfit for an integrated society, we may read Archilde's outsider status as precisely what makes him typical and exemplary. Rather than see Archilde as the master of one form of modernity, the violin, and victim of another, the modern gun, we can see Archilde lacking a context in which his own form of hybridity is allowed political, cultural, and social expression. For Phinney, a group like the NCAI is about more than just advocating for the rights of Indians as a collective; it is about the situation modernity has forced upon many Native peoples—neither offered a way to live "the old ways" within reservations, nor willing to assimilate at the lowest rung of "white proletarian culture." Thus precisely what is radical about McNickle's novel is the way Archilde's isolation is placed, as Phinney's "Indian Intelligentsia," within the generic structures of a Popular Front political and cultural lexicon while also demanding autonomy from them. Locating the text within the two recognizable radical forms, the "structure of feeling" of *The Surrounded* is very much in dialogue with other texts by radical writers of color who acted within a similar dialectic of belonging and separatism. Like Richard Wright's dialectic of modernity, or the often cited unevenness of Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, Phinney's "Indian Intelligentsia" demands modernity, but on the terms of his own intellectual sovereignty. One could say *The Surrounded*'s alternative radical bildungsroman is the political corollary to Phinney's radical congress of "bona fide Indian leaders."

By stating some of the thematic similarities among *The Surrounded*, Phinney's critical essays, and writings by Popular Front era black nationalists, I do not wish to flatten obvious differences among texts nor suggest that "Native American self-determination" and "black nationalism" share identical roots and contexts.

Yet despite these differences, these texts and movements display similar tensions around questions of belonging and nationalism that articulate themselves through Popular Front literary and cultural modes. I also would hope that by pointing out crucial commonalities among texts by writers of color, I can begin to suggest ways in which Native American literature and activism was in dialogue with the Popular Front. I would not go so far as to say there was a "Native American Popular Front," as Bill Mullen and Robin D. G. Kelley have suggested there was "African-American Popular Front," but I would say that Native American issues and Native American intellectuals played a crucial part in the dialectics between and among race, class, and nation that formed the movement's most intense political currents. While Collier's progressive reforms were enacted as part of an attempt to renew U.S.

national identity—which he accurately saw as reliant on incorporating Native Americans for its cultural reproduction—such a view was challenged by both Native American intellectuals and the space opened up by New Deal programs. Writers within the FWP and intellectuals within the Collier administration, such as McNickle and Phinney, used the space opened by his reforms to pursue their own more radical vision of tribal life. In addition, we can see that Native American policy was shaped by transnational currents in social modernism, including Soviet policy, Marxist theories of self-determination, and global decolonization that link efforts at reform to other activists and intellectuals of color who rethought U.S. racial issues along similar lines. By approaching Native American policy and literature in the 1930s through the lens of the Popular Front, we can see the breadth and depth of the movement, as well as understand how radical modernisms were embraced and challenged. At the center of *The Surrounded*'s political structure is the conflict between a telos of radical and ulterior modernity represented by Archilde and the history of racial violence represented by Sheriff Quigley. While these two narrative strands would seem to be unbridgeable, it is precisely this gap between a new universalism and the history of exclusion from such universalisms that embodies the horizons and contradictions of the Popular Front. And until intellectuals such as Phinney are given their proper due as modernist thinkers posing questions with other intellectuals of his age, we cannot begin to say we have considered the meaning of Native American modernity.

# 3 • The Other Revolution

## Haiti and the Aesthetics of Anti-Imperialist Modernism

While the fight against fascism in Spain dominated the headlines, one might expect its progressive call for democracy against militarism would be the logical symbol for artists to depict, and indeed, there was a great call for films and novels that might encourage the struggle. And yet, more than any other historical event, it was the image of black colonial revolt in the global South that gripped the radical imaginary of the 1930s: Guy Endore's *Babouk* (1934), Arna Bontemps's *Black Thunder* (1936) and *Drums at Dusk* (1939), C. L. R. James's *Black Jacobins* (1938) and *Toussaint* (1936), Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1936) and *Heart of Darkness* (1939), William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), Langston Hughes's *Emperor of Haiti* (1938), and W. E. B. Du Bois's Federal Theater Project production of *Haiti: A Drama of the Black Napoleon* (1938) are but some of the texts that reimagine the Haitian Revolution, not to mention the *Daily Worker*'s series as well as numerous radio plays and B horror films staged on slave plantations in a "voodoo" Afro-Caribbean. While these texts have stark generic, political, authorial, and textual differences, they have in common a marked dis-ease with the colonial project of the United States and, often by means of a radical and sensational style, an urge to disrupt the orderly assumptions of liberal democracy.

The Popular Front policy of supporting Western imperial powers against fascism evoked something of a "conjuncture" among the radical Left: a specific structural contradiction that evokes a crisis—a "moment of danger" in the social order.[1] The failure of the 1934 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Haiti and Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy to change U.S. imperial relationships fostered a small cultural crisis, as U.S. universalist proclamations and imperialist ambitions divided the New Deal coalition. More particularly for the radical writers under consideration here, the inauguration of the "Popular

Front policy"—the coalition of liberals and communists to defeat fascism—was interpreted by many on the far left as offering support for imperialism.

While the Popular Front policy did not end the anti-imperialist movement on the left, it led many of the more strident anti-imperialists to feel that they had been betrayed by the new Communist alliance with Western "democracies." As Penny von Eschen points out, many African American and anti-imperialist radicals in the late 1930s saw little difference between the "democracies" of the Anglo Atlantic world and fascism. As von Eschen writes, "African American journalists and activists carried out an anticolonialism that refused to recognize national loyalties," celebrating Gandhi's resistance against the British war effort, criticizing the Atlantic Charter for its refusal to recognize colonial subjects, and comparing England's colonial rule to fascist expansion over Europe.[2] One 1940 cartoon in the *Chicago Defender* went so far as to suggest that while fascists "pick on anybody" and are thus more egalitarian than Western democracies, the United States and Britain "pick on the darker races only."[3]

The Haitian Revolution becomes thus a touchstone in this debate, a historical metaphor for the abandonment of black liberation by the Left. As one Enlightenment-era democracy after another conspired to undermine the burgeoning black republic both before and after its inception in 1804, Haiti become a symbol for a certain perspective or bloc within the larger Popular Front "structure of feeling," to borrow Michael Denning's formulation. George Padmore's resignation from the *International Negro Worker* was perhaps the most high-profile individual protest against a wartime Popular Front policy of supporting England and the United States without criticizing their imperial policies—and his perspective was shared by many on the radical left. Although remembered now only as Soviet orthodoxy, the "Yanks Are Not Coming" campaign was perhaps the final gasp of the anti–Popular Front anti-imperialist Left, with the CIO executive board authoring a resolution against an "Imperialist War" in the name of "Labor Interests," and John L. Lewis calling for "Negro Rights" rather than "overseas war."[4] W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James both wrote extensively about the connections between fascism and imperialism, prefiguring Aimé Césaire's analysis that fascism was merely colonialism coming home to roost.[5] James's *Black Jacobins*, which depicts liberals in league with the reactionaries to re-enslave Haitians, serves as pointed commentary on the alliance between imperial powers and radicals to end fascism. And Orson Welles's unmade film *The Heart of Darkness* re-creates Kurtz as a fascist on his way to Europe, equally placing the origins of fascism in the colonial world. Haiti and its revolution thus serves as a symbol of a comparable moment in which democracy and the forces of reaction, imperialism, and race lay at the nexus of global politics, forcibly reminding liberals of the New Deal and Popular Front that these are twinned and inextricable formations.

The second conjuncture concerns itself predominantly with the cultural: what is the significance of Haiti as symbol for modes of representation in the literature of modernism? As critics such as Frederic Jameson, Michael North, Michael V. Moses, and Sieglinde Lemke offer, the revolutionary aesthetic of modernism is based in no small part on the appropriation and simultaneous disavowal of black cultural style and the imaginary of black bodies. This "modernist primitivism" grants African Americans little or no agency and is seldom concerned about the actual material and political conditions of the people from whom it takes its inspiration. Yet if we are to believe that the Popular Front era also constituted the "3rd Wave of Modernism," in Denning's phrase, how do the radical moderns of the 1930s negotiate the stylistic and political contours of modernism's generative inception a decade earlier? Rather than abandon the racial matrix of modernism, Haiti serves as a site for radical modernists to reshape the meaning of blackness and the self-conscious modernity of mid-20th-century cultural movements. By locating the origins and meaning of modernity in the colonial periphery, authors such as C. L. R. James and Orson Welles—both of whom I'll discuss here at greater length—also refashion the aesthetic and racial coordinates of modernism, suggesting that (anti)colonialism is not a separate, but an integral, part of the modern world.

Aligned with a political movement that understood anti-imperialism as central to a new vision of a modern, egalitarian world, such an aesthetic project gave the movement a language and visual rhetoric to cognitively locate it. While I'll discuss the imperial lineages of modernism further in the chapter, it's important to understand that *anti*-imperialism finds its expression in the nexus of modernist movements. At once revolutionary, forward thinking, and avant-garde, anti-imperialist modernism remakes the tropes of modernism, the sensational, the astonishing, the disorienting, as a way to bring the violence and the modernity of empire back to the metropolis. In reworking such tropes, we cannot dismiss the colony as merely a primitive backwater or source of marginalized, yet exotic occupants—its full integration into the modern world as a site of exploitation, political meaning, capitalist discipline, and revolution is brought front and center. The colony disorients because is made to seem familiar and inside the experience of modernity—its shock is the shock of the present. As a modernist cultural worker of the 1930s, Orson Welles spoke from the cultural and political elite, already a Hollywood director by his midtwenties, and yet he comes surprisingly close to the analysis of fascism and modernity that James articulates in *The Black Jacobins*: that rooted at the center of modernity is the colonial experience, and fascism is full, integrated expression of modernity in the metropole.

As a metaphor, Haiti has a long history of being the site of Western imaginary—"inexhaustible symbol" of Western desires and fears, no less so during the modern period.[6] As Mary Renda points out, tales of voodoo magic inspired travel books, dance, and musical recordings throughout the U.S. occupation in the teens and twenties. Such cultural representations of Haiti, often framed as "exotic," allowed consumers in the United States to safely take pleasure in the U.S. occupation and experience the expansion of the U.S. empire as an outlet for "repressed sexuality" and libidinal desire.[7] William Seabrook's *Magic Island* (1929), much like Paul Gauguin's paintings of Tahiti, celebrate Haiti as magical escape from the sexual and emotional strictures of civilization, a place where one can flee from the "robotic" world of industrial modernity.[8] As Michael Dash suggests, Haiti emerges as an "overseas Harlem" for white travelers, a site where one can escape from the strictures of civilization and Puritanical sexual mores. Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* (1926) and Eugene O'Neil's *Emperor Jones* (1920) are perhaps the most well-known examples of this trend, and as Renda articulates, such tropes appeared in soldiers' letters, newspaper accounts, and even among some African American members of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Sterling Brown.[9]

By the 1930s, however, representations of Haiti underwent a marked cultural change. Most immediately, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy demanded a more nuanced treatment of the Haitian people, one that departed from, if not broke with, the primitivist excess of "voodoo" tales and libidinal frenzy. The Roosevelt administration's increasing attempt to use "soft power" in Latin America was at least in part the result of a vibrant anti-imperialist movement in the United States, targeting direct U.S. imperial control over Haiti, the Monroe Doctrine, as well as military spending and the cultures of militarism that legitimated it, even as this movement was the first to denounce the Good Neighbor Policy as hypocritical at best.[10] Constituted by a wide-ranging African American press, the Communist Party, antifascist organizations such as the League Against War and Fascism and the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, the movement the decades between the Great Depression and onset of the Cold War effected a shift in U.S. radical and avant-garde culture, away from primitivism and toward a politics and aesthetics of North-South solidarity. As Chris Vials demonstrates, this seismic political shift can be traced most broadly in the evolution of the "zombie" narrative in mass culture throughout the 1930s. While Seabrook's tale places the Haitian "zombie" within the context of rural life, superstition, and exotic arts of "voodoo magic," by the Depression era, this narrative changes from one of erotic and sexual possession to one of colonial slavery. Vials traces the way in which narratives of "voodoo," and particularly the "zombie slave," represented Haiti and the Caribbean as a violent land dominated by rapacious, often white "masters" and their subhuman slaves. While Vials is certainly correct to point out these narratives did not leave room for solidarity with the black "slave" population, the sensationalist images of brutality and horror also registered a visceral rejection of the U.S. colonial project.

Of course, writers such as C. L. R. James, George Padmore, W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps, and Guy Endore, as well as Workers Party and Anti-Imperialist League activists such as Richard Moore and Grace Campbell, did more than simply register dis-ease with the U.S. colonial project—they declared a fundamental solidarity with the Haitian people resisting U.S. occupation and U.S. neoimperial control. In the late 1920s, the Anti-Imperialist League managed to unite various sectors of the Left around the occupation of Haiti as a symbol of U.S. imperialism. The Workers Party, the Communist Party, and members of the NAACP, American Negro Labor Congress, and Haitian diaspora led a media and protest campaign in New York City to end the occupation.[11] What is significant about the "Hands off Haiti" campaign is not its size—at its peak, it mustered perhaps one thousand attendees for a raucous protest in front of City Hall in New York City—but rather the broad range of people and interests who joined. Ethnically diverse, the organizations and the membership of the "Hands off Haiti" campaign included radical socialists, black nationalists, members of the black progressive elite, and recent immigrants from the Caribbean, all of whom found common ground in demanding the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the island.

Throughout the 1930s, left-wing journals such as *Fight Against War and Fascism*, the *Daily Worker*, *Western Worker*, *International Negro Worker*, and *The Dynamo* continued to print narrative pieces and editorials about the Haitian Revolution, the U.S. occupation of Haiti, and imprisonment of the Haitian writer Jacques Roumain. As Robin Kelley and Hakim Adi point out, the Communist International took the question of black liberation seriously, forming, in Adi's words, the "era's sole international white-led movement . . . formally dedicated to a revolutionary transformation of the global political *and* racial order."[12] The focus on Haiti as a symbol served as an expression to Communist commitment to black liberatory politics, while also framing both the United States and the black elite in Haiti as part of the imperial regime during and after occupation. This frame served to complicate the black nationalist politics that often celebrated black figures in positions in power, while also complicating the United States as a champion of freedom against European fascism. Stories included the Communist Party youth journal *Young Pioneer*'s two-part historical narrative of Toussaint-Louverture, a "working class Negro hero" and "military genius," and other similar narratives, such as the *Western Worker*'s historical series on the Haitian Revolution, and a call to celebrate the liberation of Haiti from French colonial control as an international "liberation day."[13] The antifascist journal *Fight* ran a fragment from Guy Endore's novel *Babouk* as well an editorial by Endore decrying the structural effects of the U.S. occupation.[14] In general, the antifascist and Communist press focused on the same narrative of the Haiti and its revolution: that it was not only a site of black liberation and anti-imperialism, but of black working-class self-activity. Endore's editorial in *Fight* is at pains to distinguish the black elite who collude with the U.S. occupation from and the black *cacos* who form the resistance, often along class lines. Thus we should understand the Haitian Revolution is not just a black uprising, but a black working-class uprising—something quite different from the legalistic politics of the NAACP and Harlem poetry salons of the 1920s.

As Nicholas Mirzoeff points out, representations of Toussaint have always been read against the many layers of both European and African representations of power and leadership. The iconic late 17th-century image of Toussaint on horseback in a European general's uniform, his sabre raised, hooves towering over a colonial fort and ship, is an image of black mastery reserved typically for forms of European power only (see fig. 5). The figure doubles as a voodoo deity, the San Jak, a redemptive military figure often riding on horseback, and figure of European mastery and Enlightenment.[15] Jacob Lawrence's iconic portrait of Toussaint is a continuation in many ways of Toussaint's early image: in a portraiture style often reserved for members of elite, it renders Toussaint as a modish, stylized harbinger of a new modernity. It is perhaps not surprising that the Communist Party publications offer slightly different interpretative frames for their Toussaint: pen and ink figures of massed revolutionary uprising. In the *Young Pioneer*, Toussaint no longer rides atop symbols of European power; rather he stands towering over a mass of black slaves, armed with pikes and muskets, displaying not a sabre but a constitution. Indeed, of the five images of the *Young Pioneer*'s Toussaint biography, only one is actually of Toussaint—the rest are images of slaves, slave masters, and revolutionaries, emphasizing that he leads a social revolution, and is not a solitary heroic figure (see fig. 6). In *Fight*, the Haitian Revolution is not an image of blackness at all, but rather a stylized image of four masculine figures representing Indian, black, white, and East Asian workers

Balthaser, Benjamin. *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture From the Great Depression to the Cold War.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7381040.

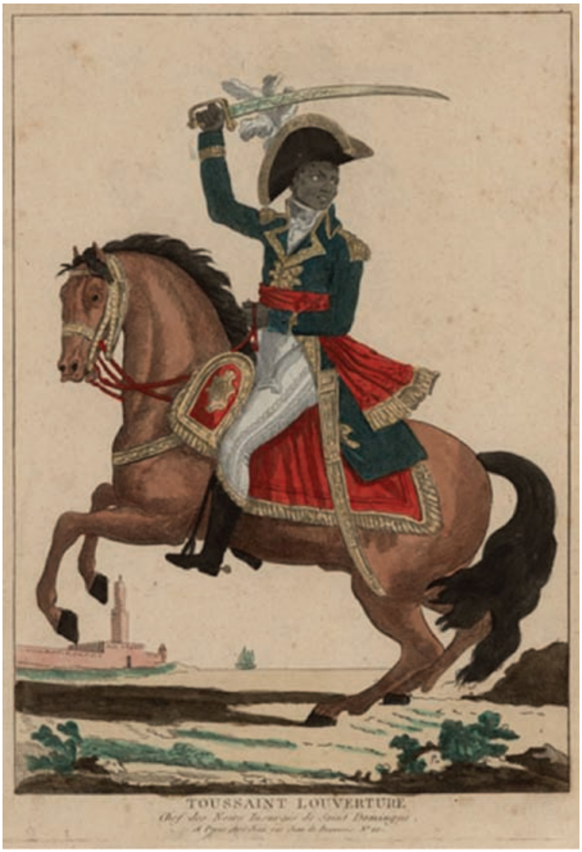


Fig. 5. Color engraving, *Toussaint L'Ouverture, Leader of the Insurgents of Santo Domingo, Domingue* (anonymous, ca. 1800).

straddling a globe—a vision of working-class, transnational anti-imperialism (see fig. 7).

Under George Padmore's editorial guidance, Haiti emerged in the Comintern-backed *Negro Worker* (formerly the *International Negro Worker*) as perhaps the guiding symbol of black working-class revolt, often criticizing both the NAACP and the Garveyites' racialist approach while at the same time creating space for images and rhetoric of black solidarity.[16] Of all the left-wing journals, *The Negro Worker* carried the most frequent coverage of Haiti and even called for the defense of "Haiti and other Negro states" as part of its founding platform.[17] In its own histories of the Haitian Revolution, *The Negro Worker* makes both interracial appeals to "proletarian solidarity" and calls to "liberate "Negro peoples throughout the world," suggesting the revolution can read in multiple trajectories at the same time—as a black nationalist revolution, and as a proletarian revolution. In columns produced

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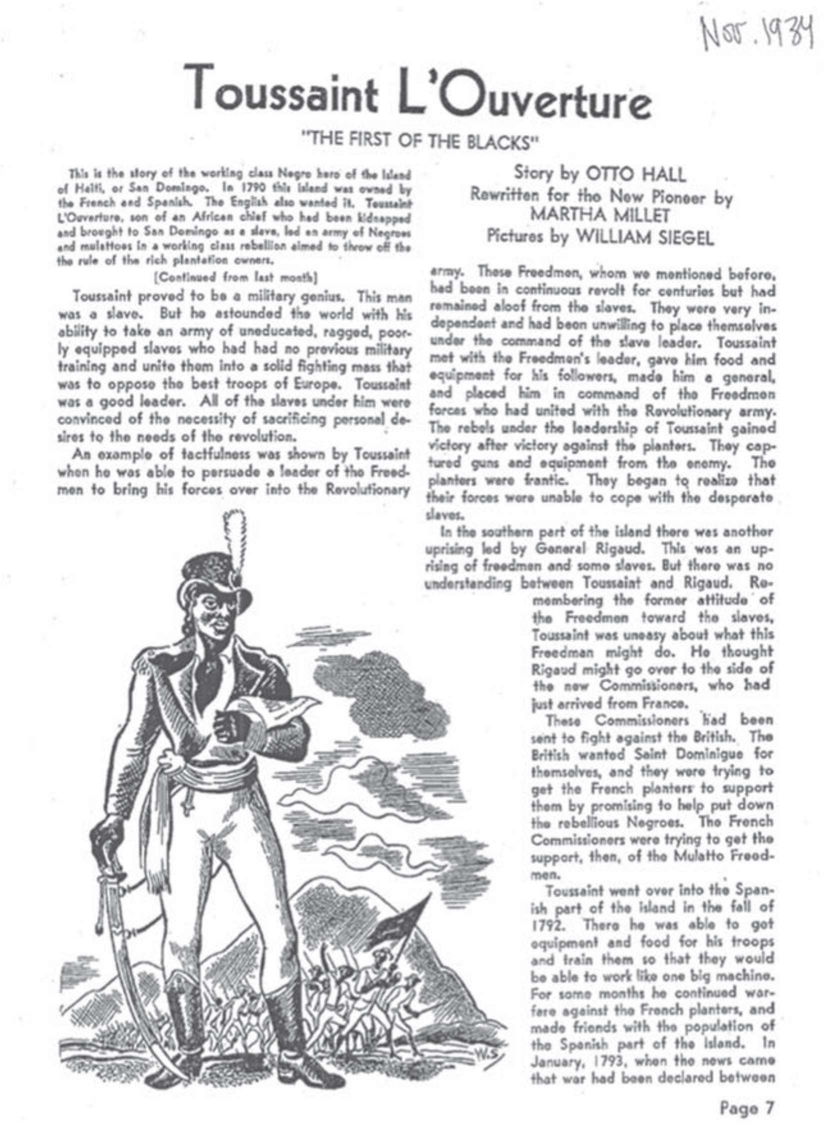

Nov. 1934

# Toussaint L'Ouverture

## "THE FIRST OF THE BLACKS"

Story by OTTO HALL
Rewritten for the New Pioneer by
MARTHA MILLET
Pictures by WILLIAM SIEGEL

This is the story of the working class Negro hero of the Island of Haiti, or San Domingo. In 1790 this island was owned by the French and Spanish. The English also wanted it. Toussaint L'Ouverture, son of an African chief who had been kidnapped and brought to San Domingo as a slave, led an army of Negroes and mulattoes in a working class rebellion aimed to throw off the the rule of the rich plantation owners.

[Continued from last month]

Toussaint proved to be a military genius. This man was a slave. But he astounded the world with his ability to take an army of uneducated, ragged, poorly equipped slaves who had had no previous military training and unite them into a solid fighting mass that was to oppose the best troops of Europe. Toussaint was a good leader. All of the slaves under him were convinced of the necessity of sacrificing personal desires to the needs of the revolution.

An example of tactfulness was shown by Toussaint when he was able to persuade a leader of the Freedmen to bring his forces over into the Revolutionary army. These Freedmen, whom we mentioned before, had been in continuous revolt for centuries but had remained aloof from the slaves. They were very independent and had been unwilling to place themselves under the command of the slave leader. Toussaint met with the Freedmen's leader, gave him food and equipment for his followers, made him a general, and placed him in command of the Freedmen forces who had united with the Revolutionary army. The rebels under the leadership of Toussaint gained victory after victory against the planters. They captured guns and equipment from the enemy. The planters were frantic. They began to realize that their forces were unable to cope with the desperate slaves.

In the southern part of the island there was another uprising led by General Rigaud. This was an uprising of freedmen and some slaves. But there was no understanding between Toussaint and Rigaud. Remembering the former attitude of the Freedmen toward the slaves, Toussaint was uneasy about what this Freedman might do. He thought Rigaud might go over to the side of the new Commissioners, who had just arrived from France.

These Commissioners had been sent to fight against the British. The British wanted Saint Dominigue for themselves, and they were trying to get the French planters to support them by promising to help put down the rebellious Negroes. The French Commissioners were trying to get the support, then, of the Mulatto Freedmen.

Toussaint went over into the Spanish part of the island in the fall of 1792. There he was able to get equipment and food for his troops and train them so that they would be able to work like one big machine. For some months he continued warfare against the French planters, and made friends with the population of the Spanish part of the island. In January, 1793, when the news came that war had been declared between

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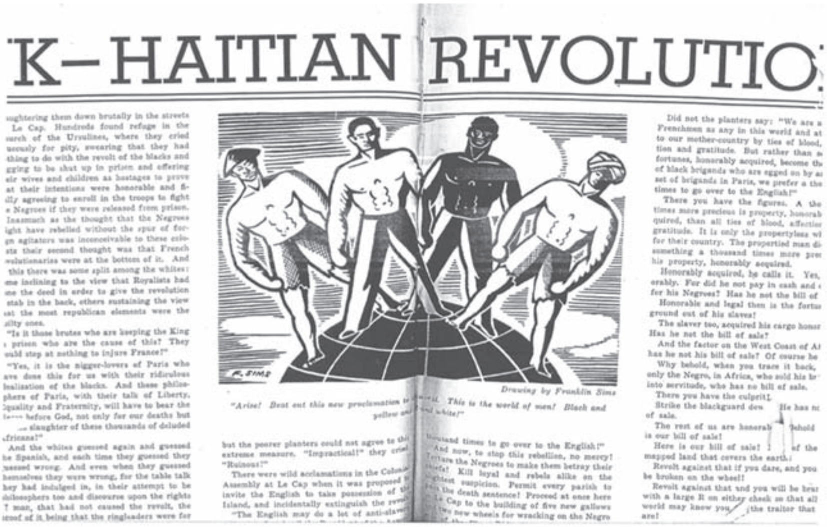
Fig. 6. "Toussaint L'Ouverture: 'The First of the Blacks,'" part 2, Young Pioneer November 1934, 7–9, illustrations by William Siegel. (Courtesy of the Labadie Collection, Hatcher Library, University of Michigan.)



K—HAITIAN REVOLUTIO

ughtering them down brutally in the streets
Le Cap. Hundreds found refuge in the
urch of the Ursulines, where they cried
ueously for pity, swearing that they had
thing to do with the revolt of the blacks and
gging to be shut up in prison and offering
eir wives and children as hostages to prove
at their intentions were honorable and fi-
lly agreeing to enroll in the troops to fight
e Negroes if they were released from prison.
Inasmuch as the thought that the Negroes
ight have rebelled without the spur of for-
gn agitators was inconceivable to these colo-
sts their second thought was that French
volutionaries were at the bottom of it. And
this there was some split among the whites:
me inclining to the view that Royalists had
ne the deed in order to give the revolution
stab in the back, others sustaining the view
at the most republican elements were the
ilty ones.
"Is it those brutes who are keeping the King
prison who are the cause of this? They
ould stop at nothing to injure France!"
"Yes, it is the nigger-lovers of Paris who
ave done this for us with their ridiculous
lealization of the blacks. And these philoso-
phers of Paris, with their talk of Liberty,
quality and Fraternity, will have to bear the
before God, not only for our deaths but
slaughter of these thousands of deluded
fricans!"
And the whites guessed again and guessed
he Spanish, and each time they guessed they
uessed wrong. And even when they guessed
hemselves they were wrong, for the table talk
hey had indulged in, in their attempt to be
philosophers too and discourse upon the rights
f man, that had not caused the revolt, the
roof of it being that the ringleaders were for

Drawing by Franklin Sims

"Arise! Beat out this new proclamation to [illegible]. This is the world of men! Black and yellow and [illegible] and white!"

but the poorer planters could not agree to thi
extreme measure. "Impractical!" they cried
"Ruinous!"
There were wild acclamations in the Coloni
Assembly at Le Cap when it was proposed t
invite the English to take possession of th
Island, and incidentally extinguish the revo
"The English may do a lot of anti-slave

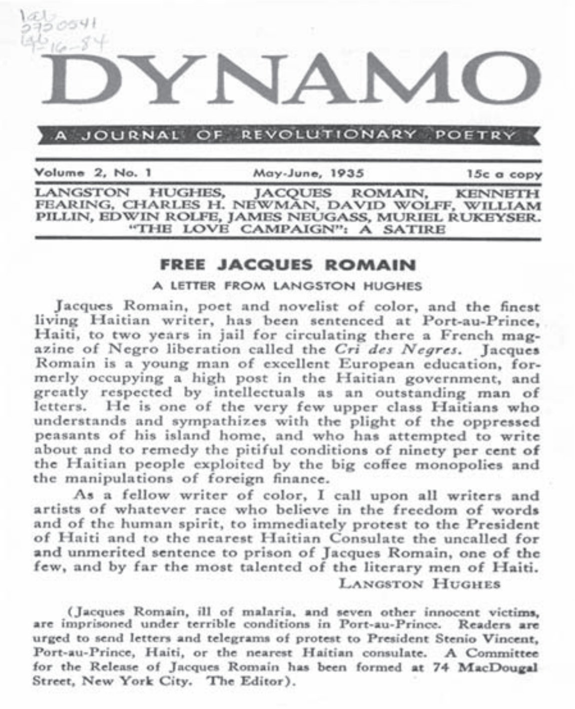
thousand times to go over to the English!"
And now, to stop this rebellion, no mercy!
Torture the Negroes to make them betray their
chiefs! Kill loyal and rebels alike on the
slightest suspicion. Permit every parish to
pass the death sentence! Proceed at once here
in Le Cap to the building of five new gallows
and two new wheels for wracking on the Negro

Did not the planters say: "We are a
Frenchmen as any in this world and at
to our mother-country by ties of blood,
tion and gratitude. But rather than s
fortunes, honorably acquired, become th
of black brigands who are egged on by a
set of brigands in Paris, we prefer a the
times to go over to the English!"
There you have the figures. A the
times more precious is property, honorab
quired, than all ties of blood, affectio
gratitude. It is only the propertyless w
for their country. The propertied man di
something a thousand times more pre
his property, honorably acquired.
Honorably acquired, he calls it. Yes,
orably. For did he not pay in cash and
for his Negroes? Has he not the bill of
Honorable and legal then is the fortu
ground out of his slaves!
The slaver too, acquired his cargo honor
Has he not the bill of sale?
And the factor on the West Coast of A
has he not his bill of sale? Of course he
Why behold, when you trace it back,
only the Negro, in Africa, who sold his b
into servitude, who has no bill of sale.
There you have the culprit!
Strike the blackguard dow He has n
of sale.
The rest of us are honorab behold
is our bill of sale!
Here is our bill of sale! of the
mapped land that covers the earth.
Revolt against that if you dare, and you
be broken on the wheel!
Revolt against that and you will be bra
with a large R on either cheek so that all
world may know you the traitor that
are!

Fig. 7. A Franklin Sims illustration accompanying an excerpt of Guy Endore's novel *Babouk*, which ran in the 1934 edition of the anti-fascist journal *Fight*.

with two years of each other, the first is very clearly a call for a collective black uprising against colonial rule, while a later one in 1934 calls on "white and black workers" to resist imperialism. For all their differences, however, both columns single out the United States as the inheritor of the French colonial regime.[18] "Haiti" is "once more enslaved," the columns declare, even as Roosevelt claims a "New Deal for the forgotten man." Denouncing the "rape of Haiti" by the marines at the "behest of Wall Street bankers," the columns predict that "American ruling class" will "continue to control the financial affairs of Haiti" through Haitian "misleaders." *The Negro Worker* was by far the most clear about the importance of Haiti and the memory of the Haitian Revolution to the radical Left: a sign that now as in the late 17th century, liberal reformism would not be enough, and that the United States cannot be counted on.

Beyond Communist circles, the imprisonment of Jacques Roumain seemed to be the one cause that united all of the interest groups with a stake in Haitian liberation in the 1930s. Roumain, perhaps the best-known author in Haiti and someone celebrated for championing the liberation of the republic from both its colonial yoke and the elite comprador class, was jailed by the Vincent regime in the years after the United States' departure. Not only did focus on Roumain unite various strands on the left, it reminded U.S.



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DYNAMO

A JOURNAL OF REVOLUTIONARY POETRY

Volume 2, No. 1 May-June, 1935 15c a copy

LANGSTON HUGHES, JACQUES ROMAIN, KENNETH FEARING, CHARLES H. NEWMAN, DAVID WOLFF, WILLIAM PILLIN, EDWIN ROLFE, JAMES NEUGASS, MURIEL RUKEYSER.
"THE LOVE CAMPAIGN": A SATIRE

**FREE JACQUES ROMAIN**

A LETTER FROM LANGSTON HUGHES

Jacques Romain, poet and novelist of color, and the finest living Haitian writer, has been sentenced at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to two years in jail for circulating there a French magazine of Negro liberation called the *Cri des Negres.* Jacques Romain is a young man of excellent European education, formerly occupying a high post in the Haitian government, and greatly respected by intellectuals as an outstanding man of letters. He is one of the very few upper class Haitians who understands and sympathizes with the plight of the oppressed peasants of his island home, and who has attempted to write about and to remedy the pitiful conditions of ninety per cent of the Haitian people exploited by the big coffee monopolies and the manipulations of foreign finance.

As a fellow writer of color, I call upon all writers and artists of whatever race who believe in the freedom of words and of the human spirit, to immediately protest to the President of Haiti and to the nearest Haitian Consulate the uncalled for and unmerited sentence to prison of Jacques Romain, one of the few, and by far the most talented of the literary men of Haiti.

LANGSTON HUGHES

(Jacques Romain, ill of malaria, and seven other innocent victims, are imprisoned under terrible conditions in Port-au-Prince. Readers are urged to send letters and telegrams of protest to President Stenio Vincent, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, or the nearest Haitian consulate. A Committee for the Release of Jacques Romain has been formed at 74 MacDougal Street, New York City. The Editor).

Fig. 8. Front cover of the poetry journal *Dynamo* (Vol. 2, no. 1 [May–June 1935], Courtesy of the Labadie Collection, Hatcher Library, University of Michigan.)

liberals and radicals that the U.S. imperial control over Haiti was ongoing despite the departure of U.S. troops in 1934. The two-dozen-member Board of the Committee for the Release of Jacques Roumain reads like a who's who of the liberal-left Popular Front coalition, including Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, Archibald MacLeish, Louis Adamic, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Lewis Mumford, Jerome Davis, Malcolm Cowley, Waldo Frank, and J. E. Spingarn, led by radical journalist Carleton Beals.[19] Appeals authored by Langston Hughes appeared in the poetry journal *The Dynamo* and the NAACP's *The Crisis*, and Hughes, Horace Gregory, Babette Deutch, and Miriam Blecher lectured, wrote, and even danced in tribute to raise money for the imprisoned writer.[20] Even the usually hard-nosed *Daily Worker* issued a poignant appeal for Roumain's release, entitled "Poet in Chains."[21]

Radical energies focused around the case of Roumain not only because of his status as a writer, but also because the fight for his release intersected with so many segments of the Popular Front Left, redirecting antifascist solidarity campaigns to the global South. Anti-imperialists who saw Vincent as the legacy of U.S. occupation, antiracists who understood the importance of

Haiti within the black imaginary, Communists who were inspired by Roumain's championing of the Haitian working classes, the NAACP, who understood Roumain to be one of their own, a member of the black elite in Haiti who turned to social justice work—all understood their desire to free Roumain as part of the fight against fascism. Langston Hughes's brief letter on the front cover of the radical poetry journal *Dynamo* identifies Roumain as a "writer of color," and "one of the very few upper class Haitians who understands and sympathizes with the plight of oppressed." Hughes not only links his fate as a black writer in the United States to black writers abroad, he notes that the "Haitian people" are "exploited by the big coffee monopolies and the manipulations of foreign finance." Roumain is thus not only important because he is a figure of a global black diaspora and a representative of the cross-class alliances among black radicals, he is a figure who exposes and denounces the global reach of empire and finance capital. Roumain's status as a Haitian writer and a black writer brings together for Hughes the many strands of the black Left—and yet it is significant also that Hughes publishes his letter not in the *Chicago Defender* but in a radical poetry journal known for its socialist and communist sympathies. It is clear that Haiti is more than just a symbol of blackness—rather, the blackness of the island is a symbol of global and interracial anti-imperialist and antifascist struggle.

Thus it makes sense that the *Daily Worker* editorial calling for the release of Roumain reads as an amalgam of Popular Front journalistic styles and obsessions. The piece opens with a rigged trial reminiscent of the court scenes from Nazi Germany that littered the left press, in which manufactured evidenced is presented to demonstrate that Roumain is a subversive who wants to bring down the state with violent means. The piece moves on to Roumain's education in Europe, during which he realizes his place is back among his "native land," a journey that would be familiar with many of the Parisian exiles who, like Malcolm Cowley, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos, returned to the United States with great hopes to join social movements. And then of course, his final act—to join a revolutionary party and renounce his class origins—places him within the narrative arc of the Popular Front literary movement, a tale of middle-class realignment, as Denning suggests, as middle- and upper-class artists sided no longer with their wealthy benefactors, but with the radical masses. This is not to suggest the editorial is false to its particulars—rather than Roumain, and Haiti behind him, became a symbol on the left less because it was a cause to win like republican Spain, but that it spoke to so many currents and cross-currents of the period.

What makes Haiti thus a symbol for the Popular Front period is precisely this nexus between the literary and the political, the symbolic and the real. In many ways, Haiti's importance for the 1930s was not that of Ethiopia or Spain, causes on which the future of the world seemed to hinge. More than anything else, Haiti served as a constant metaphor for the meaning of the antifascist struggle. As Penny Von Eschen reminds us, the war against fascism appeared to many in the African American community as a war between colonial empires over the ownership of the global South.[22] That is, it must be remembered that for many Haiti was not only an anticolonial cause, it was also a puppet regime of the United States (and formerly France), and Jacques Roumain was the prisoner of a government sponsored by the U.S. State Department. If the 1930s saw itself in a revolutionary age, it was a revolutionary age for which many of its symbols were also ones of colonial domination: the so-called democracies that allowed Germany to rearm, the "democracies" that allowed Italy to invade Ethiopia, the United States to depose of the Ramon St. Grau government in Cuba, that allowed Britain and the United States to blockade the Spanish Popular Front government. Placing Haiti at the center of a story of antifascism, the "booming of Franco's canons," serves to remind us that in the same way the death of the French Revolution lay in its colonial policy and colonial ambitions, so too would antifascism not succeed unless the global colonial system was abolished. The enemy of the *Black Jacobins* is the "good liberals . . . silent about slavery as any colonist," much like the "good liberals" who were willing to see Spain and Ethiopia fall, and the "good liberals" who opposed fascism but would not oppose or even acknowledge U.S. imperialism.[23] In Walter Benjamin's seminal essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," it's easy to forget that liberal "social democrats," as well as fascists, are those whom Benjamin directs the historian to work against. For Benjamin, the danger of social democracy is its conformism; that it grants to capitalism the qualities of the natural world—not recognizing, as C. L. R. James and Orson Welles would argue, the logical extension of capitalism's need for colonies abroad and management of racially segmented industrial labor at home. [24] Haiti thus became a kind of code word, a trope, to signify not only the potentialities of the antifascist coalition, but also the dangers should fighting fascism leave the colonial order in place.

## Black Jacobins as Anti-Imperialist Modernism

Herbert Marcuse writes in his "Notes on the Dialectic" that the dialectic is often the mode of the modernist avant-garde, "the language of negation" deployed in "the effort to break the power of facts," the power a naturalized status quo.[25] For Ezra Pound, this dialectic comes in the form of a nostalgized past rendered in the language of the future: a form of fascist futuricity. For C. L. R. James, this dialectic renders the past, present, and future simultaneously. The plantation system is a symbol of modernity and technological progress, at the same time it is rendered as a site of barbarism and cruelty. This contradiction can only be resolved through a leap into the future by the new modern consciousness of the slave. Thus James and his representation of San Domingo and its slaves is both a fulfillment, and the most radical break, with this modernist tradition.

For James, there is no binary between the colony and the metropole, nor is there a binary between modernity and savagery: the West/Other distinction so necessary to modernism is broken down from the economy to the culture to the level of the individual slave and owner. The plantation was not, as historian Eugene Genovese argued, a throwback to a feudal order, or an aberration of modernity—it was a fully modern system of production, employing the most advanced techniques of cultivation, distribution, and labor discipline known at the time. And in that sense, there is no rupture between the past and the present. As Brett St. Louis suggests, the colonial plantation was the "most sophisticated expression of capitalist discipline" available at that historical conjuncture.[26] Much like Foucault's theories of "bio-power," describing the ways in which bodies are interpellated into often violent systems of governance to maximize their production and compliance, the often barbaric-seeming torture associated with the slave regime was part of its lurid but lucid modernity.[27] James is at pains to dispel any myth that the plantation owners were motivated by feelings of bloodlust or cruelty. Rather, the ingenuity of slave owners' torture devices, the routine indignities they would visit upon the slaves, and the unspeakable violence were "a regime of calculated terrorism and brutality" based on a simple calculus of the slaves' overwhelming numbers and the need to maintain the conditions for accumulation.[28] As James puts the formula, "If on no earthly spot was so much misery concentrated as on a slave-ship, then on no portion of the globe did its surface in proportion to its dimensions yield so much wealth as the colony of San Domingo."[29] In short, the plantation was a modern system of power, and violence, in this formulation, is a part of the rational accumulation of wealth, not its antithesis.[30]

If the Caribbean slave plantation for James is the site of modern production—and not as others would have it, a site of fantasy or wild barbarism—then the slave, interpellated in its discipline, becomes a modern subject. Indeed, for James, the African-descended slaves working in "huge sugar factories" were far more advanced than their European counterparts, "closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time."[31] Not only is the labor of slaves organized along modern systems of production, the slaves' clothing, food, and housing is completely integrated within global systems of commerce, as little food or other life necessities were produced in the cash-crop colonial economy. If as Raymond Williams writes, the enemy of the radical modernist avant-garde is "tradition," then it is the slaves' violent rupture with tradition, their total dependence on the slave economy for their bare survival, the erasure of all previous modes of existence—whether status, clan, tribe, or even culture—that marked the slave as the most radical "conscript of modernity" the world knew.[32] As James argues, because the slaves "were closer to a modern proletariat than any workers at the time, the rising was therefore a thoroughly prepared and organized mass movement."[33] In other words, not only were the slaves conscripted into the machinery of modern commodity production, their form of organization, their political consciousness, their mode of action was thoroughly modern as well. While James suggests the slaves "constructed the French revolution in their own image," in a way, the revolution in San Domingo was so much more total, so much more successful, because modernity, as David Scott suggests, was not a choice for the slaves, but a "condition" of their choice to become political.[34] There was no "past" for the slaves to return to.

Modernism has often been thought to be the poetics of the avant-garde, a prefiguration of the future toward which we are reluctantly, or messianically, heading. While James to some extent has been claimed by a new generation of scholars investigating the black Atlantic, it's important to note how different James's conception of modernity—and modernism—is from Paul Gilroy's masterwork of the same name. Gilroy reminds us that "double consciousness" is the experience of African Americans in modernity, "people in, not of, the modern world."[35] While Gilroy's concept of the black Atlantic gives a language with which to discuss African American culture as both modern and yet part of a rich "counterculture" of modernity, "transfiguring" the tropes of dominant culture and the racial assumptions of Western civilization, it also assumes that modernity is at heart a Western project, originating in Europe.[36]

James's radical suggestion is that there is nothing *more modern* than a slave plantation, and that the slaves are perhaps *more modern* than their European counterparts. Slavery, as Stuart Hall suggests, is not a regional history but rather "at the world center" of modernity, and the Caribbean in many respects is "ahead" of Europe in this understanding.[37] And yet James is also insistent that the slave plantation is *behind* Europe as well, in culture and administrative expertise. While the slaves may be "more modern" than their European counterparts, the experience of modernity is not one of progress or linear development. Thus at the level of structure, one can read *The Black Jacobins* as a montage of the past and future, of culture and barbarism, modernity and Enlightenment. It's not a stretch to suggest that for James, LeClerc's decision to fight a "war of extermination" against the African-descended slaves is both the most barbaric act of the text and also what ensures the revolution its final push.[38] As Adorno writes in *Negative Dialectics*, it is the precise consciousness that "there is no getting out of this" that paradoxically marks one as a full member in the modern world, for all "old tendencies" are rendered false.[39] Thus *The Black Jacobins* is not a "counterculture" of modernity, as Gilroy suggests; it is a radically different and competing view of how we should understand what modernity means.

As a crucial part of James's argument about the modernity of slaves and slavery, it's also important to consider James's *Black Jacobins* as a modern*ist* work in its own right, engaged with questions of representation, defamiliarization, and linguistic expression, that is, the way in which modernity is experientially processed and cognitively mapped. James considers Toussaint's life itself a work of theater, evaluating Toussaint as much by historical standards as the standards of dramatic tragedy. James likens Toussaint's struggle to tragic literary figures such as Prometheus, Hamlet, and Ahab, suggesting that it is only through the literary imagination that one can understand the humanity, pathos, struggle, and drama of Toussaint's rise and fall. Yet for the question of modernism, it is interesting that James also describes the Haitian Revolution as a violation of the rules of classical drama, describing the slaves' agency, their ability to become modern "arbiters of their own fate" as something Shakespeare could not have written, something as strange and violent to aesthetic laws as if the Greek Chorus entered the dramatic action itself.[40] In some ways, the conceit of the modernist avant-garde is that the inherited modes of representation are no longer adequate to the experiential realities, that the "shock, loss, and distance" of the modern age require new forms of expression.[41] To suggest that the self-activity of the slaves as modern political actors is not only a violation of historical narratives of modernity, but also a violation of the aesthetic narrative of history's theatrics, who is to be "onstage" and "offstage," who is to look and who is to be seen, suggests that slaves' visibility is an aesthetic as well as a historical fact. The slaves were not making art, but their eruption onto the historical stage is one that alters all ways of seeing and of mapping one's relationship to the world.

That is, James requires the reader not only to reorient modernity's origins, but also to see modernity in a literally new way, with new bodies and new coordinates. Sensationalism, estrangement, and dialectical imagery serve as modes of dissonance and disruption designed to, as Joseph Entin writes of radical modernism, “destabilize established narrative codes” of looking and reading.[42] Early on in the narrative, as we are introduced to the “property,” that is, the slaves, we are also greeted with grotesque and sensational images of torture and brutality. James is clear that we understand these torture techniques are anything but the colonists reverting to animal spirits—rather they are “calculated” acts of “terrorism” based on a very rational and crudely numerical “fear of the slaves.”[43] The descriptions are not only vivid, they are artfully constructed to alternate between crude brutality and the technical and often spectacular application of pain. Some of the passages are worth reproducing:

> Masters poured burning wax on their arms and hands and shoulders, emptied boiling cane sugar over their heads, burned them alive, roasted them on slow fires, filled them with gunpowder and blew them up with a match; buried them up to the neck and smeared their heads with sugar that the flies might devour them; fastened them near to nests of ants or wasps; made them eat their own excrement, drink their urine, and lick the saliva of other slaves. One colonist was known . . . to throw himself on his slaves and stick his teeth into their flesh.[44]

> Fear of their cargo bred a savage cruelty in the crew. One captain, to strike terror in the rest, killed a slave and dividing heart, liver, and entrails into 300 pieces made each of the slaves eat one.[45]

By the time we reach the execution of Ogé, the mulatto planter and advocate for mulatto rights, the precise combination of ritual, public spectacle, technique, and sheer cruel inventiveness seems familiar:

> tied with a cord round the neck, and there on their knees, with wax candles in their hands, to confess . . . after which . . . led to a parade-ground, and there have their arms, legs and elbows broken on a scaffold, after which they were to be bound on wheels, their faces turned to the sky, to remain thus while it pleased God to keep them alive.[46]

The effect of such images is not simply to convey the brutality of the colony; rather, such brutality is the precise expression of the dynamic, simultaneously archaic and futuristic motion that made the modern world, of which San Domingo was the center. Rather than see these acts as “backward,” they are the “most sophisticated” expressions of capitalist discipline at the time.[47]

The sensational images not only shock, they also discomfort and dislocate—they cannot be relegated to a past or a distant horizon of history—it is by their modern logic that they defamiliarize the present. Indeed, as James articulates, such "maniacal acts" are only strange if one refuses to see them as analogies to the current regimes of Europe.[48]

Like Marcuse, Sergey Eisenstein roots the emergence of modern ways of seeing in the "dialectical image," the representation of contradictory images that produce a dynamic of turbulent forward motion.[49] Indeed, so indebted was he to Eisenstein's way of seeing, James contacted Eisenstein to film a version of *The Black Jacobins* starring none other than Paul Robeson.[50] Such dialectical images of torture locate the plantation squarely within such contradictions of precision and barbarity, modernity and the ancient regime. This visual whiplash of history marks the aesthetic structure of the entire text, presenting images that often quite literally embody the contradictions of slavery and modernity. The image of Dessalines, an "old slave, with marks of the whip under his general's uniform," ranging across the island represents the moment of historical rupture in the text, when the brutality of modernity and its promise of equality are suddenly shown as unable to reconcile: Dessalines can be a general in the French army, or a slave, but not both, and thus he is the engine for final conflict and the end to Toussaint's Enlightenment project. Toussaint, who wished to find a way reconcile the history and structure of slavery with military modernity, is wiped away in a single contradictory image. Dessalines was "fast coming to the conclusion at which Toussaint's still boggled. . . . The old slave-owners were everywhere grinning with joy at the French expedition; he would finish with everything white forever."[51] While James derides Dessalines as a "brute," he also acknowledges him as the "man of the moment," one who did not feel the limitations of Toussaint because he did not understand their origins. Even James's sentences are "deliberately paradoxical," creating at the level of syntax the visual grammar of the book.[52] The "slaves destroyed tirelessly . . . and yet they were surprisingly moderate" is just one such example.[53]

This visual text of racialized bodies, broken, violated, placed on pikes and marched through Port-au-Prince also exists within a modernist visual regime of surveillance that must be considered when reading James's text. As critics Marissa Stange, Joseph Entin, and Shawn Michelle Smith point out, modernity is also a racial and classed "way of seeing," one constructed by a documentary sensibility that divided bodies into knowable types. From police mugshots to documentary films and photographs, from modernist novels to newspaper stories, modern modes of surveillance attempted to make bodies "transparent" markers of identity, readable by visual cues. Not only do the violent images violate any stable order of compliance, they lay bare the idea that race and labor exist in a knowable biological or cultural order. Images of white slave-owners sinking their teeth into the flesh of slaves or the wives of slave owners inspecting the genitalia of male slaves in public is the flip side of the grotesque "sensational" images of torture that ultimately subvert and invert narratives of progress, order, and control. As Entin describes the "sensational" as a means for modernist artists to question the Fordist order of integrated and hierarchical systems, so James creates a visual text of sensational violence and broken bodies to upset the biological claims of race and class that ordered the colonial world.

In this sense, the "organized mass" of revolting slaves stands in a stark and dialectical contrast to the sheer wantonness of torture in the first several pages of the text: it is precisely through revolution that the order and regimentation we associate with modern life become visible in the text. Indeed, the image of the revolutionary who leaps voluntarily off a scaffold to show the audience "how a revolutionary dies" is perhaps the most concise expression of how a former slave is irreducible to her body, and part of a self-fashioned order far beyond the discipline of the rack and screw.[54] The dialogic of bodies is most apparent in the figure of Toussaint himself, whom James describes on more than one occasion as "small, ugly and ill-shaped," and yet a man "destined" to lead San Domingo to liberation, singled out by his superior qualities of intellectual, diplomatic, and physical strength and far-reaching vision.[55] These destabilizing paradoxes and contradictions not only de-essentialize a racial regime based on typed bodies, but also, like other modernist montages, are designed to "astonish" the viewer, destabilize a sense of visual order, and uproot a forward motion of progress that is neatly teleological.

James's construction of Toussaint himself is perhaps what makes *The Black Jacobins* a work of specifically *anti-imperialist* modernism. James is at pains to point out that Toussaint's modernity is different from that of the slaves' deracinated existence, fully interpellated within the technics of the slave regime. Toussaint, allowed an unusual freedom of movement and education by his master, is not only literate, but someone who discovers himself as revolutionary through the act of reading.[56] "Over and over again Toussaint read this passage," writes James of Abbé Raynal's *Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of the Europeans in the Two Indies*, in which Raynal calls for a "black chief" to lead the slaves to liberation.[57] As Bolívar Echeverría comments in "Homo Legens," the person whose "direct and immediate experience of the world" is "mediated through books" is the "modality of the modern, singular individual in prototypical form."[58] In other words, what makes Toussaint "modern" is not simply his position within an economy that strips him of his roots and origins, but his reinvention of himself as a "man of destiny" through the act of reading. Repeatedly, Toussaint is distinguished from his revolutionary contemporaries as being a man of "vision," as someone who is moved not by intemperate passions, but by calculation and thoughtful deliberate process—his decision to protect his former master as well as to create a disciplined army before joining the fight are but two early signs of his rational and even keel. More importantly, as a "homo legens," Toussaint is deprovincialized through reading and sees his primary document, his constitution, as a global document of anticolonial liberation:

> He cherished a project of sailing to Africa with arms, ammunition, and a thousand of his best soldiers, and there conquering vast tracts of country, putting an end to the slave-trade, and making millions of blacks "free and French," as his Constitution made the blacks of San Domingo.[59]

Like other modernist heroes, from Robert Cohn to Jay Gatsby, Toussaint is a figure for whom the convulsions of the modern world produce a new, less provincial sense of self, an enlarged sense of self and an almost mystic grandeur. Yet where Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald produce characters who ultimately fail precisely because they reject who "they are" and embrace an alien culture, Toussaint is utterly transformed, and in his transformation transforms the lives of millions of slaves with him.

We can thus think of Jacob Lawrence's iconic portrait of Toussaint as having something similar to say: Toussaint is depicted at rest, a portrait of a lone individual, rendered unique by the heightened visual style of Lawrence's modernism. Yet this portrait also reveals a contradiction: Toussaint is either a lone modern individual or a revolutionary, not both. As David Scott notes, Toussaint's "tragic dilemma" is one precisely constructed from the "historic conflict between old and new," between re-enslavement by France or freedom by cutting all ties with France for good.[60] For James's Toussaint, neither was possible, or rather both were tragic: he could not accept a return to slavery, nor could he accept an island unlinked from the global economy, and more importantly, cut off from Western culture on which his own development as a revolutionary depended. As James writes, "Toussaint's failure was the failure of enlightenment, not of darkness," a failure because he understood all too well what severing San Domingo from the world order would bring (288). Yet it is this tragedy that also makes Toussaint's journey an ironic and thus modernist one: that it is the world that is out of joint and not the hero—or perhaps one could say that what makes modernist heroes ineffectual is often their most redeeming quality. For James this is clear: "If Dessalines could see so clearly and simply, it's because the ties that bound this uneducated soldier to French civilization were of the slenderest," calling the leader who successfully drove the French from San Domingo a "brute," giving him none of the subtlety and sophistication he gave Toussaint.[61] And yet unlike Cohn or Gatsby, Toussaint's tragic irony does not expose a deep-seated pathos in his character; one cannot exactly pity him. As Scott notes, "Toussaint is a whole person," and what made his greatness also sealed his disaster—he is all of a piece.[62] What Toussaint exposes is rather deep contradictions about the modern world that his revolution, should it have been successful, could have perhaps healed. In wishing to preserve the wealth and culture of modernity while erasing the racial and social significance that wealth produces, Toussaint was in a sense trying to come through modernity on the other side. One could say that James's radical style is not a dressing on his dialectic art; dialectics is the core of his aesthetic radicalism.

## Heart of Darkness: The Aesthetics of Anti-Imperialist Antifascism

In Stuart Hall's extended interview about the life and work of C. L. R. James, he remarks that Haiti served in the 1920s and 1930s as a symbol "black liberation and black self-creativity," a powerful source for the collective aesthetic imagination of the Harlem and Chicago renaissances.[63] One has to ask what the investment in the representations of Haiti might have been beyond the Harlem Renaissance, in the broader currents of radical modernism. That Orson Welles, as perhaps the most important and influential modernist filmmaker of the Popular Front era, based significant works on Haiti as a trope can tell us a great deal about the anti-imperialist contours of aesthetic modernism in the 1930s. As an antiracist, his own relationship with the African American and Mexican American community at times represented genuine solidarity—directing the first all-black cast of Shakespeare in Harlem, actively defending the Mexican American youths in the Sleepy Lagoon trial—and at other times, slumming and appropriating, bragging on at least one account of hosting raging all-nighters in Harlem with the cast. His internationalist politics were equally troubled, often veering wildly between the two poles of anticolonial solidarity and modernist appropriation. Attending the 1945 Pan American War and Peace Conference, Welles editorialized that the United States' lofty and universalistic rhetoric was undermined and called into question by racism at home and "U.S.-armed dictators" abroad.[64] Yet Welles responds artistically to the "sham" of the conference with *Lady from Shanghai*, a film critical of imperialism and yet perhaps the most Orientalist picture of his entire oeuvre.

The contradictions of Welles's anti-imperialism become even more apparent in *Macbeth*—more apparent and more deeply complex. Part of the complexity is owed to the fact that Welles's production performed as part of an antiracist and antifascist project, and there are many points of commonality *Macbeth* shares with his other antifascist allegories, including *Julius Caesar* and *War of the Worlds*—the exercise of power for power's sake, investigations of evil, of democratic and undemocratic forms of resistance. Michael Denning goes so far as to write that Welles's *Macbeth* is an "allegory of African American uprising," and links *Macbeth* with anticolonial struggles and the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini's imperial army.[65] Yet it is not at all clear that opinion about the production was unified, even at the time. While not mentioning *Macbeth* by name, Hallie Flanagan notes in her memoir of the FTP that the *New York Amsterdam News* doubted another play's realistic rendition of African American lives would interest the "downtown public," as "in this production the Negro is not 'exotic,'" unlike other recent FTP productions.[66] It also must be remembered that *Macbeth* comes on the heels of Elmer Rice's resignation in the face of the government's censorship of the "living newspaper" *Ethiopia*.[67] *Ethiopia* explicitly chronicled—albeit in relatively "evenhanded" terms—Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia and Hailie Selassie's defiant declaration before the League of Nations.[68] Clearly, some stories of "anti-colonial struggle" are better in the eyes of the government than others.

If one compares the *New York Times* review of the FTP's second living newspaper, in which *Ethiopia* receives fair mention, with the review of *Macbeth*, the difference is immediately apparent. The attitude toward *Ethiopia* is strictly political; little or no mention of race is even made, despite the fact that a number of real Ethiopians form a large part of the cast, and their presence in the Negro Theater Unit was credited as impetus for *Ethiopia*'s staging.[69] Likewise, in a review in the *New Theater Journal* (*Ethiopia* showed once for press only), the author stresses the style and innovation of the living newspaper format and, like the *Times* piece, the political controversy. The *New Theater Journal* does go so far as to say that given the number of blacks in the production, the federal censorship is a "blatant violation of civil rights," but there is little to suggest that the meaning of *Ethiopia* was in any way uncertain—it was a dramatization of an illegal invasion.[70] By contrast, the *Times* review of *Macbeth* drips with exotic, even erotic overtones. The review is festooned with inventive ways "Negro" can be used as a modifier—there is the "ferocity of Negro acting" and the "Negro extravagance" of the colorful costumes, as well as the "sensuous, black-blooded vitality" of the court's "animalism."[71] Perhaps more disturbing, however, is Brooks Atkinson's attention to the "tight fitting trousers" worn by Lord Macbeth, which do "justice to his anatomy."[72] It would be difficult to imagine, for instance, the same reviewer frankly discussing the penis size of Haile Selassie at the League of Nations, or at least, one should hope. While this says as much about the reviewer as it does about the plays in question, it is clear Welles's *Macbeth* is at least read within the tradition of exotic portraits of Haiti that littered the previous decades.

Yet there are interesting ways in which the depiction of Haiti by Welles is left ambivalent and richly unsettling. In the closing of the *New York Times* review, Atkinson contrasts the large crowd *Macbeth* drew to the smaller "Ethiopian mass-meeting . . . on Lennox Avenue."[73] While the reviewer is cynically suggesting that Harlem cares more for spectacle than substance, or perhaps that politics is boring, it is worth noting that he feels the constituencies for both are the same, and that Harlem has clearly voted with its feet. Perhaps even more compelling is the audience response to *Macbeth*: not only was it well attended by Harlem crowds, but the audience "clapped vigorously when Macbeth is crowned."[74] Not only does this suggest the audience did not read the play as straight Shakespeare, but it throws a *Macbeth*-as-liberation reading into question as well, given that Macbeth, is after all, the ruler against whom the people seek their liberation. Or rather, perhaps, one could ask what form of liberation the play performs. While the *Times* reviewer exoticized the actors, the first all-black cast of a Shakespeare play in the United States stages a quite different form of occupation. Not only does a black man assume the mantel of power (what the audience cheered), the events in Haiti are staged as high art, rather than primitive jouissance. If the logic of modernist primitivism is to construct one's modern identity by gazing upon the savage and uncivilized, then this "Haitian" *Macbeth* inverts the racial terms of that construction. Equally, the primitive "voodoo" witches (whose role in the Welles production is greatly enlarged) are part of the original Shakespeare play, suggesting in an uncanny way that the "primitive" is a European, not African, construction. Indeed, the power of the Welles play within the racial trajectory of modernism is precisely the question of who is appropriating whom. And while Welles's *Macbeth* was not censored in the same way as *Ethiopia*, it's also likely that the radical racial instability of *Macbeth* would slip past the censor's pen.

Shortly after Welles's success with *Macbeth*, he began working on a film project of the *Heart of Darkness*, eventually taking over the writing himself before the project was canceled by RKO in 1940. Why Welles chose to make a film version of *Heart of Darkness* is not on the record, but RKO's expertise with visual effects and its "liberal" reputation, as well as the success of Welles's radio version of *Darkness*, made the text a natural fit. And as film critic Guy DeBona suggests, we can read Welles's Haitian *Macbeth* as a "rehearsal" for his nearly finished script of *Heart of Darkness.*[75] There is much to suggest that Welles built *Darkness* out of the witches cauldron of *Macbeth*, down to the "voodoo" drums, lush canopy, obsession with evil and fascist tyranny, revision of "classic" works of art, racial and visual instability, engagement with Western imperialism, and perhaps most importantly for the question of imperialism, an American setting. At this stage of Welles's career, he was becoming increasingly critical of fascism as well as U.S. imperialism. While Michael Denning suggests we read many of Welles's works as antifascist popular culture and gestures toward Welles's anti-imperialism, he does not give full treatment to Welles's evolving politics. As James Naremore writes, Welles's columns for the *New York Post* in the mid-1940s obsessively and consistently concerned themselves with U.S. imperial designs in Latin America and collusion with fascism in Europe. He acknowledged that "U.S. imperialism" in the Southern Cone made Latin American governments suspicious of joining the war effort, and wrote extensively about how U.S. indifference toward, even support for, General Franco abroad and lynching in the United States made pronouncements about the dangers of Perónismo ring hollow.[76]

Thus the selection of *Darkness*, with its self-conscious but also self-deceiving narrator, makes a certain logic as Welles parses U.S. idealism from its practice. *Darkness* is, as Michael Valdez Moses writes, an "ur-text" of modernism, with Faulkner, Eliot, and Fitzgerald all consciously quoting it in major works as a symbolic marker of the modern world.[77] And yet *Darkness* is a modernist text that places on stage the imperial politics that is usually left offstage. While JanMohamed is entirely correct to suggest that Conrad's text "demystifies" the imaginary of the colonizer, his analysis seems to miss the most obvious oddity of the text: while modernism is thoroughly implicated in the colonial project, its mode is often to displace the colonial administration for a fantasy of the primitive and/or the luxuriousness of high style.[78] Modernism, as Jameson suggests, is a mode that forever displaces the locus of social conflict onto an impenetrable style, and this act of displacement takes on an almost literal turn when discussing the meaning and existence of overseas colonies. Few modernist texts travel the entire distance from colony to metropole, and even less frequently as colonial agents. As the foundational work of modernism, *Darkness* announces that which often remains hidden—the colonial relationships of power, loathing, and desire that construct the native and colonial project. And yet, as JanMohamed suggests, the status of Conrad's book is ambivalent; it is an exotic and racist depiction of Africa just as it is a self-conscious critique of the narcissism and pretense of the colonial project.[79] "Even if Africans," as JanMohamed writes, "are incidental . . . to the novella," with its main subject the disoriented perceptions of Marlow, it is nonetheless the Westerners' gaze on the "primitive" that produces the heightened consciousness of the narrator.[80]

These particularities of Conrad's text—its position within the modernist canon and its direct and ambivalent engagement with imperialism—speak not only to Welles's growing obsessions with the U.S. empire and domestic racism, but also highlight how under Welles's revisions the text becomes a perfect vehicle to construct an anti-imperialist modernism: a direct revision of modernist tropes of the colony and metropole, the primitive, and especially the nature of modernist high style and its relationship to the imperial subject.[81] Welles's first significant revision is to make Marlow an American—instead of gazing into the shadow of the Thames, Marlow lights his pipe in a shop window before the Hudson. Marlow's opening speech, in which he describes the "utter savagery" of conquest, shifts the context from the ancient Roman conquest of Brittany or the Gauls to the foundation of the United States.[82] As Amy Kaplan, Louis Perez, and Donald Pease suggest, U.S. imperial culture has always confronted its conquest of the Americas with various forms of disavowal, separating itself from global European empires and their administration of the "darker races," as well as from the despotic Spanish. Kaplan notes in her introduction to the groundbreaking anthology *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism* that it is only in Africa that Perry Miller recovers the innocence of America, implying not only America's enlightenment, but its fundamental distance from the European imperial project signified by Africa.[83] Thus Welles's American Marlow not only locates the "darkness" of imperialism in the United States, the placement of Marlow in New York, gazing into the Hudson "that was once marsh," does not allow the reader to displace the brutality of conquest—"the conquest of the earth which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion, or slightly different shaped noses than we ourselves"—onto another place or time. Welles's slight revision to Marlow's speech—the "different shaped noses"—equally insists on the modernity of American empire by equating the nationalism of anti-Semitism with the imperialism of antiblack racism. Unlike the modernism of Pound, Eliot, and Fitzgerald, in which the gaze is continually directed outward, Marlow's identity as an American is only one of the ways Welles's *Darkness* functions as a self-reflexive text, inviting the viewer to recognize his or her own discomforting entanglement in the imperial project.

Beyond Marlow's identity as an American, it is the script's remarkable opening scene that has been commented on by nearly all scholars who write about *Darkness*, describing its self-reflexive qualities as nearly "Brechtian" and undermining the "racial Manichaeanism" of modernism by drawing the viewer into the production of race as participant, and not as spectator.[84] Welles's remarkable and frankly bizarre opening—in which Welles enters the screen threatening the audience with first a gun, then executes the viewer in an electric chair, before imitating a bird and finally instructing the audience members that they resemble Lithuanian janitors—is justified in the script by telling us that it is meant to "instruct and acquaint the audience" with the "special technique used in the 'Heart of Darkness.'"[85] While never elaborating on what this technique might be, it's clear that the script is designed to make viewers aware that they are viewing a constructed technology, one that pulls the viewer by an act of metaphorical violence into its ideological frame. It's worth quoting the unreleased script at some length:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Orson Welles. Don't worry, nothing's gone wrong. There's just nothing to look at for a while. You can close your eyes if you want to, but—please open them when I tell you to. If this confuses you, tell yourself what your name is and remember that everything from now on is between you and me. Now then, open your eyes. (Louder) *Open your eyes!*
>
> (Iris open on interior of bird cage as it would appear to a bird inside of the cage, the cage, filling the entire screen. Beyond the bars can be seen chin and mouth of Welles, tremendously magnified.)
>
> Welles
> That great big hole in the middle there is my mouth. In this motion picture you play the part of a canary and I am asking you to sing. You refuse. That's the plot. I offer you an olive.
>
> (A couple of Gargantuan fingers thrust an enormous olive towards the camera, through the bars of the cage.)
>
> Welles
> You don't want an olive. This enrages me.
>
> (Welles' chin moves down and his nose and eyes are revealed. He is scowling fiercely.)

> Welles
> Here is a bird's-eye view of me being enraged. I threaten you with a gun.
>
> (Now the muzzle of a pistol is stuck between the bars of the cage. It looks like a Big Bertha.)
>
> Welles
> That's the way a gun looks to a canary. I give you to the count of three to sing.
>
> (Welles' head moves up showing his mouth on the words, One, two, and three. His voice is heard over echo chambers and the narration is synchronized on the count with the movement of his lips.)
>
> Welles
> One —
> (On normal level) That's the way I sound to you, — you canary!
> (on echo again) Two, — *three!*
>
> Welles (Cheerfully)
>
> (Normal level again) You still don't want to sing so I shoot you.
>
> (The gun goes off with a cloud of smoke and a shower of brightly colored sparks. As this fades out —
>
> Welles
> That's the end of this picture.
>
> (RKO caption, THE END. Conclusive chords of music finishing off as the screen goes black.)[86]

As the onscreen Orson Welles informs us, this is not the end of the film, naturally. Before the diegetic action begins and we are in Marlow's New York City, we are run through a mock execution on an electric chair of a prisoner (with the implication that the viewer is next), before gazing into the open mouth of a "Lithuanian Janitor" we are to imagine we've become, brushing our teeth in the mirror.[87] Welles at least partially makes clear what he wants the audience to understand from these surreal images: "You're the camera. The camera is your eye."[88]

In a film about empire, it is not incidental that the author would want to remind the viewers about the ways they are implicated in the act of photographic looking. As E. Ann Kaplan makes clear in *Looking for the Other*, "Looking relations are never innocent," especially when deployed and counterdeployed in the context of colonial power.[89] Part of the meaning of a colonial gaze is the privilege of seeing without being seen, and without being made to feel self-conscious about the act of seeing. If we think for a moment about the foundational works of Anglo-modernist canon, so much of it from *Gatsby* to *The Waste Land* orients its complex subjectivity of the author persona on the premise of a powerful gaze that can interpellate, interpret, and seize the meaning of people and things: Eliot's "Tiresias," who apprehends the meaning of London's racial and classed degradation; Nick Carroway, who coolly grades the pretenses of the fake and fabulous alike while alone escaping judgment from them in return. And in particular, the view of the camera, as the principal recorder of the modern world, has been implicated in constructing the racial and imperial view for Western audiences. As Shawn Michelle Smith argues, photography in the mid- to late 19th century trained the American eye to "see established social hierarchies" as "anchored in . . . visual 'truths.'"[90] Using the scientific and sentimental discourses of photography to produce essentialized realities about differentiated bodies, photography, Smith suggests, became the privileged social structure that produced a dominant white, middle-class subjectivity.[91] Race, Smith argues, became a way of seeing through the image—photography came into being not merely as a tool of racial segregation, but shaping and codifying the way in which racial knowledge came to be disseminated and understood.

For Welles thus exposing the camera's power to murder, to inhabit, to give orders and make order is not merely a question of "Brechtian" effect, as James Naremore suggests, but rather is crucially embedded in the anti-imperialist politics of the film: the viewers themselves are to be reminded that they, like the camera, are implicated in the construct of empire, and not outside of it. Quite literally the film constructs "the audience"—presumably Western viewers—as "entirely made up of motion picture cameras."[92] Constituted as Western subjects, they have been granted the power to shape the racial order of the world. And yet there is a second, perhaps even more radical premise articled by the film's opening sequence—that not only is the viewer complicit in "murder," as the film suggests, but the audience is a potential victim of murder and imprisonment herself: before becoming the "camera eye" the audience is first imprisoned and executed. This double view, in which the audience is both the camera and the victim of the camera, in which the audience is complicit at the same time it is a casualty, disrupts the "order of things" necessary to maintain the colonial color line, the "Manichaean divide" of colonialism. More specifically to the film and the historical context, this parallax view conforms to C. L. R. James's own argument that imperialism is a corrosive force not only on the colonized, but ultimately the Enlightenment aims of liberals in the metropole. Just as the liberals and ancient regime overthrew the radical aims of the sans culottes in French Revolution in the name of restoring Saint-Domingue to the French Empire, so James accuses "the liberal democrat" of dithering "until the sledge hammer of fascism falls on his head."[93]

This thus brings us to the final major revision authored by Welles—in addition to being a colonial agent, Kurtz is very clearly articulated in the script as a fascist. In a scene invented out of whole cloth by Welles, Marlow is interviewed by a doctor before departing for West African coast. Yet the interview has little do to with Marlow's health and more to do with verifying Marlow's racial identity:

> DOCTOR: I always ask leave, in the interests of science to measure the crania of those going out there.
> MARLOW: And when they come back, too?
>
> (The doctor hastily lowers his props.)
>
> THE DOCTOR: Oh, I never see them . . .
>
> (He pushes his face closer to the camera, his one good eye darting appraisingly in every direction. The other glass one remains fixed in the lense [*sic*].)
>
> THE DOCTOR: Hmmm . . . good Nordic type . . . the superior races you know, very interesting the effect . . . no, no, I never see them . . . Besides the changes take place inside . . . inside.[94]

The doctor represents, of course, the pseudoscientific arguments about eugenic and phrenologic ideas of race, that race is not only part of an ocular regime of knowledge but also empirically testable by measurements of the body. Adding to this is the Enlightenment idea that each "race" has a proper environment in which it thrives, the temperate climate of the North producing "higher types" than the hot and humid environment of the global South—thus the doctor's "theory" about the fate of "Nordics" in the Congo. Given that the doctor's discourse is based on the empiricism of science, Welles's complication of the act of looking and being seen further undermines the scientific claims of racial difference—not only are the cameras in

Welles's opening highly unreliable, they are also weapons and torture devices. The doctor's act of looking through "the lens" of the microscope brings viewers back to the beginning of the film, in which the audience members are asked to look at the "Lithuanian janitor," the executed man, and finally themselves as victims.

Not only does the doctor serve as a reminder of the political nature of the technological apparatus of the camera, but the doctor identifies Kurtz as "our next leader" and a "great man," someone who will "regain the lost colonies" of the British Empire and restore it to global dominance.[95] Elsa also remarks later to Marlow that Kurtz is seen as a "demagogue in uniform" by the outside world, suggesting that Kurtz should be understood as a kind of Nazi, someone associated with fascist ideas of militarism, in addition to the deployment of eugenic racism and the will to power of "great leaders" by the doctor. In constructing Kurtz as a fascist, Welles gives artistic expression to the political analysis commonplace among figures of the radical black diasporic left in the 1930s and 1940s, such as Aimé Césaire, George Padmore, and W. E. B. Du Bois. As Césaire famously writes in his *Discourses on Colonialism*, before Westerners were "victims" of Nazism, they were "its accomplices."[96] Every member of the "Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century" Césaire writes, "has a Hitler inside of him." Or, as Du Bois articulates in his 1947 *The World and Africa*:

> There was no Nazi atrocity—concentration camps, wholesale maiming and murder, defilement of women or ghastly blasphemy of childhood—which Christian civilization or Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world.[97]

Thus the dialectic view in which fascism is merely the return of the repressed, the violence of colonial authority revisited upon the metropole, explains in part the odd staging at the outset of the film. In a film about the colonial origins of fascism, the (presumed) Western viewer is invited to participate in the execution of a prisoner and the violence of looking, while at the same time being ensnared in the fatal entanglement of authoritarian modernity. Transforming Kurtz into a fascist, much like changing Marlow into an American, prevents what the original Conrad version of *Darkness* allows: for the death of Kurtz to fade into the jungle, to remain essentially strange. In the late 1930s, the implications of fascism were not merely idle thoughts—the colonial administration was literally pointing the barrel of a gun at the audience.

Like C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, Welles's *Darkness* offers no stable vantage point from which to perceive either the global "North" or the global "South." And rather than simply offer a kind of easy incorporation or hybridity, the coconstitutive process by which the North is created by the South and the South is produced by the North is shown to be an act of violence, slavery, incarceration, and death. While in *The Black Jacobins* this process leads to an act of revolutionary transformation produced through the modern subjectivity of the black slave, Welles's *Heart of Darkness* remains at an ironic remove, offering neither radical political solution nor an ulterior vantage point from which to resist the colonial act of ocular seizure. One scene in particular, worth quoting in its entirety, registers the dialectic yet also the film's critique and complicity with colonial modes of seeing:

> Panning down, the camera discovers as it trucks up the muddy banks, a railroad track which it now follows, panning up again as it moves very distantly. At first, a single native is heard singing a mournful lament. Camera approaches the end of the railroad track. There are piles of track and ties. We continue on up the hill. The pad of feet on the soft earth and the jingle of chains, announces before the camera registers it, the approach of a small chain-gang of natives, headed by ______?, one of the Company men. The natives are carrying enormous stone drainage pipes. As this procession passes Marlow, the Company man straightens, his rifle on his shoulder and grins in a nasty, familiar way at the camera. Then this procession continues past us, on down the hill. We hear their footsteps and the clank of their chains, fading behind us. The lament of the single native is louder, and following the sound, the camera encounters the excavation. This is a great big ridiculous hole in the face of the mud bank. In it, frying in the sun, are a lot of dying savages and a lot of broken drain pipes. Into some of these, the natives have crawled, the better to expire. The whole picture is one of terrible desolation and despair. The camera takes in the singer who is one of this number and Marlow looks down at his feet, the camera pans down for a moment, registering a med. Closeup of a negro face, the eyes staring up into the lense [*sic*]. Then the camera pans back up the hill, registering again the fence of the compound of corrugated iron buildings, which are the settlement. We continue to truck up towards it, the voice of the singer fading in the distance behind. The sorrowful sound of this voice blends gradually into the far off tinkle of a piano heard as the camera moves through the opening in the reed fence, and shows the long perspective of iron buildings to the right

> and left. At the far end of the avenue, stands at girl. She is looking at the camera, very small in the distance. As the camera moves up the street, she moves down towards it, slowly she comes closer and closer and is seen to be very beautiful. Finally, about two or three buildings up this avenue, she comes face to face with the camera, filling the frame and looking at the lense [*sic*]. The look of recognition on her face fades and changes to one of slight embarrassment.[98]

The dialectic portrait of a heap of dead bodies and modern drainage pipes can serve as a direct commentary on the price of modernity: this contradictory image of progress and death stands whole and unreconciled, much like the wealth and barbarity of French colony of Saint-Domingue. The other two poles of the scene, the "beautiful" white woman, Elsa, and the dying "savages" and the "single native" singing a lament also stand within the same frame, products of a colonial order that create one as an object of desire and another marked for death. That the "savage" and the "white beauty" are co-constitutive fictions is not acknowledged by the film, even if marking their proximity exposes their construction. It is very clear in what is perhaps Welles's most experimental major, if unmade, film, modernism is deployed as a means to track the colonial coordinates of modernity itself.

While some such as Perry Anderson argue that modernism is the "emptiest of all categories," far too vague to have any relationship to modernity, let alone the history of capitalism, I would like to suggest these anti-imperialist modernists can tell us something not only about the modernist movement at midcentury, but also about the subjective contours of modern imperialism.[99] As Peter Osborne articulates in a response to Anderson, there is something about the Enlightenment project of imperialism—its effort toward totalization, its global reach, its temporal coordinates in notions of progress—that requires a new mode of expression and produces with it a new way of experiencing time and the self.[100] Thus we can think of Raymond Williams's definition of modernism as works that imagine a new future, against ideas of tradition, as a definition with uniquely imperial implications—for it is through ideas of futurity and progress that the colonial project, "the idea of it," to quote Conrad's Marlow—redeems itself even in the face of its own violence. The "imperial man"—to look at Marlow or, in its radical vision, Toussaint-Louverture—is someone who positions himself in a particular relationship to the world, one of mastery, inwardness, and futurity. Welles's negative portrait (Marlow) and James's positive portrait (Toussaint) thus function as mirror versions of one another, as constructed selves produced by the dialectic self of empire, caught between ideas of tradition and ideas of the future, between ideas of civilization and ideas of the primitive. While Welles disturbs these categories in terms of a negative critique, James explodes them into a vision of an egalitarian future beyond these categories. Haiti stands at a nexus of these contradictions, pointing both to the ongoing horrors of the colonial project and to a redemptive and liberatory future.

And yet it's important to note the intense stylization of both of these works—the striking dialectic images, the sensational visions of torture, the paradoxical sentence structures of James's *Jacobins* and the surreal, self-conscious address of the audience of Welles's *Darkness.* Rather than consider these as simply striving for effect, these strategies of estrangement are meant to disorient the reader/viewer from the established forms of colonial order. Ideas of "race," "nation," "global," and "aesthetic" are deeply embedded within imperial logics. Whether it is James showing us a white master biting his slaves or Welles executing his audience with a gun, one must be "astonished" in order to be (literally and figuratively) re-oriented.[101] As against transparent modes such as realism and naturalism in which the social totality can be represented through textured description, such works both spatially and temporally dislocate the reader/viewer as a means to underscore the unevenness, the invisibility, and the reach of imperialism. And by doing so, they also reorient the very tropes of modernism toward a progressive end. As Michael Valdez Moses argues in his essay on Conrad, by tracing the modernist tropes back to their imperialist origins, we can also think of the ways *post*colonial literatures owe their development to reworking these modernist tropes.[102] In this sense, we can think of James and Welles as taking complimentary if alternate paths. In embracing modernist forms as the basis of their critique, they are also embracing a form of modernity as well, stripped of its racist foundations and transformed into a means of granting subjective agency to the entire globe. Just as with the opening of Welles's *Darkness*, in which the audience is trapped within a cage and asked to either be executed or be executioner, so too these works suggest that modernity cannot be escaped—it can only be submitted to or transformed. Thus the power of these works is not simply their anti-imperialist politics or their radical stylization—it is that they ask us to imagine the dialectics of transformation from within the very order they critique.

# 4 • The Strike and the Terror

## The Transnational Critique of the New Deal in the California Popular Front

The same year Dorothea Lange's iconic photograph *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, CA, 1936* first appeared in a special edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, another photograph—also of a farmworker—circulated in the California Communist Party newspaper, the *Western Worker.* It is an image of a striking worker lying on the ground in a pool of his own blood, his hat on the earth beside him, shot in the face by antiunion vigilantes during one of the greatest labor upheavals of the 1930s, the Corcoran cotton strike of 1933. The image was republished repeatedly in the Communist and labor press, as well as in the published collection of Paul Taylor's fieldwork in the San Joaquin Valley, gathered with Lange, *On the Ground in the 1930s.* If Lange's photograph is the dominant cultural icon of the Great Depression, appearing in major newspapers and magazines in the 1930s and since reissued in schoolbooks, museum displays, ready-made-art syllabi, postage stamps, government web pages on the New Deal, and other media for organizing a national narrative for a popular audience, then I would argue that the wounded, perhaps dying worker from the largely forgotten cotton strike forms an important countermemory of the 1930s. Mexican American, male, wounded, part of a militant strike led by the Communist Party and involving mostly workers of Mexican and Filipino descent, this representation of labor violates nearly all the precepts that made the Lange image central to the ideological work of representing the Depression around notions of whiteness, paternalism, national identity, gender, and the deserving poor.

Various commentators and critics have offered explanations for the *Migrant Mother*'s iconic status, pointing out the importance of racialized representations of poverty, her link to the *Grapes of Wrath* narrative, the religious metaphors employed by the photo's framing, the appeal to middle-class and sentimental ideals of the family, and the photo's participation in a New Deal program that fused cultural production with a federal relief program. Together, I would argue these various critiques of the photograph create a composite of public memory around the Great Depression. The photo is both a symbol of the Depression and a metonym for a collective narrative of the era, defined as a crisis in which workers temporarily suffered hardship as individuals and families, ameliorated by a new relationship to a benevolent state that has the popular legitimacy to interpellate and represent them. The appeals to the racially defined nuclear family though the theme of the lost father are further suggestive of a socially conservative, patriarchal, and racially bounded narrative of the U.S. working class. In this sense, the Lange photo and the narrative it helps to produce also create a uniquely *national* image of labor and poverty, in which the absent father and the paternalistic state form structural homologies.

As the image of the wounded striker would suggest, the Lange photo existed within a much larger imaginary field of labor representation in the 1930s. Competing with the popularized imagery of the Farm Security Administration that had access to large-run newspapers and magazines, socialist and labor organizations in California developed a visual and rhetorical language to narrate their struggle within self-published Communist and labor newspapers. Contrary to what I will argue was the sentimental nationalism of the FSA, socialist and labor advocacy organizations developed a global and deterritorialized lexicon of violence that was at once rooted in the specific historical struggles in California and also formed important discursive links with transnational struggles against racial violence and colonialism. Creating a visual and rhetorical language of "terror," left groups in California displayed images of wounded, dying, and lynched bodies, often on the front pages of newspapers and newsletters, and combined the images with sensational stories of strikes, anticolonial uprisings, and antifascist resistance. This at once formed a counterdiscourse to the conservative sentimental-nationalism of the New Deal, and reimagined labor in the United States as inherently transnational, part of immigrant flows and colonial dislocations. This double dislocation of the national subject was a key and often misunderstood feature of the Popular Front era, and yet also had an urgent specificity to the situation in California.

As part of what Michael Denning refers to as the "long Popular Front," California's left social movements were somewhat unique.[1] As the site of the one of the most militant and multiethnic labor movements of the 1930s—the longshoreman's union in San Francisco and the growing militancy within incipient farmworker unions in the Salinas and Central Valleys—California

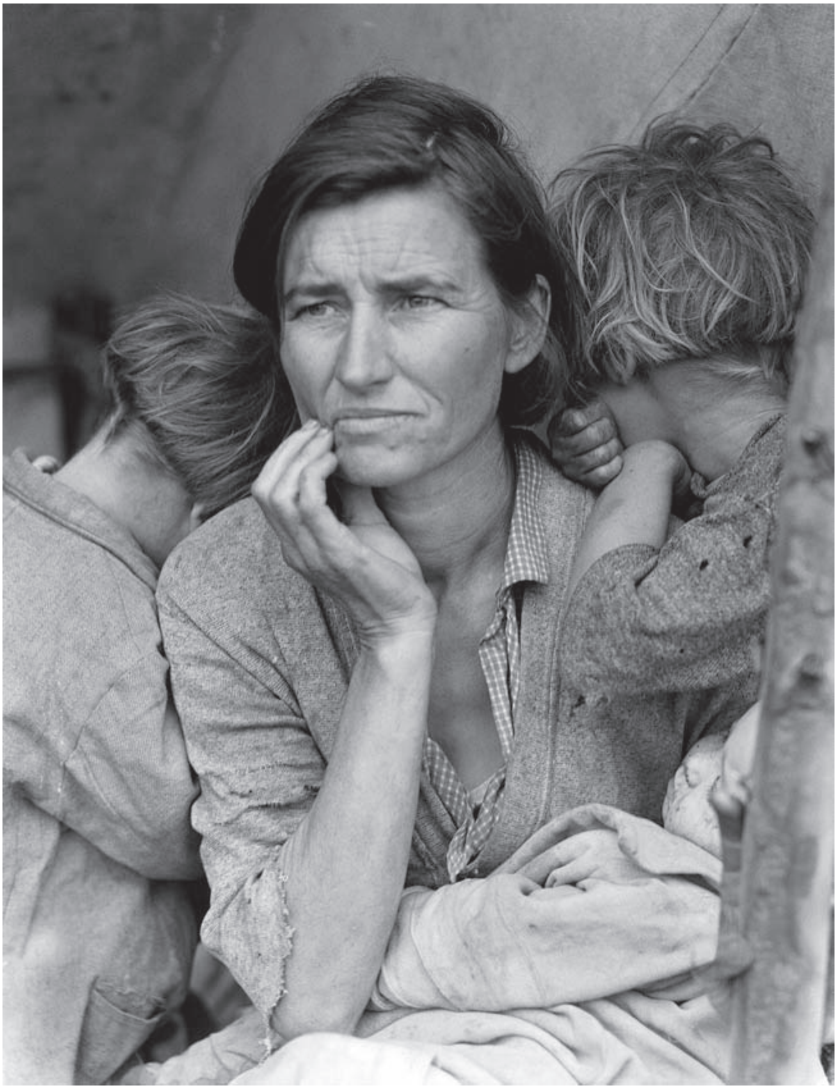


Fig. 9. "Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California," Photograph by Dorothea Lange (1936). (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, FSA/OWWI Collection.)

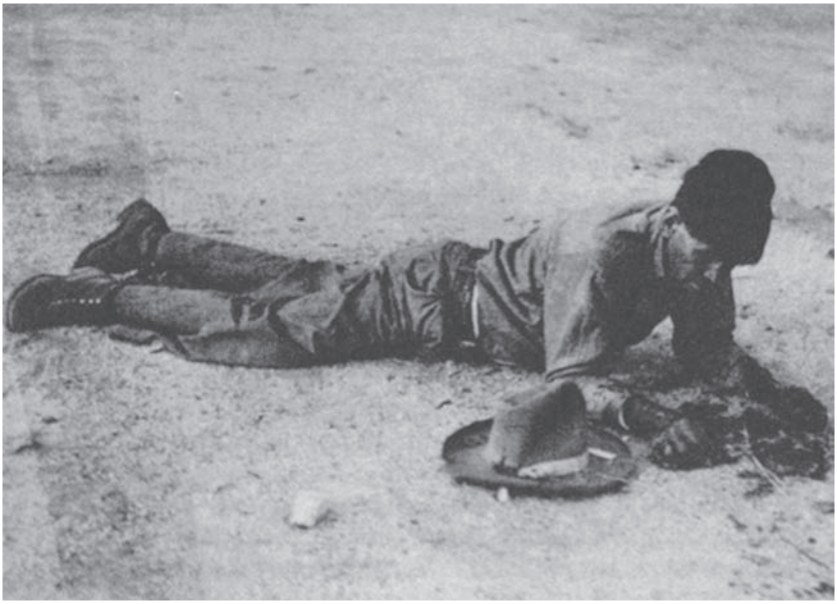


Fig. 10. “Worker shot in the face after Pixley Massacre.” (*Western Worker,* October 23, 1933. Photograph courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

was also the site of one of the more repressive racial and antiunion regimes in the nation. For the California Left, the violence of the vigilante movement and the “red squads” of Los Angeles, the mass deportations of Mexican Americans, and the conditions of poverty in the Central Valley could not be fully explained or contained within the discourse of U.S. liberal democracy or the New Deal. To activists within the same circles, like civil rights lawyer and historian Carey McWilliams, California was “that state of the union which has advanced furthest toward an integrated fascist set-up,” something echoed by other left intellectuals at the time, including Mike Gold’s casual reference to “lynch towns” in the Central Valley and “Nazi Germany” east of Los Angeles.[2] It must be remembered that “fascism” to groups such as the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL), the Communist Party, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and the American League Against War and Fascism (ALAWF) included Nazis and Blackshirts, but also U.S.-backed dictators in Cuba and Brazil, agribusiness owners in the San Joaquin Valley, and antilabor laws that all but outlawed union meetings in California’s farm labor camps. This suggests that fascism was a flexible term that expanded to include U.S. racism in the South along with European dictators and an entire field of capitalist social relations, including racism, antilabor violence, and global imperialism.

California itself was read as an imperial space, as something both foreign and domestic, as Amy Kaplan articulates in *Anarchy of Empire*, a space that is cannot be incorporated within a U.S. narrative or read outside of it.[3] As Denise da Silva describes the site of the colony as a place of "total violence," the focus on violence as a way to narrate an anticolonial aesthetic is not random, as it gave a common term to connect what would otherwise seem like disparate events.[4] Thus violence became a way not only to draw attention to the abuse of civil liberties in California, but to mark it as outside democratic space altogether—linking power in the state with fascism and colonialism.

The concept of "terror" became the primary visual and rhetorical method for representing labor in California. Far from being a new term within the U.S. political lexicon, "terror" springs from the seemingly unlikely source of internationalist anti-imperialist movements during the 1930s and 1940s. In one of the more radical transformations (or one could say co-optations) of terminology, the idea of "terror" as opposed to grassroots "democracy" has a history that traces at least one thread, not back to Enlightenment thinkers or Pentagon planners, but to socialist and labor newspapers in circulation in the United States. Contrary to today's meaning, nearly every use of "terror" in the 1930s and 1940s implied state or state-sponsored violence against civilians, often by reactionary forces.[5] The word came into mainstream usage in the United States use after the German "terror bombing" of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, and the term nearly always carried with it the valences of the unique and particular violence of fascism. Leon Trotsky published a number of short essays prior to the Bolshevik Revolution arguing that the revolutionary value of "terror" is limited, as individuals and even organized civil groups lack the "bureaucratic hierarchy" necessary for terror campaigns to be effective.[6] Terror, by this definition, is a program for states, carried out against workers. As one historian writes, "terror bombing . . . by the late 1930s" was associated in the minds of Americans "with images of . . . the Italians in Ethiopia . . . Germans against Spanish Republican strongholds, and the Japanese against Chinese cities . . . bombing from the air was viewed as terrorism against civilians, carried out by fascist dictators."[7] Perhaps two of the best-known artistic images of fascism from the 1930s, Pablo Picasso's painting of the firebombing in *Guernica* and Ben Shahn's hooded prisoner in *This Is Nazi Brutality*, were also images of terror, the spectacular, sensational, and gratuitous violence that intentionally violates conventions of political discourse and armed conflict.[8]

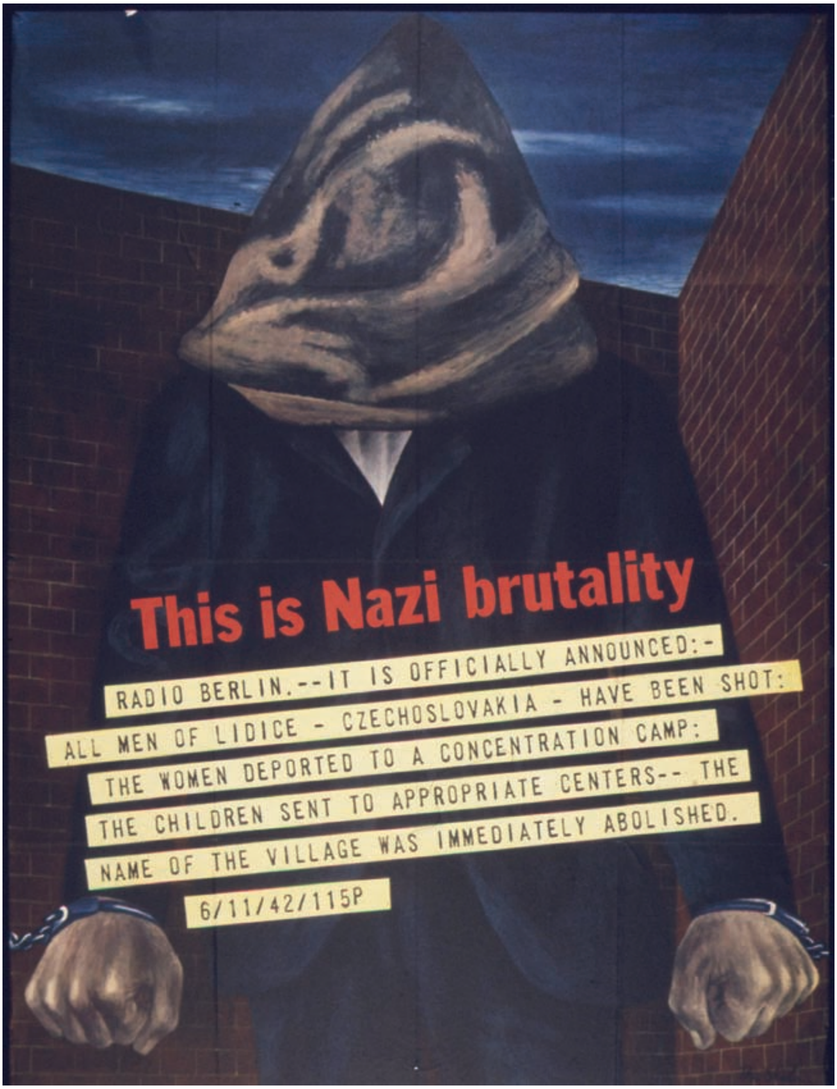

This is Nazi brutality
RADIO BERLIN.--IT IS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED:-
ALL MEN OF LIDICE - CZECHOSLOVAKIA - HAVE BEEN SHOT:
THE WOMEN DEPORTED TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP:
THE CHILDREN SENT TO APPROPRIATE CENTERS-- THE
NAME OF THE VILLAGE WAS IMMEDIATELY ABOLISHED.
6/11/42/115P

Fig. 11. “This Is Nazi Brutality,” illustration by Ben Shahn, Office of War Information, 1942. (Image courtesy of the Northwestern University Library Digital Collection.)

Before entering U.S. popular lexicon, the word "terror" appears in the United States much earlier, often in the context of violence by vigilantes against striking workers, and lynch mobs both in California and in the South. Due to the violence directed at the California labor movement, California socialist and labor journals used the term more than anywhere else. California-based antifascist publications like *Hollywood Now*, the Communist *Western Worker* and *People's Daily World*, the Spanish-language *Lucha Obrera*, and union newsletters like *UCAPAWA News* and *The Agricultural Worker* frequently combined coverage of international events with coverage of local issues in such a way as to suggest connections between events. For the 1930s Left, internationalism consisted of more than a concern with the rise of fascism in Europe; it assumed a global perspective on labor, race, and imperialism that saw a common arena of struggle between working and subaltern classes in both the first world and third. To draw out these links, left journalists developed a global and deterritorialized lexicon for violence outside of legal, statutory, or citizenship rights through the visual and rhetorical culture of "terror." Images of wounded, dying, and lynched bodies were often displayed on the front pages of newspapers and newsletters, and were combined with stories of strikes, anticolonial uprisings, and antifascist resistance. Given the need of activists and intellectuals to connect what seemed like disparate sites of violence, from Ethiopia to California's San Joaquin Valley, certain forms of violence became key expressions of global imperialism. These images not only critiqued the violence of fascism and imperialism, but also constructed a counterdiscourse to the national-popular images of California and the West produced by photographers, painters, and writers like Dorothea Lange, John Steinbeck, Jack Delano, and Ben Shahn, who often framed their critiques of poverty within sentimental discourse of benevolent paternalism and social welfare.

As Michael Denning writes, Steinbeck's novel and John Ford's film *The Grapes of Wrath* became the dominant narrative of the Depression, as well as the most lasting cultural memory of struggle and dispossession.[9] While Denning clearly notes that *The Grapes of Wrath* story was not representative of the Popular Front as a whole, the narrative "achieved the greatest success in the state apparatus and the culture industry" as it "reinforced . . . sentimental and conservative . . . interpretations of New Deal populism."[10] The *Grapes* narrative lay within an entire field of cultural field of production, including the Farm Security Administration photographs by Dorothea Lange and Jack Delano and films like *The Plow That Broke the Plains* that offer a redemptive vision of U.S. democracy based on the morality of white, rural, patriarchal values around the family, as well as individualist ideas about the dignity of the passive poor, self-reliance, and uplift. While scholars like Denning, Barbara Foley, Robin D. G. Kelley, Bill Mullen, and James Smethurst draw attention to the diversity of grassroots political movements in the 1930s, little if anything has been said about the ways in which Popular Front journalism and visual culture formed a counterdiscourse to the *Grapes* narrative. I would like to suggest that within both English- and Spanish-language left and labor newspapers in California, a sensational and often visual rhetoric of "terror" constructed an anti-imperialist modernist language of violence and resistance that challenged national-popular notions of cross-class and global unity based on an erasure of difference. Rather than base a New Deal populism on a sentimental coalition of white middle and working classes within a national frame, by constructing both a language and a visual culture of transnational structures of violence as well as resistance, "terror" linked the colonies and imperial core to create multiethnic networks of solidarity outside of the limits of a racialized nationalism. Further, these newspapers, including farm-labor newspapers like *UCAPAWA News* and Spanish-language Communist Party newspapers like *Lucha Obrera*, also suggest greater connections between English-language, white ethnic, antifascist organizations and Spanish-language, Latino/a organizations in California than have been documented. Rather than a New Deal coalition consisting of unity between white workers and white middle classes as imagined by FSA photography, these newspapers imagined a cross-race, bilingual, and international unity based on working-class solidarity and anti-imperialist, antiracist activism.

To understand the meaning of "terror" in the antifascist lexicon, it's necessary to underscore its pervasiveness. West Coast English- and Spanish-language journals such as *Western Worker*, *People's Daily World*, *Lucha Obrera*, and *UCAPAWA News* headlines weekly and daily used the word "terror" to describe antilabor, racial, imperial, and vigilante violence. To give a sense of the usage—and sheer number of uses—of the term, it's worth listing a sample of the headlines: "Lynch Terror in Vacaville," "Terror against Workers," "Deportation Terror against Mexican and Filipino Workers," "Ola de Terror Anti-Obrerista," "El Terror en la America Latina," "Demonstration against War on August 1, Despite Police Terror," "Reign of Police Terror in Seattle," "Boss Terror to Crush Sugar Workers' Strike in Hawaii," "Lynch Terror in California," "SF Workers Defy Terror," "Two Shot as Salinas Lettuce Strike Grows; Terror Sweeps Entire State," "Mexican Workers Hunted Down as Authorities Launch New Terror," "Vigilante Rule through Fascist Terror," "Vigilantes . . . Burn Fiery Crosses in Terrorism," "Terrorism—Weapon against the Working Class," "Terror Grows in Imperial Valley," "Terror against Workers," "Vacaville Vigilantes Attempt to Rule Town through Fascist Terror," and of course, the first lines of Tillie Olsen's electrifying strike reportage of the 1934 general strike in San Francisco, "Do not ask me to write of the strike and the terror."[11] These uses of the word "terror" link the specificity of racialized violence against blacks, deportation of Mexican Americans, and the brutalization of workers by invoking a common term that underlines less their subjectivity than the nature of the violence directed against them by a racial, capitalist state. For a movement that represented a spatially, geographically, racially, and politically diverse body of workers, finding common terms to link their repression also constructs a set of shared interests and a common language of struggle.

This language not only joined workers of various racial and ethnic backgrounds under a common term, it was also deployed to connect forms of violence in a global context. On the front page of the California Communist Party's *Western Worker*, the imminent invasion of Ethiopia dominated the news in October 1937: San Francisco's International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) placed a "ban" on Italian cargo in protest, the Labor Council of LA passed resolutions condemning the invasion, and antiwar and anti-imperialist organizations planned protests from Seattle to Los Angeles.[12] The same newspaper that breathlessly carried this news also carried a longer analysis of the invasion's causes: the way "three-power imperialists" of England, Germany, and the United States would benefit from the further colonization of Africa, and how the "democracies" and "fascist powers" of Europe colluded on issues of empire.[13] The final page of the newspaper carries no news of Italy, but rather, a stark and haunting woodcut of a lynching, the agonized black body on display above a crowd of three jeering white vigilantes, flames filling the contours of the frame (fig. 17).[14] While the strike by a militant labor union to protest an imperialist invasion, the collusion of "democracies" with "fascist dictatorships" in an imperial project, and racist violence in the United States appear in the newspaper without editorial comment, their combination says much about the way in which U.S. and global struggles around questions of labor, race, and imperialism were imagined by a broad multiethnic Left in the California. Given the frequent connection between the "fascist gangs of the KKK and White Legion" and European fascist powers in the 1930s left press, the implication that the "three-power imperialists" were engaged in a global lynching of the last free African state would not be lost on contemporary readers.[15] As Penny Von Eschen writes in *Race against Empire*, for the 1930s civil rights community—and I would add for the antifascist one as well—news of an imperial invasion was considered the part of the same world-structure of power as a lynching in the Deep South.[16]

This structural view of racism that compares the legacy of slavery in the South with the racism of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia was carried over into the labor battles in California. The violence against workers by the Growers' Association in the Imperial Valley is cited alongside an article about the violence deployed by Italy to "civilize" Ethiopia (quotes in original).[17] In another edition of the *Western Worker*, a funeral cortege for a murdered striker in the Imperial Valley is placed alongside a funeral cortege for murdered independence activists in the Philippines.[18] The *Agricultural Worker* makes the comparison more explicit, citing the way that Filipino workers are exploited in the United States by the same "American finance capital . . . invested from coast to coast of the Filipine [*sic*] Islands. . . . enslaving the Filipino masses there."[19] And more generally, news coverage of the violence of the Growers' Association and American Legion against striking workers resembled news coverage of the United States putting down demonstrations in the Philippines, or the Batista regime's soldiers firing into crowds of strikers in Cuba. In addition, left newspapers were eager to connect the militarization of Pinkertons, the U.S. National Guard, and vigilante squads with repressive techniques and attitudes acquired by officers who saw service in the Philippines or Cuba; they also suggested that the militarization of CCC camps and state militias was part of a larger imperial-military project of expanding U.S. power. Beside an article reporting the mass arrest of strikers in Shafer, California, an article reports on a conference exploring cooperation between U.S. and Mexican unions: they have "common enemies," the piece argues, reminding us that both faced the conditions one experiences "in a colonial country."[20]

This is not to suggest that labor organizers, Communist Party members, and radical intellectuals were insensitive to local concerns. Many of the labor activists in the Central Valleys were veterans and/or descendants of veterans of the Mexican Revolution and Filipino resistance to U.S. imperialism. There was thus a literalness to the imperial metaphors used to describe antilabor and racist violence committed against union activists in the state. Many saw the great labor strikes against California growers as a continuation of earlier anti-imperialist wars by another means. And indeed, many of the land claims on which major industrial growers farmed were appropriated from land grants held by Mexican ranchers. As much as Penny von Eschen and Robin D. G. Kelley have both written about the powerful anti-imperialist movements within African American communities, and Josephine Fowler has written about anti-imperialism within the Chinese and Japanese American communities in California during the same time, California labor activists were a crucial component of the anti-imperialist imaginary of the 1930s and

1940s.[21] In coastal cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well, local labor and free speech campaigns, such as the General Strike in San Francisco or the Free Speech Movement in Los Angeles, their enemies were quite literally drawn from the ranks of imperial conquest: Randolph Hearst and the "red squad captain," L.A. Police Chief Hynes. Like the veterans of anticolonial wars and revolutions working the fields in the Central Valley, there was thus a literal sense that domestic struggles in California's major cities were framed against figures that embodied imperial aggression and forms of imperial masculinity. California was an "outpost of empire," as McWilliams framed it, based on "racial hatred" and undemocratic forms of power.[22]

This sensibility was also enhanced by large antiwar demonstrations held in California in the 1930s. Antiwar and anti-imperialist protests drew crowds in San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Fresno, and Portland in the thousands and tens of thousands.[23] The demonstrations represented organizations as diverse as the American League Against War and Fascism, the Methodist Church, the Socialist Party and Communist Party, relief and unemployed organizations, the All-Americas Anti-Imperialist League, the Chinese Anti-Imperialist League, and unions belonging both to the Communist-affiliated Trade Union Unity League as well as the conservative American Federal of Labor.[24] This anti-imperialist activism culminated in a wave of student strikes in the late 1930s, including UC Berkeley and UCLA, in which millions of students demanded, among other things, an end for U.S. support of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and U.S. intervention in Latin America. Carlos Bulosan, Carey McWilliams, Karl Yoneda, Ernesto Galarza, James Rorty, Dorothy Healey, and countless other key leaders in the California Popular Front saw themselves as part of a larger internationalist anti-imperialist and antifascist movement that also interpreted local conditions of vigilante violence, racism, militarism, and the consolidation of power in the hands of Western agribusiness as a legacy of U.S. imperial expansion.

Bound neither by sovereignty nor by national definition, left and labor newspapers used the language of terror to link their struggles abroad, creating out of the global archipelago of colonialism an imaginary of a new form of solidarity. The images produced a deterritorialized and decentered space of empire that focused on the violence done to bodies as a way to shape a movement otherwise segmented by labor stratification, spatial apartheid, and cultural and language barriers. The "Terror-Ridden Philippines" and the "brutal terrorization . . . of Philippine masses . . . by American imperialism" links the status of migrant field labor to the status of a colonial subject.[25] In the Spanish-language Communist Party newspaper *Lucha Obrera*, "Terror in Latin America" by the U.S.-backed regime in El Salvador is discussed alongside a "terror wave of deportations" in Arizona.[26] And likewise, in the *Daily Worker*, the headline "Sheriff Asks Troops in Akron Strike," detailing the way the military is used to "slaughter" workers on the picket line, is placed parallel to the headline "Marines Rushed to Puerto Rico to Back Up Terror," in which the "imperialist governor is held responsible for massacres."[27] The language of "terror" thereby forces analogies among fragmentary and often competing discourses of power within U.S. imperial control. It suggests that the deployment of violence in the imperial periphery is not separate from the treatment of minorities and workers in the United States, but part of a larger system of coercive state power. As a mode of representation, the discourse of "terror" punctures the sentimental nationalism of much of the WPA and FSA imagery, in which the worker was viewed either as a passive victim in need of a benevolent national government, or as a masculine—and compliant—member of a capitalist order based on the ideology of productivity, classlessness, and free labor. The images of wounded and dying workers shatters the middle-class gaze of sentiment and complacency, government benevolence, and the ordered rationality of the capitalist system.

## Migrant Mothers, Dying Men: Terror as a Counterdiscourse to New Deal Sentimental Nationalism

In the photo of the wounded, perhaps dying, worker from the Corcoran cotton strike, also known as the Pixley massacre, the worker does not address the camera and appears to be staring at the pool of his own blood gathering beneath him. The visual discourse of "terror" in the Popular Front was largely centered on the male body. Given that the dominant image of the New Deal was the productive, heroic working-class body, these broken and wounded bodies of men speak to an experience of capitalism that the state or the middle class cannot reclaim or recover. Their masculinity, or perhaps their broken masculinity, is designed to shock and disturb the viewer—because vulnerable male bodies are not traditionally thought to be objects of scrutiny in the same way vulnerable women's bodies are, these images demand by their irredeemability an answer to the question of which person or persons perpetrated the crimes. There is a way in which these images refuse the transparency and easy consumption of *Migrant Mother* by being far more than just bodies—they demand a larger historical and social context.

Critic Paula Rabinowitz argues in *Labor and Desire* that the laboring body of the Popular Front era was not only frequently imagined as masculine, but was also rendered in an exaggerated language of health and virile power.[28] As art historian Barbara Melosh notes, images of masculine, often towering workers projected symbols of strength, dignity, and power in an era in which men often faced the anxieties of worklessness in particularly gendered terms—male workers not only lost their place within a culture of productive value, but their masculinity was doubly threatened by a loss of female dependence.[29] While these images broke with 19th-century romantic depictions of the working class insofar as they presented workers as dignified and engaged in valuable (and value-producing) labor, the heroic, masculine worker of the WPA—without bosses, time clocks, or injury—also reinforced a vision that American labor was classless, all male, and artisanal.[30] While at least some of the more expressionistic visions of virile working-class bodies can be seen as revolutionary, especially when coupled with caricatures of a feminized bourgeoisie—lawyers who have "plump fingers" and intellectuals with "delicate" bodies[31]—many of the images of the FSA and WPA pointed to more liberal discourses of sentiment and inclusion: a restored male body was meant to reassure a patriarchal nation of its productive health.[32] And even these more radical visions of male bodies implicitly or explicitly rendered women in subordinate or invisible roles.

If the "hypermasculine male, with bulging biceps and accentuated buttocks" is a "staple of 1930s art," we can think Dorothea Lange's Farm Security Administration photograph *Migrant Mother* as its matrimonial partner.[33] Lange's photograph, as well as others from the federal project, are part of the official memory of the Great Depression, and are some of the most reproduced works of the decade, images that are often synonymous with the Depression itself. The FSA photographs produced by prominent Popular Front photographers like Dorothy Lange, Ben Shahn, and Arthur Rothstein were part of the federal program to promote government-backed loans to small farmers and resettlement facilities for farmers forced off their land.[34] Faced with hostility from the large growers in California, who feared the resettlement camps would provide labor organizers unrestricted access to farmworkers, as well as southern Democrats who were against any relief of any kind for the middle and lower classes, the FSA hired filmmaker Roy Stryker to direct a propaganda effort that would promote not only the FSA but many of the relief efforts undertaken by the federal government. While it was a government effort to support particular controversial programs, the images nonetheless circulated widely within newspapers and the emergent visual print culture of magazines like *Life* and *Time* that relied on documentary photography.

The images of the rural farmworkers selected by Stryker suggest patriarchal family values as well as conservative ideas about the dignity of the passive poor, self-reliance, and moral uplift. As critic Wendy Kozol notes in her essay "Madonnas of the Fields," many of the images focus on mothers who are framed as secular Madonnas who promote the values of virtue, charity, and humility.[35] The images rarely present farmers or farm laborers in collective settings or engaged in waged labor. Rather, the images largely present women either as isolated figures within rural landscapes or as the head of families with an absent or subdued father. The women are often engaged in the work of child care or positioned in feminine occupations recognizable to a middle-class audience such as mending or food preparation. And while it was common for women to work alongside men and children as sharecroppers and pickers, there were few if any close-ups of women working in agricultural fields. In addition, the portraits often present a deracinated vision of poverty, in which government programs, capitalization of farmland, and crop monoculture are nowhere in evidence. Rather than suggest that the Agricultural Adjustment Act and other federal agrarian programs actually hastened the intensive capitalization of farming in the United States, the images suggest a return to the yeoman ideal, facilitated by liberal relief policies designed to give temporary assistance to people who are self-reliant and deserving because they embody moral and civic virtue. The images not only reinforced the idea of the U.S. poor as rural, white, and associated with the yeoman tradition, but more importantly rekindled the myth of the yeoman farmer as the moral backbone of the nation.

Lange's *Migrant Mother* is the best known of these photographs, precisely because it encapsulates the values and myths the FSA championed. Simultaneously heroic and defeated, Lange's mother gazes out at an unknown horizon that both suggests the stability of a moral character—she dominates the frame solidly with two small children flanking her—as well as a dislocation we can assume is temporary. The children face away from the camera, offering us a portrait of devoted motherhood. As the portrait suggests both self-reliance as well as destitution, it is a study in many of the contradictions around discourses of poverty and the New Deal—constructed to reveal extreme poverty at the same time they are supposed to suggest uplift and self-determination. Even the woman's hand close to her mouth suggests a delicacy and refinement that contrasts with the dirt of her nails and clothes, a contrast that implies she is a bearer of presumed middle-class values that she may at one time, with help, return to. The function of the portrait, and I would argue its success, has much to do with the placement and function of the viewer above the mother, in the figurative role of the state. As the FSA photography project was designed to justify relief, the mother's position forces the viewer in a role of domination, as though she makes an appeal to the viewer for help. Likewise, the role of the state is further legitimated as necessary, to fulfill the role of the photo's missing father, restoring the family to the middle-class norm for which the image was created.

Like Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, the photo proposes a new collectivity based on the sentimental metaphor of the maternal family. Just as Rose of Sharon breastfeeds the starving migrant in a barn, so we are to understand the privatized family must break down and reconfigure new forms of mutuality. Yet, as with the pamphlet *Their Blood Is Strong*, the metaphor of the family also suggests a strong racial-national form of identification. In Steinbeck's pamphlet, the dust bowl migrants are "of the best American stock" and are differentiated from the "foreign peon labor," who may be pitied, but will not inherit the future of "white and American" farms that will eventually restore the nation.[36] In imaging a nationally redemptive motherhood, Lange's image of the *Migrant Mother* places the FSA project squarely within the sentimental protest tradition of Harriet Beecher Stowe's and Helen Hunt Jackson's "culture of maternity." As Tompkins argues in *Sentimental Power*, Stowe creates a moral society of mothers, who uphold civic virtue and the bonds of solidarity based on their power to feel. Roy Stryker, the director of the FSA photo project, articulated this language of feeling clearly when he stated, "You're not going to move anybody with this eroded soil—but the effect this eroded soil has on a kid who looks starved, this is going to move people."[37] While Stowe bases her moral vision on cross-race, and even cross-gender, formations of motherhood, Steinbeck and Lange based their appeals to feeling on images of working-class mothers within the bounds of a national-popular, racially bound project.

That both Lange and Steinbeck would articulate the language of sentimental belonging within California is interesting, especially considering that California was considered one of the primary sites of labor and racial violence in the 1930s. While to my knowledge, no single image of a lynched or otherwise violated body circulated in the same way the image of the *Migrant Mother* ran through popular picture magazines and federal agency publications, antilynching images and images of "terror" nonetheless circulated widely within Communist, antifascist, and labor journals. Images of lynched bodies were shown nationally in progressive journals, such as the NAACP's *Crisis*, which frequently ran an ad in support of the federal

Costigan-Wagner antilynching bill with a photo of a hanging black body, or in the International Labor Defense campaign to commute the death sentence of African American lumber worker Ted Jordon, accompanied by an image of a noose superimposed above his body.[38] Yet within California, the images of racial and antilabor violence traveled beyond antilynching campaigns, and were a regular staple of labor reportage. Two images—the image of a bleeding worker of Mexican descent shot during the Corcoran cotton strike of 1934 and the image of two workers shot by the police during the San Francisco general strike the same year—not only dominated coverage of the events, but were reproduced as images multiple times in the publications to represent labor struggle in California (see figs. 9 and 10 respectively).[39] If Lange's *Migrant Mother* is a body designed to evoke not only a nostalgia for a mythic yeoman past, but also a benevolent state imagined through tropes of motherhood, these wounded male workers produce a very different discourse.

With the wounded worker's body from the Pixley massacre positioned in the middle ground of the shot, we are denied the up-close intimacy of the *Migrant Mother* portrait, an intimacy that suggests she is part of a larger national, even human family. While the impact of the wounded farmworker is clearly designed to provoke emotion, the emotion it is designed to provoke is quite different from the Lange images. As Joseph Entin writes in *Sensational Modernism*, the "sentimentalism" of the Lange image not only eliminates her historical and social context, it provides an "integrative" experience, as the poor are feminized, to be "pitied" and thus redeemed by a New Deal state.[40] By contrast, the images of Walker Evans and Weegee disorient and "disintegrate," not allowing the scenes of poverty, spectacle, and violence to conform to middle-class standards, suggesting a "lack of transparency" inherent to the subject's existence and an inability to translate the experience back into a productive, capitalist order.[41] The victim of the Pixley massacre dominates the frame with nothing but arid earth underneath; there is no suggestion that he is assisted or cared for; his hat lies beside him undisturbed. In the other often-circulated image, the two striking workers shot dead in San Francisco likewise lie facedown, with no family members or loved ones in the frame. In contrast to the conventions of middle-class family portraiture to which *Migrant Mother* adheres, these are men cut off not only from community, but from any sentimental or productive social order. They disturb precisely because they do not suggest a solution or comfort the viewer with his or her ability to help, but rather point to a social and historical context in which their death has come to be seen as acceptable.

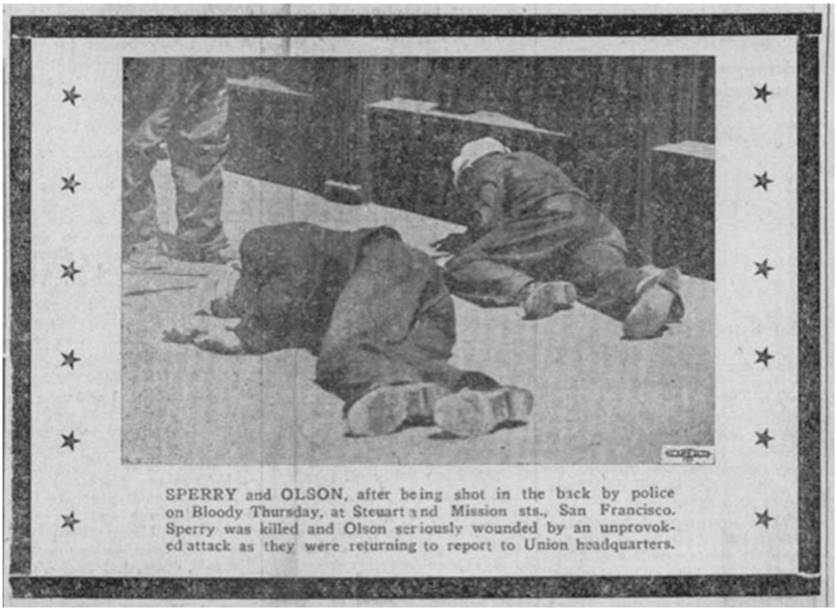
## Solidarities in Terror: Toward a Visual Critique of U.S. Empire

Further distinguishing themselves from the FSA images, these photos also help produce communities of worker-journalists. Both in methods of production and circulation, these movement newspapers actively sought to break down the binary between journalist and reader. Many of the articles and images were sent in by readers under the byline "worker correspondent." This was in part a pragmatic response to a lack of funds and the inherent difficulties of getting news during strikes in which workers would be wary of speaking to any newspaper, and the highway patrol would run checkpoints, arresting on sight anyone who seemed sympathetic. But it also suggests a paper constructed as a community project, defined less by "objective" standards of professional journalism than by membership within a given political collective.

Movement newspapers are by their nature hybrid genres, part newspaper and part party or union organ. While it may seem remarkable today, the Communist Party newspaper in California, the *Daily People's World* (formerly the *Western Worker*) was, as the title suggests, a daily paper with a circulation at its height in the tens of thousands. Yet its methods of circulation were quite different from other large-run newspapers. One of the typical activities for Party members would be to sell copies and subscriptions of the *People's Daily World/Western Worker* to other members, as well as on the street, and the sale of the newspaper was seen as itself contributing to the movement. Likewise, organizing campaigns in the Central Valleys brought copies of the *Western Worker*, *Lucha Obrera*, *Agricultural Worker*, and *People's Daily World* with them, and they were seen as crucial components of the educational function of unions and political parties.[42] As one writer reports, copies of the *Western Worker*, *Lucha Obrera*, *Agricultural Worker*, and *Daily Worker*, circulated in labor camps widely, though surreptitiously, along with journals like *Detective Stories*, *Screen Romances*, and *Mcfadden's*.[43]

In content as well as consumption, these images form a marked contrast to not only FSA photographs, but also to the structure of the "documentary aesthetic" that privileged a lone recorder of the "other" in ways that are often highly aestheticized.[44]

In function, the images act to bring attention to the violence committed to workers and colonial subjects, and they also act to form bridges of solidarity and reassurance to subjects facing the violence of fascism and colonialism. More importantly, the images then serve to construct a collectivity in which the victim of violence and the recorder of it are not distinct. Elaine Scarry writes about the way victims of torture seek gestures of solidarity and recog-

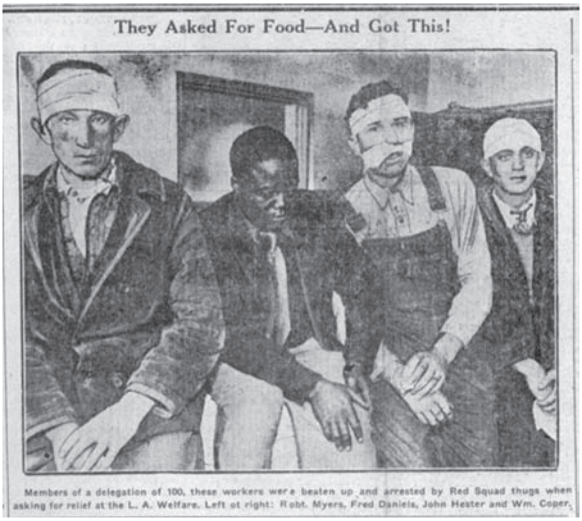


SPERRY and OLSON, after being shot in the back by police on Bloody Thursday, at Steuart and Mission sts., San Francisco. Sperry was killed and Olson seriously wounded by an unprovoked attack as they were returning to report to Union headquarters.

Fig. 12. "Sperry and Olson," front page photo. Like the image of the fallen Pixley striker, this image was reproduced multiple times. (*Western Worker,* July 4, 1935. Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

nition both within prison and once released.[45] Often risking jail for making such gestures, the supporters of the tortured declare their vulnerability at the same time they demand justice. This shared sense of vulnerability by the photographers and the victims prevents the distance implied by the documentarian, and also creates the image as a material part of the struggle.

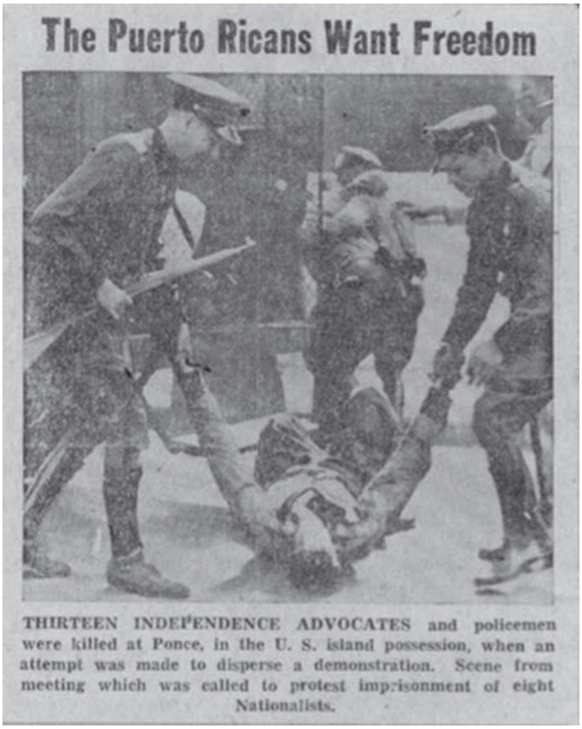
Often, the same image would run through multiple stories. During the 1933 Corcoran cotton strike, the same image of a Mexican-American worker shot in the face by vigilantes ran at least three times between 1933 and 1935, each time with a caption drawing attention to the blood pooling below him (see fig. 20).[46] Two consecutive issues show the same front page photo of two labor organizers just released from the hospital after beatings by police, displaying their bandages and bruised faces; and yet another gives us close-ups on the jaws of protesters broken by LA's notorious "red squad"; and yet another asks us to "note the bruises" on the "ribs and arms" of a relief worker beaten by deputies "and particularly the pin holes . . . made by detectives pushing pins on their badges into him"—all of which were front-page photos.[47]



They Asked For Food—And Got This!

Members of a delegation of 100, these workers were beaten up and arrested by Red Squad thugs when asking for relief at the L. A. Welfare. Left ot right: Robt. Myers, Fred Daniels, John Hester and Wm. Coper.

Fig. 13. “They Asked for Food—And Got This!” (*Western Worker,* January 30, 1933. Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

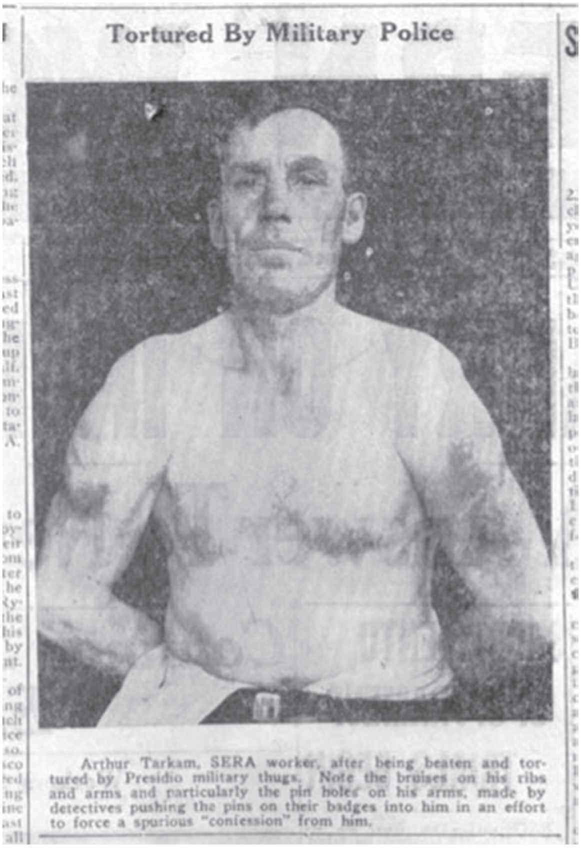


The Puerto Ricans Want Freedom

THIRTEEN INDEPENDENCE ADVOCATES and policemen were killed at Ponce, in the U. S. island possession, when an attempt was made to disperse a demonstration. Scene from meeting which was called to protest imprisonment of eight Nationalists.

Fig. 14. “The Puerto Ricans Want Freedom.” This photo accompanied a story about a strike in the U.S. on the same page. (*People’s Daily World,* April 12, 1937.)

Balthaser, Benjamin. *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture From the Great Depression to the Cold War.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7381040.



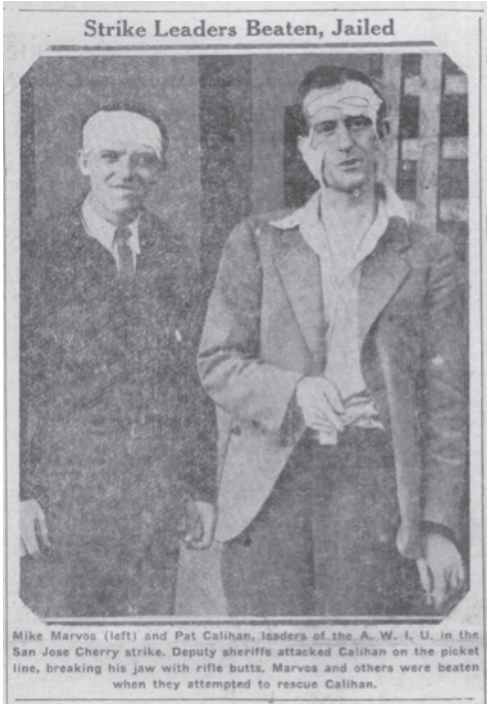
Tortured By Military Police

Arthur Tarkam, SERA worker, after being beaten and tortured by Presidio military thugs. Note the bruises on his ribs and arms and particularly the pin holes on his arms, made by detectives pushing the pins on their badges into him in an effort to force a spurious "confession" from him.

Fig. 15. "Tortured By Military Police." Front page photograph in the *Western Worker* (November 29, 1934). (Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

These images are often coupled—within the same journal and sometimes on the same page—with photos of dead waterfront workers in the San Francisco general strike, and the bodies of executed guerrillas in Ethiopia, Korea, and China, as well as the bodies of independence activists in Puerto Rico.[48] Given the ocular nature of racial and imperial discourse, the importance of images drawing connections among forms of violence cannot be overstated. To mark bodies in the imperial center as well as the periphery as vulnerable—and on display—draws a parallel between the violence against "visible" bodies of white workers and the power of the state to write violently on bodies on the colonial margins. To see the naked—and tortured—torso of a white relief worker beside the mutilated torso of a black guerrilla asks that we imagine empire as a language of what total violence written upon flesh.

From the bodies of dead children in anti-Franco posters, to the mangled



Strike Leaders Beaten, Jailed

Mike Marvos (left) and Pat Calihan, leaders of the A. W. I. U. in the San Jose Cherry strike. Deputy sheriffs attacked Calihan on the picket line, breaking his jaw with rifle butts. Marvos and others were beaten when they attempted to rescue Calihan.

Fig. 16. “Strike Leaders Beaten, Jailed,” front page photo. (*Western Worker,* July 2, 1933. Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

bodies of Guernica in Picasso’s painting, to the multiple presentations of wounded laboring bodies in the *Western Worker*, to the attention to “black bodies swaying” in Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit,” this discourse of violence acts as a way to “cognitively map” a fragmented empire within the spatial and ocular frame of a human body. Seeing for instance, the bodies of dead El Salvadorian communists hanging evoked lynch mobs in the South, in the same way images of lynch mobs in the South made the images of hanged guerillas in Ethiopia visible to a U.S. reader (see figs. 17 through 20). Given the need of activists and intellectuals to connect what seemed like disparate sites of violence, from Ethiopia to Schaferville, certain forms of violence became key expressions of global imperialism. Visual and immediate, they also allowed for the potential expression of solidarity and empathy among scattered and disparate groups. The violated body in this sense, became a kind of common denominator for what these groups and struggles shared.

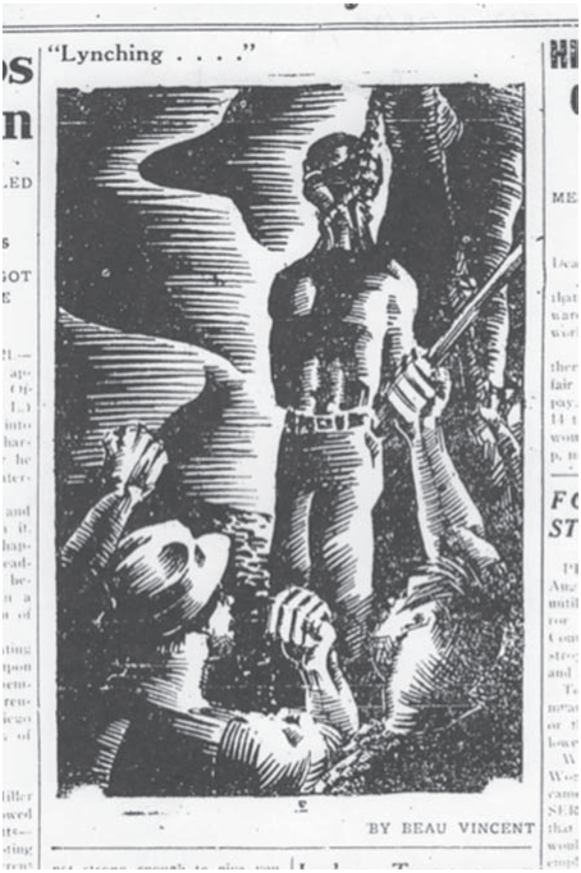
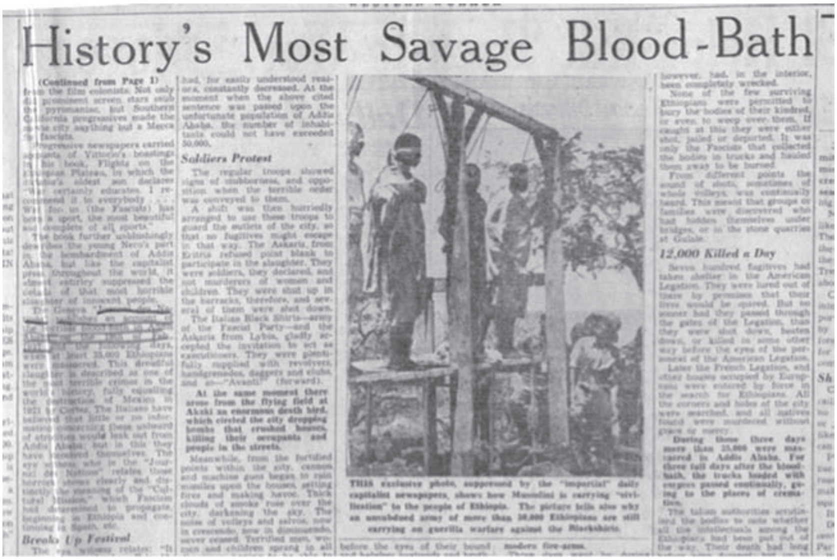


Fig. 17. "Lynching . . . ." (*Western Worker*, October 28, 1935. Woodcut illustration, courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

## The Twin Circulations of Violence: Disrupting the Pathological Public Sphere

As many of the headlines and images suggest, the lynching of African-Americans and the violent suppression of the often non-white labor in California were thought of as part of the same racialized structure of power.[49] California was frequently compared to the South in terms of the level of violence directed at minorities and labor organizers, with Mike Gold referring to "lynch towns" east of Los Angeles and the Communist Party frequently associating anti-labor violence with the Klan, as in a dramatic cartoon of muscular workers knocking out a Klansman with their fists.[50] As an editorial in *Lucha Obrera* argues, "lynching happens not only



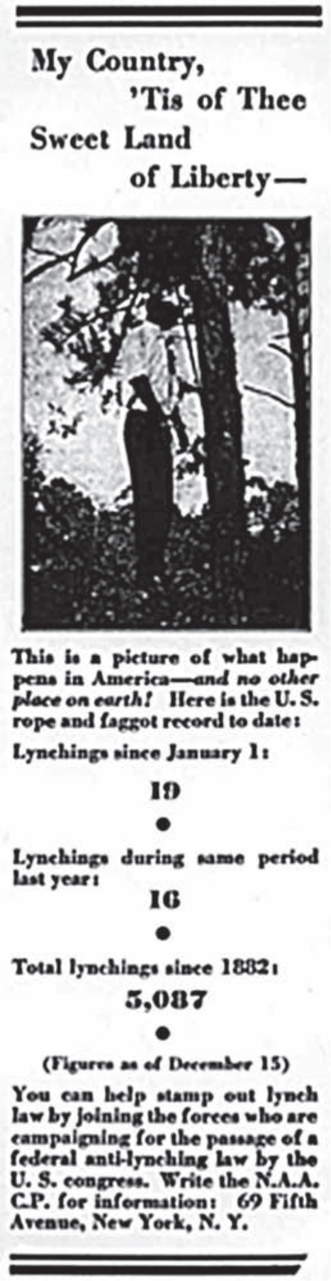
History's Most Savage Blood-Bath

THIS exclusive photo, suppressed by the "impartial" daily capitalist newspapers, shows how Mussolini is carrying "civilization" to the people of Ethiopia. The picture tells also why an unsubdued army of more than 30,000 Ethiopians are still carrying on guerilla warfare against the Blackshirts.

Fig. 18. "History's Most Savage Blood-Bath." Ethiopian partisans about to be executed by Italian colonial police. Notice the inversion of the word *savage*. (*Western Worker,* October 11, 1937. Image courtesy of Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.)

in Southern US where the tradition is unleashed against the working masses of black peasants, but also in California. . . ."—thus posing the practice of lynching as less a regional phenomenon than something that occurs in the West as well.[51] Of course, although "lynching" as a discrete practice, that is, hanging by a rope, rarely occurred in California after the turn of the century, the practice of organized violence for ideological, racial, and political ends continued and the term likewise continued to signify contemporary forms of violence. The meaning of "fiery crosses burning on hilltops" described by Carey McWilliams in *Factories in the Fields* and its Southern associations were intentional, both on the part of the perpetrators and in McWilliams' reporting of them.[52]

Racial violence and its representation in California circulated in ways that were remarkably similar to the ways images of lynching circulated in the South. As Jacqueline Goldsby notes in *Spectacular Secret*, the lynching of African-Americans is both "spectacular" and "secretive," relying on formal sources of institutionalized power to strike fear and trauma into the community of its victims, as well as informal networks of circulation to ensure both the deniability of its actors as well as the claims to justice of its victims.[53] The



My Country,
'Tis of Thee
Sweet Land
of Liberty—

This is a picture of what happens in America—*and no other place on earth!* Here is the U. S. rope and faggot record to date:

Lynchings since January 1:

19

●

Lynchings during same period last year:

16

●

Total lynchings since 1882:

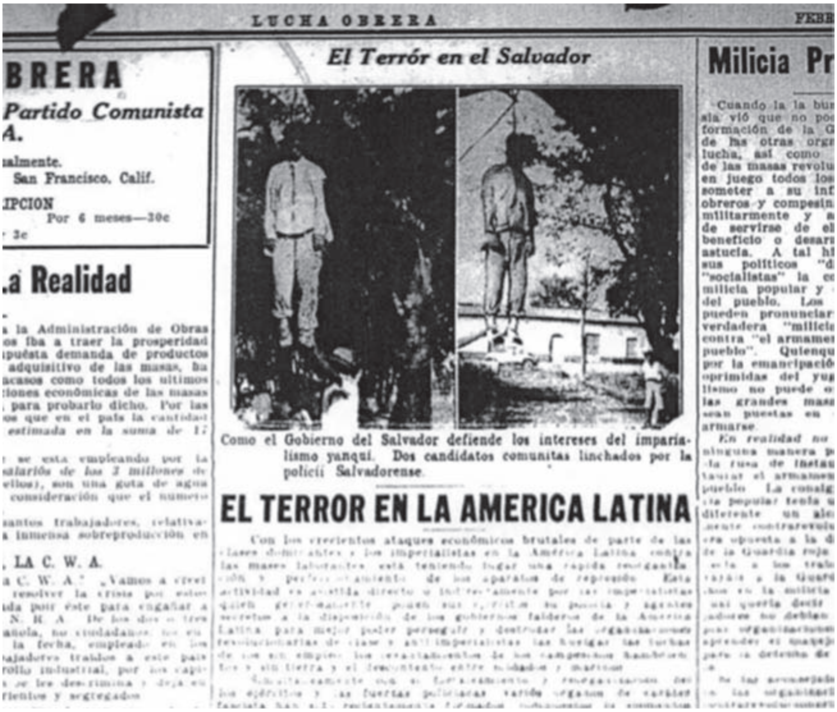
5,087

●

(Figures as of December 15)

You can help stamp out lynch law by joining the forces who are campaigning for the passage of a federal anti-lynching law by the U. S. congress. Write the N.A.A.C.P. for information: 69 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Fig. 19. Advertisement for Anti-Lynching Campaign, in *The Crisis* (January 1936).



LUCHA OBRERA

El Terrór en el Salvador

Como el Gobierno del Salvador defiende los intereses del imparialismo yanqui. Dos candidatos comunitas linchados por la policii Salvadorense.

EL TERROR EN LA AMERICA LATINA

Fig. 20. “El Terrór en el Salvador,” *Lucha Obrera* (February 1934).

“normalized invisibility” of lynching in which lynching practices and photographs circulated widely within broad but circumscribed communities, allowed for lynching to both be pervasive as well as absent in public life.[54] In the San Joaquin Valley, editorials advocating concentration camps and firing squads circulated widely, yet did not make it the newspapers in the urban centers.[55] On a purely practical level, this doubling discourse of public spectacle and public silence allowed vigilante squads employed by the California Growers’ Association to operate freely and openly without risk of censure. As Carey McWilliams notes, the urban middle class could both be aware “fiery crosses burning on hilltops” in the San Joaquin Valley and simultaneously ignore them as aberrations of the “heat counties.”[56]

The Communist Party and left unions’ decision to publicize the images was precisely designed to disrupt the normalized way in which such images circulated. Coinciding with the NAACP’s decision to publicize—rather than suppress lynching photographs—this practice forces the images of violence to appear where they are not expected.[57] As Leigh Raiford argues, antilynching activists in the teens up through the 1930s made the conscious decision to release once-suppressed images of lynching to the public as part of the decades-long struggle to enact a federal anti-lynching ban.[58] Demands that images of violence appear on the front page of large-circulation newspapers in urban areas were intended to have to opposite effect of their circulation in more informal networks, drawing attention to the public's denial of their existence. The images of terror appearing unexpectedly emphasize two planes of knowledge, one the "official" discourse of the rational and universalist state and another a semipublic sphere in which acts of racial violence circulate. This double discourse of violence relies on two separate planes of knowledge and visibility, one for the citizen-subject in which criminality is officially impersonal, and another in which bodies are marked for discipline outside of the public eye. In this sense, the photographs circulated by anti-lynching and labor activists served not only to interrupt the orderly circulation of knowledge as it supports a practice of violence, but also to draw attention to the way the penal system's invisibility is structured on a hypervisibility that could not be acknowledged. Calls for violence regularly circulated in local newspapers of towns such as Corcoran and Delano yet often, without agitation, did not manage to make it into national and urban newspapers like the *San Francisco Chronicle* or the *New York Times.* The very fact that Paul Taylor and Carey McWilliams would often do little more than republish statements and editorials from local papers in their works suggests that the publication of this information for a national audience implicitly violated dominant circuits of communication.[59]

Much like lynching photos that circulated both in private and in public spheres, these images were viewed in what I suggest was a twin circulation, both in Communist Party and labor newspapers and in the publications of well-known authors and artists like Paul Taylor and Walker Evans. The NAACP, as well as writers like McWilliams and Taylor, used editorials and statements from local officials in their publications to create an alternative sphere of meaning, publicizing statements meant only for the agricultural communities in which they were written. And while Goldsby writes of the "pathological public sphere" constructed by the circulation of "private" lynching photographs in semipublic venues, images of terror taken by labor activists relied on multiple forms of circulation precisely because the public sphere did not grant sufficient space for this form of critique.[60] Indeed, a 1933 book *The Crime of Cuba* by well-known journalist Carleton Beals featured photographs by California photographer Walter Evans, in which Evans included two images by anonymous Cuban activists of murdered labor organizers (see figs. 21 and 22). Evans and Beals, with access to a public sphere and

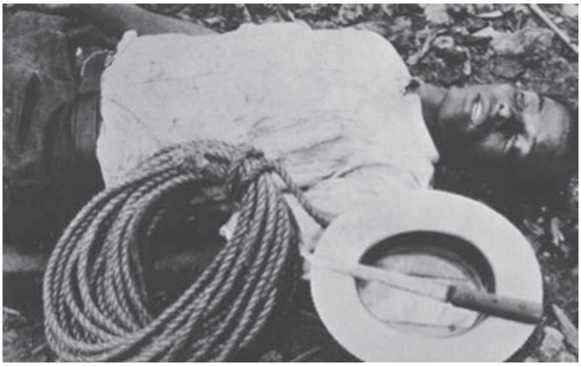


Fig. 21. "Document of the Terror" by an anonymous photographer, from Walker Evans and Carleton Beals's *The Crime of Cuba*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1933, plate 26. Courtesy of the Walker Evans Archive, Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

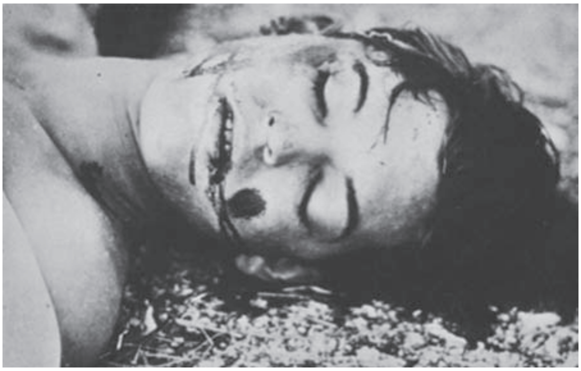


Fig. 22. "Gonzalez Rubiera," by an anonymous photographer, from Walker Evans and Carleton Beals's *The Crime of Cuba* (1933). (Courtesy of the Walker Evans Archive, Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

audience that the anonymous activists—like their U.S. counterparts—lacked, relied on the publication of the book to release the images. Also, Paul Taylor's *On the Ground in the 1930s* includes an image that circulated at least three times in the *Western Worker* before being used by Taylor, of a wounded, and possibly dying, striker in the Pixley massacre (see fig. 20). This combination of marginal and mainstream modes of communication is a common feature of Popular Front culture, and it also suggests that these images—unlike the production of the *Grapes* narrative—circulated from mass movements to the center.

Critic Elaine Scarry also writes of the way torture's power resides precisely the construction of a semipublic sphere based on unacknowledged structures of "pathological" feeling. On the one hand, torture is a spectacle, and she cites the way in which torture facilities in South Vietnam, Pinochet's Chile, and the U.S.-occupied Philippines were referred to in "torturer's idiom" as the "cinema room," the "blue lit stage," or the "production room."[61] While Scarry uses the facilities' names to highlight the "dramatic structure" of torture, these names also suggest the way in which images and rhetorics of torture circulate as spectacle. As Paul Taylor cites, during the 1933 Pixley cotton strike in California, editorials from small-town papers like the *Corcoran News* threatened "concentration camps," forced medical procedures including delousing and vaccinations, and deportation; other newspapers threatened "dead Mexicans in the streets" if the strike continued.[62] While the *L.A. Times* editorialized shortly after the Pixley strike that due to the havoc of the cotton strike, "the time for the scotching" of the "Communistic menace . . . among the olive pickers" was "now," such specific threats as murder or concentration camps were absent.[63] Thus the power of both the rhetorical violence of such editorials and the real violence they inspire in armed vigilante organizations is precisely dependent upon the power to control the circulation of violence and to speak for those to whom it is directed. And like McWilliams's "fiery crosses on hilltops," they are meant to be both seen by one constituency (the farmworker) and ignored by another (the urban liberal). The mastery of these separate planes of knowledge within the same public sphere is necessary to "convert the prisoner's pain into the torturer's power."[64]

As Goldsby notes, images of lynching "helped shape the experience and meaning of American 'seeing' at the start of the twentieth century," with images and films of sensational racialized violence used to narrate such early motion pictures as *Birth of a Nation* and *Avenging a Crime; Or Burned at the Stake.*[65] In many ways, one could say these images participate in this culture as a means of constructing a language of critique. Yet rather than naturalize violence as legitimate or unavoidable, these images create a language of critique by their presence in unexpected contexts and without such legitimation. They often draw attention to the vulnerability and pain of the body, and they appear within a public sphere that does not officially acknowledge them. As scholar Denise da Silva points out, imperialism is a global language of "total violence" on bodies of color that renames itself as governments and regimes of knowledge shift.[66] Thus terror became a portable and reproducible visual shorthand to refer to the intrinsic nature of imperial domination, and to construct a moral cultural outrage over its more desperate acts. While fascism, antilabor violence, imperialism, anticommunism, and counterinsurgency may seem spatially, politically, and discursively separate, the very sameness of terror's discourse renders them part of the same system.

## "Ola de Terror Anti-Obrerista": The Communist Spanish-Language Press in California and the Popular Front

Given the racially charged context of labor relations in California, it's not surprising that the journal in California most dedicated to making the spectacle of terror public is the Spanish-language Communist Party paper *Lucha Obrera*. During the two years of *Lucha Obrera*'s run, it offered weekly updates about deportations, national organizations opposing deportations and violations of the rights of the foreign born, correspondence to and from Mexico between members who had been or were facing deportation, regular news about labor in Mexico and Central America, frequent analysis and reports about U.S. imperial involvement in Latin America, and, translated into Spanish, key headlines from English-language Communist dailies. Repeatedly, the news journal suggested connections among immigration raids and vigilante violence, deportations and lynching, U.S. imperialism, and European fascism. An October 1934 article entitled "Ola de Terror Anti-Obrerista" explains that the "anti-worker terror" included the use of "immigration officers to intimidate Mexican workers."[67] Several months earlier, the paper ran an editorial exhorting readers to protest against mass deportations to Mexico, framing the injustice in the language of antifascist civil liberties, protesting the "breaking down of doors," the use of "stool pigeons," and the frequent questioning of political beliefs and the deportation of anyone—citizen or not—who belonged to the Communist Party and was of Mexican descent.[68] In framing the immigration raids as violations of racial, political, and First Amendment rights, the article suggests that we consider immigration officers as comparable to the Guardia Civil, Gestapo, and other secret police agencies. The paper particularly called on Mexican American activists to join with prominent antifascist organizations like the Committee for the Protection of Foreign Workers and the International Labor Defense, and also sought to tie the growing concern about fascist governments in South America to their use of border patrol agents and national ID cards.[69] Together, such articles suggested a *hemispheric* concept of "fascism" that was concerned as much with governments in Italy and Germany, as with racist policies in the United States and anticommunist governments in Latin America. "Fascism" becomes a way to link violence against workers of Mexican descent in the United States and U.S. imperialism in the global South.

In addition to creating a transnational voice for workers of Mexican descent, *Lucha Obrera* also created an internationalist representation of lynching and racial violence. In an article titled "El Terror en La America Latina," the author describes how U.S.-backed regimes have also created popular fascist parties, the Milicia National in Chile and the Gold Shirts in Mexico, which do the bidding of U.S. multinational corporations.[70] While the connection of fascism and imperialism bears mention, the article is accompanied by two lynching photographs of executed communists in El Salvador (fig. 18). As the article connects fascism with the reach of the United States in the Latin South, so also the article visually connects the public spectacle of lynching to the U.S.-backed fascist regimes. In connecting the practice of lynching with the political practice of fascism and imperialism, the article forces the reader to consider implicit historical connections between slave practices in the South and the construction of U.S. imperialism abroad. As mentioned earlier, an editorial in *Lucha Obrera* argues that "lynching happens not only in Southern US . . . but also in California," challenging not only the presumption that lynching is a uniquely southern practice, but also the idea that it is merely a question of civil liberties and law enforcement.[71] As Ken Gonzales-Day argues, the function of public lynching in California was not merely "law and order." He points to the way the spectacle of lynching existed side by side with a modern, bureaucratic form of law in which the functions of the state occur away from public view.[72] The function was less a form of criminal punishment or an official aspect of the penal code than the "legal and social privilege" of Anglo-Americans over residents of Mexican and Indian descent.[73]

Thus the language of "terror" not only creates an international visual and rhetorical lexicon to connect the disparate practices of racial and imperial violence, but such representations also crucially interrogate assumptions about the artificial boundaries separating deportation, lynching, antilabor violence, and the violence of imperial domination. *Lucha Obrera*, rather than forcing a Mexican American readership to conform to mainstream antifascism, implicitly challenges the antifascist movement to see issues central to the Mexican American community as central to their concerns. In a cartoon in *Lucha Obrera* above an editorial titled "Que es Fascismo?" a multiracial crowd of workers with clubs emblazoned with the names of Communist organizations rally together, promising they will fight back.[74] While images of multiracial marches were common in Communist and other left newspapers, it was not uncommon for the white worker to dominate the frame, as in a 1933 cartoon in which a white farmworker in a cowboy hat is flanked by a Mexican American and African American farmworkers during a Kings County cotton strike.[75] In an image of worker solidarity that ran in *Lucha Obrera*, the faces of the workers have been darkened slightly by the artist, suggesting a movement that is both multiracial at the same time it is exclusively for workers of color. This image creates both a universal language of antifascism and one based on the celebration of a racialized subjectivity.

Yet in doing so, *Lucha Obrera* also encouraged the Mexican American community to see commonalities among struggles in the United States and struggles in Mexico. The paper featured letters by deported workers about conditions in Mexico that connect struggles on both sides of the border for greater government assistance. In a letter quoted beside an article about the transnational maritime strike in 1934, the writer wishes to make clear that Mexican workers are in solidarity with their northern comrades.[76] Likewise, *Lucha Obrera* continually highlighted cross-border labor solidarity against deportations, reporting on joint Trade Union Unity League–Confederación Sindical Unitaria de México (TUUL-CSUM) actions in Washington, D.C., and simultaneous support rallies both in the United States and in Mexico.[77] While *Lucha Obrera* is singular in the attention it gives to transnational acts of violence and cross-border acts of solidarity, it is not fundamentally different from other left publications in California at the time that were making similar connections. Many of the leading activists in the Mexican American community such as Emma Tenayuca and the editor of *Lucha Obrera*, Pete Garcia, saw themselves as part of a larger antifascist movement, at the same time they also understood themselves as organic leaders of their own communities. Tenayuca, the leader of one of the largest strikes in Texan history, was also active in the League Against War and Fascism, the largest antifascist group in the United States, and Chris Mensalvas was president of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA), one of the more integrated unions on the West Coast. And while less biographical information is known about Garcia, he frequently appeared as a speaker at labor rallies up and down California. Despite its short life, *Lucha Obrera* stands as an important document of the multiethnic and transnational movements that existed in California before the Cold War.

## Conclusion

Through the West Coast Communist, antifascist, and labor newspapers, one can see that the terms “antifascist” and “farm labor” came to be laden with an anti-imperial valences not understood in other times of U.S. history. In part, this has to do with the way anti-imperialism has been marginalized within historical and popular accounts of antifascism, as well as for individual groups like the American League Against War and Fascism, and its supporters in the CIO and communist and socialist parties. And, as the images of terror suggest, there is a specificity to fascism in California that goes beyond even the concern for civil liberties one sees in the LaFollette Committee or the ACLU. By connecting racial practices of the United States in the fields of the San Joaquin Valley to the Philippines, it exposes the myth of the United States as an "accidental empire" at the same time it suggests that internal expansion and racialization within the bounds of the nation are part of the same colonial process. Likewise, one can see the ways that these news journals circulated competing discourses within the field of Popular Front, challenging much of the often conservative New Deal imagery that dominates the cultural memory of the Depression. More than simply offer critique, labor newspapers like *UCAPAWA News* and socialist newspapers like *Lucha Obrera* created cross-race and cross-language antifascist alliances within the California Popular Front, making the need as well as the institutional basis for such imagery a reality. Not only can these journals suggest an alternate map to read social movements within the Depression, they also suggest that the construction of the Popular Front as a national-popular movement was contested at the time. This forces us to consider the way in which even progressive scholarship has remembered a twenty-year social movement, as well as some of the major tropes by which the movement is remembered. As Amy Kaplan writes of Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, it is not only an antifascist spectacle, but a precise critique of the way in which imperial conquest abroad is reflected and refracted within both the domestic and the political space of the U.S. nation.[78] Yet one can also place the film based loosely on the life of Hearst within a spectrum of anti-imperialist discourse, in which it emerges as only the most well known, if perhaps one of the less radical. In this sense, the journals can act to recenter a social movement closely associated with national belonging and suggest a new way to read it, with the periphery, as it were, at the center. This is not to say that we should think of the Popular Front as an anti-imperialist movement, so much as to say that anti-imperialism was a constitutive part of way in which labor was imagined.

# 5 • An Inland Empire

## Fascism, Farm Labor, and the Memory of 1848

How many know of Joaquin Murieta? Joaquin was one of the most interesting characters in California history. We are certain that if story writers are looking for material to write fiction based on historical truth, they will find no more dynamic personality than Joaquin Murieta.

—"A Prize for the Writers on Joaquin Murrieta," *Western Worker*, 1934[1]

Driving into the Valley, you had the feeling of leaving the United States behind you

—Dorothy Healey, labor organizer for the CAWIU[2]

In 1939, the *L.A. Times* reported on a ghostly phenomenon: scores of prospectors scouring the California countryside searching the hidden treasure of Joaquín Murrieta, the famed and mythical Mexican bandit who turned to armed resistance and/or crime after his wife and brother were murdered by invading Anglos.[3] According to the *Times*, the circulation of the Murrieta myth was so widespread and the prospectors so numerous, oil companies repeatedly called the police under the mistaken assumption that the treasure hunters were attempting to make illegal claims on their land. The language in the *L.A. Times* story is compelling: "The forbidding specter of Joaquin Murrieta's 'death curse' hangs like a cloud over the rugged country between the Rincon and the Casitas Pass," suggesting not only something sinister in the "treasure hunt" but the gothic weight of memory that hangs over the otherwise innocent pursuit of this December 25 Christmas Day newspaper story. Indeed, the 1930s witnessed an explosion of cultural representations of

Joaquín Murrieta: three films produced were loosely based the myth, *The Avenger* (1931) and *The Lone Rider and the Bandit* (1942), and four novels and a film all more or less follow John Rollins Ridge / Yellow Bird's 1854 text: Ernest Klette's *The Crimson Trail of Joaquin Murieta* (1928), Walter Noble Burns's *The Robin Hood of El Dorado*, on which the 1936 film by the same name was based (1934/36), Dane Coolidge's *Gringo Gold* (1939), and Samuel Peeples's *The Dream Ends in Fury* (1948). There was also a history cited by Carey McWilliams, Stanley Coblentz's *Villains and Vigilantes* (1936), and one recorded song by Los Madrugadores, "Corrido de Joaquín Murrieta" (1934). One has to wonder why the specter of Murrieta reemerges in the 1930s with such ferocity as to inspire hordes of treasure hunters, and why the story of armed Mexican resistance, annexation, and U.S. imperialism was suddenly in the imaginary of the U.S. public.

Beyond Murrieta, the U.S. conquest of Mexico emerges in the 1930s California landscape as a kind of "spectral presence" in the histories, fiction, and popular culture of the California Left, often mobilizing the memory of 1848 as a means to narrate the violence and social dislocation of the period.[4] Whether it's an attempt to understand the colonial patterns of landownership, contract labor, mass deportations, the terrible violence visited upon laboring bodies by state-sponsored actors, or the racialized nature of state and federal aid, 1848 reemerges as a crucial site of return from which the lineage of the varying discourses of power can be traced. Like other theories of haunting that focus on the role of the uncanny for an imperial history the United States would like to forget, left intellectuals and popular culture myths like the California bandit Joaquín Murrieta used the "absent presence" of the U.S.-Mexico War to create bonds of solidarity among racialized victims of violence and to link the white business elite with an imperial venture. In this sense, the tale of Joaquín Murrieta became the perfect vehicle to express the many contradictions of Popular Front discourse around the U.S. West and its imperial legacy. At once part of the romantic myth of California—the various legends feature a landscape of abundance and an adventurous departure from Murrieta's humble beginnings—Murrieta's story is also one of dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and spectacular violence. In this sense, the "haunting" of 1848 is at once a Benjaminian project, using a silenced historical memory to narrate a present moment of crisis, as well as a mass cultural trope addressing the many contradictions of the social modernism of the 1930s and the U.S. West.[5]

As an historical analytic for these writers, it's important to note that other attempts by Popular Front authors to construct a usable past involves stories of successful liberation: the Haitian Revolution as with C. L. R James, Orson

Welles, and Guy Endore, or the story of slave emancipation for W. E. B. Du Bois and William Aptheker. The project of historical memory in California is often the story not of successful revolt, but of failed rebellion, conquest, displacement, and violence. In the second section of this chapter, I look at the many stagings of the story of Joaquín Murrieta, the Sonoran outlaw who took revenge on the U.S. invaders for the murder of his family and eventually was gunned down and decapitated by U.S. state militiamen. The figure of Joaquín Murrieta dominated both discourses of the anticolonial revolution and containment, as the promise of Mexican American unionization held for many both the dream and the fear of Murrieta's social banditry. For some, like Mexican American folk singers and radical organizers, Murrieta appears as a national hero; for liberal New Dealers in Hollywood, his story becomes a sympathetic if cautionary tale of what can happen if racist vigilantism goes unchecked. Either way, explaining U.S. imperial conquest is central to articulations of power; indeed, one might say that it is the central fact of an emerging labor consciousness in California.

Even for those writers whose political imaginary may be as much engaged in imperial nostalgia as critique, the discursive return to 1848 seems to be a cultural flashpoint of articulation that unites many authors together within a shared field of reference. That the referent is unstable in its meaning also suggests that the narratives of labor and antifascism were contested, even among members of the same movement. As a movement that simultaneously critiqued U.S. empire and embraced U.S. democracy, the U.S. conquest of Mexico became a perfect articulation for that contradiction. If part of John Steinbeck's lament lay in fact that "white and American" yeoman who can trace their lineage to the democratic beginnings of the American Revolution cannot settle and become farmers in California, he, like many others, lay the blame at "imperial greed" of the state's original Anglo invaders.[6]

Yet in one sense, for many of these writers, the U.S. invasion of Mexico was not merely a metaphor. As Mike Davis writes in his history of vigilantism on the West Coast, the 1846–47 war of conquest in California was "but a prelude to the protracted, incomparably more violent predations of Anglo gangs, filibusters, and vigilantes" that stole native and Californio land in the 1850s.[7] While the rapid land theft, or "accumulation by dispossession," had reached its limit by the end of the decade, as most of the arable land was under Anglo title by that time, the mode of social organization that secured the Native genocide and land theft—the vigilance committee—had become a firm fixture of the California political structure. While the image of the vigilante in popular cultural memory is of a citizen who claims the right to act because the state is either absent or corrupt, Davis is clear that the roots of vigilantism lay in the imperial quest for land and gold, and that participants were often members of a hegemonic elite.[8] Indeed, Davis's long essay primarily concerns the hundred-year continuity of institutionalized private violence that can trace its roots to the annexation of California, condoned if not participated in by elites to maintain a racialized structure of power. Citing the first vigilantes as death squads with the singular aim of dispossessing Natives of their land, Davis creates a continuity from Indian genocide, to anti-Chinese riots, to antilabor and anti-IWW violence, to the Associated Farmers' "fascist" control of the Central Valley. In doing so, we can consider imperial violence and power as an ongoing project. The invasion of Mexico and "1848" is not a memory, then, but rather a lived present. As a starting point, there is a literalness to Bulosan's, McWilliams's, and Tenayuca's use of empire to narrate their current struggle. And likewise, one can't help but read the explosion of Murrieta myths during the decade as an acknowledgment, even by Hollywood, that the U.S.-Mexico War is still being fought.

To represent lynching, vigilantes, and racism as central to conceptions of California, these writers radically displace narratives of U.S. westward expansion in which mythologies of California are central. As Tomás Almaguer writes in *Racial Fault Lines*, the foundation of California along republican ideals was also based on racial exclusion. U.S.-European immigrants to California often imagined themselves as inheritors of the "free labor" tradition, emphasizing self-sufficiency, the small landholder, and individualism as defining traits—often explicitly against the landed estates of the Californio elite, slaveholders of the U.S. South, and those defined as lacking the racial stock needed for self-reliance: blacks, Native Americans, and Asians were regarded as threats on the assumption that slavery, preindustrial ways of life, and peonage were racially encoded.[9] To place racial and antilabor violence at the center of an imaginary of California thus complicates any claim that California would be free of the kinds of racial antagonism over labor that characterized the U.S. South and the race riots of the Northeast. It likewise challenges the specific racial binary that was produced by this discourse as well—it was often assumed by purveyors of this ideology that the free-labor ideal was necessarily "Anglo-Saxon," and yet it is very clear that labor—white and nonwhite in much of California—was far from "free."[10] Indeed, while McWilliams demonstrates that the Spanish colonists employed "slave labor," US entrepreneurs perfected the hacienda system, institutionalizing and industrializing it.[11] This perspective not only refutes the Western conceit of progress, it also denies an easy othering of California's racialized past, and as importantly, a separation of California from the "original sin" of slavery. Californio civilization is not safely contained in a picturesque past, but haunts the present in its most reactionary form, and racial violence is not contained to the South, but is the foundation for the West's most utopian state. For these writers, it is clear that the Anglo "colonial empire of California" and the entire U.S. West is firmly a product of the U.S. conquest of Mexico, and is more like the U.S. South than an escape from it.

It is thus significant that the first poem to appear in Carlos Bulosan's journal *The New Tide* is a chronicle of the invasion and occupation of Mexico City in 1847 by General Winfield Scott's forces in the U.S.-Mexico War. In 1934, Chris Mensalvas, who went on to be elected president of Local 7 of United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA), and Carlos Bulosan, who was perhaps the best-known Filipino writer at midcentury, co-edited *The New Tide*, in which their poems and stories appeared with those of other working-class Filipino, Mexican American, and Euro-American writers. In the two issues that appeared in 1934 before the demise of the journal, *The New Tide* included a poem by William Carlos Williams, as well as a story by a prominent U.S. Filipino writer living in the United States, José Garcia Villa. This attention to both the left-literary mainstream represented by Williams and a national and anti-imperialist consciousness suggested by the inclusion of Villa is not accidental, as much as it may productively complicate the historical record of proletarian literary journals. Indeed, on at least two historical websites devoted to Bulosan and Filipino history, *The New Tide* was referred to as a "Filipino journal," while another wrote that it was an "ILWU organ."[12] While these sorts of misunderstandings are not ubiquitous, they do nonetheless suggest a certain ambivalence around the generic expectations of both proletarian literature and the editorial intent of racially conscious activist-intellectuals like Mensalvas and Bulosan. Neither a "race journal" (in the 1930s lexicon) nor devoted solely to labor issues, *The New Tide* expressed a literary sensibility that was neither and both.

The poem at once celebrates the resistance of the Mexican army to the U.S. invasion and lists atrocities committed by U.S. Marines upon breaching the walls of the city. The poem forces an identification with the residents of Mexico City as it shifts from accounts of atrocities committed by a "Marauding, hungry foreign band / With gringo guns on every hand," to heroic acts of resistance "against the hateful stripe and star" that are both victorious in setting "the Yank in flight." As the Mexicans are overtaken, so the narrative of the poem itself comes to an end, finishing on their drumbeat of "cursed dismal doom."[13] It is clear that the writer identifies with Mexico and refers to the "snake and eagle" as "our flag" and the United States as an "alien . . . North Empire." The U.S. military is presented as both vampiric and inhuman; U.S.

soldiers are "columns, columns, columns, columns . . . cannons, rumbling drums . . . bayonettes . . . gun" whose only human act, eating, is framed as a kind of imperial cannibalism, as "each well-drilled man is daily fed / By pouncing on our motherland."

With these images, the Mexican resistance against the United States is reimagined as a Popular Front struggle against racism and fascism. In the final stanza, the United States reveals itself as a slave empire. The Confederate "Stars and Bars," replace the "Stripe and Star" from an earlier stanza, as the flag is raised over Mexico City. As the "Stars and Bars" replaces "the Eagle and Snake," it's clear that the defeat is not only for Mexico, but for a mestizo republic that outlawed slavery with independence. The violence of the invasion suffered by Native Americans, African American slaves, and Mexicans recalls cross-racial alliances against southern landowners and California agribusiness. Posing the "Indian's right" against the Confederate flag suggests a linking of discourses of slavery with discourses of westward expansion and colonial conquest. And perhaps what is most interesting in the poem is its focus on the disembodied nature of the U.S. military. In rendering it as fusions of machine and insect, "steel centipedes of sword and fire," and as mechanically "well-drilled" pairs of "glittering bayonettes," the poem recalls a powerful language of antifascism that centered on the mechanical, modernized capacity of the fascist state to commit acts of violence. Suggesting Hemingway's "mechanized doom" and Orson Welles's "doom machines" from *War of the Worlds*, the poem implicitly links an antifascist imaginary with the invasion of Mexico. In the same way Welles's futuristic radio plays raised the question of the contemporary context, so this poem connects the language of international antifascism with the local racial politics of California.

It should also be noted that this poem appeared in a journal that was both one of several prominent proletarian literary journals on the West Coast, and also, in Bulosan's words, "the first of its kind to be published by Filipinos in the United States."[14] In this sense, *The New Tide*, which appeared twice in 1934, was more like than unlike other radical journals of the period in California, covering topics that ranged from lynching to colonial alienation for a multiracial, working-class audience. The first edition included two stories about lynching, a long prose-poem by Mensalvas that mediates colonial displacement through the trope of sexual encounters, a poem by Bulosan on the psychological toil of migration, and numerous stories and poems about unemployment and the strain of joblessness and its effects on family and the domestic sphere, in addition to the poem I quote above, on the U.S. conquest of Mexico.

The two lynching stories, "Only a Damned Nigger," and "A Necktie

Party," both focus on the absence of legal status or claims to identity for African Americans in the South: neither lynching involves a criminal act, nor is the absence of criminality a concern on the part of the lynch mob. The first story concludes when a young girl admits to an indifferent sheriff that she wasn't attacked; the second story concludes when the overseer presumed to be murdered by his African American sharecropper mysteriously reappears without even a wound.[15] As a method to display the regularity of the practice as well as its symbolic nature, the lynchings themselves are highly ritualized: the police give a formal and scripted pretense of resistance; a lynching is moved from a landowner's property to a "neutral" site by a creek; at one point a lyncher is prevented from cutting off the victim's testes, as "this ain't no rape case."[16] While the "point" of lynching in both seems to be not only the racial exercise of power, but also a kind of social excess—with references to "frenzy," "sport," and even sexual sadism—both focus on the legal state of nonbeing of African Americans and the repeated insistence that no crime even need to take place for a lynching/auto-da-fé to take place.[17]

This is significant, as the two poems by Bulosan in the journal, "Cry against Chaos" and "The Foreigner," also focus on a similar state of nonbeing, repeatedly chanting "We are dead" in "Cry," and in a more pointed reference to a lynching, the "fear" of foreigners who eventually "burn themselves / with their own fire."[18] Both the antilynching stories and Bulosan's poetry about the status of the migrant worker suggest that *homo sacer*—the legal nonperson—is socially dead in the eyes of the law. Stripped of rights, and living in a state in which the power structure can act with impunity, Bulosan uses metaphors of a self-imposed ritual burning and the darkness of a spiritual coma to express the emotional world of this form of statelessness. In a sense, Bulosan is playing on the double meaning of "stateless," a person without legal citizenship and in an existential state of nonbeing. Thus thematically, the position of a colonial subject and a victim of lynching in the South are linked by their racialized legal status as well as their subjective negative state enforced by a racist social structure.

Stories in *The New Tide* that concern lynching, the loss of a domestic sphere due to overwork or unemployment, and the policing of sexuality and prostitution by medical and civil authorities construct a continual thread throughout the journal, expressing concerns for spaces of social reproduction. As later world-system theorists like Immanuel Wallerstein point out, workers in colonial and neocolonial countries operate both within and outside of the formal "labor sector," meaning their experience of exploitation falls outside of the standard representation of the first-world working class.[19] In the Mensalvas poem "Fifteen Farewells," the successive loss of each new girlfriend is cast in implicit racial terms: he writes that he "knew he lost them forever" when he remembers that his one "American" girlfriend "Marjorie" wouldn't kiss him.[20] Structurally, the displacement from the Philippines is complete only when the colonial desire for an "American" girl is rendered impossible. At that point, the Mensalvas poem leaves the chronicle of progress he charts with each new girlfriend, and recognizes that he is "lost to them forever," losing with his dream of sexual conquest his hopes for assimilation within U.S. culture.

While there are several poems and stories that are explicitly anti-imperialist, I argue that the undercurrent of racial, classed, and gendered borders over which the characters in the journal are consistently displaced echoes Bulosan's own concerns as a colonial subject, mapped in the continual violence, peripatetic wandering, and despair in *America Is in the Heart*. Even as *The New Tide* shares the generic concerns of "proletarian literature," I suggest that many of the concerns also speak to Bulosan's and Mensalvas's positions as colonial subjects traveling to the metropole of the United States. Or perhaps a better way to put it, looking at *The New Tide* as one of the central proletarian literary journals in California refocuses a discussion of proletarian literature to necessarily include these concerns.

It's also important to note that the journal circulated within the progressive literary coterie in California, reaching, and in several cases publishing original work from, well-known figures like Edmund Wilson and William Carlos Williams, while at the same time, as Bulosan recalls in *America Is in the Heart*, he first distributed it among farmworkers:

> When [*The New Tide*] came out, José and I took a hundred copies and distributed them to some of the more literate farm workers. It did not create a sensation, but we did not expect anything spectacular . . . it was fumbling and immature, but it promised to grow into something important in the history of Filipino social awakening.[21]

Like the stories and poems themselves, which cover spaces from New York City coffee-pots to colonial armies to immigrants' quarters to the houses of prostitutes, so too does the journal materially attempt to bridge the divide between urban literary Left and workers in the fields. It's also important to note that the journal was so self-consciously multiethnic and cosmopolitan that Bulosan would attribute a "Filipino social awakening" to its development. This kind of paradox for Bulosan, both racially determined and overdetermined at same time, marks a distinct sensibility one witnesses among many of the writers of color in the Popular Front period.

As Dorothy Fujita-Rony argues, Filipino texts and narratives destabilize the territorial boundaries of the continental United States, making the Philippines the "most western part of the American Empire," with Seattle, not the most western city in a contiguous republic, but the "colonial metropole" of a Pacific periphery.[22] In this sense, the very presence of the colony in the text destabilizes the foundation myth of the country, that one travels to America as a refugee toward the beacon of freedom, to escape the limits of class or history imposed upon a subject: America is always already there, deeply implicated in the poverty and colonial history. In this context—and the wartime context in which Bulosan was writing—it seems crucial to point out that the first scene is that of Allos watching his brother approach his farm, unsure of who he is. He is informed by his father that "Leon maybe dead," given the length of time since anyone had heard from him.[23] It is a moment of estrangement, both in the sense that "the war in Europe" has little meaning in the village, and that the most important family relations are governed by the national interest of the United States—given the ability of the United States to draft noncitizen soldiers from a foreign country for its own military interests. What Carlos/Allos repeatedly identifies as "Filipino"—family and land—are rendered momentarily unrecognizable, outside of his immediate surroundings: the text opens less with an invocation of home than with ruminations on the essential homelessness of the colonized subject.

For an anticolonial writer like Bulosan, we can thus ask what it means that he and Mensalvas open their journal with a poem about the U.S.-Mexico War. Given that the journal is split between work that specifically refers to the editors' subjectivities as Filipino workers, and stories and poems that are more typically representative of mainstream Popular Front concerns, such as lynching and unemployment, one could say that the invasion of Mexico by the United States acts as a metaphorical bridge or placeholder for Bulosan's own sense of cultural displacement. Using the medium of the invasion and occupation of Mexico City, the journal draws together its range of concerns—lynching and racial violence, colonial alienation and displacement, labor and national identity—within a trope that places them under a single analytic. While Bulosan is not the author of the poem, one could argue that his publication of it performs a kind of national masquerade, an adoption of a national symbol to subvert its meaning. Like the scene in *America Is in the Heart* when Allos/Carlos is sold into slavery as soon as he arrives in Seattle, his deadly "middle passage" across the Pacific acts as a kind of Manifest Destiny in reverse, from freedom and landownership into a form of literal wage slavery.[24] In the same way, Bulosan announces which historical narrative of the United States he adopts. Rather than the triumph of the West as a form of progress, Manifest Destiny is presented as an inhuman cannibalism, and a victory for the most reactionary forces over a mixed-race Mexican republic. More than anything else, the presence of the poem as an opening to the journal declares a fundamental gesture of solidarity with other colonized peoples, and suggests that Filipinos and Mexican Americans share a historical lineage of oppression.

This also forces one to read the often-quoted Popular Front slogan "We are America" from *America Is in the Heart* in a different context. The "we" in this construction includes not just immigrants who have come to live in the United States, but those who have any point of contact with the U.S. empire. Thus one could argue that Bulosan's politics of inclusion are radically destabilizing, as the "Americans" that Bulosan includes are the very colonial subjects that have been rendered *homo sacer*, the "foreigner" or lynched victim of the journal. Using a Popular Front lexicon, in much the same way that *The New Tide* is a "proletarian" journal that expands greatly on the imagination of what that term should mean, Bulosan expands the language of multiethnic inclusion to grant those parts of the U.S. empire rendered invisible an unsettling visibility. The "fight for democracy" that so defines the Popular Front thus has a very different meaning, as this universalist term is used to include those subjects not included within the notion of a democratic citizenry. In the same way *Hollywood Now* defends "American democracy" by pointing out that the United States is an empire, so Bulosan joins the U.S. military's fight against fascism by pointing out that Mexico was invaded by a fascist army. Bulosan is thus one of the more striking examples of the ways in which antifascist writers in California spoke a dual lexicon of belonging and estrangement. As Fujita-Rony chronicles, organizations like the Filipino Anti-Imperialist League in New York City and the West Coast Communist Party supported the war and also engaged in transnational protests for the release of political prisoners held in U.S. colonial jails.[25]

Bulosan and Mensalvas' journal is not the only multiethnic, working-class publication that reaches back to the history of the U.S. conquest of Mexico or maps the politics of colonial space to narrate the terms of a present crisis. In 1939, Mexican American labor organizer and Communist Party leader Emma Tenayuca wrote "The Mexican Question in the Southwest" for the Marxist theoretical journal *The Communist*. Like Bulosan, Tenayuca was involved with leftCIO and Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) unions and was an "organic intellectual," insofar as she emerged from within working-class organizations and at the time of her historical and theoretical writings lacked formal higher education (though like many Popular Front intellectuals, she attended Communist Party seminars and night classes, and after

World War II earned a BA from San Francisco State College and later an MA from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio).[26] And also like Bulosan, she theorized the position of the "subaltern subject" in the United States, writing the first historical analysis of Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals in what we might call now a postcolonial context. Perhaps most importantly, Tenayuca shared with Bulosan an anti-imperialist sensibility that emerged from a multiethnic, working-class formation and that was centered around Popular Front organizations such as the Workers' Alliance, the Unemployed Council, and the TUUL.

This is not to suggest that Tenayuca lacked support in the Mexican and Tejano community. Tenayuca organized for the extension of WPA employment to Mexican American workers and for an end to discrimination in relief, and led marches against the mass deportations of undocumented workers in Texas. In a state that exercised de facto and de jure segregation against the Mexican American population, such outspoken, open, organized resistance against white authority was nearly unheard of at the time. As historian Zaragosa Vargas writes, Tenayuca left a "lasting impression on Mexican workers—men and women who were not accustomed to either a Mexican or a woman confronting the police."[27] As Vargas suggests, Tenayuca quickly became a well-known figure even before the famous pecan sheller strike, in which ten thousand workers, mostly women, struck for months while facing violence, deportation, jail, and even starvation. Like the Central Valley strikes years earlier, the pecan sheller strike took on the dimension of a "popular uprising," uniting members of the community to challenge not only the local employer but other racist institutions such as the police and the city council.[28] Tenayuca reported that as she walked the streets of San Antonio, she would hear people comment on the street, "There goes the little woman who confronts men." [29]

Yet she was also ostracized for the very politics—as well as cross-racial alliances—that made her an effective leader. Red-baited repeatedly by the local police and white political establishment, the middle-class, religious, and political leadership of the Mexican American community quickly fell in line. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) officially called for her dismissal as strike leader and condemned the strike as Communist-led. Likewise, representatives of the Catholic Church attacked Tenayuca for her marriage to white party leader Homer Brooks, for organizing undocumented workers, for her open assaults against racism as an organizer in the Workers' Alliance, and more than anything for her membership in the Communist Party. Church members even went so far as to declare her "not a Mexican," and to brand her as a race traitor in the church's Spanish-language newspaper *Voz.*[30] Thus racial identification for LULAC and the church meant keeping within boundaries defined by the Mexican American middle class. A few years after the strike, ostracized by the community she supported so vigorously, Tenayuca left Texas for San Francisco, where she enrolled in school.

Tenayuca's story gets at the complexity of Popular Front anti-imperialist politics, in that it often existed in the nexus between racially conscious and racially mixed social and cultural institutions. While Tenayuca is primarily remembered as a Tejana activist, and while she organized almost exclusively within the Mexican and Mexican American community, she did so within organizations that were outside of the *mutualistas*, fraternal orders, and racially defined labor unions that served as an alternative public sphere for Mexican Americans in the Southwest. Rather, her fights were for inclusion inside organizations that were dedicated to expanding the New Deal to cover racial minorities and cross-racial union organizing within TUUL. While she is credited with a sizable role in shaping a new, militant consciousness within the Tejano community, her writings reflect a dual consciousness as one organizing simultaneously as a Mexican American and within movements that defined themselves as internationalist and working class. Her writings reflect this dialectical approach, as they suggest a fusion of Mexican American history and Marxist thought on minority and third-world nationalism.

Her essay "The Mexican Question in the Southwest" is significant most notably for its positioning of the United States as an internal empire, the construction of the Mexican American population as an internally colonized people, and the call for cultural as well as political and economic recognition. As historian David Gutiérrez puts it, the article "stood the traditional ideology of assimilation on its head, demanding Americans recognize the contributions of the Mexican people . . . rather than expect them to assimilate into the mainstream."[31] As the lead organizer for the 1938 San Antonio pecan sheller strike, Tenayuca and her husband, coauthor Homer Brooks, applied their experiences as field organizers in the development of a theoretical position. Tenayuca notes in the essay that without organizing the undocumented and without recognizing the legitimacy of the Spanish language, as other mainstream Mexican American organizations like LULAC refused to do, no organizing drive among workers of Mexican descent would be possible. And likewise, the essay implicitly calls upon the Communist Party to grant the same level of resources to organizing Mexican American workers as to black workers in Chicago, Harlem, and the South.

Beginning the article with the U.S. invasion of Mexican territory in 1846, Tenayuca frames Mexican American identity as a product of a colonial conquest. She argues that "the treatment meted out to the Mexicans as a whole has from the earliest days of sovereignty of the United States been that of a conquered people," citing the economic and cultural "penetration of Anglo-Americans" in Mexican territory that "has practically segregated into colonies" the original Mexican inhabitants.[32] She describes the process of colonial alienation provoked by separating communities from their land, enclosing public spaces, repressing the Mexican and mestizo language and culture, denying political representation, enforcing second-class wages, and targeting whole communities with state repression. The outlining of forms of oppression has a culminating logic, as she makes the deliberate argument that Mexican Americans, like other colonized peoples, suffer repression as a whole people in both cultural and economic terms, outside of the safeguards of citizenship and nationhood at all levels of identity formation.

As Tenayuca argues, one cannot look at the massive organizing drives of the 1930s as just "the labor aspect," but rather they must be viewed as part of a cultural, political, and economic drive for liberation from a historic and imperial conquest. Her demands for "the study of the Spanish language and *the use of Spanish in the public schools and universities* in communities where Mexicans are the majority" as well as literacy campaigns directed by the WPA to be conducted in Spanish (a demand she notes the Workers' Alliance won) are combined with a demand for an end to deportations and an opening of the U.S.-Mexico border.[33] Tenayuca frames her demands on the grounds of "the due recognition of the historic rights of the Mexican people in this territory."[34] It is crucial to note that Tenayuca does not articulate her demands on the grounds of social utility, in other words that an open border would facilitate commerce or that Mexican immigration is good for the U.S. economy, but rather as the historical birthright of a people who have legal and moral claims to the lands of California, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas.

These positions articulate the Mexican-origin population in the Southwest as a "whole people," and Tenayuca notes cross-class alliances in the "scores of small Mexican merchants" who "signed petitions demanding of Mayor Quin the right of the strikers peacefully to picket the factories without interference from the police," despite the fact that the merchant class and labor were often seen as hostile.[35] She also notes that a Texas local of UCAPAWA adopted a demand for schools taught in English and Spanish in towns "where Mexicans were a majority."[36] In emphasizing cross-class and regional alliances, this is not merely a Spanish-language version of the New Deal with its populist celebration of working and middle "producing" classes. As other black and Native American U.S. intellectuals would do in the same period, she takes contemporary Marxist writings on imperialism to argue that in many respects, the Mexican origin population forms a separate "nation-state," in terms of culture and history, comprising a "population . . . whose customs, language, traditions, and culture were essentially different from those of the rest of the country."[37] Such a claim is not merely descriptive, for the Soviet definition establishes cultural and linguistic differentiation as key claims for nationhood. Rather than reading Tenayuca's invocation of the USSR as party orthodoxy, I see it as a tactic used by many activists of color in the United States, who strategically claimed the prestige of the Soviet Union in their demands for independence.

Beginning her article with the U.S. imperial conquest of Mexican land, she draws the conclusion that the labor struggles in the Southwest are a continuation of the logic of this conquest. Like other 1930s writers, she links racism in the United States with imperialism abroad.

> Internationally, the Mexican and Spanish-American people's movement in the United States has an important bearing on the relationship between the United States and Latin-America, especially in Mexico. Unless the "Good-Neighbor" policy begins at home, with respect to the treatment of the Mexican people, it will be difficult to convince Latin-Americans of the sincerity of this policy.[38]

Comparing the treatment of workers of Mexican descent with the armed intervention by the United States in Latin America draws attention not only to the racism of U.S. foreign policy, but to the imperial implications of U.S. labor policy domestically. And the paragraph contains more than just a little bit of a veiled threat. The United States was within a few short years of the Sandino uprising and frequent and often violent protests near the Canal Zone in Panama. While she does not say it directly, one can also glean from the "unwillingness to accept" the Good Neighbor Policy a refusal to accept U.S. hegemony in the region. Drawing on the extensive comparison between fascism and imperialism, as other antifascist actors did, she notes that a right-wing publication in Mexico City compares the fate of Mexicans in the United States to the Jews in Germany.[39]

Thus Tenayuca links the antifascist struggle to the struggle against U.S. conquest of Mexican land. This connection was not merely discursive. As Vargas reports, Tenayuca was a member of the National Executive Committee of the Workers' Alliance, and attended the Workers' Alliance convention in Milwaukee months before the pecan strike. As a member of the Alliance's executive committee, Tenayuca served with Frances Duty, the leader of the

Harlem Alliance and a figure within the internationalist African American left circles. At the convention, Tenayuca was noted for pushing a legislative program of extending relief and for sponsoring a resolution "against war and fascism."[40] Perhaps more importantly, Tenayuca connected with members of the delegations from Colorado and California and heard of conditions suffered by Mexican Americans there. As Vargas relates from an oral interview with Tenayuca, "her thinking was shifting" as a result of the meeting, and "she aimed to connect the plight of San Antonio's Mexicans to . . . other workers and to international events."[41] Thus such forums were crucial not only because they connected local activists to international issues, but they also became means by which activists of color from across the United States could share experiences and influences. As in the case of Bulosan, her articulation of a Mexican American nationalism was a direct result of the internationalist and cross-racial activism of Popular Front institutions.

Despite, or perhaps because of this, the text is uneven in regard to its attitude toward the internal colonization of Mexican Americans. While she clearly argues that Mexican Americans have historic claims to the land and the right to cultural self-determination and, likewise, to free movement across the border, she invokes a somewhat technical reason for backing down from a full claim for independence—Mexican Americans do not form a "territorial and economic community."[42] Yet simultaneous claims for national belonging *and* separatism make sense if one considers the threats of deportation faced by Mexican Americans in the Southwest. To claim to be a citizen and a colonial subject is not a contradiction, then, but rather a precise analysis of what it means to be a U.S. subject within an imperial context. If the fight Tenayuca outlines is simultaneously a global struggle for liberation that begins with 1848, and if the solution will be in the acquisition of full citizenship rights within a pluralist democracy, then there is an implicit tension in her definition of the United States as national space. Similarly, Bulosan records supporting the Marcantonio bill for Filipino citizenship rights in the United States, as the same time he openly supported an end to colonial control over the islands.[43] In a sense, one could say that these two activists and intellectuals organized within the republican limits of a multiethnic, democratic movement, yet did so with the full knowledge of their position as colonial subjects. And like Bulosan, Tenayuca uses a historic moment of imperial conquest to begin her narrative of the United States. Just as Bulosan enters the United States as a slave, so does Tenayuca use the U.S. invasion of Mexico to chart an alternative to full citizenship rights in the United States, supplanting the U.S. revolution as the metaphysical origin of the nation.

Yet insofar as Tenayuca constructs the U.S. national space as both imperial *and* democratic, her work is a clear departure from middle-class organizations like LULAC, which tended not only to embrace assimilation and promote deportation, but to frame themes of "Americanization, citizenship, and integration" within metaphors of social belonging: the United States was their "home." While LULAC eventually dropped calls for the deportation of undocumented immigrants, the fact that this was a key part of its strategy suggests it claimed a position within the U.S. nation as a racially defined state, and sought to win concessions within that framework. Tenayuca's claims for belonging are far more complex and multilayered within her writings and statements. At once calling the Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals in the United States a "whole people" based on historical conditions, she also articulates a space of solidarity with working-class whites and African Americans based on a future, if often contradictory, process of organizing. Likewise, the "nation" is bisected by claims of international borders, and the domestic space is impacted by what the United States and other imperial powers do abroad. It is a formulation of political identity and practice that is situational and articulated through multiple sites of power at the same time. In this sense, Tenayuca's essay is not only the first attempt to locate Mexican Americans within the United States as a historically defined people with a specific relationship to U.S. imperialism, it is also a kind of metacommentary on the U.S. Popular Front, which simultaneously articulates a demand on the U.S. state and nation at the same time it theorizes an international sense of identity and politics. Within the literature of the Southwest, it also refuses to grant California (or Texas) exceptional status: all lands once occupied by Mexico form Tenayuca's imagined community of Mexican Americans.

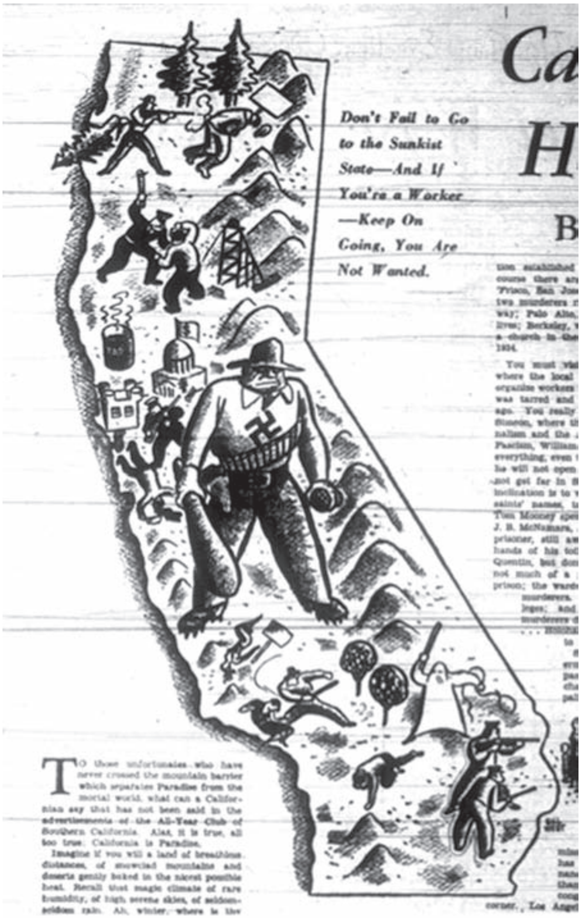
Among the three figures I will discuss, Carey McWilliams is perhaps best remembered as a figure on the California left in the 1930s and 1940s. Lawyer, historian, journalist, and activist, Carey McWilliams is often best known for his book on farm labor in California, *Factories in the Fields*, a history of the rise of agribusiness and migratory labor in California. Often compared to John Steinbeck for his concern about migrant farmworkers (and also the near simultaneity of the books' publications), their comparison has as much to do with the way the California Popular Front gets remembered as it does with the content of their work. Steinbeck's concern was primarily for white migrants, reconstructing a kind of yeoman mythology out of the farmworker struggle. McWilliams, on the other hand, was a central figure in the California Popular Front precisely because his writings and tireless advocacy work stitched together, often personally, the many seemingly disparate geographic, racial, organizational, and political differences in the movement. Personal friends with Edmund Wilson, Carlos Bulosan, and Los Angeles city councilor Eduardo Roybal, McWilliams was a lawyer for the racially charged Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee and special counsel for the Korematsu case, a reporter and historian of farm labor struggles in California, and a prominent antifascist in Southern California. He spoke at UCAPAWA rallies, Filipino independence events, rallies to raise funds for Spanish loyalists, and protests against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and was a regular columnist for *Hollywood Now* (and I should also add, was eager to distance himself from Steinbeck in his memoir).[44] Together, these seemingly disparate sites of struggle create a map of social resistance in California, and a greater insight into the multiracial and multidimensional character of the movement. Indeed, one could say McWilliams was one of the few to theorize the connections among, for instance, the internment of the Japanese and the dispossession of the Mexican landowners, the struggle of farmworkers in the Central Valley and the fight against fascism. In this sense, McWilliams was a sort of theorist of the West Coast Popular Front, insofar as he distilled the common history and significance of the disparate movements under a single analytic term.

McWilliams begins his history of California with the metaphor of the concentration camp. In *Southern California Country*, McWilliams's contribution to the American Folkways Series edited by Erskine Caldwell, he sees the process of Western colonization of California as a planned genocide, and describes it in compellingly contemporary terms. As I mention in chapter 2, McWilliams compares the Franciscan padres to "Nazis" and the Mission system to "concentration camps," noting that the Native Americans who submitted to the Mission system were so weakened they could not resist the later invastion of the United States.[45] That is, for whatever the differences within U.S., Spanish, and Mexican policies, McWilliams sees the beginning of the California system of agriculture in the enslavement of the California tribes. Citing one of the early historians on California tribal history, McWilliams suggests that "it would be possible to show how the cheap labor market passed from the Indian to the Chinese and how the same rationale of peonage and compulsion was applied to the latter."[46] Like Mike Davis's work cited earlier on the continuity of vigilantism, so McWilliams connects the long history of Native genocide to contemporary patterns of racialized labor exploitation. And more significantly for the West Coast antifascist movement, he makes a compelling case that fascism not only exists within the United States, but is a result of the West's imperial lineage. Thus the final culmination of the colonization of America is the fascist control of politics and labor in California and the construction of concentration camps in the San Joaquin Valley.

While McWilliams is not a theorist, I would argue that his presentation of California "farm fascism" not only remakes the fight against fascism into the fight against imperialism, as many intellectuals like C. L. R. James and Du Bois were doing abroad, but also places the western farm labor movement and the antifascist movement in a much broader context of transnational decolonization. At the center of McWilliams's critique is the term "farm fascism," coined to convey the multilayered links among antilabor violence, state collusion with finance capital, racism, and imperialism. In doing so, he challenges the contemporary view that fascism, as one historian put it, "did not extend a significant threat within the United States."[47] While self-identifying fascist organizations were rare in California—the Silver Shirts, Black Legion, and American Nazi Party having no more than a few hundred members in L.A. at their height—McWilliams challenged the commonsense attitude that fascism was a European, even particularly ideological, formation. Rather, farm fascism was a formation of power that combined land monopoly, finance capital, undemocratic forms of political control, and organized campaigns of violence against migrant workers, journalists, and even government officials attempting to benefit from the struggles of farmworkers for basic rights. Likewise, farm fascism was supported by an entire superstructure of ideas and publications that promoted agriculture in California and hid not only its violence but its industrial-plantation nature. The phrase "farm fascism" thereby draws attention to the particular *modernity* of the agriculture industry in California.

In the 1930s, and especially in West Coast and southern circles in which state violence was commonplace for organizers, it was equally commonplace to talk about fascism in the United States. "The drive towards fascist control has probably been carried further in California than in any other state in the union," McWilliams states.[48] In Alabama, the *Southern Worker* carried an open letter to the Socialist Party to unite against the "fascist gangs" of the Klan and White Legion, and Langston Hughes named the Spanish fascists as "Jim Crow people" in his "Love Letter from Spain."[49] In California, the 1936 State Conference Against War and Fascism, as part of the ALAWF, resolved the following during its yearly meeting in Fresno:

> Fascism is a very real threat. . . . In California, the Chamber of Commerce, Associated Farmers Inc., Hearst interests, vigilante organizations, etc, we see the formation of very ominous patterns . . . the vigilante outbreaks in this state are not merely sporadic . . . but definitely planned and directed assaults upon the fundamental rights of the people.[50]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B
Don't Fail to Go to the Sunkist State—And If You're a Worker—Keep On Going, You Are Not Wanted.

Fig. 23. "California Here We Come." One of the many representations of California as a fascist state. (*Daily Worker,* February 16, 1936.)

As noted earlier in this chapter, antifascist organizing sought to connect local struggles against Jim Crow and antilabor violence to international struggles against Nazism and imperialism. It also sought to create broad coalitions, like the church, labor, civil rights, and socialist organizations listed as attending the California conference. The *Western Worker* ran a seven-part series entitled "California's Sun Kissed Hoodlums," featuring "home-grown fascists," vigilantes, racist police, and growers living in armed camps, and the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee openly declared the acts of the LAPD as "fascist" and L.A. County officials as belonging to the "Hitlerian Master Race."[51] The Chamber of Commerce, the LAPD, the Associated Farmers, and Hearst were far more a threat than the Silver Shirts. Fascism, for the

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California Left, became a way to tie together antiracism, antiwar activism, anti-imperialism, civil liberties campaigns, and labor unionism into a single framework.

There is no mythic beginning or lost democracy for McWilliams to return to—California was an empire from its inception. Not only does this refuse the pastoral narratives of FSA imagery, it also demands that organizers and intellectuals confront the legacies of imperial power as central to any liberatory project. "The colonial character of landownership" was something that did not arise with the modern state for McWilliams, but rather dates back to the earliest foundation of Western rule in the territory.[52] What is unique about this characterization of postannexation land monopoly is that it refuses a binary between the Spanish hacienda system and the free-labor history that is often so much a part of the official ideology and historiography of the California past. As Almaguer suggests, U.S.-European immigrants to California often imagined themselves as inheritors of the "free labor" tradition, emphasizing self-sufficiency, the small landholder, and individualism as defining traits—often explicitly against the landed estates of the Californio elite.[53] This challenge to the dominant cultural memory of California complicates any claim, as was made by the U.S. invaders, that civilization or modernity would be the result of the conquest. It likewise challenges the specific racial binary that was produced by this discourse as well—as inherent parts of their competing civilizations, it was often assumed by purveyors of this ideology that the free-labor ideal was necessarily "Anglo-Saxon."[54] Indeed, while McWilliams demonstrates that the Spanish colonists employed "slave labor," it was US entrepreneurs who perfected the hacienda system, institutionalizing and industrializing it.[55] This perspective not only refutes the Western conceit of progress, it also denies the defenders of the status quo an easy othering of California's racialized past: the Californio civilization is not safely contained in a picturesque past, but haunts the present in its most reactionary form.[56]

Like Tenayuca's, McWilliam's critique of fascism goes beyond the liberal paradigm of civil liberties to investigate the historical lineages of power in the U.S. West. While McWilliams supported and helped organize testimony for the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee, his analysis of lynching and extrajudicial violence is not one that ultimately rests on a claim of abstract citizenship. "California is the home of vigilantism," he writes, and he notes that the current "vigilante armies" and "militias" have names that refer back to the original vigilantes of the postannexation era.[57] Likewise, McWilliams writes that the organizing principle of vigilantism in 1848 and in present times is the same: "race hatred" and the need to keep a racially coded system of ownership and privilege intact.[58] In *Factories*, vigilantism is not an aberration or an unusual form of excess. Rather, it is constitutive of the structures of ownership and labor in the state, and McWilliams chronicles repeated waves of vigilantism directed at first at the Mexicans, the Chinese, and later at the Wobblies and most recently at the explosion of union organizing in the Central Valley. Connecting violence against Mexican miners in the 1850s to the anti-Chinese riots, the Alien Land Laws, anti-Filipino violence, and anticommunist agitation at the turn of the century, McWilliams draws a straight line from the violence of imperial domination to racialized labor repression in the 1930s.[59] This places the violence reported on by the LaFollette Committee not within the field of an abstract citizen or a claim of individual rights, but rather within the colonial ethnic cleansing preceding and just following annexation, leading up to the deportation of thousands of Mexican Americans in the early 1930s.

McWilliams, like Bulosan and Tenayuca, also emphasized the building of democratic institutions as a way to fight fascism, arguing that unions and other grassroots forms of working-class mobilization are the answer to the power of agribusiness in the Central Valley. In this sense, it's fair to say that his work is also caught within the contradiction of democracy and empire as a framework to understand, and organize against, the structures of capital and power in the West. Yet despite what may seem like limited proposals for organizing, it's clear that all three writers saw their struggle within larger global struggles against fascism and imperialism. And in this sense, this is what is so radical about their work. Framing the fight against racism and labor exploitation within the framework of global antifascism and the U.S. invasion of Mexico, they allow antiwar groups in Los Angeles and San Francisco to make common cause with labor organizers in the inland valley. More significantly, the links between unionization in the fields and fascism connect decolonization struggles in Africa and Asia with the fight to unionize cotton workers in the San Joaquin Valley. While anti-imperialist scholars like C. L. R. James, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Cedric Robinson have critiqued the Popular Front as legitimating the English, French, and U.S. empires by posing global struggles within first-world frameworks of "freedom" against "fascism," the Popular Front writings of McWilliams, Tenayuca, and Bulosan suggest that the discourse of antifascism could be used to expand the critique of imperialism. Including racial domination within the national borders of the United States and Manifest Destiny, and far from excusing the United States, a discourse of antifascism became a way to narrate the roots of the United States' imperial history.

## A Prize for the Writers on Joaquín Murrieta: Anti-Imperial Romance and the California Popular Front

In 1934, the Communist Party offered a "prize" for fiction chronicling the "historical truth" of "Joaquin Murieta." Coming at the end of the party's more stridently anti-imperialist "third period" and shortly after the bloody Corcoran strike and vigilante violence, the figure of a Mexican bandit resisting the vigilantes two generations earlier may have seemed like an appropriate myth to reignite. Yet which mythology is open to question. As Shelley Streeby writes in "Joaquín Murrieta and the American 1848," the Spanish-language *corridos* of Murrieta competed with English-language novels and films, often circulating within widely different constituencies and with very different meanings during the 1930s. The Murrieta stories speak to themes of popular Mexican resistance against U.S. power, class resistance to displacement and enclosure, and romantic ballads of the West, as well as racial anxieties by dominant groups about national boundaries, racial miscegenation, and Mexican immigration.[60] Since the publication of Ridge's text in 1854, Murrieta has remained a liminal figure, both claimed by Mexican Americans protesting U.S. invasion and marked as a criminal figure calling for greater law enforcement, as represented by the *Police Gazette* and other mass consumption serials for a predominantly white 19th-century audience. And collectively, what they refer back to is, of course, the unsettled legacy of 1848, the U.S. conquest of Mexico, and the annexation of the Southwest, told through the medium of Western romance.

That the most circulated bandit story of the 1930s—and perhaps the most cited Western in an era that witnessed the decline of the genre—is also a story of imperial conquest is worth noting. Slotkin argues that the "Western" was eclipsed by the urban gangster in the 1930s, as "social problem films" and dirty realism took the place of big-sky myths of the open frontier.[61] While Slotkin is correct to the extent that "A" Westerns were rare compared with the era before and after the Depression, the extent of the Joaquín Murrieta myth would seem to challenge his thesis, as Murrieta corresponds with many of the concerns of the genre. Perhaps Murrieta was a Western made for a public that was suddenly skeptical of the West: hearing stories of violence, strikes, and discord instead of the promise of open horizons and individual wealth, the white frontier hero is suddenly replaced by a Mexican bandit opposing the Anglo advance into his country.

In this light, it's important to note that the *New York Times* reviewer of the William A. Wellman film *Robin Hood of El Dorado* seemed vexed by the fact that Hollywood would even make such a film—especially one that he finds to be so critical of the United States. He marvels that the film's "frank indictment of American injustice, greed and cowardice in the years of the California gold rush" could be a feature while at the same time the studios were "unable to make films of 'It Can't Happen Here,' 'Paths of Glory,' or the 'Forty Days of Musa Dagh,'" all novels published within a year or two of *El Dorado* and rejected for one reason or another by the studios as too controversial.[62] While I argue that Murrieta's status as a romance of the West has much to do with its space for critical comment, the unmade films the reviewer lists also reveal much about how Murrieta was seen in the 1930s. All three titles would, very generally, be considered antifascist novels: Sinclair Lewis' targeting of state power, Humphrey Cobb's critique of militarism and war, and the Austrian-Jewish Franz Werf's novel about state-sponsored genocide in the Ottoman Empire. That the reviewer would implicitly connect *Robin Hood of El Dorado* to these three well-known novels is interesting, given that the Murrieta story is not usually considered part of—and precedes—the antifascist and antiwar movements.

Yet given the Communist Party's interest in the story—naming Murrieta a "hero fit for filming" in the *Daily Worker*'s nonetheless scathing review of the film—it bears consideration why they would have selected the Murrieta tale in the mid-1930s for their prize.[63] As Streeby argues, the Murrieta legend is at once a story of resistance and a call for law and order. While these two tendencies in Murrieta would seem to be irreconcilable, they make sense if one considers that antiracist and antilynching campaigns were perhaps the single largest concern of antifascist activists within the United States. And indeed, the film version of *The Robin Hood of El Dorado* was the first Hollywood film to critically depict the lynching of a racial minority as an unacceptable form of nonstate violence, and certainly the first film to place racist lynching in the context of the West.[64] As such, it is important to consider the film as embedded not only within the genealogy of Murrieta legend, but within the cultural context of Popular Front, and to consider the ways the film exemplifies the extent to which a Popular Front sensibility informed the cultural industries, as well as the contradictions and limitations of this project. While the film transforms Murrieta into a Popular Front figure, changing him from a proto-capitalist gold miner to a yeoman farmer, he is also transformed from a bandit dedicated to clearing Anglos from California, to one deeply ambivalent about the United States. In doing so, the film also transforms the California rural landscape from a site of racial and labor violence to an epic pastoral for a consumer eye.

In many ways, the concern for civil liberties expressed by the film is fully integrated within the consumer logic of the culture industries. Murrieta changes from Mexican hero to white matinee idol, and his epic of resistance to Anglo authority is also an epic of California's stunning natural beauty. In this sense, the film fits Murrieta within the "romance" of California, placing it within the lineage of works like Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* that promoted the aesthetically cleansed vision of the California it ostensibly critiqued. In doing so, the film fits within an ongoing critical debate about the representation of California within the Popular Front, with critical realists like Edmund Wilson and Carey McWilliams as well as a critical realist tradition McWilliams, Wilson, and others deliberately placed themselves against.

As Michael Denning writes, "The most effective part of Popular Front public culture was . . . the mobilization around civil liberties and the struggle against lynching and labor repression."[65] Antilynching campaigns were particularly effective and emblematic of the Popular Front precisely because they combined the radical and marginal elements with those at the very center, Spanish-language Communist Party organizers with the ACLU, black sharecroppers' unions with organizations with the NAACP and the International Labor Defense. The campaigns spoke to both the severe racial discrimination and the terror in the United States, while they also made calls on both civil society and the state for law and order. They engaged the history of imperial conquest while also making appeals to U.S. democracy. Groups like the National Negro Congress and the International Labor Defense gained national and even international attention for their defense of the Scottsboro Boys, with protests not only occurring in New York and California, but at U.S. embassies in Cuba, South Africa, and Europe. On the West Coast, the case of Ted Jordon, an African American sentenced to death on dubious charges in Portland, Oregon, also gained significant support. Likewise, labor organizations like the Communist Party's TUUL and the CIO UCAPAWA led fights against the antilabor "criminal syndicalism" law that prosecuted unions as organized crime. The anti-"CI" campaigns were central in linking the concerns of labor with broader concerns for civil liberties throughout California. And indeed, many of the farm-labor unions like Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) and UCAPAWA that fought the "CI" laws also fought against organized racial violence against their members by the growers' associations and the police.

While the ILD ceased to exist after the mid-1930s, perhaps the most important "antilynching" campaign on the West Coast occurred in the 1940s, when dozens of Mexican American youths were picked up and sentenced for murder in a wave of anti–Mexican American sentiment, shortly after the so-called zoot suit riots the year before. The Sleepy Lagoon Case sparked significant public outcry, and the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee formed into a multiracial, grassroots coalition that included Mexican Americans, whites, and blacks, Hollywood celebrities, and labor officials and was chaired by Carey McWilliams. Likewise, the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee drew significant attention to the abusive actions of the Growers' Association and other vigilantes taken to crush labor-organizing drives in the fields. Indeed, California was frequently compared to the South in terms of the level of violence directed at minorities and labor organizers, with Mike Gold referring to "lynch towns" east of Los Angeles and the Communist Party frequently associating antilabor violence with the Klan, as in a dramatic cartoon of muscular workers knocking out a Klansman with their fists.[66] Of course, although "lynching" as a discrete practice, that is, hanging by a rope, rarely occurred in California after the turn of the century, the practice of organized violence for ideological, racial, and political ends continued, and the term likewise continued to signify contemporary forms of violence. The meaning of "fiery crosses burning on hilltops . . . and vigilante terror" described by McWilliams in *Factories* and its southern associations would not be lost on the reader, and would be considered part of "lynch culture" by readers.[67]

What unifies the Murrieta stories is their focus on lynching as a racialized practice of terror in California's state formation. In *The Dream Ends in Fury*, Murrieta laments after his brother is hanged, "What have I done but be born a Mexican?"[68] In a clear reference to the racial politics of the Depression, the miners who hang Murrieta's brother José in the film version of *El Dorado*, as well as the miners who rape and kill Rosita, complain openly of their troubles with unemployment. "Everyone's gettin' rich 'cept for us," one miner says, while another complains that "the land don't belong to us."[69] Not only does this gesture to the logic of the massive "repatriations" of the 1930s that cited unemployment as the primary cause for deporting tens if not hundreds of thousands of Mexicans from California, it also resonates with other Popular Front critiques of racism as a form of displaced class anger. From Archie Mayo's film *Black Legion* (1937), in which a northern Klan-like organization feeds on the resentment of factory workers, to Nathaniel West's "mob of resentment" at the climax of his 1939 novella *Day of the Locust*, this reading of lynching places Wellman's *El Dorado* clearly within the lexicon of a Popular Front common sense. Likewise, the notion that the vigilante killing of Murrieta's brother was a localized act of terror is repeatedly punctured in *Gringo Gold* by the reference to a statewide race war and the racial epithets used by the sheriff's men throughout the text.[70]

The Coolidge text repeatedly emphasizes the social and collective nature of the Anglo dispossession of Mexican property and persons. It is clear that

Murrieta loses his miner's claim as part of a systematic purging of nonwhites from the gold fields, and in a scene that is reminiscent of current debates around immigration, Coolidge wryly notes that "the morning after the hanging of Carlos, there was no one to sweep up the saloons, or take out the garbage," making clear both the class position of Mexican Americans and Anglos' dependence on nonwhite labor.[71] Murrieta is consistently linked with the entire Mexican population of the state who "began to realize what it meant to their people to be deprived of their homes and property . . . tricked by land-hungry sharpers, or money-grabbers charging their ten-percent."[72] In a gesture that seems linked to the massive "repatriation" of Mexican Americans in the 1930s as well as historically based in the ethnic cleansing of towns like Sutter and Rancheria shortly after annexation, a mob burns down the entire Mexican quarter in San Andreas "and drove them from the town."[73]

Many of the calls for law and order within the 1930s texts can thus be read in the context of the call for antilynching legislation. As the search for federal legislation suggests, many antilynching organizers felt that the forces of "law and order" would protect them from private militias and local law enforcement. For many, it was government responses such as the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee that cemented in the public imagination the idea that the federal government would be the protector of civil liberties. As historian Jerold Auerbach suggests, the Roosevelt administration's efforts to protect civil liberties led civil libertarians to abandon their antistatist perspective and recognize the role of the federal government.[74] Likewise, many of the antilynching campaigns themselves were quests for impartial law enforcement. The NAACP's *The Crisis* reported on its Monterey chapter's successful fight for a jury trial of a local black citizen rather than a judicial assignment to an asylum. In addition to running the names of congressional sponsors of antilynching legislation, in *The Crisis*'s special issue on lynching, the opening editorial begins with an evocation of the "mob" that "sets itself up in a place of the state."[75] While there are contrary discourses around the question of lynching, it is clear that at least within certain liberal sectors, the hope for an impartial system of justice regulated by the state vied for hegemony among others.

In this sense, it's interesting to note that the figure of Harry Love, the deputy who eventually tracks down Murrieta, is presented in nearly all of the texts as something of a liberal. In the film version of *El Dorado*, the Love figure (Bill Warren) defends Murrieta as "a man done wrong to" and appeals to liberal universalism when he argues that "none of you would done any different." Warren is also instrumental in initially preventing a "citizen's militia" from tracking Murrieta down. And indeed, Warren's first instinct, after he hears that Murrieta has been threatened on his farm, is to find a lawyer and attempt to enlist the help of the federal government. It is only when the federal government is unable to act that Murrieta is driven into his acts of violence. In the words of the lawyer Warren consults, "Washington D.C. don't seem to know nothing about what's going on out here," positioning the federal government as against the local, racist authorities. The meaning of this clear: that if Washington, D.C., were able to enforce the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and protect Mexican lands from encroachment, then Murrieta would have never been driven to crime. This positions Washington as the arbiter of order, and more importantly, suggests that proper law enforcement would protect minorities from mob violence. This is similar to the language of the Costigan-Wagner antilynching bill advanced by most left organizations in the 1930s, meant to curtail "states rights" and prevent lynching.

The rhetoric of "disorder" used to critique lynching was widespread among left-liberal groups in the 1930s. While contemporary scholarship on the collusion between the law and lynching contradicts this view, the progressive and impartial administration of the law was an important strand of antilynching activism and thought. In an article in *The Crisis*'s special issue on lynching, a psychologist argues that the practice is "primitive" and "savage," as "the administration of justice is ruthlessly wrested from the arms of the Law and meted out by private citizens."[76] Tellingly for the subject of Joaquín Murrieta films, Roosevelt was quoted in the *The Crisis* as calling lynching "banditry."[77] This rhetoric of lawlessness opens the door for federal intervention against lynching, yet it also deracinates lynching from its specific racialized nature and also from questions of structural power. For films like *Robin Hood of El Dorado*, the violence done to Murrieta and Murrieta's slide into increasing violence against "innocents" are equated, both examples of lawless behavior with the government forces ultimately providing for stability.

Yet the 1930s versions of Murrieta also present the government in a far more positive—and progressive—light. Like Warren in *The Dream Ends in Fury*, Love is described as "a man out of step with his time . . . the fact that a man was a Mexican carried no more weight with him than if that man were English or German."[78] And in *Gringo Gold*, the figure of Captain Bynes, who finally tracks and kills Murrieta, is also depicted as without racial prejudice, derided as a "regular Greaser lover" by locals in a bar for refusing the reward money.[79] This representation of an impartial state carrying out justice regardless of race and ethnic origin, as well as the figure of Captain Love / Bynes / Bill Warren, who is depicted as a bearer of progressive values while at the same time the only one who can track down Murrieta, evokes the paradox of liberal discourse around lynching. So long as Murrieta remains a passive victim of racist miners, the figure of the benevolent federal government, through the character of Love, acts both paternalistically and generously. It is only when Murrieta crosses the line between revenge and social banditry that the Love figure decides to hunt Murrieta down. This aspect of the 1930s Popular Front era Murrieta tale is decidedly different from the original John Rollins Ridge version. While Love may figure as the harbinger of law and order for Ridge, and thus be "necessary," Love himself does not exhibit the same element of sympathy and liberal concern in Ridge's text he does in the more contemporary versions. In the 1930s vision of Murrieta, it is no longer an oppressive hand of government suppressing by force, but rather a reluctant state that finally must take action despite its acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Murrieta's claims of injustice.

Murrieta's racial liminality is key to understanding his role as a figure in Western antilynching stories. Even those that appear in relatively radical journals, such as Forest Frazier's "Only a Damned Nigger" in *The New Tide*, or Bulosan's self-representation during acts of violence in *America Is in the Heart*, present the racial body of a lynching victim as passive and defenseless. As mentioned in chapter 1, many of the photographs of "terror victims" display their bodies as targets, rather than as voices of resistance. While this interestingly complicates the usual memory of strong, masculine bodies as the primary representation of labor in the 1930s, it does also present problems for the representation of Murrieta, who is at once, in the English-language versions, a criminal and a victim of racial terror. While William's *Robin Hood of El Dorado* is remembered as starring the matinee idol Warner Baxter as Murrieta, a sizable portion of the cast have Spanish surnames, a rarity in Jim Crow Hollywood, in which Mexican Americans were seldom allowed on screen—except in the most stereotypical or minor roles. Yet this is not to say the division of the roles according to race was random. José, Murrieta's brother who is lynched, Rosita, Murrieta's wife, who is raped and killed, and Murrieta's mother, who is beaten by a mob, are the only leads with Spanish surnames, and they do not, or cannot, resist when they are assaulted. The active "Mexican" roles, as bandits, killers, and *hacendados*, including Murrieta, Three Fingered Jack, and Juanita, are played by Anglo actors. The division of roles between Anglo/Mexican-descent actors also mirrors the split within discourse on antilynching. For the film to succeed in drawing sympathy for Mexican victims, Murrieta's exceptional status as a marginal white seems to suggest the converse: "good" Mexicans—and therefore those who deserve pity—must also remain passive.

It's possible that the choice in casting had to do with perceived racial sensitivity among the white producers, who did not want to portray actors of Mexican descent in more violent roles. While critic Paul Buhle calls the film version of *El Dorado* "among the most positive . . . to this time . . . in its admiration of Chicano culture," and although it was cowritten by well-known left-wing playwright, Melvin Levy, the decision to cast an Anglo matinee star as the lead role may have also been a calculated attempt to make the story more palatable to white, mainstream audiences.[80] Levy, who was known as a key writer for the Boston Group Theater, and was one of the many "graylisted" artists during the Cold War, likely had much to do with some of the important changes from the novel to the script. Several of the key plot points are altered to fit within a liberal, Popular Front discourse, most central of which is the change of Murrieta from a gold miner to a yeoman farmer. In nearly all the versions of Murrieta, including the *corrido* and the 1854 Ridge / Yellow Bird text, Murrieta is a gold miner whose claim is challenged and then stolen by white miners. In *El Dorado*, Murrieta never mines and is even contemptuous of mining as "lazy and greedy"; rather he is pictured multiple times as a hardworking farmer, first living with his wife and mother, and then with his brother. The white miners, by contrast, are portrayed as bearers of capitalistic greed. They are presented as animalistic, often digging through the mud with their bare hands, the "bones of their pack animals" driven to overwork "whiten in the sun," and they are shown as degrading the natural landscape through mining. This image of an emergent capitalist order destroying land and degrading human beings is immediately juxtaposed to Murrieta, standing upright, digging potatoes with a pitchfork, very visibly clean, and using appropriate tools for his work. The miners are all single men, but Murrieta is constantly presented as a man with family, represented by his wife Rosita in the conservative domestic role of cooking and cleaning, and his extended family nearby. This presentation of Murrieta as a yeoman farmer dispossessed of his land by greed is one of the central tropes of Great Depression cultural production—from FSA photographs to Steinbeck's *Grapes*—and placing him within this lineage does much to include Murrieta within the cultural center of "worthy victims" and inheritors of the mythic U.S. democratic tradition.

This yeoman Murrieta is remade to fit within an allegorical New Deal coalition of liberal businessmen, minorities, and the working class in Williams's *El Dorado* as well. Continuing the film's disposition to see racism as the product of resentment and anarchy, his response to Three Fingered Jack's sadistic delight in killing Chinese workers is to declare that the band needs "leadership," and that he would volunteer, giving the band a political direction, repositioning Murrieta as something of a modern political leader. Like the New Deal federal government protecting Mexican Americans, so Murrieta would curb the racialized chaos of Three Fingered Jack and his band.

More important, Murrieta eventually comes to understand that the wealthy *hacendados* he earlier scorned and robbed are "now as poor as I am," and he joins forces with the daughter of a prominent Mexican family. Like Frank Capra's "big family" of the New Deal, so the joining of the daughter of a wealthy businessman with a social bandit creates cross-class alliances.

The final scene of the film, in which Murrieta falls dead on Rosita's grave, echoes the theme of family and a Popular Front critique of capitalism. Rosita's marker places her death in 1848, mapping the U.S. invasion of California with the breaking of the domestic unit. Obviously committed for effect (since the film places her death after the Gold Rush, the marker would have to be inaccurate), this scene troubles the 19th-century trope of annexation as a wholesome marriage between two people. As Streeby argues in *American Sensations*, Mexican elites were imagined as welcomed "in the U.S.-American family circle," completing the trope of annexation as "union" of marriage between the United States and Mexico.[81] And likewise, Sam Houston's statement that the annexation of Texas into the United States would be "as a bride adorned for her espousals" is critiqued: annexation in *Robin Hood of El Dorado* destroys marriages and sets loose rapacious, lone men upon honest, hardworking farmers.[82]

As much as *El Dorado*, along with other English-language versions of the Murrieta legend, may fit the contours of Popular Font culture, I nonetheless have to question Paul Buhle's assessment that *El Dorado*, or any of the other English-language versions of the Murrieta legend, displays admiration of Chicano culture. I don't believe that the makers of *El Dorado* are racist per se; rather the film has little to do with Mexican American or Chicano/a culture one way or the other. Unlike the Los Madrugadores' *corrido* that circulated on Spanish-language radio stations and was specifically geared toward a working-class audience of Mexican descent, the English-language versions of the legend's metatext did not circulate among channels of Spanish-language viewers or readers. Even the Communist Party's "prize for the writers on Joaquín Murieta" made the call within the English-language edition of the party newspaper, not the Spanish-language *Lucha Obrera*. What this suggests is that no matter what the political content and meaning of the English-language Murrieta metatext, it is a text about, rather than by or for, Mexican Americans in California, and the dominant culture's relationship to the memory of 1848. Given that Murrieta is a metatext by and about the dominant culture, and funded by major U.S. culture industries, it also poses the unanswered question from the *New York Times* reviewer: how did such a text critical of U.S. racism and imperialism get made, when other, arguably milder antifascist texts could not? While one answer could lie in Streeby's analysis of the text as a criminalization of Mexican Americans, given Murrieta's heroic stature in many of the texts, I would also argue that Murrieta fits within the context of the California romance.

That it is protest fiction is not a contradiction with its status as romance, a work of fiction that acts as a fanciful realm onto which the viewer can project desires not only of consumer, even imperial desire, but also for a premodern, chivalric past.[83] Arguably the most important California romance, Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, was also written as protest fiction, attacking the native genocide in California that directly came after annexation. As Chon Noriega argues, what defines *Ramona* as a romance of the West was the extent to which her character could create a consumer fantasy of California and stand in for, while also eliding, the actual Native Americans in California. The novel's success, according to Noriega, depends on Ramona's racial claims to whiteness, in which "the mostly White, presumably female readers" are invited "to occupy the space of the Indian in a moment of 'sentimental identification.'"[84] The discourse of sentimentalism enacts an erasure of just the subjectivity it is supposed to represent precisely because it is predicated on the assumption of sameness. As Amy Kaplan argues in "Manifest Domesticity," sentimental discourses of the home were employed as part of the U.S. imperial project, both to differentiate racially unfit subjects as lacking the order and refinement of the domestic sphere, and to define the role of empire as bringing these subjects within imperial discipline to "civilize" and train within a stern maternal organization.[85] Yet even sentimental works published as protest fiction like Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* emphasize the ability of Tom and Ramona to adopt values that allow them to be produced as subjects within a white middle-class culture of feeling. Ramona's racial liminality, as well as her education, beauty, and fidelity, fashion her, like Tom, into an image of sentimental concern, "the same" as the reader, and yet essentially differentiated from the actual subjects of color they are constructed to represent.

Yet as Michael Denning suggests in *The Cultural Front*, the Popular Front's engagement with the sentimental is part of its cultural legacy, even if this is far more ambivalent and partial than later critics might assert.[86] Many of the values derided by the high moderns, writes Suzanne Clark in *Sentimental Modernism*, such as love, commitment, domesticity, and the affect of consumer culture, were also values to a large extent embraced by left-wing cultural producers in the 1930s.[87] In Kenneth Burke's famous essay delivered at the 1935 American Writers Congress, "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," Burke speaks of adopting the affective, suasive appeals of advertising in their work as revolutionaries, and proposes that socialists should assume "positive symbols" that would evoke sentimental bonds and create "sympathy" and "kindred values" among a democratic vision of "the people."[88] Indeed, it is just this sensibility that Denning refers to when he defines the Popular Front with Raymond Williams's phrase, as a "structure of feeling," noting that the culture of "commitment" as a personal and felt choice became something of a catchphrase for left intellectuals in the period.[89] In this sense, one could say *Robin Hood* embodies many of the contradictions of Popular Front cultural production. If the culture industry's version of the Popular Front is marked by a sensibility of national belonging, then a legendary bandit who defines himself in the 1930s Spanish-language *corrido* as one who "makes Anglos / tremble" and to whom "no one gave . . . a bit of affection" is necessarily fraught with tension.[90]

The aesthetic and political demands of representing California as an "outpost of empire," to use McWilliams's phrase, also problematizes an aesthetic based on "sympathy" and "kindred feeling"—or as Noriega frames it—"sentimental identification." This is not to suggest that left and anti-imperialist activists denied bonds of solidarity; rather, the bonds were articulated precisely by the quality of "negativity" Burke wanted to avoid, their status as victims of racial and class oppression. As Don Mitchell writes in the *Lie of the Land*, the question of landscape in California was of central importance to the agricultural giants, as it was to the real-estate boosters, who wanted to present California as "a playground of beauty" and a "pastoral Eden" to cover up the real facts of exploitation and labor strife.[91] As in the 1920s film version of *Ramona*, according to Noriega's critique, what the novels and films of the Murrieta legend reproduce is the colonial gaze as a tourist, orienting the viewer to enjoy a pastoral, mythic landscape of the Spanish Californio and the open abundance of land, while paradoxically feeling a sentimental identification with the victims of colonial expansion. The romance of California is precisely about constructing a fantasy of natural beauty and wonder, and yet often this beauty is dependent upon covering up California's colonial legacy.

Murrieta thus functions as a kind of double text, critical of 1848 and its consequences, at the same time celebrating the romantic myth of California. Indeed, I would argue that the Murrieta legend supplanted the Ramona legend as a kind of 1930s production of the "foundational myth" of California. In this sense, the racial liminality of Murrieta in the English-language texts fulfills a logic similar to the half-Scottish/half-native Ramona in Jackson's novel. Unlike the *corrido* by Los Madrugadores, in which Murrieta's identity is posed though a sense of national, rather than racial, belonging—"*yo no soy Americano. . . yo soy . . . Mexicano*"—Murrieta is frequently distinguished in the English-language texts through ocular descriptions of his race: marked apart from the character of Three Fingered Jack as both lighter-skinned and more civilized, Murrieta is described in turns as a "Spaniard" and as having a "complexion . . . neither dark nor light, but clear and brilliant," and as discussed earlier, played by a well-known white matinee idol, Warner Baxter, known for playing racially liminal roles.[92] While *Gringo Gold* and *The Dream Ends in Fury* avoid the racial epithets of the Ridge text, Burn's *El Dorado* further triangulates Murrieta between "poor Indians" who are "cowardly" and "miserable," and the "Oriental patience" of passive Chinese miners, creating, as Omi and Winant describe, a whiteness by proxy.[93] And unlike other Hollywood representations of characters of Mexican descent played by Anglos, such as Marlon Brando's Zapata or Charleton Heston's Miguel Vargas, Baxter is not in brownface, further suggesting the director's intention to present a visually deracinated Murrieta. In this way, Murrieta speaks more to a residual Spanish colonialism, in which the Californios were legally considered "white" and often distinguished economically as well as racially from the later working-class migrants from northern Mexico.[94] And much like Noriega's argument about Ramona, it allows the viewer to see Murrieta as neither "Mexican" nor "white," but in an in-between position that offers the viewer a site of identification. Thus Murrieta's tragic death allows the viewer to close off the event in the past, safely sealed within a violent narrative of progress.

One of the more curious facts about the Murrieta legend is that, while proposing a critique of the Gold Rush years, the resurgence of the tale could provoke precisely the promise of the Gold Rush for dozens of "prospectors" searching for Murrieta's buried gold. Rather than understand the Murrieta story in relation to a binary between "critique" and "containment," one could suggest, rather, that it reproduces the romance of California at a moment in which dominant institutions were under assault. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Murrieta legend is its place within the pastoral tradition, the representation of a preindustrial California. In the same way *Ramona* led to a mission revival, so Murrieta celebrates the wildness of California's landscape for a WPA generation celebrating a return to nature. In the opening and closing shots of *Robin Hood*, we're presented with a vast pictorial landscape, long shots of the rugged Sierra mountains, and close-ups of Murrieta within the natural world. Murrieta is nearly always associated with the natural landscape, opposed to Warren and other Anglos, who are always framed either within the rational pursuits of economic gain—mining or in their offices—or within the semiurban space of the town. Equally, the scenes of the mountain hideaway suggest a pastoral romance, with guitars, singing, and drinking around campfires, and in the presence of giant redwoods often pictured in tourist brochures. And nearly all of the Murrieta tales feature his travel from the high mountains of northern California to the still-Spanish towns of Los Angeles and San Diego, reproducing a tourist's regionalism much like the Federal Writers' Project state guides. While the "tourism" promoted by Murrieta is not the same as the Spanish pastoral promoted by Jackson's novel, the film produces a California landscape that is nearly identical to the Edenic dreams of large agribusiness landowners.

In Mitchell's *The Lie of the Land*, he discusses the way in which large landowners in California worked hard to promote—and produce—California as a model pastoral landscape. Citing a wave of regional and travel writers at the birth of the large agricultural estates, Mitchell argues that there was a sustained effort to produce California as a "purely aesthetic environment" modeled on Italian villages and orchards.[95] While the literature of the California landscape may seem merely idealist, this idea was constructed through forced relocations of vagrants, migrant workers, and immigrants.[96] Mitchell writes of the landscape as a form of "spatial power" produced through the visual and discursive representation of beauty, in which the reproduction of beauty and the reproduction of capital in this instance have a direct one-to-one correlation.[97] It's not merely a question of how labor will be represented, then, but if within the discourse of the California ideal the representation of labor is even possible. In this sense, the production of a "beautiful California" is never disturbed in the Murrieta legend; rather, through Murrieta's heroic romance, the California landscape is reproduced as the source of Edenic redemption. Murrieta's refuge in the pastoral mountains away from the troubles of racial violence mirrors the California booster's hope to retreat from the troubles of labor strife in the pastoral images of the state, and his travels up and down the state are highly suggestive of the mode of conveyance from which the tourist's gaze is best fixed, the automobile. The fact that the Murrieta films and texts pose landscape as the answer to social turmoil does not erase their status as Popular Front protest literature, and indeed it suggests the many ways in which more successful, and more centrist, Popular Front campaigns relied on a bourgeois sensibility. The Murrieta tales fuse a Popular Front concern for civil liberties with a mass culture sensibility of sentimental identification and consumer tourism. While I argue there are important continuities between *Ramona* and the English-language Murrieta, one could also say that the Murrieta legend was an attempt to supplant the "foundational myth" of California with a more active and militant figure, albeit within a stable lexicon of consumer and sentimental desire. This is not to condemn the film as without political merit, but rather to suggest that, like many other Popular Front texts that had the good fortune to make it within the mass market, its success also came with the consequence of its integration within the lexicon of the culture industries.

In this context, it's interesting to note that many of the authors engaged in anti-imperial politics in California also vigorously positioned themselves as antiromantics. McWilliams, Edmund Wilson, and proletarian novelists James Rorty and Arnold B. Anderson took on as part of their excavation of the West the romantic mythology of California. It should be noted that critics like Suzanne Clark question the binary between "sentiment" and "realism," suggesting that not only do realist writers engage in moments of sentiment, but that much politically engaged literature, especially by women, is ignored by adherence to this construct.[98] Yet I would argue that writers in California used the extensive critical lexicon against the sentimental as a way to engage in an anti-imperialist discourse, without necessarily always calling it by name. While as Clark mentions, the modern critique of the sentimental embraces "the objective" and the "difficult" as opposed to the emotive appeal of sentiment and ocular sensibility of beauty, these writers adapted and transformed the modernist sensibility to discover a quite different "resistance to the obvious" than would have been intended by Eliot or Pound. The "obvious" for these writers is California as a space of natural beauty; the "obscure" is California's imperial history, workers who have been hidden away from sight by large agricultural and business interests, the degradation of the land by monoculture. This is not to suggest that realism is inherently anti-imperial, rather that the antisentimental discourse was used by these writers in the service of an anti-imperial critique. In some ways, one could suggest that these writers developed a radical modernism based on the extremes of the California landscape, and the chasm between official discourse and working-class experience.

James Rorty's 1936 *Where Life is Better: An Unsentimental American Journey* takes for its object of parody the title of a pamphlet the author wrote in the 1920s as a copywriter for a booster campaign in San Francisco, "Where Life is Better," by Californians, Inc. He ends his narrative in an Imperial Valley jail during a lettuce strike, as a stark reversal of the "lies" he earlier spun about the freedom and beauty of the Golden State. For Rorty, as for the other writers of the U.S. West just mentioned, "the pioneer concept" of individualism and expansionism relies on "the sentimentality of the pioneer" that is given to "saccharine frosting of neo-Hellenic day-dreaming" to cover up the "hysterical brutality" of conquest.[99] As a copywriter in the 1920s, Rorty had penned booster literature for a living, describing the "enchanting scenes" and the "possession of paradise" for an advertising company, and comes to the conclusion while sitting in jail in El Centro that the booster literature merely "covers over the stockades of fascism."[100]

Other California debunkers like Edmund Wilson also end their private westward journeys in California. Wilson ends his trip in San Diego, a town, he reminds us with a melancholic delight, that has the highest suicide rate in the entire nation, the "last blind feeble effervescence of the great burst of the American adventure."[101] The rejection of California romance and its status as an empire is thrown together in one spectacular image:

> They throw themselves into the placid blue bay, where the gray battleships and cruisers of the government guard the limits of their enormous nation—already reaching out in the eighties for the sugar plantations of Honolulu.[102]

In this remarkable metaphor, the dream of California ends in San Diego by a kind of symbolic suicide that, in death, has already reinvented itself in the overseas empire in Hawaii.

The obsession with the gap between California as an aesthetic landscape and its reality is probably best captured in the Woody Guthrie song "Do Re Mi," from *Dust Bowl Ballads.*[103] The presentation of California as a "Garden of Eden" that one experiences by "taking your vacation by the mountains or sea" is punctured by the narrator's "look through the want ads every day" and the need for money, the ironically aesthetic "do re mi." "The paradise to see," California's status as an aesthetic landscape, hides the reality of unemployment. Indeed, the function of the song is to replace one form of looking with another, the consumer gaze of the tourist with the active search of the unemployed. The move from the ocular to the body is also the move from the spatial aesthetic to the actual conditions of production. And other writers and artists, such as Nathaniel West, Robert Cantwell, Chester Himes, and John Steinbeck, also joined the chorus of deconstruction of the California mythology in one way or another. The function of the California romance for these writers is to cover over the brutality of exploitation, racial violence, and fascism. Cantwell's factory in darkness, Himes's prison house of racism in "free" California, Steinbeck's labor camps burned by the police, and West's mob of the insulted and injured all point to a culture of political and repressive violence under cover of a sentimental landscape built on dreams of escape and plenty.

One odd and nearly forgotten 1930s novel, more than any other, engaged with the appropriation and commoditization of the Spanish past in California. Proletarian novelist Arnold B. Armstrong published *Parched Earth* in

1934 along with a wave of novels and reportage about the CAWIU-led strike wave near Corcoran, including Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle*, Daniel Mainwaring's *The Doctor Died at Dusk*, and Paul Taylor's essays later collected in *On the Ground in the 1930s.* While little is known about Armstrong (and indeed, the name is a pseudonym), the book was reviewed favorably by the Communist Party's prestigious West Coast John Reed Club's publication, *The Partisan*, which noted it was "revolutionary" and reviewed it with other well-known strike novels, William Rollins Jr.'s *The Shadow Before* and Lauren Gilfillan's *I Went to Pitt College.*[104]

*Earth* is in many ways, a southern gothic novel staged in the San Joaquin Valley. It tells the story of a mentally disabled "idiot child" who is the illegitimate offspring of the Anglo cannery owner Everett Caldwell and the granddaughter of a Spanish don who has not only lost the family land to Caldwell and other speculators, but who lives as a prostitute and social outcast at the edge of town. Caldwell's refusal to recognize the child and the child's lewd appearances exposing himself in public and his voracious appetites speaks to a psychoanalytic understanding of imperial memory. The "idiot child" not only speaks to the refusal of Californians to recognize the U.S. invasion of 1846, but also embodies a return of the repressed that haunts the present, an uncanny eruption through our most basic systems of desire.

The novel is singular insofar as it begins its story with the Spanish conquest of Alta California—evoking from the first page the Spanish enslavement of the Native Americans, and eventual annexation of California to the United States.[105] This broad scope of history is crystalized into three representative figures: the Vasquez family, who lose their land, the Caldwell family, which becomes the figure of Anglo capitalism, and the Rathbone family, who represent the fading small landholding pioneers. All three families are linked through a legacy of conquest, present in the figure of a disabled child, the illegitimate offspring of a Spanish grandee's daughter, Belle Vasquez, and the son of the Anglo lawyer Ev Caldwell, who owns the town's canneries as well as politically controls its population.

This figure of the disabled boy—the real identity of whom is unacknowledged by the town—literally and figuratively haunts the streets: he goes out late at night to break into stores and feed himself as his mother lies dying of syphilis, a disease she contracts from Ev Caldwell and spreads as a prostitute, a second unacknowledged "haunting" that lurks in narrative darkness. This figure of monstrosity, as well as the poisonous sexual economy pursued by Ev through Belle, suggests that the unresolved and uncanny presence of empire leaves the town of Caldwell not only unsafe, but itself slowly dying from a disease that literally is formed by its conception. While Belle's son Wally acts as a "narrative prosthesis," standing in for an unnamable horror of genocide and social theft, this memory acts as an uncontrollable force, neither progressive nor reactionary, attacking both labor organizers and the Chamber of Commerce with equal venom.

Yet the political solution lies in contradiction. One of the main working-class figures in the text, train engineer Hop Collins, tells Rathbone that what will save Caldwell is a "new pioneer spirit" that the communist organizers show, a real "fighting spirit" and respect for "the Golden Rule." This nostalgia for the "real pioneer," as opposed to the monopoly capitalist, is shown in the sympathetic portrait of the Rathbones as the central figures in the text, who attempt to make it by "honest work" while the aliens—foreign contract laborers and large landowners—destroy the remnants of the producer's republic. Unlike Steinbeck's works, however, the novel does not allow even a promise of such a utopian fantasy. Wally, the disabled boy, destroys the city dam and floods the town in what is both a return of the repressed and an image of revolution. As the barber exclaims while a wave of water crashes through the town hall, "I didn't even have to go to Mexico to have my revolution."[106] The river suddenly unleashed, we are to understand, was originally allowed, in the days of Native Americans, to flow unimpeded through the valley. Used for irrigation by the Spanish, and then dammed by the Caldwells, its release is a metaphoric return to the moment before conquest. It is telling that in the final confrontation between cannery workers and the National Guard—interrupted by the flood of water—the troops receive "Don't shoot to kill" orders, as the labor power will be needed in the military when "we go to fight Japan."[107] Thus the seeds of overseas empire are intimately tied to the management of laboring bodies within an internal empire in California.

It's also telling that the central event in the novel is the yearly fiesta created by Ev Caldwell to attract settlers to the region. The fiesta, like the fiestas in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, included "Spanish costumes, Indian regalia, pioneer garb" in addition to guitar players, dancers, and a parade.[108] Likewise, Caldwell "remembered the old mission across from the railroad tracks and was tempted to restore it," which associates him with the mission revivalism of the 1920s.[109] Ironically, the actual "Mexican laborers" who worked on the restoration left for promises of better pay in the south, highlighting the discrepancy between the image of Mexican history and the actual citizens and workers of Mexican descent in the valley.[110] As William Deverell writes in *Whitewashed Adobe*, the construction of Spanish-style architecture and inauguration of Spanish fiestas in Southern California, including parades, Spanish dances, caballeros, music, and outdoor "Mexican" food, marked the beginning of Southern California's regional identity in the eyes of real-estate and agricultural boosters. As Deverell writes,

> La Fiesta offered elite Anglos in Los Angeles the ideal vehicle by which to forget—whitewash—both the unpleasantness of recent decades as well as the entire bloody history of the Southwest throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. La Fiesta suggested . . . that indeed a kind of *rapprochement* had been worked out between the white city builders of Los Angeles and the Mexican past and people. . . . but the peace was a contrived peace . . . it was a past cloaked as nostalgia.[111]

McWilliams devotes an entire chapter of *Southern California Country* to *Ramona* and the mission revival. For McWilliams, the answer lay in the need to find a sacred and mythological past that could give an aura of history and presence to a region most marked by boom-and-bust cycles of capital accumulation and real-estate speculation. And likewise, the glorification of the mission past by the state, Chamber of Commerce, and various popular historians, with its attendant rise in value as a tourist destination, had little to do with the actual conditions of Mexican Americans or Native Americans in California. Deverell notes that "the region accepted charming Ramona, as a folk figure, but completely rejected the Indians living in the area."[112] As McWilliams describes it in more savagely ironic terms, "paunchy realtors . . . in gaudy sashes" and "outland females . . . in Native American costumes" were viewed "by the 3,279 Mexicans who live in Santa Barbara . . . doubtlessly bewildered."[113] Beyond mere commodification, the Los Angeles fiesta was also a celebration of Manifest Destiny, the floats presenting a chronological narrative of progress through "primitive" Natives replaced by increasingly complex representations of industry and the arts.[114] Tellingly, the military would occupy a large part of the parade, celebrating the armed conquest of the West.[115] While some attempts were made to suggest "diversity," such as a Chinese dragon and a "real" tribe of Pueblo Indians, the fiesta was designed to celebrate the colonial incorporation and domination of alien and "exotic" cultures.

Narratively speaking, the fiesta frames the entire novel. The fiesta has an almost lunar pull on Wally, who slobbers its pronunciation as "Festa"; Deverell note that the pronunciation in the 19th century varied from "fyesty" to "fi-eestor" by tourists thoroughly unfamiliar with even the rudiments of Spanish.[116] It is during the fiesta that Wally first exposes himself in public.

Wally's public nudity sets in motion the town council's decision to condemn Belle Vasquez's property, which leads to his nighttime foraging for food, and his eventual destruction of the dam during the preparations for the next fiesta. The irony of the unclaimed progeny of conquest appearing naked during a spectacle of appropriation is that of a silent history demanding to be recognized. It's clear that the history that has been suppressed by the town will reemerge as a grotesque if not allowed as a figure for justice.

Yet it's also more complicated. Wally's own desire for the fiesta suggests that even ersatz representations of history can invite libidinal desires that cannot be contained. Even the commodified representations of Murrieta carry within them critiques of empire, at least picked up on by cranky *New York Times* reviewers. In the way the Murrieta legend's "meaning" is variable and contingent, so the construction of the fiesta in *Earth* works to show the way the history of empire is buried at the same time it is evoked. The translation of Spanish culture into the very industry that exploits Spanish-speaking workers can also allow critical messages to emerge within its own system. Thus for many writers on the left in California, engaging with history and the commodification of history were simultaneous pursuits.

Yet as I mentioned, even *Earth*, despite its excavation of the absence and presence of 1848, does not do justice to the actual conditions for workers of Mexican descent in California. Given that the novel was released the year after the great Corcoran cotton strike, during which tens of thousands of mostly Mexican American strikers armed themselves inside camps for months, *Parched Earth* announces the centrality of 1848 at the same time that it ignores the contemporary reality of its now striking descendants. While "fruit tramps" and "cannery workers" remain a presence throughout the novel, they remain racially ambiguous. With the exception of Hop Collins, a white skilled laborer, and a brief oration by a communist organizer, workers also remain voiceless. Yet the novel's reason for existence—as articulated by the *Partisan* reviewer—is to chronicle the labor violence always hovering on the border of the text—and town—like a barely articulated memory.

Like other mainstream texts of the 1930s in the West, in Murrieta tales and popular anti-Hearst tracts, the acknowledgment of empire is an ever-present modality through which to simultaneously express and contain what was the greatest labor insurrection in California history up to that point. While writers like McWilliams and Tenayuca and organizations like the All-Americas Anti-Imperialist League and the ALAWF were clear about the connections between empire and antilabor violence, the connections in many of the mass culture texts remain ambivalent. The circulation of the Murrieta legend may be, in some ways, a useful metonym for the way in which anti-imperial discourse operates within the Popular Front. Emerging simultaneously in an anti-imperialist *corrido* celebrating armed resistance against the United States within a working-class Chicano/a subculture, and a major Hollywood film that both celebrates the myth of expansion at the same time it critiques it, the circulation and representation of the Murrieta myth suggests not only the presentness of anticolonial discourse, but also the multiple ways it can move within and outside of the dominant culture of the 1930s. It also suggests the way in which Popular Front culture both elides and calls forth marginalized subjectivities. Attuning itself to working-class radio stations—even the English translation of Los Madrugadores' name, The Early Risers, suggests a culture of labor—the song marks itself as part of a larger "laboring of U.S. culture," as Michael Denning frames it. Yet the same anti-imperialist movement also witnessed the elision of working-class production with Hollywood films and slick paperbacks. My intention is not to focus on one over the other, but rather to suggest that within a larger field of antifascist and anti-imperialist production, "1848" acts as kind of metatext, linking numerous different cultural productions together: *The New Tide*, proletarian novels, popular labor histories, the Communist Party, Hollywood films, and even treasure hunts in the Sierra Nevada.

What this suggests is that the Popular Front as a moment of cultural and political history needs to be revisited. Often remembered as a moment of sentimental nationalism, featuring a "redemptive" vision of America, to quote George Lipsitz, this view by necessity rewrites much of the Popular Front's central literature.[117] Given the anti-imperialist consensus in which a "redemptive" view of the United States was seriously challenged, Lipsitz's narrative of the Popular Front unfortunately aligns itself with the Cold War production of social movement history. While much of the work tying farm-labor activism to anti-imperialism and connecting antifascism with movements abroad remains to be done, by focusing on California one can at least begin to see the broad web of connections among organizations as well as an intertextuality among writers, intellectuals, and Hollywood cultural producers. The lack of visibility for the anti-imperialist movement is often a result, however, of these organizations' desires to provide for the daily needs and immediate concerns of their constituents. The various anti-imperialisms that circulated in the 1930s, from the ALAWF to Bulosan's *The New Tide*, often had to frame arguments in relation to immediately reachable goals, such as redistribution of military spending, citizenship rights for Filipino migrants, or the banning of ROTC contingents from college campuses. This tension between immediate and global goals was often framed as a tension between narratives of citizenship and belonging and narratives of anticolonial resistance. As Emma Tenayuca and Carlos Bulosan suggest, their practical needs as socialist organizers and U.S. residents/citizens meant that claims of belonging were a necessity when repatriation and racial violence against "aliens" competed for attention with critiques of U.S. power. Rather than see all Popular Front activism as fraught with contradiction on this issue, it's important to cite the unambiguous ways in which a reading of U.S. imperial history was central to their often effective activism on key Popular Front causes. To conclude, one needs to look back at the Popular Front in California with a view of possibility—that simultaneous campaigns aimed at labor, war, imperialism and pursuing electoral victory and civil liberties shared a common lexicon and common agenda. Rather than looking at the Popular Front for seeds of its own failure, activists and intellectuals today can learn much from the multiple entry points this movement has left available to us.

Balthaser, Benjamin. *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture From the Great Depression to the Cold War.*
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# 6 • Cold War Re-Visions

## Red Scare Nationalism and the Unmade *Salt of the Earth*

*Salt of the Earth* is often remembered as the primary counternarrative of the Cold War. A film made by blacklisted artists, it presents a miners' strike in which a largely Mexican American and Native American union overcomes a Taft-Hartley injunction after the ladies' auxiliary takes over the picket line.[1] Against this backdrop, mineworker Ramón Quintero and his wife, Esperanza, negotiate their new roles, as Esperanza struggles for equality as strike captain and Ramón chafes against the perceived threat to his masculinity. These two narratives in *Salt of the Earth*, of a strike by a minority union with a long history of racial consciousness and the story of the miners' wives' empowerment as they take over the picket line, challenge central cultural and institutional doctrines of the postwar order: maintenance of the color line, the Cold War cult of domesticity, and more than anything, the notion of labor-management "peace" as key to the prosperity of working-class Americans.

When producer Paul Jarrico related the strike he witnessed in New Mexico, director Herbert Biberman understood immediately that they had found their "story."[2] It was a story that, unlike other critical films made during the height of the Cold War, not only challenged the multiple intersections of class, race, and gender suppression that formed the postwar political project, but also imagined possibilities for radical transformation: rather than finding their union shattered after the injunction, the miners transformed it into a more inclusive institution, more powerful for its inclusion. Even the story of the film's production becomes a part of this counternarrative. Rather than promote official values of technocracy, the nuclear suburban family, and national unity, the filmmakers' artistic collaboration with the miners and ultimately their reliance on networks of solidarity to resist government suppression suggest an alternative model of social organization based on mutuality and working-class self-activity. In this way, *Salt* stands not only as a challenge to the Cold War, but also as the last and perhaps finest product of the multiethnic, working-class, internationalist Popular Front.

Yet it's difficult to know exactly what "story" Biberman and Jarrico intended to tell. Between the treatment, preproduction draft, and final film version, the screenplay went through a number of changes and edits that significantly changed the meaning of the film. Some are explained by Biberman and others as resulting from the unusual, democratic method of review. Michael Wilson, Jarrico's brother-in-law and the blacklisted screenwriter of *Salt*, insisted that the mineworkers themselves would have veto power over scenes and content, and he helped form a committee of union members and the ladies' auxiliary who could suggest and implement changes. Among critics and followers of the film, the story of those changes is a success. It is a narrative of worker-artist collaboration, a case of intellectuals bridging the many meanings of racial and class difference. Looking at the published record, the story would seem to be true: racist scenes were removed, unflattering gender stereotypes were omitted, and Mexican American mineworkers replaced professional Anglo actors as leads.[3] As George Lipsitz frames it in his definitive work on postwar culture, the film becomes a parable of collective art in which Biberman's and Wilson's "contact with concrete struggles of a working-class community" in the end "produced a work of art and politics far superior" to the original draft of the film, or to any of the mainstream work either had done as highly paid studio artists.[4]

There is a great deal of truth to this claim, especially to the notion that a film's meaning is embedded in the practices of its production. Yet critics' many accounts of the changes uniformly ignore larger and more sweeping omissions made by Wilson and the union committee. Such changes are not included in any of the published, firsthand accounts of the film, nor are they referred to in any of the later scholarship on the film that relies on such accounts. In fact, it seems entirely probable that few if any of the critics who make these claims have actually seen the archived, preproduction draft and treatment of the film (especially as its circulation is limited to a single copy in the Wilson archive at UCLA). Indeed, the claim that the final script was "far superior" to the original draft seems based more on the powerful cultural narrative surrounding the film than an account of Wilson's original script. The changes that took place in the film present a far more complex and contradictory process than a simple narrative of the reeducation of Hollywood elites or of essential working-class spirit.

For what the changes reveal is less the dropping of stereotypes for a broader conception of working-class life than a wholly new film. Rather than contain merely a few objectionable scenes cut out by the union committee, the original, preproduction draft presents us with a very different vision of the film's meaning, one that in many respects is far more expansive, far more critical of the international Cold War, a film that finds its location as much in Silver City, New Mexico, as in the intersections of the Korean War, white racism, anticommunism, domesticity, and the legacy of U.S. imperialism. While *Salt* is undeniably a monument to worker-artist collaboration any way you cut it, it is impossible to see the original script as merely the efforts of naive cultural producers, or the final version as solely the product of radical working-class and racial consciousness. Rather, the tension between the original script and the final product is a tension between different worldviews, between a script that uses the specific location of Silver City, New Mexico, to offer a critique of the international Cold War, and a version that leaves much of the direct critique of the U.S. Cold War implied or even unsaid. Instead of seeing one version as better than the other, I propose that the two are a negotiation between the needs and experiences of two disempowered groups—the old (and blacklisted) Hollywood Left, and a civil rights consciousness inside a minority-run labor union facing not only the Cold War blacklist, but a longer cultural history of struggle against racism and cultural dispossession. While Wilson, Biberman, and Jarrico wanted to fit the Local 890 strike against appropriately named "Empire Zinc" into a global discourse of race, imperialism, labor, and the rising threat of U.S. fascism, the meaning of this representation for miners who lived in Silver City may have had consequences beyond the Hollywood filmmakers' conception.

Beyond a concern over derogatory stereotypes, I would argue that the miners were concerned about the repercussions of such a radical film. As historians such as Mary Dudziak, Penny Von Eschen, and Thomas Borstelmann point out, the civil rights movement that saw its greatest achievements at the height of the Cold War did so at the expense of its earlier commitment to anti-imperialist politics. The worker-artist collaboration, rather than simply broadening the scope of the film, may have paradoxically limited what the cultural producers felt they could say. Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW or Mine-Mill) was deeply affected by Cold War politics, as its leadership was red-baited and its charter revoked by the CIO for refusing to sign noncommunist affidavits. For the mineworkers, caught in a struggle to end a two-tiered wage system in the Southwest's mines, a film that further suggested they were "soft" on communism, skeptical of the church, and antiwar may have been more of a risk than they wished to take. Likewise, the history of Mexican American labor activism in the Southwest suggests that vigilante and state repression, including violence, red-baiting, and deportation, were not new, nor were they confined to the state/corporate apparatus of the Cold War. The reification of a racialized national identity, the policing of bodies and borders, and the climate of corporate and government terror associated with the red scare of the late 1940s and 1950s goes back half a century for southwestern miners to the first mass union drives in the early 1900s, in which Mexican American mineworkers were subjected to assassination, deportation, and mass terror. To use Gramsci's military metaphor for social movements, the colonized subject requires a different mode of struggle, the "war of position" as much as the more open "war of maneuver."[5] For a community under the double-edged threat of race and class persecution that had recently survived "Operation Wetback" and the "repatriations" of the 1930s, it is easy to see why both the antiracist militancy of a union like Mine-Mill and the political caution regarding its national presentation on film would not be so much a contradiction as a kind of dialectical common sense.

Still, even a glance at the original script reveals that that the changes made to it are significant. There are omitted scenes that suggest collusion among the Catholic Church, the DA, the sheriff, local businesses, and the zinc mine to break the strike. There are omissions in which members of the white business and political establishment resort to vigilante violence and overt racism to defeat the workers and their union. There is a scene in which the sheriff admits to taking bribes from the mine, and another in which the sheriff complains that his bribes are not large enough, given the community pressure he will face if it becomes known that his deputies beat women, even if those beaten are radical, picketing women. There are scenes of overt racism by shopkeepers who deny strikers credit. There are scenes depicting open tension between Anglo and Mexican American mineworkers. There are implicit critiques of union bureaucracy and subtle and not-so-subtle attempts by the union to discipline its own more militant members, suggesting tensions between pragmatic and more revolutionary goals. There are repeated references to the culture of anticommunism in the United States—speeches by union officials warning members about how they will be red-baited by newspapers and politicians, editorials and headlines denouncing the union as "communist," references by mine executives and managers to "bolshevist" union leaders and strike captains, and explicit links between the culture of anticommunism and racism, sexism, and imperialism. And perhaps most important, there are references to the Korean War and the U.S.-Mexico War that implicitly connect U.S. foreign policy to the ideology of domestic control of labor, women, and nonwhite populations as well as to the U.S. history of imperialism.

What is startling about these omissions is not their wide-ranging nature, but rather their consistency. They connect the particular and local struggle of the Mexican American mineworkers of Local 890 to the larger state, civic, and corporate apparatus of the international Cold War; and they link the Cold War to a longer U.S. history of imperial conquest, racism, and industrial violence. Together these omissions construct a broad map of Cold War social relations, as well as posit an alternative history of the Cold War as both a continuation of recent Popular Front struggles and of older historical struggles that have their genesis with the foundation of the nation, including the theft of Native and Mexican lands by European colonists. The final film remains a subtle critique of the U.S. conquest of the Southwest, yet the connection between the then-current global war against communism and Manifest Destiny is subdued. It is not an understatement to suggest that the removal of nearly all references to the Korean War and anticommunism alone produces a film that, while challenging the Cold War consensus, severs crucial links between internal U.S. politics and third-world revolution.

To give an example, one of the more striking missing subplots concerns a woman referred to merely as "the widow," a mineworker's wife who lost her husband a year earlier in the Korean War. Engaged in an affair with a mineworker, "the widow" breaks off the adulterous relationship when she learns that the ladies' auxiliary is now picketing the mine. The scene introduces the complex way in which colonized people are conscripted to fight wars of colonization for an imperial power, and also the way their narratives of resistance to conscription are suppressed. Equally, the choice made by the widow to resist advances from a sexist male mineworker and join her union sisters on the picket line is framed as recovery of the loss of her late husband. Such a narrative move suggests that the ideology of domesticity—the pressure the widow feels to remain away from the public arena of the picket line and submit to masculine sexual desires—intersects with the corporate and imperial project of the Cold War. This is not a political point contrived by naive or insensitive filmmakers, and its removal—and the removal of scenes like it—deserves a fuller treatment than it has thus far received.[6]

This is not to say that *Salt of the Earth* in its final form did not challenge the Cold War consensus, especially as it concerned gender and the color line, or that it did not present the optimistic, intimate portrayal of workers engaged in struggle. And likewise, the film connects the racist policies of both Grant County and Empire Zinc to the colonial occupation of northern Mexico, the dispossession of Mexicans from their land, and the intersections among class, race, and gender that inform any working-class struggle for equality and liberation. Yet there is a grain of truth in what the *New York*

*Times* reviewer wrote after seeing the premier in 1953—that for all of *Salt*'s "agitated history," it is "in substance, simply a strong pro-labor film with a . . . sympathetic interest in the Mexican-Americans with whom it deals."[7] While this subtlety was certainly lost on the government, Hollywood unions, and local vigilantes, all of whom conspired to shut down the film and deport the lead actress, Rosaura Reveultas, the film *Salt* became is obviously different from the kind of film Michael Wilson, Herbert Biberman, and Paul Jarrico initially imagined they would make. What the changes mean, and what kind of film *Salt* finally became, may have much to do with Biberman's changing sense of not only what the film was about, but whom he filmed and why. That these changes aren't discussed in any sources relating to the film, and indeed, that the original script remains unpublished, does not suggest that they were unimportant.

I would argue the filmmakers' silence reveals a deep and unacknowledged contradiction faced by progressive writers and artists attempting to narrate collective struggle during the Cold War, the absence of commentary merely underscoring its insolubility. The fact that *Salt* was the "one unfettered creation of Hollywood's victims," as Paul Buhle refers to it, suggests that the tensions felt by the *Salt* filmmakers are not only, as one would suspect, between capital and labor, studio and employee, but also between the different aims and goals of radical cultural production at this time in history.[8] For the filmmakers, one of whom served time in jail under the Smith Act, the immediacy of the Cold War in its international dimensions would understandably seem like the crisis of the moment; for the workers of Mine-Mill Local 890, securing an end to decades, if not over a century, of racial discrimination may have been more of a priority.[9] In this sense, the changes to the film are a powerful reminder that resistance is always culturally and materially located, not only within the realm of the possible, but within the immediate needs of disempowered groups.

Examining the revisions to the *Salt of the Earth* script can also tell us much about similar tensions within film production during the early years of the Cold War. It was a time of remarkable repression within the film industry, and during which time many directors and writers associated with the Popular Front were either expelled from Hollywood or attempted to address the changing political landscape with equal parts subversion and collusion with emerging structures of power. If the creators of *Salt* felt it necessary to heavily edit their film to make it less critical of U.S. imperialism and in line with mythologies of U.S. democracy, it may be helpful to also place these changes in the context of the work of several other Popular Front filmmakers who continued to labor in Hollywood. Darryl Zanuck and Elia Kazan's production of John Steinbeck's script *Viva Zapata!* and Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai* both work within similar terrain, placing Popular Front political figures, a peasant revolutionary who's lost his land and a "waterfront agitator," within a new Cold War logic of international expansionism and working-class entrapment. While both films offer greater intellectual and political complexity than conservative epic blockbusters like Cecil DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*, the collusion of *Zapata* and the fatalism of *Lady* both highlight the way *Salt* is exceptional and yet subject to the same forces that shaped both films, albeit in surprising ways.

## Frank Barnes Meets Ramón Quintero: Anti-Imperialism and the Popular Front

To place this discussion in context, one needs to consider why Biberman, Jarrico, and Wilson were interested in the New Mexico strike to begin with. Biberman and Jarrico wrote after the film was released that they wanted "stories that would reflect the true stature of union men and women" and more specifically "material dealing with minority peoples."[10] The link between the "true" character of union men and women and their status as "minorities" is not something, in the heart of the Cold War, that anyone would have taken for granted. Yet for Biberman and Jarrico, their desire to present a prolabor film had everything to do with its location in New Mexico and the ethnic and racial identity of the union's leadership. If one thinks about other possible script ideas they considered—one regarding a divorcee who loses her children after accusations that she is a communist, and another about the Scottsboro Boys—it's clear that the Mine-Mill 890 strike was the "story" precisely because it was not only a "prolabor" or "prominority" or "prowoman" narrative—as it is often portrayed in discussions today—but also because all of these elements bring together so many intersections of the Cold War: the way in which anticommunism so frequently spoke the language of domesticity, race, and individualism to the extent that they became inseparable from the ideological struggle. From the outset, the film's scope was internationalist in vision and political in the broadest sense.

But one aspect of Biberman's interest in the strike very seldom is discussed—Biberman did not think of the Mexican American mineworkers as minorities so much as partial foreigners. Biberman writes in his memoir that it is only as he cast several professional Mexican actors for the lead that it occurred to him that Mexican Americans were "not Mexicans" but a separate and distinctly U.S. American culture.[11] While Biberman's confusion over whether the miners were "Mexicans" or "Americans" is naive, even implicitly racist, it also reveals certain tensions within artistic production at the time; one cannot discuss the meaning of the Cold War in the United States without discussing what happens outside of U.S. borders, and the two are dialectically linked. In essence, Biberman and Wilson wanted to create a film around a militant union struggle that would both be representative of what unions could and should be and engage with the political dimensions of the Cold War within the United States—and yet looked for a population and strike that they understood to be on the margins. This fact alone reveals what to any labor historian is obvious: the Cold War compromised the union as an oppositional force within U.S. culture by, as Antonio Negri suggests, incorporating unionism as a dynamic part of the new Keynesian-military state apparatus.[12] But more than this, it reveals the extent to which Biberman and Wilson hit on what many historians of the Cold War have only recently brought forth—the connection between struggles to fight racism at home and U.S. imperialism abroad, between the international Cold War and the struggle for freedom within the United States.

In Mary Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights*, she writes of the "narrowed discourse" of Cold War–era civil rights struggle. Of course, it must be asked what was "narrow" about a movement to end centuries of white terror in the United States. Penny Von Eschen writes of the many black institutions, activists, and newspapers that continually linked segregation in the United States to fascism in Europe, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia to the larger context of European and U.S. imperialism, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria to the English and French occupation of Southeast Asia, and perhaps most embarrassing for the United States during the war, the segregation of the armed forces to German segregation of Jews and other "undesirables." As Von Eschen writes, "At the dawn of the civil rights movement, international issues went hand-in-hand with domestic concerns."[13] Institutionally, organizations such as the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, the Filipino Anti-Imperialist League, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and the Council on African Affairs sponsored articles and newspapers and organized conferences and trips that brought together a wide range of constituencies—labor unions, civic organizations, intellectuals—from across the world to link the two issues. The Communist Party sponsored trips to Cuba, the Soviet Union, Europe, and Africa; the CAA frequently hosted leaders of anticolonial struggles in Africa, creating meetings between black intellectuals such as Alphaeus Hunton and Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah; and figures such as Carlos Bulosan and Emma Tenayuca linked the struggle to unionize the fields with the nationalist struggles in the Philippines or in the U.S. Southwest.

More important for figures such as Herbert Biberman, Paul Jarrico, and Michael Wilson were organizations like the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL), later renamed the Hollywood League for Democratic Action and the American Peace Mobilization. This group, headed by Biberman and Sam Ornitz, tied the racism of Nazi Germany to racism at home, and worked hard not only to end racist stereotypes in Hollywood films, but also to organize support for the Sleepy Lagoon case and raise money for striking farmworkers in the Central Valley.[14] In one sense, these are simply positions that one might expect from a progressive organization in California, but there is a specificity to the HANL's understanding of "fascism" as both international and local that many in the L.A. community shared. Carey McWilliams, a figure well known within Hollywood leftist circles and a columnist for HANL's publication *Hollywood Now*, wrote extensively about the connections among fascism, imperialism, vigilante violence, the U.S. conquest of California, and the collusion between business and government to suppress labor rights and deport labor militants. To McWilliams, California was "that state of the union which has advanced furthest toward an integrated fascist set-up," something echoed by other leftist intellectuals at the time, including Mike Gold in his reference to "lynch towns" in the Central Valley, and "Nazi Germany" east of Los Angeles.[15] Similarly, Biberman, Wilson, and Jarrico intuitively connected the relationships among race, U.S. objectives abroad, and labor conditions at home, inviting speakers and writers to discuss subjects such as the British Empire and the rise of fascism, or slavery and U.S. empire. Indeed, in its file on Biberman and HANL, the FBI was troubled not only by the fact that the League exposed connections between the U.S. business establishment and the rise of Nazi Germany, but also by the League's critique of the "imperialism" of the "Allied War Effort," England's continual colonization of Africa and Asia, and racist practices within the United States.[16] HANL, like many other organizations at the time, made the connection among racism, fascism, and imperialism in both word and deed—often including the United States and U.S. policy within that critique.

As Borstelmann, Dudziak, and Von Eschen argue, such commitments collapsed or were held increasingly suspect as the Cold War wore on. Paul Robeson, Alphaeus Hunton, W. E. B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, C. L. R. James, and even Josephine Baker found themselves without passports, hunted by the FBI, called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and forced to testify—their careers destroyed and their message discredited. Figures who were central to the anti-imperialist sensibility in the California Left such as Bulosan and Biberman found themselves blacklisted, implicitly or explicitly. By and large, the civil rights establishment did its best to distance itself from such figures, looking to Truman's "multiethnic anticommunism" to replace the *New Masses*' multiethnic socialism as the paradigm for leftist intellectuals in the Cold War. The civil rights establishment abandoned such internationalist critiques, opting to support U.S. foreign policy in exchange for legal victory at home.[17] This is not to say that some civil rights advocates didn't continue to make such comparisons, but by and large the felt loyalty of mainstream figures such as Thurgood Marshall and Walter White to the Democratic Party and to anticommunism would guarantee progressive action on the home front.

In this context, Biberman's and Wilson's interest in the strike is not just a portrait of civil rights struggle. Rather, it is an attempt to bring together the internationalist scope of Popular Front–era antiracism with a concern for militant unionism. What is compelling about Biberman's "mistake" about the cultural identity of Mexican Americans is the impulse to connect the populist concern with "true union" struggle and the internationalist, anti-imperialist efforts of organizations such as the CAA. While many critics argue that *Salt of the Earth* was ahead of its time, in another sense, it was ten years too late. The organizations and institutions that fostered such internationalist and laborist thinking—often in separate spheres—were bankrupt and discredited by the early 1950s, largely owing to a concerted effort by the government to destroy them. What the original script of *Salt* attempts is no less than a rare bringing together of these two separate spheres. The film incorporates the fictional figures of Frank Barnes and Ramón Quintero into a single work, the white labor organizer and the Mexican American who claims the United States stole his land. That is, *Salt* fuses the antiracist, anti-imperialist sensibility that is so much a part of the work of C. L. R. James, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Carlos Bulosan with the central Popular Front icon and narrative form—the strike tale. In this sense *Salt* is not simply an expansion of a 1930s political aesthetic; it is the fulfillment of it.

## Viva Zapata? Remaking a Cold War Popular Front

To further contextualize Biberman's interest in Local 890's strike, it might be useful to consider a film that was released the same year by three equally well-known Popular Front–era figures, Elia Kazan, Darryl Zanuck, and John Steinbeck—the Oscar-winning *Viva Zapata!*[18] In many ways, *Zapata* is a classic Popular Front film: it tells the story of a revolutionary people's hero; it focuses on the plight of landless peasants and small farmers as they fight wealthy landlords growing cash crops for export; it represents the organic knowledge of "the people" as morally and intellectually superior to the weakness and corruption of the ruling classes and their representatives. The film can be read as a kind of sequel to what many regard as the definitive Depression novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, in which uprooted tenant farmers are pitted against California's landed elite and their gangs of vigilantes. Likewise, the film suggests an aesthetic of the popular, celebrating the romance between the merchant's daughter Josefina and the peasant Zapata, fusing both the cult-of-feeling romance with the masculine contours of a proletarian hero. The film focuses on Zapata's physicality, immediacy, and compassion as the filmmakers compare both to Josefina's cold and calculating father and the frail intellectualism of President Francisco Madero.

Yet the film has one major difference from U.S. Popular Front narratives—*Zapata* takes place in Mexico. Rather than depict the United States as the supporter of the landed elite in the figures of Porfirio Díaz and General Victoriano Huerta, the United States is depicted as a benevolent world power and leader in world democracy.[19] Responding to Zapata's skepticism that the Mexican hero Madero lives in Texas, Rudolfo counters with a speech about the benevolence of the United States. In the United States, Rudolfo tells a rapt Zapata, "They protect political refugees," an observation that prompts Rudolfo into a further lesson on civics: "Up there, they're a democracy; up there they govern with the consent of the people." Never mind that the United States arrested Mexican opponents of Díaz who sought refuge in the United States, or that U.S. ambassador Henry Lane Wilson conspired with deposed elements of the Díaz regime to assassinate Madero; the film's point is clear: in the United States, freedom is achieved. All that is left is to export this freedom to the rest of the world, by aiding "democracy activists" abroad. Thus Steinbeck and Kazan succeed in transforming a classic Popular Front imaginary into one that aids the internationalist dimensions of the Cold War, suggesting ways in which the struggle for social and material equality can be relived not as a strike in the nearby factory or office, but as a struggle against communism abroad.

True to form, Zapata's fatal flaw is not that he ignored the long reach of *El Norte*, but, in a thinly veiled attack on the Bolshevik revolution, that he attempted to redistribute land and thereby produced a new tyranny. Yet for all its anticommunism, *Zapata* locates what is essentially a national-popular 1930s icon, the "people's hero," outside of the United States. Played in brownface, Marlon Brando's Zapata deploys a Popular Front aesthetic and sensibility in the cause and interest of U.S. world power. Thus *Viva Zapata* suggests a kind of sublimated desire for the now-forbidden arena of the political, available only in the imagined body of the Mexican, a sort of revolutionary minstrel costume. While the film could be merely interpreted as a rote fulfillment of U.S. foreign policy needs—as "benevolent supremacy" requires U.S. audiences to learn about foreign countries, sympathize with the plight of their inhabitants, and find ways to connect their struggles at home with those abroad—it also makes a second and equally important point that resonates with American audiences: within the United States, the struggle is over. Whether one listens to Rudolfo's speech to Zapata about the democracy achieved in America or one considers that it is Steinbeck's last work about displaced agricultural workers, the film functions to divert repressed political energy to concerns in the third world. While such revolutionary images may be forbidden both on the silver screen and in literature, audiences could be allowed a kind of vicarious thrill seeing Tom Joad move through the body of Zapata. While neither Mexicans nor Mexican Americans would be allowed to play such a heroic lead role in Jim Crow Hollywood at the time, the brownface Brando allows the viewer the joy of self-projection as well as the safety of otherness. The film thus acts as both a perverse elegy for the Popular Front imaginary and a projection of sublimated revolutionary desire.

In this sense, the film exposes a larger truth about Cold War politics—that the kind of open struggle imagined and led in the 1930s was no longer possible within the United States. Whether it was the climate of repression instigated by HUAC, the purging of communists and other radicals from the AFL-CIO, the Taft-Hartley Act, or more generally, union acceptance of the "labor peace" in exchange for productivity gains, films like Steinbeck and Kazan's *Viva Zapata!* and (the equally Popular Front–styled) *On the Waterfront* could act as a kind of return of the repressed, so long as they generally endorsed the United States' stated goals during the Cold War.

One could say Biberman and Steinbeck agreed on a single point: films could not represent struggle within the United States. For Steinbeck, radical struggle within the United States would be subversive; for Biberman it would not be subversive enough. As Christina Klein writes in *Cold War Orientalism*, Popular Front ideals of unity, mass culture, internationalism, and liberal inclusiveness were reincorporated into sentimental narratives of Americans abroad, person-to-person exchanges, and an interest in the history and cultures of other nations—all in the name of securing "democracy" as against "communism." In this sense, we can read the original *Salt* as a kind of progressive palimpsest, a ghost still in the machine of films such as *Zapata*. Instead of finding a site outside of the U.S mainstream from which to project a benevolent American supremacy, as Steinbeck and Zanuck do, Wilson's original script of *Salt* attempts to locate a site on the margins from which to analyze the contradictions of the United States and internationalist Cold War state apparatus. In this sense, the color line and even national boundaries become articulations of the changing political landscape of struggle Biberman and Wilson are trying to rearticulate while remaining within a Popular Front conceptual framework. We can think of Biberman's interest in the New Mexico strike as more than just a Popular Front concern with antiracism or a laborist's interest in a militant strike. Rather, Wilson's fictional site in New Mexico is one from which the entire scope of political and cultural changes of the Cold War can be rethought and analyzed—complicating clear notions of national borders, outside a dominant civil rights Left and trade union consensus, exploding the third-world/first-world divide—as earlier Popular Front anti-imperialist texts had attempted to do. As *Salt's* mineworker families are at once internally colonized—working at a mine that was once the property of the Mexican and Native American families and denied equal treatment within the United Stated—they are victims of the Cold War logic they simultaneously challenge. Unlike mainstream civil rights discourse that attempts to "fill out the contours of U.S. democracy" within the confines of U.S. anticommunism and imperialism,[20] the original script for *Salt* situates the strike outside of discourses of U.S. labor prosperity and peace, criticizes Manifest Destiny and the Korean War, and demands equal rights for a Mexican and Native American communist union. In this way the script suggests a radical premise: multiethnic democracy is not possible while the U.S. remains an empire.

## The Prison of Empire: Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai*

*Salt of the Earth* and *Viva Zapata!* were not the only postwar films to feature iconic Popular Front figures struggling against—or colluding with—new structures of U.S. empire. Orson Welles's 1947 adaptation of the potboiler *If I Die Before I Wake* into *The Lady from Shanghai* transformed an "utterly conventional" murder mystery into a surreal Cold War allegory.[21] Originally titled *Black Irish*, the film centers on the fate of an Irish merchant mariner who is seduced aboard a luxury yacht by the kept wife of a wealthy criminal lawyer.[22] Much has been made about the film's ableist and masculine contours, opposing the macho, working-class O'Hara to the disabled, possibly homoerotic figures of Arthur Bannister and George Grisby.[23] Of equal critical concern has been the cruise via the Mexican coast, in which the "racial otherness" of the South is used to suggest, in a Conradian way, the presence of evil and corruption, posing the "blackness" of film noir as a critical unconscious regarding the dangers of racial mixing and the loss of white prestige.[24] Yet these provocative readings nonetheless limit the significance not only of O'Hara's roots in 1930s antifascist struggles, but also of the way the film takes a critical eye of its own conventions. In part, these readings are possible if one doesn't consider the ways the film was locked in a debate over its own meaning, radically shifting registers from Hollywood convention to critical irony. And likewise, it doesn't take into the account the many layers of signification in O'Hara's "blackness," both as the "Black Irish" and the veteran of the first fully integrated army raised in the United States, the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

As a left-wing antifascist, Orson Welles was highly aware of the dangers of a postwar world in which the U.S. appeared poised to lift the imperial mantle from Europe as Africa and Asia decolonized. In 1945, Welles attended the Pan American War and Peace Conference, which was to set transnational relations among nations in the Americas after World War II. While he was sympathetic with the stated objective of the meeting, to secure Latin American opposition to European fascism, he felt the Latin American leaders were "pseudo-revolutionaries" who could not succeed "without the help of a couple of North American companies you could name."[25] And more worrisome for Welles was the way in which the U.S. seemed set to dominate Latin America after the war. Welles wrote in the *New York Post* shortly after attending:

> Internationalism can't be preached in a new government level and practiced on an old states' rights basis. The inconsistencies are just too glaring. . . . Thus an Atlantic Charter is perused by foreigners with one eye on a lynching in Arkansas. A Crimea communique is studied in reference to a Detroit race riot. A declaration at Mexico City stirs memories of a place called Sleepy Lagoon. . . . no moral position taken by us against Col. Perón has any meaning for Spanish-speaking America until we break with Gen. Franco. . . . Our attitude towards the policy of the Good Neighbor matches the rest of our foreign policy.[26]

Linking racial violence in the United States with U.S. imperial objectives abroad, Welles suggests that U.S. opposition to fascism was opportunistic, focused on its own economic and political needs (opposing Perón) while maintaining ties with Franco. And more importantly, Welles suggests that lineages of imperial power and fascist authoritarianism are present in the United States under the code of "states' rights" and urban "riots." Soon after his return from the Pan American conference, Welles went to work on an antifascist thriller, *The Stranger*, focusing on a fugitive Nazi hiding as a college professor in a small Connecticut town. While the Nazi is captured, implying a postwar world in which fascists can't hide from justice, more unsettling is the suggestion that without international monitors, fascism could have gotten along just fine with the small-town manners and economism. Far from being an alien to Harper, Connecticut, the fugitive Nazi is celebrated for repairing the ancient clock tower, thus setting the town back in tune with its colonial past. As Welles wrote for the *Post*, "We've been on the move for quite a time now . . . from North Africa to Yalta. The next objective is San Francisco [and the UN conference]—and we better continue. . . . Otherwise we'll find . . . we didn't take the ride at all. We were taken for it."[27]

The image of a new fascism "taking [the Left] for a ride" even as it's said to have won seems a fair place to begin with *Lady* as Welles's first major film production since *The Stranger*. The figure of "waterfront agitator" seduced in an alliance with wealthy conservatives only to be framed and hanged after his usefulness is over seems a loaded allegory for the position of the antifascist Left after World War II, met at home with conservative revanchism and the Cold War abroad. And yet contrary to most film noir, World War II is barely mentioned, and O'Hara does not claim to be a veteran of that conflict. Rather the memory and wartime trauma point back to a conflict that severely disrupts the narrative of wartime unity. The Spanish Civil War is not only a troubling memory because of the fact that major sectors of U.S. capital profiting from World War II defense contracts supported Franco (represented in the film by George Grisby). In addition, the structure and purpose of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade suggested an antifascist radicalism that undermined U.S. claims for moral superiority after the war. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade was not only the first fully integrated armed force in U.S. history, but many of the nearly hundred African American soldiers and officers within the unit carried with them a very different understanding of fascism and freedom than U.S. wartime propaganda would allow. As Langston Hughes noted in his memoir *I Wonder as I Wander*, many African Americans traveled to Spain to fight the kind of racism they experienced in the U.S. South.[28] And as Robin D. G. Kelley writes in *Race Rebels*, African American volunteers in Spain were motivated by socialist black nationalism that found expression in Communist Party militancy and saw the Lincoln Brigade as a way to avenge the 1936 Italian invasion of Ethiopia.[29] As the title of Kelley's chapter suggests, "It ain't Ethiopia but it will do" became a kind of common sense for the black Left of the 1930s to explain the Spanish Civil War. Thus O'Hara's nickname (and the proposed title of Welles's film), "Black Irish," can be thought of as a stand-in for the missing figure of Africa during World War II, as well as for the broken promise of black prosperity after the war.

As Michael Denning suggests, Welles invites us to view his work as complex allegory, insofar as figures and backdrops are laden with political signification. As Denning reads Welles's 1936 "voodoo" *Macbeth* as a fusion of anticolonial imaginary with an "allegory of an African-American uprising" in the wake of the 1935 Harlem riots, so too can we read the ominous southern setting in *Lady* with similar colonial implications.[30] In one sense, the cruise speaks to the position of labor after world war, increasingly employed and implicated in U.S. defense spending and foreign policy, both through eradication of radicals from CIO unions, and through the participation in neocolonial programs like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The sense of seduction and confinement, as a fascist and a wealthy Jew are literally in bed together (the homoerotic relationship between Grisby and Arthur Bannister has been extensively commented upon), as well as the constant appearance of befuddlement would not exactly be unrecognizable on the faces of once-radical labor activists in the post-Lewis era. The fact that O'Hara can be read as an innocent "fall guy" needs to be countered with O'Hara's desire to "know what the rich are like" and to ultimately enter into a deal with fascism in order to secure his own right to domestic happiness. If the Harry Bridges trial is, as Denning said, one part of the political unconscious of *Lady*, the sinister bargain labor struck with big-business after HUAC is the other. Michael's murder of a fascist spy in Spain as a sign of his militant "blackness" is mirrored by the spyglass wielding Grisby's invitation to "murder" him for money. What was once an antisystemic movement is brought within the logic of personal gain.

Grisby's scopic gaze—surveying the bathing Elsa with his spyglass and the panoramic heights of Acapulco—suggests a self-consciousness about the act of looking in the film. Hollywood's tourist gaze as represented in films like *Out of the Past* and *South Pacific* is rendered as an act of surveillance and colonial mastery, connected to the possession of women and servants, as well as a reference to the act of spying that belongs to images of Nazi spies from the previous war. This gaze is frequently countered by O'Hara's visual association with darkness and depths. Before O'Hara gives his speech likening Grisby and the Bannisters to self-cannibalizing sharks, Grisby and the Bannisters must call for O'Hara and send someone to find him. Grisby and the Bannisters are cut off from the scene of the "picnic," secluded on their own private stretch of beach while the swirling of torches and conga dancers pulse behind them. O'Hara is found mixing with the porters and islanders who have been hired by Bannister for the day. Likewise, O'Hara is only major character in the film who goes, significantly, to the lower deck of the yacht and talks to the black maid. This constant split in the film, literally between the "lower" decks and the "upper" decks, between the "darker" worlds and "brighter" worlds, informs the colonial subtext of the film. As Welles inverts the imperial binary of savage/civilized in his performance of *Macbeth*, so *Lady* suggests that the "bright, guilty world" of power is the one that is truly filled with headhunters and cannibals. O'Hara's trip away from darkness—into the upper decks of the Bannister yacht—is thus also his descent. This "falling upward" expresses itself repeatedly throughout the film, in the "madhouse" when O'Hara spins down the slide—but toward the center of the screen—as well as the vertiginous cliffs of Acapulco O'Hara appears to fall beneath with Grisby as they are climbing.

The scene in Acapulco in which Grisby first attempts to lure O'Hara into his fake murder is perhaps the most complicated expression of this motif in the film. As film critic James Naremore writes, it was a scene heavily edited by the studio in the final cut, in which Grisby's remarks are "systematically played off against American tourists in the background, whose conversations about money become obsessive and nightmarish."[31] Rising from the slums of Acapulco, it is almost as though Grisby and O'Hara pass through geological strata of social life on their ascent, from poor shacks lived in by locals, to tourists arrayed in various classes, from the déclassé man rubbing zinc oxide on his nose and complaining to his wife that "pesos are real money" to the well-heeled worrying about expense accounts on his honeymoon, to the final heights, at which Grisby announces his plan with the offer to O'Hara to "make five thousand dollars." This descent into chaos, rendered by fast shot/reverse-shots of Grisby and O'Hara, and wide-angle lens close-ups with deep focus, suggests the ascent away from the "darkness" of the city is also a fall into madness and corruption, with the final scene displaying the vertigo of the cliffs and black water beneath O'Hara's head. Thus the typical reading of the film, of O'Hara's "fall into darkness," is constantly reversed in the visual language of film, as O'Hara falls away from darkness and into the light. The imperial relationship to the world, represented by Grisby's association with tourism and the "easy money" of colonial theft, is covered over by Grisby's manufactured paranoia about "nuclear war." Rather than read the Cold War as deferred nuclear conflict, as popular history often does, *Lady* exposes the imperial project underneath it. It's telling that Bannister refers to O'Hara's attempt to quit as a lack of a "sense of adventure," considering that adventure films are one of the ways in which colonial desire is constructed on Hollywood screens. Rather than read *Lady* as imperial noir, I would argue that it is an anti-imperial adventure film, constructed and subverting the formula of the genre.

Thus the film's cruise down the Mexican coastline is not a journey to the heart of darkness, as Kaplan suggests, but a debate between twin registers of looking. The "moral darkness" of Elsa and Grisby is not conflated, but rather contrasted to the "racial darkness" of O'Hara. As the "black Irish" is also a reference to the Moorish presence in Ireland, so it suggests yet another subtext to the Spanish Civil War, in which many on the left felt that the Republic would support a more liberal policy in the colonies than the fascists. As Langston Hughes wrote while a correspondent for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, a "free Spain" would also mean "freedom" for "Moorish brothers" who are as "dark" as the narrator in Hughes's poem.[32] Thus the "blackness" that O'Hara receives "for what he did to those finks in '39" renders him racially dark at the same time he morally pure. O'Hara's conflation of light with guilt, his "bright, guilty world" of exploitation in Acapulco, is the most lucid verbal declaration of this principle in the film. The reversal of tropes of light and dark suggests a kind of negative exposure, as the role of Mexico in the film is to do roughly what Biberman and Jarrico intended to do with the original script of *Salt of the Earth*, to expose the postwar political and economic order by traveling to the zone of its hardest impact.

This is not to suggest that we should read *Lady* as wholly separate from the imperialist gaze of its character, Grisby. At heart its basic conceit, that the lady from Shanghai trapped the innocent merchant marine, suggests that the Popular Front aesthetics of anti-imperial solidarity sits somewhat uncomfortably with yellow peril fantasy of Hollywood convention. Welles's attempt to redeem its Asian Orientalism by presenting a brief scene of two Chinese girls code-switching from Cantonese to a hip idiom in the mass spectacle of O'Hara's trial deracializes the "Asian threat" by suggesting that these girls are as "Americanized" as the other spectators. Yet the film merely moves the location of the threat within culture, as O'Hara realizes the "truth" about Elsa once inside the traditional Chinese theater, in which only Chinese is spoken. That the final scene of the film takes place in San Francisco further recalls the Asian Exclusion Acts of the late 19th century, in which the Workingman's Party in San Francisco played a central part. While the film may resist the optimism of postwar empire building that *Viva Zapata!* engages in, it renders at least part of its terror in the last century's language of imperial panic.

In this sense, empire is a prison for the left-wing O'Hara, a "crazy house" in which the radical worker is (en)trapped by both the imperial schemes of the ruling elite and the fear of alien threats lurking in the dark theaters of the city. O'Hara's "leaving the madhouse" in the final scene cannot be separated from Welles's own desire to quit the United States, as the Popular Front coalition splintered—or one could say in the Wellesian language—cannibalized itself in the late 1940s. As much as *Salt of the Earth* radically departs from films like *Viva* and *Lady*, together the three become part of a lengthy discourse on the role of the Popular Front and its position within the new expanding "American century." *Viva* and *Lady* suggest a nostalgized gaze into the past, either with "democracy achieved" in the United States, or with a veteran of the Spanish Civil War who now travels as a prisoner aboard a luxury cruise. While *Viva* recalls active resistance and *Lady* a sharp, anti-imperialist critique, collusion and panic seem the only modes available in the new era of U.S. dominance. Thus the changes to the original script of *Salt* also seem to suggest that staying within the borders of the United States is ultimately safer. While one could argue that the fact that the presence of Mexican Americans challenging U.S. ownership of their land makes the final cut of *Salt* implicitly transnational, the original script very clearly states the relationship between domestic expansionism and the further expansion beyond U.S. shores.

## The Original Script

For all *Salt of the Earth*'s embattled history at the hands of local and state anticommunist repression, the most striking omission from the draft to the final cut of the film is just this pervasive texture of anticommunism. Remaining as a single wisecrack by Ramón in the final version of the film, the repeated presence of anticommunist remarks and references in the original draft creates an ominous cultural atmosphere mineworkers and union officials must negotiate. Anticommunism infects the language of the business elites and allied law enforcement and is present as a continual concern of union leaders as they consider strategies of resistance and solidarity. Consider Charley Vidal's speech on the night of the initial strike vote, cut in its entirety:

> Mine owners will stop at nothing to keep us from getting equality. They'll distort the issues. They'll print lies about our union in their kept press. They'll red-bait your leaders. They'll charge that this strike was cooked up in the Kremlin. They'll remind the public that zinc is needed for the war. They say that any miner who walks off the job now is a traitor to his country.[33]

It is a remarkable speech. It suggests that anticommunism is not a question of subversion, espionage, or external threats, but rather explicitly links anticommunist ideology with control of labor, revealing how questions of foreign policy are the means by which union militancy within the United States can be contained. As a critique, it gets to the heart of the way labor unions were conscripted willingly and unwillingly to cooperate with the corporate elite's assault on radicals by claiming to back seemingly labor-neutral foreign-policy goals. Vidal's speech suggests it is just those "foreign-policy goals" that are used as justification for persecuting workers who strike for fair wages and working conditions. Rather than accept the AFL-CIO's conceit, the speech underscores their inseparability.

Given that the history of Mine-Mill Local 890 is intimately tied both to the anticommunism of the postwar years and to the longer history of anticommunist raids against Mexican citizens of the United States beginning in the years after world war, it's nothing short of stunning that the entire context of anticommunism is removed from the script. Likewise omitted from Vidal's speech are newspaper headlines quoted by Esperanza: "Red Terror in Zinc Town, Says Mine Spokesman. Civic Leaders Demand Union Probe. Commies Sabotage Zinc Production."[34]

Anticommunist rhetoric is so pervasive in the original script and treatment that even a casual conversation between company executives reveals that they consider strike leader Ramón "a Bolshevik," and frequently refer to union leaders as "reds."[35] Likewise, given the decimation of the Left-led unions after the Taft-Hartley Act, it is impossible to understand the ultimate demise of Mine-Mill in the late 1960s without understanding the anticommunist attacks against the union.[36]

More important, however, are the connections among anticommunism, gender, and imperialism. Sheriff Dade, for example, refers to "red leaders" and "Bolsheviks" who mislead "good Mexican girls" to "desert their homes."[37] Sheriff Dade's quote is central, as it expands the question of gender beyond the personal drama of Ramón's unwillingness to accept his wife's new role as strike leader, to suggest the way in which gender roles are articulated as part of an international political project. Not only is there the question of how the mineworkers will react to their wives and daughters taking over the picket line—and men taking over domestic tasks—but the entire question of the Cold War as a specifically *domestic* project is raised. When Sheriff Dade refers to "red leaders" who are leading "good Mexican girls" to "desert their homes," he draws on a strong web of images that connects communism with threats to domestic security. As Elaine Tyler May points out in *Homeward Bound*, gender becomes one of the key sites of discursive struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. U.S. journalists, for instance, repeatedly suggest that Soviet women have "desexualized themselves" by leaving the home to work in industry, while gender transgression itself becomes a sign of communist influence.[38] Likewise, as Nicholas Berg points out, Mexican and Mexican American women have always been read as outside heteronormative relationships, their sexuality and presumed fertility both a domestic and a eugenic threat.[39] In this way the script suggests that gender equality, class equality, and racial equality are intrinsically related and that such categories are mobilized to suppress other forms of resistance as well.

In the original script, not only do women and men find that their struggles for equality are inseparable, but Ramón is obsessed with the idea that Esperanza's new role with the union poses a sexual threat to him, that Esperanza is "sneaking off somewhere" with the union president, Charley Vidal.[40] This intimate connection, in which Ramón understands his wife's political activism as a transgression against marriage, suggests the ways in which the Cold War domestic policy affected the lives of even union militants. It also suggests that gender discourse can stifle political movements for social change. And one can hear in Ramón's charge of infidelity against Esperanza a distant parallel to the reasoning of mine superintendent Alexander that Sheriff Dade should use force to remove women from the picket line. As Sheriff Dade refuses to do so, Alexander hotly accuses Dade of being soft on communism: "But don't you see what they're doing? It's an old Commie trick. Don't you read the papers? How the reds in Korea put women up in front of their troops so our boys won't fire? They're doing the same thing here."[41] Of course, this is a statement Ramón would never make. But nonetheless, gender transgression and political subversion nonetheless share a common discursive thread for both figures, regardless of their political, racial, and class position. For a corporate executive like Alexander, asserting communist subversion is a way of containing the new threat posed by the union. For Ramón, asserting sexual transgression is a way of containing the threat against his traditional role as patriarch within the home.

Yet Alexander's comment—also omitted in the final version—goes a step further. It makes a direct connection between newspaper reports from the Korean War and a strike in rural New Mexico. The executive's remark hence links gender transgression to communism and the Mine-Mill Local 890 to the international Cold War. This gets at the heart of the preproduction draft—that the actions of these miners in New Mexico exist within a national, even international framework that shapes how their lives are understood by the public—and even by themselves. That Mexican American strikers are no different from "reds in Korea," and indeed, the fact that a corporate executive collapses a picket line and a battle line makes the connection between U.S. labor and Cold War imperialism clear. In the same way that radical black activists in the 1930s understood Jim Crow practices in the United

States as discursive and material corollaries to European colonialism in Africa, the original script understands that wars fought against people of color abroad are mapped onto bodies of color in Silver City.

The original script also highlights the connections among racism, anticommunism, and the ideology of domesticity and class within the institutions that construct life in "Zinc Town." The script draws compelling structural parallels among Esperanza's confessions at church, her son Luis's experiences at school, and Ramón's experience with the mine and even with his union. In an opening scene of the original script depicting Esperanza's confession, she explains how she slapped Luis after he failed his English test and then quickly goes on to relate the way school officials punish him for speaking English at school, how the "Anglo kids" tease him, and how he is "always fighting."[42] The scene conveys the school's efforts to forcibly assimilate the Mexican American children, but also suggests ways in which the local elite view complaints of any kind: the priest criticizes Esperanza for instilling in Luis a "rebellious spirit." At the same time, the priest enforces distinct gender roles in the home. For example, when Esperanza compares Luis's behavior at school to that of her husband "so full of pride, so quick to take offense, brooding, walling himself off from me," the priest rhetorically asks if Esperanza is confessing her sins or "discussing your husband's."

Her confession likewise forms a structural parallel with the opening shot of Ramón, sitting in the mine locker room, smoking a cigarette. He's been disciplined by the mine for speaking out against dangerous blasting practices, even chided by union officials for mounting a "one-man work stoppage," as concerned with keeping Ramón in line as they are with ensuring that challenges to the mine's unsafe practices are made through the negotiating committee.[43] There is a special poignancy to Ramón's charge that he is forced to "work alone"—or blast without his usual assistant—since it is in isolation that both Esperanza and Ramón must face their challenges to the social order. This parallel is explicitly drawn in the treatment, comparing the darkness of the mine with the "dark" of the "confession booth," suggesting ways in which their lives are both materially and ideologically circumscribed. Yet there is another parallel Esperanza's confession serves: the confession is structured much like the questioning of HUAC testimony. Not only does the priest warn Esperanza to stay away from "radical ideas," but it is implicitly understood that if she abandons her radical and thus "sinful" attitude, that if she "names names" and discusses the union's strike plans, she will receive absolution. While Esperanza can break with the oppressive structure of confession to join the ladies' auxiliary, Ramón's stubborn individuality plays a far more complex role in determining his response to change. For although

Ramón's individuality makes him an organic leader, willing to take on the mine and cautious union officials, it is the same masculine individuality that won't allow him to accept his wife's new role. It is telling that in Ramón's return to the union after deserting it with other male chauvinists, the union officials make as much of his individualism as they do his sexism, comparing him to the rugged frontier individualist Daniel Boone.[44] And given the context of imperialism and racism that is the important texture of the original draft, naming Ramón after a white frontier hero when he abandons his union is hardly incidental.

Yet one of the more striking omissions from the original script is the woman Wilson names simply "the widow." Biberman and Wilson claim that they cut Ramón's extramarital affair for the reasons mentioned above—to suggest that Ramón is having an affair would be to promote negative stereotypes of Mexican Americans. Yet they don't mention that she is effectively a war widow because her husband is listed as "missing in action" in Korea.

> Missing in action, she muses, missing in action. The torn flesh of his body scattered over a paddy field somewhere in Korea . . . swallowed up by a war he hated, losing a life he never got to live, leaving an empty marriage from which love was always missing.[45]

This short monologue not only exposes the empty domesticity of the Cold War project, but suggests that men and women of color are proxies in an imperialist war they also suffer as victims. Unlike *Zapata*'s depiction of the United States as liberator of Spanish-speaking peoples abroad, the original script presents U.S. foreign policy as a murder of Spanish-speaking people at home. This scene, like Alexander connecting the picketing women with myths about Korean battle tactics and Charley Vidal's speech in which the war effort is used to crush union demands, internationalizes the struggle and questions the goals of U.S. foreign policy. The fact that this unseen victim "hated" the Korean War—not "reluctantly fought" or simply "misunderstood" it—also forces the viewer to question why this "battle for freedom" might engender such an attitude. The posing of the Korean War as a major plot point in the story also implicitly critiques liberal advocates who insisted that one must accept U.S. foreign policy goals in exchange for civil rights. As the fate of the mineworker suggests, foreign policy and civil rights are inseparable: the conscription of minorities for the most dangerous aspects of military service is very much part of the logic of a racialized state.

It's telling that the widow also considers herself "missing in action," trying unsuccessfully to "find herself with Ramón." It suggests that the Cold War battlefront on which one can go "missing" is broader than military action on the Korean Peninsula—that gender identity has been "conscripted" into the project, like the male members of the community. And like the military itself, Ramón demands her "submission." As she tells Ramón that she will join the picket line, she challenges not only the Cold War domestic order, but the demands the Cold War places on labor. She says she will not be "missing" any longer. In this sense, the questions the script raises about anticommunism, the international Cold War, race, and domesticity are answered by the widow's decision to no longer "go missing." The military metaphor of "going missing in action"—an unhappy marriage and a lost husband—is ultimately realized when she joins the new battle line / picket line of women. She is not only winning a strike, but striking a blow against an entire militarized, patriarchal order based on racialized codes of power.

Indeed, from the very beginning of *Salt*, Wilson frames the strike as a question of U.S. imperialism. Esperanza narrates the opening as she passes by an "ancient graveyard," remarking that her history, the history of "her people," is "recorded only on these worn stones."[46] In the original script, the graveyard functions as a recurring symbol of the miners' history and sense of pride as a distinct people, making the point repeatedly that the only land that the company doesn't own is the graveyard by the church. While this is clearly problematic from the point of view of civil rights advocacy and Mexican American self-identity, suggesting by way of metaphor that Mexican Americans are a "dead people" who have no living cultural traditions, the graveyard also functions as an alternate history, a way to connect the racial discrimination faced by the Mexican American workers to the history of U.S. conquest of Mexico. In this sense, the treatment of the miners in Local 890 is presented as merely the latest manifestation of a long tradition of conquest and institutionalized persecution. The graveyard, a recurring symbol throughout the work, punctures not only the view of American exceptionalism projected abroad, but also the frequent insistence that the United States, unlike Europe, is not an imperial power. The image of a cultural remnant preserved in the face of conquest is one that would likely resonate strongly with members of anticolonial movements and, indeed, suggests a tough dialectical stance that colonialism enforces "tradition" while at the same time such "traditions" remain a source of resistance.

The original script poses a totalized world in which institutions such as the mining company, the government, the press, the church, the law, and the family are unified by anticommunist ideology for the purpose of domestic control, most specifically the labor power of industrial workers. And it is against this backdrop that the Quinteros and their entire company town are placed figuratively outside of the national frame, literally people who are connected to a dead past with greater strength than to a current Americanized culture. It is one of the more profound ironies of the Cold War that the "American" identity of Mexican Americans that Biberman comes to understand also comes at the implicit price of locating the mineworkers within the national frame. It emphasizes the paradox of the Cold War era, that, entering the "mainstream" and becoming "American," one also risks entering an exceptionalist discourse, no matter how radical one's politics. Since all that is communist is indeed "un-American," to remove the film's critique of anticommunism is also to limit its critique of U.S. imperialism, the Korean War, and the parallel institutional structures that maintain them.

## Negotiating History, Negotiating Histories: Two Views of the Cold War

Of course, one could argue that the final edition of *Salt* says implicitly what the original draft says explicitly—that at the height of the Cold War, a picket line of miners' wives from a blacklisted Mexican American and Native American union challenges the consensus so dramatically as to not need editorial comment. And what is more, from the opening shot, we hear a sustained and compact meditation on the meaning of colonial memory, tracing the many layers of history from the dispossession of the Quinteros to their lives in a company town. And of course, any strenuous debate on the content ended up mattering very little to its critics and enemies—it, like the crew, was blacklisted within the United States, the film limited to two theaters on short runs, and Biberman's "Independent Productions Corporation" spent the remainder of its capital on lawsuits. Yet I would argue that the persistence of the original script in drawing the readers' attention to the international dimensions of the conflict operates almost with a kind of Brechtian effect—one cannot naturalize the experience of the film, nor can one place the events of Silver City outside of an international narrative of imperialism. The progression of events is constantly interrupted by multiple and competing discourses that literally do violence to the narrative of community struggle. One cannot read the original script without understanding the way in which daily life, or Gramscian "common sense," is a product of U.S. imperialism, the Korean War, and the Cold War social order. While the final published script and film remain transnational in their critique of U.S. expansion into the Mexican north and its celebration of Mexican American culture—one cannot help but notice that the film is also brought more closely within the bounds of the nation. With the conclusion spoken by Esperanza that "we had won the strike," it becomes possible to read *Salt* as a film emphasizing a civil rights concept of expanding U.S. democracy.[47]

Despite these changes made to the film, one needs to be careful to avoid a neat binary between radical artists and more cautious union leaders, bold challenges against the Cold War order and calculated submission. It's clear that the workers of Mine-Mill 890 chose a militant, communist-led union over the United Mineworkers and the Steelworkers, both of which engaged in red-baiting campaigns against the union, first in the 1930s and later in the 1950s. As labor historian Robert Zieger writes, Mine-Mill was known nationally along with a handful of other unions, such as the International Ladies Garment Workers and the Fur and Leather Workers' Union, as among the more radical and democratic unions to emerge from the social upheavals of the 1930s.[48] In the Southwest, Mine-Mill was more than just a more militant alternative to other, more bureaucratic CIO unions. In part because of a long tradition of mineworker radicalism going back decades, and in part because of a growing political and ethnic solidarity among Mexican Americans, members of Mine-Mill tended to look at the union as a whole social movement, embodying not only a desire to desegregate the mines, but a larger fight for racial, gender, and class equality within the entire community.[49] According to another union activist, for Mine-Mill 890 president Juan Chacón the union was as much a source of securing higher wages as it was a source of ethnic identity, and a means for combating the colonial character of capital in the Southwest. Chacón's "attitude toward management," the union official recounts, "was 'I'm Chicano and you're a gringo and you're fucking the Mexican.'"[50] This quote dramatically suggests that the union was a central expression of racial pride and ethnic nationalism, articulated through the modality of a class-based organization. As one labor historian noted in a report prepared for the U.S. Bureau of Labor, labor activism among Mexican Americans of the Southwest often "took the form of organized racial conflict."[51] That Chacón was also cast as the lead in *Salt* as Ramón is not an accident: the film committee was clear about wanting actors to also be individuals who expressed the collective desires of the community.

And like other central organizations of the Popular Front, Mine-Mill was deeply invested in a politics of international solidarity, condemning the Truman Doctrine, opposing the Marshall Plan, officially endorsing the Wallace "peace" campaign, as what some refer to as the last gasp of the Popular Front against the Cold War.[52] And like other central organizations of the Popular Front, the union suffered tremendously for its internationalism. Not only was Mine-Mill thrown out of the CIO and raided by the Steelworkers on the orders of the national CIO leadership, but also Local 890's international representative, Clint Jencks (who played Frank Barnes in *Salt*), was imprisoned for refusing to sign a noncommunist affidavit. While these actions did not end Mine-Mill's stance on racial equality, it would be an understatement to suggest that it may have dampened its enthusiasm for openly embracing an anticommunist platform at the height of the red scare. As legal counsel for Mine-Mill Nathan Witt argued, "Ideology took a backseat to racial equality with Mexican American unionists," who were "more concerned with fighting discrimination than in whether or not organizers were members of the Communist Party."[53] While this kind of political and cultural pragmatism may have made Communist organizers feel they could work without fear of hostility in Mine-Mill, it also meant that at the height of the Cold War, presenting an antiracist message in *Salt* may have been more important than critiquing international anticommunism. As California Communist Party leader and Los Angeles area Mine-Mill organizer Dorothy Healey remembers, she was allowed to work in the union as long as her affiliation with the Communist Party remained at the level of an open secret. When she decided to attend a high-profile conference, Mine-Mill "felt that having one of their organizers seen at a national convention of the Communist Party was not going to do them any good, and so they gave [her] an ultimatum: don't go, or don't come back."[54]

For all of the Mine-Mill rank-and-file militancy, it must also be remembered that for many both in the Anglo community and in the small middle-class Mexican American community, Mexican American unionism was tainted with the brush of subversion to begin with, and the question of Mexican American identity at the time was sharply cut by contradictory discourses both embracing and rejecting national belonging and citizenship. A film that emphasizes the explicit rejection of U.S. wartime patriotism and suggests the possible Communist affiliation of the mineworkers may run closer to the truth, but it nonetheless unfortunately risks reproducing a white-nationalist discourse on the political, social, and cultural "otherness" of Mexican Americans. For the community of Grant County, questions of political, economic, and social persecution were nothing new, and the crisis of the Cold War was a continuation of patterns of exploitation that had existed since the U.S. invasion and occupation of Mexico. In addition, the history of the mineworkers' struggle in the Southwest is one punctuated with vigilante violence, deportation of union activists whether or not they held legal residency or citizenship, and red-baiting by the white community, influential members of the middle-class Mexican American community, other unions, and official state forces.[55] As Curtis Marez points out, to be Mexican American in the Southwest was already to be marked as "other" and potentially communist—opening up the possibility for state-sponsored violence.[56]

Therefore, one need not look further than the union filmmaker committee to understand how the alterations were made. By one estimation, the film had been reviewed by nearly four hundred people in the community by the time it was actually shot.[57] Thus the immediate needs for representation and for political change likely dominated the selection process—as Biberman later wrote, the film was the "expression of a community," not the vision of a particular group of artists.[58] Rather than understand the changes of the film as indicating that a once-radical union gave in to anticommunism in a quid pro quo exchange for civil rights gains, the changes instead suggest that Mine-Mill attempted to manage a delicate balance between its vulnerability as a minority union and its commitment to profound social change. This delicate negotiation of militant commitment to the local and to international politics of anti-imperialism, along with the workers of Mine-Mill's unique vulnerability as subjects with only limited access to full citizenship rights, meant that any act of resistance was necessarily circumscribed.

The final film version, while perhaps less radical in some ways than the preproduction script, manages this delicate balance between narratives of resistance and narratives of belonging. The exchange between Ramón and Barnes is telling: recalling that Barnes couldn't recognize a portrait of Benito Juárez, Ramón challenges him that if he didn't recognize a portrait of George Washington, "You would say I was an awful dumb Mexican."[59] This dialogue performs a double function: not only does it reaffirm the cultural heritage of the Mexican American Southwest, but it also displays the way Ramón is required to perform his citizenship as cultural knowledge to prevent himself from being labeled "a dumb Mexican," while Barnes has no such reciprocal burden. This scene articulates Ramón as both a national subject and a subject in resistance, without compromising either. In the context of the mass deportations of the 1930s, and the impending deportations of "Operation Wetback," protecting claims to citizenship was not an idle concern.

As I have suggested, the changes in the script did not simply make for a "more accurate" or "more progressive" film. Likewise, the question of artistic democracy and cross-race/cross-class collaboration does not automatically produce a result that is more critical of the oppression that produced these terms to begin with. This is not to take away any of the film's power. It remains a moving story of labor militancy, of the transformative power of collective action, of resistance to the ways in which domestic and racial discourse can be mobilized to divide workers from their struggle for dignity, rights, and control over their own labor. It is also a powerful critique of Cold War hegemony, articulating the ways in which the family, mass culture, consumerism, and liberalism function as weapons to demobilize a once militant labor movement. And certainly, compared to other films made in the 1950s that featured Mexican Americans, the assertion that Mexican American cultural heritage is something to celebrate and that it plays an active role in their strike victory was unheard of at the time. If the changes to the film mean anything, they are a reminder that resistance is always culturally and materially located not only within the realm of the possible, but within the immediate needs of disempowered groups. For members of the Hollywood Ten, exposing the scope of the international Cold War and finding a cultural front from which to critique its multiple sites of exploitation must have seemed like the current crisis in need of address. I can only imagine that for members of Mine-Mill Local 890, the Cold War, pared down to a mention of the Taft-Hartley Act, would be less a crisis than a return of the same. While the Cold War stalled the militant Mexican American union efforts for more than a decade, the repression of the 1950s was hardly new to the Grant County community. For this reason, if for no other, the original script deserves to be restored as a work in its own right, as not only a powerful critique of the Cold War, but as a living template of how two subject positions, both partly within the discursive field of the "old Left," responded to their historical moment. This is not to suggest that the original script should be imposed over or used instead of the final version of the film. Indeed, the original script and the final version of the film should not be understood as opposites. While I argue the original script contains valuable scenes, one can't deny that Wilson and Biberman's objective—to make a movie as a collaborative project with the miners of Local 890—transforms the picture's meaning into something else, a medium that is far more powerful than whatever words the original script may contain. That is to say, the meaning of *Salt of the Earth* is the fact that the union made, rewrote, starred in, and defended the film, and had the courage to both trust and challenge Biberman, Jarrico, and Wilson and to stand up to the Cold War consensus at both the local and national levels. And yet the different needs and messages of these two groups lay at the heart of the film's paradox.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture* (New York: Verso, 1998), 396.

2. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 271.

3. George Lipsitz, *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 46–47.

4. Corey Robin, "Fear of the Liberals," *Nation*, September 26, 2005; Kathleen Grier, "The Siren Song for War," *The National Memo*, March 22, 2013, http://www.nationalmemo.com/the-siren-song-of-war-why-pundits-beat-the-drums-for-iraq/; Chase Madar, "For U.S. Foreign Policy, the 'Left' and the 'Right' Have Little Meaning," *Aljazeera English*, June 8, 2014, http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/democrats-republicansforeignpolicy.html.

5. For a consideration of how antiracism shaped the Popular Front, please see Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights* (New York: Norton, 2013); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) and *Race Rebels* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Bill Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African American Cultural Politics, 1935–46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem during the Great Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Mark Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917–1936* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998); Chris Vials, *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U.S. Culture, 1935–47* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013); Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Alan Wald, *Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

In addition to these crucial works, Lizabeth Cohen, Wendy Kozol, and Paula Rabinowitz offer ways to think about how gender structured the labor movement; sexuality was key to understanding the role mass media and radical political movements of the decade. Lizabeth Cohen makes the argument that price controls during and after World

War II were a major component of the New Deal coalition, often overlooked due to their importance in the domestic sphere. *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar American* (New York: Vintage, 2008); Paula Rabinowitz, *Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Wendy Kozol's essay "Madonnas in the Fields: Photography, Gender, and 1930s Farm Relief" also frames the New Deal as a specifically gendered project, based on the idea of healing the patriarchal family, *Genders* 2 (Summer 1988): 1–23.

Joseph Entin, Barbara Foley, Cary Nelson, James Smethurst, and Mark Szalay suggest how the how the literary Left shaped modernism at midcentury: Joseph Entin, *Sensational Modernism: Experimental Fiction and Photography in Thirties America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Barbara Foley, *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929–1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Cary Nelson, *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); James Smethurst, *The New Red Negro: The Literary Left and African American Poetry, 1930–1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Mark Szalay, *New Deal Modernism: American Literature and the Invention of the Welfare State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

6. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 134.

7. "Common sense is not something rigid and stationary, but is in continuous transformation, becoming enriched with scientific notions and philosophical opinions that have entered into common circulation. 'Common sense' is the folklore of philosophy and always stands midway between folklore proper (folklore as it is normally understood) and the philosophy, science, and economics of the scientists. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, a relatively rigidified phase of popular knowledge in a given time and place." Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985), 421.

8. The Popular Front is defined in its most limited meaning as a global coalition against fascism. "Popular Front" also refers to a global social democratic, anti-imperialist movement, witnessing elections of Popular Front governments in Chile, Argentina, Spain, and France. Other Popular Front movements existed in much of Latin America, as well as North America and western Europe. To this day, many progressive governments in Latin America still use a Popular Front vocabulary.

9. Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 12.

10. Shelley Streeby, *Radical Sensations: World Movements, Violence, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 19.

11. Giovanni Arrighi's *Geometry of Imperialism* (London: Verso, 1983) is an excellent explication and critique of Hobson's theory. Arrighi gives his succinct summary of Hobson on pp. 20–36. It should also be noted that V. I. Lenin based his classic work on Hobson's thesis, expanding Hobson's territorial concept of empire to a more diffuse definition, focusing on finance, monopoly capital, and class formation.

12. Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J. T. Way, "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis," *American Quarterly* 60.3 (September 2008): 625–48. As the authors of the essay note, "One can say a great many contradictory things about what is wrong with transnationalism and they will be true about someone's transnationalism."

13. Masao Miyoshi, "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," *Critical Inquiry* 19.4 (Summer 1993): 726–51. Implicit in Miyoshi's argument is that there is nothing automatically critical about the term "transnational," as it merely describes the most recent protean shift of a global capitalist system. While this is true, I would also suggest that this underscores the precise reason why anticapitalist intellectuals need to incorporate a critical transnational perspective into their work.

14. Sarika Chandra, *Dislocalism: The Crisis of Globalization and the Remobilizing of Americanism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011). Chandra remarks throughout the book, particularly in chapter 2, that the humanities have adopted the dominant language of capitalism in attempt to remain relevant in a world of neoliberal austerity.

15. Michael Denning, "The Novelists' International," in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (London: Verso, 2004), 51–72.

16. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 63–64.

17. Denning, *Age of Three Worlds*, 67. I find it a little surprising that *The Cultural Front* does not include such a global analysis as Denning works out in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds.* I might offer as explanation the powerful cultural memory of the Popular Front as a nationalist movement.

18. I find the Frankfurt School's analysis of modernism (what they term the "avant-garde") to be compelling—that it is an attempt to critique but also to capture the totalizing hyperrationality of monopoly capitalism. Herbert Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," in *The Essential Marcuse: Selected Writings of Philosopher and Social Critic Herbert Marcuse* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 67.

19. See Thomas Borstelmann, *Cold War and the Color Line* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; Paul Robeson, *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writing, Speeches, and Interviews, 1918–1974*, ed. Philip Foner (New York: Citadel Press, 1978).

20. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Klein discusses the way the rhetoric of Popular Front internationalism was conscripted by the State Department, as well as by Hollywood, into supporting anticommunism abroad.

21. Kim Scipes, "It's Time to Come Clean: Open the AFL-CIO Archives on International Labor Operations," *Labor Studies Journal* 25.2 (Summer 2000): 4–25. Also, Kim Scipes, "Labor Imperialism Redux? The AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy Since 1995," *Monthly Review* 57.1 (May 2005): 17–38.

22. For a discussion of the politics of memory, see Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

23. Clifford Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*, in *The Best Short Plays of the Social Theatre*, ed. William Kozlenko (New York: Random House, 1939), 20.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 18.

26. The "Third Period," sometimes referred to as the "revolutionary period" of the Communist International, refers to a struggle between the Lovestonites and Stalinists, in which the latter won. Jay Lovestone insisted that capitalism was gaining ground and that

revolution was not imminent; Stalin argued that Communist parties around the globe should prepare for revolution and oppose Western imperialism, rather than work within the democratic system or form an alliance with Western powers. Richard Seymour's *American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-imperialism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 79–95, makes the argument that it was only during the Communist "Third Period" that the CPUSA supported anti-imperialist movements abroad. And of course Theodore Draper's classic in the Communist Party history genre, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004), continues with the argument about the Communist Party's "Third Period." Glenda Glimore's *Defying Dixie*, while charting the way Communist Party activists in the South challenged racism both in the United States and abroad, does also give an inordinate amount of credit to U.S. members of the Comintern for setting policy, yet also documents how Communist Party activists in the South continued their anti-imperialist politics long after the Comintern embraced its Popular Front policy.

27. Hakim Adi, "The Negro Question: The Communist International and Black Liberation in the Interwar Years," in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, ed. Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 155; Kelley, *Race Rebels*; Robin D. G. Kelley, "'This Ain't Ethiopia, but It'll Do': African-Americans and the Spanish Civil War," in *Race Rebels*, 123–58.

28. Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978); Karl Yoneda, *Ganbatte: Sixty-Year Struggle of a Kibei Worker* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Zaragosa Vargas, "Tejana Radical: Emma Tenayuca and the San Antonio Labor Movement during the Great Depression," *Pacific Historical Review* 66.4 (November 1997): 553–80.

29. Howard Rushmore, "Singing Warrior," *People's Daily World*, 1.31 (May 1938), magazine, 5; Chief Benito Altaha, "Custer's Last Stand: An Indian chief Who Fought with Sitting Bull Tells the True Story of That Mighty Battle on the Banks of the Little Big Horn," *People's Daily World* 1.103 (April 1938), magazine, 7–8.

30. Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman, *Dorothy Healey Remembers: A Life in the American Communist Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 57–58.

31. Glenda Gilmore recounts a similar instance in *Defying Dixie*, in which a young Communist Party organizer who was "horrified" by the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 simply went back to organizing against white supremacy in the North Carolina: "International events, disquieting as they may be, simply could not distract [CP organizer Junius Scales] from that mission" (304).

32. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 4–6.

33. "Manifesto and Program of the American League Against War and Fascism: Second U.S. Congress," Chicago, American League Against War and Fascism, 1934, University of California, Davis, Special Collections, 4.

34. H.M.R., "Million Students 'Strike' vs. War All over U.S.A.," *Hollywood Now* 1.13 (May 1, 1937): 8.

35. James Lerner, "American League Against War and Fascism," in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, ed. Paul Buhle, Mary Jo Buhle, and Dan Georgakis (New York: Garland, 1990), 25–27.

36. "Fight Pacifism in Our Anti-war Work," *Western Worker* 2.9 (February 27, 1933): 4.

37. "The President's Page: Our Union, the War, and National Defense," *UCAPAWA*

*News* 1.8 (May–June 1940): 3; "CIO Policy on National Defense," *UCAPAWA News* 1.8 (May–June 1940): 2–3.

38. Mike Quin, "The War Has Changed, Says Murphy," in *On the Drumhead: A Selection from the Writings of Mike Quin*, ed. P. Ryan (San Francisco: Pacific Publishing Foundation, 1948), 120–23. Originally published in *People's Daily World*.

39. According to official CPUSA discourse, antifascist policy shifted to the right after 1936, from fighting for an end to imperialism to supporting imperialist "democracies" against major fascist powers. Yet a look at actual statements by activists in socialist, labor, and communist newspapers suggests a different story. See also Anthony Dawahare, *Nationalism, Marxism, and African American Literature between the Wars* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 81–83.

40. Lerner, "American League," 26.

41. Perry Anderson, "American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers," *New Left Review* 83.2 (September–October 2013): 11. See also Arrighi, *Geometry of Imperialism*, in which he argues that the United States adopted the mantel of British "free trade" immediately after World War II.

42. Anderson, "American Foreign Policy," 6–12.

43. Ibid., 12.

44. "Aug. 1 Meetings Show Growing Opposition to Bosses' Wars," *Western Worker* 2.33 (August 14, 1933): 1.

45. Beauvincent, *Did You Know?* pen and ink, *Western Worker* 4.36 (May 6, 1935): 3.

46. R. A. Morton, "General Barrows Enters into Heaven," *Western Worker* 3.31 (July 23, 1934): 6.

47. For a concise discussion of the CPUSA shift see Paul Buhle's entry "Antifascism" in Buhle, Buhle, and Georgakis, *Encyclopedia of American Left*, 46.

48. "A Program Against War and Fascism," New York, American League Against War and Fascism, 1936, Southern California Library Special Collections, 4–14; Elizabeth Noble, *Billions for Bullets* (New York: American League Against War and Fascism, 1937), Southern California Library Special Collections, 3–21.

49. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 25.

50. Michael Gold, "Migratory Intellectuals," *New Masses*, December 15, 1936, 27–30. See also a pamphlet by Carey McWilliams, "It can Happen Here: Active Anti-Semitism in Los Angeles," Los Angeles, 1935, 3–6.

51. Kelley, "This Ain't Ethiopia."

52. Seymour, *American Insurgents*, 89–90.

53. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; and Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

54. Naison, *Communists in Harlem*, 39–41. Naison charts that after the decline of the Garveyite movement, many black radicals were actively recruited into the Communist Party, suggesting both the importance of black self-determination for the Communist Party in the United States and the fluidity of political discourse on the radical left.

55. Robin Kelley is dismissive of the importance of Communist Party's slogan "Self-determination in the Black Belt," citing the greater importance of the practical issues of racism, employment, and antilynching to Communist Party organizing strategy in the South (*Hammer and Hoe*, 122, 225). However, Kelley argues in *Race Rebels* that black nationalism was a central part of the cultural literary production of black CP activists. Mark Naison agrees that the doctrine was never a practical campaign issue, yet he argues

formulating an answer to black nationalism was theoretically crucial for focusing Communist Party leaders to take black issues more seriously, organizing solidarity movements against the invasion of Ethiopia, and creating a revolutionary imaginary that could equal the Garveyites' visionary pull of militant nationalism.

56. Dawahare, *Nationalism*, 73–76; Robin D. G. Kelley, "'Afric Sons with Banner Red': African American Communists and the Politics of Culture, 1919–1934," in *Race Rebels*, 103–22.

57. Meridel Le Sueur, *Ripening: Selected Work*, 2nd ed., ed. Elaine Hedges (New York: Feminist Press, 1993), 171–74.

58. Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2008), 36–38.

59. Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945–1995* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 5–9.

60. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack (London: Verso, 1985).

61. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 130.

62. Edmund Wilson, *American Jitters: A Year of the Slump* (New York: Books for the Libraries, 1968), 303, 253.

63. Ibid., 254.

64. Ibid., 254–55.

65. Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 50–51.

66. Ibid., 58.

67. Miyoshi, "A Borderless World?" 726–51.

68. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

69. To read a good account of the postmodern critique of modernism, see part 1 of David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Conditions of Cultural Change* (London: Blackwell, 1990), 3–120.

70. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, "Introduction: The Global Horizons of Modernism," in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 2.

71. T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, ed. Cary Nelson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), lines 369–70.

72. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

73. Foley, *Radical Representations*, 22–23.

74. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 120–21.

75. Ibid., 124.

76. Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 42.

77. Entin, *Sensational Modernism*, 5–12; Paula Rabinowitz, *Black and White and Noir: America's Pulp Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

78. Kenneth Burke, "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," in *American Writers' Congress* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), 87–94, 88–90.

79. Ibid., 90.

80. David C. Williams, "Thirty Years Later: Memories of the First American Writers' Congress: A Symposium," *American Scholar* 35 (1966): 495–516.

81. This is David Scott's formulation of James's argument. David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

82. Archie Phinney, "Numipu among the White Settlers," *Wicazo Sa Review* 17.2 (Fall 2002): 42.

83. Langston Hughes, "Letter from Spain," in *Oxford Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, 2nd ed., ed. Cary Nelson and Bartholomew Brinkman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 617.

84. Archie Phinney, "On Understanding Soviet Russia," address delivered before the Tesceminium Club, Lewiston, Idaho, 1943, Archie Phinney Papers, National Archives–Pacific Alaska Region, box 2, RG 075.

85. Sidney Resnik, oral interview, New Haven, August 2005.

86. Donald Pease, "C.L.R. James, *Moby Dick*, and the Emergence of Transnational American Studies," in *The Futures of American Studies*, ed. Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 149.

87. Ibid., 157.

88. D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* (1936; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 207.

89. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 255–76.

90. Ibid., 271.

91. James Rorty, *Where Life Is Better: An Unsentimental American Journey* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1936), 272–73.

92. José David Saldívar, *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Colonality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Shelley Streeby's chapter "Global Haymarket" in *Radical Sensations*, 35–71, makes clear the ways in which labor struggles were waged throughout the Americas.

93. Emma Tenayuca and Homer Brooks, "The Mexican Question in the Southwest," *Communist*, March 1939, 258–59.

94. Michel Rolph-Trouillot, "Power in the Story," *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 25–27.

95. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 145–66.

96. Barbara Foley, *Wrestling with the Left: The Making of Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1–23.

97. Alan Wald, "Deradicalizing Intellectuals and the Next Left," Socialism 2014 Conference (June 2014), Chicago.

98. Michel Foucault makes a similar point about sexuality, suggesting that the control revolves around the multiplication of discourse rather than repression *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978).

99. Denning notes that many left-wing commentators felt Reagan's appeals to the "common man" and to a new "morning in America" smacked of the sentimental "schwärmerei" of the Popular Front (*Cultural Front*, 116–18).

100. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914–1962* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

## Chapter 1

1. Clifford Odets, "What Happened to Us in Cuba," *New Masses* 16.3 (July 16, 1935): 9–11.

2. Clifford Odets, "Play Synopsis and Act I of Law of Flight," Clifford Odets Papers, 1926–1963, box 22, folder 5, Billy Rose Theater Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 1. Odets refers to "Law of Flight" in his notes and personal correspondence as "The Cuba Play" and "The Cuban Play." As I discuss later in the chapter, the fact that Odets refers to his own play as a problematic of place suggests a great deal regarding his own feelings about Cuba's relationship to the United States, and his self-consciousness writing about a "foreign" country.

3. Clifford Odets, "Final Draft of the Play Law of Flight," Clifford Odets Papers, 1926–1963, box 23, folder 13, Billy Rose Theater Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, act 1, scene 1.5.

4. William W. Demastes, "Preface: American Dramatic Realisms, Viable Frames of Thought," in *Realism and the American Dramatic Tradition*, ed. William W. Demastes (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), xvi.

5. Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 12–13.

6. Vials, *Realism for the Masses*, 6.

7. Odets, "Law of Flight," act 1, scene 1, 6.

8. Ibid., act 1, scene 1, 4.

9. Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 3.

10. Ibid., 3.

11. "Down with the General Fraud," *Time* 23.32 (December 5, 1938).

12. Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 12–13.

13. Denning, *Cultural Front*, xv.

14. Burke, "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," 90.

15. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). See also George Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

16. Burke, "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," 90–92.

17. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 168–69.

18. Meridel Le Sueur, *Salute to Spring* (New York: International Publishers, 1989), 25.

19. Carleton Beals, *Rifle Rule in Cuba* (New York: Provisional Committee for Cuba, 1935), Southern California Library Special Collections. See also *Cuban News Week* (New York: Provisional Committee for Cuba, 1935–36), New York Public Library Humanities General Research Division, and Clifford Odets's testimony before HUAC on his journey to Cuba in Eric Bentley's anthology of HUAC testimony entitled *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938–68* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 506.

20. A description of some of Odets's advocacy work on behalf of Cuban revolutionaries can be found in Margaret Brenman-Gibson's biography, *Clifford Odets: American Playwright* (New York: Atheneum, 1981), 365–68.

21. See reviews of the following books in the *New Masses*: Lucile Perry, "Preserving

Cuba for Imperialism," review of *Problems of the New Cuba*, *New Masses* 15.2 (April 9, 1935): 25; "The Big News," review of *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press*, *New Masses* 15.1 (April 2, 1935): 35. See also Sam Dlugin, *Blood on the Sugar (Terror in Cuba)*, booklet (New York: International Labor Defense, 1935), Southern California Library Special Collections; Martin Kaye and Louise Perry, *Who Fights for a Free Cuba*, booklet (New York: Workers' Library Publishers/Anti-Imperialist League of the United States, 1933), Southern California Library Special Collections.

22. "'Hands off Cuba' Is Demand at Long Beach Meeting," *Western Worker* 2.39 (September 25, 1933): 1.

23. Louis A. Pérez Jr., *The War of 1898: United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), x.

24. Marifeli Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5. See also Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Cuba: The Making of a Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1968), and Tulio Halperin Donghi, *The Contemporary History of Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

25. Perez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 15.

26. Donghi, *Contemporary History*, 240–41.

27. Perez, *The War of 1898*, 277.

28. Beals, *Rifle Rule in Cuba*, 7.

29. Ibid., 4.

30. Odets, "The Law of Flight," act 1, scene 1, 2.

31. Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández, eds., "*José Martí's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric American Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 11. See also Monika Kaup's essay "'Our America' That Is Not One: Transnational Black Atlantic Discourses in Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes," *Discourse* 22.3 (Fall 2000): 87–113, in which she argues that the black Atlantic also serves as a critique to hegemonic Cuban nationalism, despite its mestizo intellectual and political roots.

32. Janice Radway, "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November 1998," *American Quarterly* 51.1 (1999): 1–32.

33. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 134.

34. *The General Died at Dawn*, directed by Lewis Milestone, written by Clifford Odets, 98 min., Paramount, 1936, film.

35. Brenman-Gibson, *Clifford Odets*, 400.

36. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 83.

37. Ibid.

38. Frank S. Nugent, "Odets, Where Is Thy Sting," *New York Times*, September 6, 1936, X3.

39. Bob White, "The Screen," *New Masses* 20.11 (September 8, 1936): 29. Kaufman and Stebbins quoted in Gerald Weales, *Clifford Odets the Playwright* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 112.

40. Weales, *Clifford Odets the Playwright*, 113–14.

41. Brennan-Gibson, *Clifford Odets*, 407. Odets admitted to Milestone that he adapted translations of Hitler's speeches to use for the character of Yang.

42. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13–15.

43. I discuss the visual and rhetorical links between antilabor violence and racial violence in my second and third chapters. Also, Michael Denning, Lizbeth Cohen, Mark

Naison, and Barbara Foley articulate the ways in which white ethnic Americans in the social movements of the 1930s and 1940s attempted to link race, ethnicity, and class. See Foley, *Radical Representations*; Naison, *Communists in Harlem*.

44. Chris Vials writes extensively about Odets and his critique of whiteness, especially within the tradition of 1930s boxing narratives. Chris Vials, "Taking Down the Great White Hope: Clifford Odets, Nelson Algren and the Ethno-Racial Politics of Popular Front Boxing Narrative," in *Realism for the Masses*.

45. Jacobson, *Whiteness*. I am indebted to Chris Vials for raising my awareness of this quality of Odets's work. See also Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment in Whiteness*.

46. Benman-Gibson, *Clifford Odets*, 408.

47. Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*. Kaplan cites her indebtedness to Edward Said, who demonstrates "how the treasures of European high culture bear the traces of their foundation in the remote geographies of colonial violence and exploitation" (14).

48. Odets, "Law of Flight," act 1, scene 4, 1.

49. Ibid., act 2, scene 6, 5.

50. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 166–67.

51. Odets, "Law of Flight," act 3, scene 5, 7.

52. Odets, "Law of Flight," act 3, scene 5, 9.

53. Clifford Odets, "Character Notes for Law of Flight," Clifford Odets Papers, 1926–1963, box 23, folder 4, Billy Rose Theater Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

54. Biographer Brenman-Gibson writes that Odets "could not breathe life into any of these brave Cubans" (*Clifford Odets*, 494), and biographer Weales dismisses the play in a sentence (*Clifford Odets the Playwright*, 104).

55. Lipsitz, *American Studies*, 47. Lipsitz argues that it is precisely the working-class, multiethnic "cultures of unity" that prevented the Popular Front period from creating a thorough critique of U.S. imperialism, whiteness, or the legacies of slavery and conquest.

56. Ed Krzemienski, *There's Something about Harry: To Have and Have Not: The Novel as Film*, http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/25/tohave2.html, March 2007.

57. Norberto Fuentes, *Hemingway in Cuba* (Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, 1984), 144–45. While Hemingway later spoke poorly of the book, especially considering its weak critical reception relative to his early work, Hemingway's statements at the time of its authorship contradict later accounts. Also, in considering Hemingway's work in relation to film, Vials argues in *Realism for the Masses* that the development of realism in the 20th century cannot be understood outside of its adoption by Hollywood as its main aesthetic style.

58. Jeryl J. Prescott, "Liberty for Just(us): Gender and Race in Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not*," *CLA Journal* 37.2 (December 1993): 176–88.

59. Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 257.

60. Ibid., 258–59.

61. Ibid., 146.

62. Ibid., 96.

63. John Cobb, "*To Have and Have Not*: A Casualty of Didactic Revision," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 44.4 (November 1979): 1–10.

64. Philip Durham, "Ernest Hemingway's Grace under Pressure: The Western Code," *Pacific Historical Review* 45.3 (August 1976): 425–32.

65. Kozol, "Madonnas in the Fields." Kozol argues that the FSA photographs relied on heteronormative definitions of the family in order to make the victims of the Depression appealing to white, middle-class viewers.

66. Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*, 123, 103.

67. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 273–74.

68. Durham, "Ernest Hemingway's Grace," 430.

69. Josephine Herbst, *Rope of Gold* (1939; Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1967), 362.

70. Josephine Herbst, "The Soviet in Cuba," *New Masses* 14.11 (March 19, 1935): 9.

71. Ibid., 11.

72. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 3.

73. Ibid., 10.

74. While *mulato* is the preferred Cuban term for people of mixed-race ancestry, Martí uses *mestizo* in his essay, perhaps to connect the Cuban struggle for independence with indigenous activists and intellectuals in Mexico and Central America.

75. Herbst, *Rope of Gold*, 371.

76. Ibid., 386.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., 328.

79. Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 50–51.

80. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 3–4.

81. For newspaper accounts of the steamship's refusal to grant Hughes passage, see "Ward Line Color Bar Punctured," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 5, 1930, 11; "Steamship Co., Not Cuban Govt., Banned Hughes," *Afro-American*, March 8, 1930, A3.

82. Langston Hughes, "Little Old Spy," in *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*, vol. 15, *The Short Stories*, ed. R. Baxter Miller (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 257.

83. Edward Mullen, "Langston Hughes and the Development of Afro-Hispanic Literature: Diasporic Connections," *Black Scholar* 26.2 (2001): 10–16.

84. Antilliano Jonathan Scott, "Home to Exile: Langston Hughes," *Langston Hughes Review* 20.3 (Fall 2006): 8.

85. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 3–6.

86. Langston Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander* (1956; New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1993), 404–5.

87. Stephens, *Black Empire*, 5.

88. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 8.

89. Ibid.; Sheila Lloyd, "Transnationalism in Its African-American Travels: The Politics of Location in Langston Hughes' *I Wonder as I Wander*," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 19.2 (July 31, 1995): 29.

90. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 10.

91. Ibid., 11.

92. Ibid., 12.

93. Hughes, *The Short Stories*, 256–57.

94. Ibid., 260.

95. Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Knopf, 2004), 136.

96. Hughes, *The Collected Poems*, 148.

97. Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 204.

98. Stephens, *Black Empire*, 5.

99. Mullen, "Langston Hughes," 15.

100. Lloyd, Transnationalism," 29.

101. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 11, 16.

102. Ibid., 28.

103. Ibid., 116, 172. Italics in original.

104. Ibid., 329.

105. Ibid., 357.

106. Ibid., 354–55.

107. Ibid., 353–54. Hughes includes the poem in its entirety in the volume.

108. Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 218–19.

109. Hughes, *The Short Stories*, 260.

110. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 34.

111. Hughes, *Collected Poems*, 273.

112. Bentley, *Thirty Years of Treason*, 504–14.

## Chapter 2

1. Vincent Spotted Eagle, "Indian Tells Upton Sinclair One, and Why He Joined C.P.," letter to the editor, *Western Worker*, March 14, 1934, 6.

2. Michael Denning periodizes the "long Popular Front" from the Sacco and Vanzetti trial in 1927 to the dawn of the Cold War, a generational formation that still resonates within US culture. Please see introduction for citations.

3. Kenneth Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–54* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 245. For more sources on the IRA, New Deal programs, and Native Americans, and John Collier's tenure in the Bureau of Indian Affairs that are sympathetic to at least the goals of the Collier administration's reforms, see Lawrence Kelly, *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Graham Taylor, *The Indian New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the IRA, 1934–45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Random House, 1984). For more critical perspectives, see Ronald Takaki, "The End of the Frontier: The Emergence of an American Empire," in *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2008), 228–45; Jodi Byrd, "Killing States: Removals, Other Americans, and the 'Pale Promise of Democracy,'" in *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 185–220; E. A. Schwartz, "Red Atlantis Revisited: Community and Culture in the Writings of John Collier," *American Indian Quarterly* 18.4 (1994): 507–31.

4. In his essay "The New Indian Intelligentsia," Archie Phinney lays out his blueprint for a new, militant pan-Indian organization, what became the NCAI. Phinney is insistent that "American Indians" adopt a "racial identity" as a way to join other communities of color agitating for their rights. Acknowledging that race is a "modern" and "European"

concept, he embraces it in dialectical fashion as the mode by which also to achieve power. While he does not mention the National Negro Congress or the Congress of Spanish-Speaking Peoples by name, his insistence that "American Indians" must organize in modern, political formations and in ways that use race politically would seem to suggest that he had such organizations in mind. For further treatment of the essay, see the section on Phinney (Archie Phinney Papers, National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region, box 2, RG075; hereafter cited as APA). Charles E. J. Heacock, one of the other key founders of the NCAI along with D'arcy McNickle and Phinney, argued along similar lines that Native Americans needed to create an organization that could work alongside other growing civil rights organizations of the 1940s (quoted in Thomas Cowger, *The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999, 34).

5. Phinney, "The New Indian Intelligentsia."

6. Phinney, "On Understanding Soviet Russia."

7. Jodi Byrd, Russell Means, and Ward Churchill have, among others, suggested that the international socialist Left offers indigenous people merely another form of assimilation. See Byrd's critique of Antonio Gramsci and Slavoj Žižek in *The Transit of Empire*, 29–31, 124–30; Russell Means's critique of Marxism, "The Same Old Song," in *Marxism and Native Americans*, ed. Ward Churchill (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 19–34; and Churchill's critique of Marxism, *Since Predator Came: Notes from the Struggle for American Indian Liberation* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 311–27.

8. Robert A. Warrior, *Tribal Secrets* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 111.

9. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 36–38.

10. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 6.

11. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 168–69.

12. See Benjamin Balthaser, "Cold War Re-visions: Negotiating Representation and Resistance in the Unseen *Salt of the Earth*," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 2008): 347–72.

13. Dawahare, *Nationalism*, 73–76; Kelley, "Afric Sons."

14. Tenayuca and Brooks, "Mexican Question," 258–59.

15. C. L. R. James, *C.L.R. James and Revolutionary Marxism: Selected Writings of C.L.R. James*, ed. Scott McLemee and Paul Le Blanc (New York: Prometheus Books, 2000), 188–89.

16. Ibid., 182–83.

17. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Random House, 1963), 81.

18. Ibid., xi.

19. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* (1935; New York: Free Press, 1962).

20. The decade of Indian reform under John Collier, Roosevelt's appointee to lead the BIA from 1933 to 1945, was the single largest change in federal Indian policy since the Dawes Act of 1887. The IRA was promoted by Collier, Indian activist organizations, and the BIA administration as a form of self-government that would restore the Native landbase and empower the reservation as a site of cultural and economic independence. It had several major accomplishments: it ended the policy of allotment by which Indian land was slowly broken up and finally sold to non-Indians; it legalized Native customs and

religions, many of which were still banned at the time of the IRA's passage; it created an arts-and-crafts board to verify "authentic" Native American art (and thus, it was hoped, raise prices for Native artists); it created the policy of self-government under which tribes would be encouraged to incorporate for the purposes of economic self-development; it ended "assimilation" as the end goal of federal Indian policy; and most important for Phinney and McNickle, it instituted an early affirmative-action program for the hiring of American Indian agents and staff, bypassing the usual civil service exam and seniority held by white agents. Despite the fact that the bill was seen at the time as radical and even "communistic" by conservative politicians, missionaries, and the more assimilated tribes, the act has been criticized by recent Native American scholars as both insufficient and misdirected. As part of the New Deal's emphasis on national belonging and pluralism, the IRA can be read in light of other federal programs and documents like the Four Freedoms, the Federal Writers' Project, and Fair Employment Practices Committee that attempted to increase the role, economic opportunity, and visibility of minorities within the national body.

21. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant articulate in their groundbreaking *Racial Formation in the United States*, the racial paradigm in the United States changed dramatically in the 1930s from a "biologist" view of essential racial difference to an "ethnicity" paradigm of assimilation and cultural pluralism. While "cultural pluralism" arose as an explicit challenge to earlier views of white racial superiority, the recognition of "cultural difference" tended to flatten or erase historical inequalities among different ethnic groups, as well as to deny "group rights" based on these histories of inequality, exclusion, enslavement, and extermination, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1994), 14–23, 96.

22. Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Post-colonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 125.

23. Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 191–95.

24. Dawahare, *Nationalism*, 75.

25. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 116.

26. Ibid., 172.

27. William Willard, "Nez Perce Anthropologist," *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* 38.1 (2004): 5–19; Philp, *John Collier's Crusade*, 221.

28. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade*, 176.

29. Howard Fast, *The Last Frontier* (New York: Press of the Readers' Club, 1942).

30. Wilson, *American Jitters*, 303, 253.

31. Carey McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island on the Land* (New York: Stratford, 1946), 29.

32. Ibid., 42.

33. Hartwig Isernhagen, "Identity and Exchange: The Representation of 'The Indian' in the Federal Writers' Project and in Contemporary Native American Literature," in *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*, ed. Gretchen Bataille (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

34. "There was no Nazi atrocity—concentration camps, wholesale maiming and murder, defilement of women or ghastly blasphemy of childhood—which Christian civilization or Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world." W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 23.

35. Rushmore, “Singing Warrior,” 5.

36. The CPUSA of course called the Popular Front policy a “United Front Policy” in the years between 1934 and 1936 (ibid.).

37. Altaha, “Custer’s Last Stand.”

38. Aron Kirch, “This Land Is Ours,” *People’s Daily World*, April 1938, 8–9.

39. “Interested in Indian Issues?” advertisement, *Western Worker*, July 15, 1932, 4.

40. “Calls upon Indians to Join Communists,” letter to the editor, *Western Worker*, June 15, 1932, 4.

41. “Corcina, Rumba Indians Come to Jobless Council for Help,” *Western Worker*, November 7, 1932, 2; “Forced to Give Indians Relief after Struggle,” *Western Worker*, March 16, 1933, 2; “Indians Organize Relief Fight,” *Western Worker*, August 21, 1933, 3; “Indians Robbed by GOP-Democrats; Turning to CP,” July 15, 1932, 4; “Indians Fight Removal to Poor Location,” *People’s Daily World*, May 20, 1937, 5.

42. “California Indians Betrayed and Bled of Their Money,” *Western Worker*, May 20, 1937, 5; Ned Dahl, “Working Class History of California,” *People’s Daily World*, March 3, 1937, 2; Harrison George, “Chamber of Commerce Inheritors of Earlier Genocide: Column Left,” *People’s Daily World*, January 11, 1938, 4; “Deported Indians Starve in Mexico,” *Western Worker*, July 24, 1934, 1, 5; “Indians Ask Collective Bargaining Rights,” *People’s Daily World*, July 29, 1937, 2.

43. “American Indians in the Communist Party, U.S.A.,” *Western Worker*, November 12, 1934, 3; John R. Salter, “Civil Rights and Self-Defense: A Memoir,” *Against the Current*, July–August 1988, 23–25; Alan Wald, e-mails to author, March 8, 2011.

44. Cory Pillen, “See America: WPA Posters and the Mapping of a New Deal Democracy,” *Journal of American Culture* 31.1 (2008): 49–65; Mindy Morgan, “Constructions and Contestations of the Authoritative Voice: Native American Communities and the Federal Writers’ Project,” *American Indian Quarterly* 29.1–2 (2005): 56–83.

45. Siobhan Senier, “Henry Mitchell, Indian Canoe Maker: A Penobscot Modern in the WPA,” *European Contributions to American Studies* 54 (2005): 120.

46. Morgan, “Constructions and Contestations,” 76.

47. Andrew Roy Potter, “Archie Phinney as Archetype,” in “Climbing into the Ring: Indian Employees in the Office of Indian Affairs, 1934–1946,” MA thesis, Western Washington University, 1992, 45.

48. David Price, “Archie Phinney, the FBI, and the FOIA,” *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* 38.2 (Spring 2004): 26.

49. William Willard, “Remembering Archie Phinney, a Nez Perce Scholar,” *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* 38.2 (Spring 2004): 1; Price, “Archie Phinney,” 28–31.

50. Price, “Archie Phinney,” 34. As Price points out, the motivations of the FBI hardly lay in the truth—rather, as Price articulates, the FBI sought to undermine liberation movements of people of color, and thus branding Phinney as a Communist was merely a highly effective means to do so, whether or not Phinney actually belonging or sympathized with the CPUSA.

51. Phinney, “Numipu among White Settlers,” 42.

52. In a series of letters to Franz Boas, Phinney repeatedly stresses his desire for a BIA staff position in Collier’s administration, writing, “I have written Collier stating in a general way some of my ideas about the proposed Indian program, and explaining in what way I could make myself useful. I am very anxious to get into this work—it has been my goal for many years, and now through your help I am at last being considered.” Letter to

Franz Boas from Archie Phinney, September 6, 1934, Franz Boas Papers, correspondence N–Q, box 70, American Philosophical Society.

53. Archie Phinney, "Racial Minorities in the Soviet Union," *Pacific Affairs* 8.3 (September 1935): 321.

54. Ibid., 322.

55. Warrior, *Tribal Secrets*, 111.

56. Phinney, "Racial Minorities," 325–26, 327.

57. Archie Phinney, "On Minority Languages in the Soviet Union," written on the back of notes for *Nez Perce Texts*, Archie Phinney Papers, National Archives–Pacific Alaska Region, box 2, RG 075, 2.

58. Ibid., 5–6.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., 13.

61. Ibid., 17.

62. Ibid., 18.

63. Archie Phinney, "Personal History and Experience Record," Office of Indian Affairs, OPF of Archie Phinney, NCPRC, quoted in Potter, "Climbing into the Ring," 49.

64. Dolores E. Janiewski, "'Confusion of Mind': Colonial and Post-Colonial Discourses about Frontier Encounters," *Journal of American Studies* 32.1 (April 1998): 101.

65. Cowger, *National Congress*, 34–36.

66. Phinney, "The New Indian Intelligentsia," 1.

67. Ibid., 2.

68. Cowger, *National Congress*, 35–39.

69. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 153, 234.

70. Archie Phinney, "Travels of an American Indian into the Hinterlands of Soviet Russian and Siberia," Archie Phinney Papers, National Archives–Pacific Alaska Region, box 2, RG 075, 2.

71. Ibid.

72. Phinney, "The New Indian Intelligentsia," 2.

73. Ibid.

74. Letter to Franz Boas from Archie Phinney, August 8, 1933, Franz Boas Papers, correspondence N–Q, box 70, American Philosophical Society; Phinney, "Numipu among White Settlers," 15.

75. Phinney, "Numipu," 14–15.

76. Robert A. Warrior makes a similar point regarding Vine Deloria and his reading of the "progressive" Indian tradition of the turn of the century, suggesting "these figures failed to recognize that the ideals they sought for U.S. society and Natives were far from realizable and that the Indian situation at the turn of the century was a battle of community values versus individualistic chaos rather that a battle of one set of cohesive, livable values against another" (*Tribal Secrets*, 7).

77. Ibid., 124.

78. Janiewski seems to read Phinney's founding of the NCAI as a response to his failure at ratifying the IRA as the Nez Perce BIA superintendent—he had attributed his failure to his own sense of being an "outsider," deracinated from his Indian identity through formal education ("Confusion of Mind," 100). I find this view thoroughly inconsistent with Phinney's own statements about his decision to found the NCAI or his commitment to Indian sovereignty.

79. Dorothy R. Parker, *Singing an Indian Song: A Biography of D'Arcy McNickle* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 30–58.

80. Ibid., 76.

81. Ibid.

82. McNickle, *The Surrounded*.

83. Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995), 35.

84. Christopher Shedler, "Formulating a Native American Modernism in John Joseph Mathews' *Sundown*," *Arizona Quarterly* 55.1 (Spring 1999): 132; Gaetano Prampolini, "American Indian Novels of the 1930s: John Joseph Mathews's *Sundown* and D'Arcy McNickle's *Surrounded*," in *Transatlantic Voices: Interpretations of Native North American Literatures*, ed. Elvira Pulitano (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 66–68.

85. Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940; New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 304, 358.

86. Describing the often fatal police brutality in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, Denise Ferreira da Silva notes that "such killings do not unleash an ethical crisis because these persons' bodies and the territories they inhabit always-already signify violence." Denise Ferreira da Silva, "No-Bodies: Law, Raciality, and Violence," *Griffith Law Review* 18.2 (2009): 213.

87. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 63–64.

88. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Reading Fanon in the 21st Century," *New Left Review* 57.2 (May–June 2009): 118–19.

89. Aimé Césaire, "Discourse on Colonialism," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 177.

90. McNickle, *The Surrounded*, 117.

91. Foley, *Radical Representations*, 322–23.

92. McNickle, *The Surrounded*, 97, 108.

93. Ibid., 18.

94. Ibid., 49, 47.

95. Ibid., 47.

96. Ibid., 48.

97. Ibid., 73.

98. Ibid., 74.

99. Ibid., 49.

100. Ibid., 1.

101. Ibid., 11.

102. Ibid., 108.

103. Ibid., 103, 192.

104. Ibid., 18, 12, 87.

105. Ibid., 99, 3.

106. Ibid., 240, 242.

107. Ibid., 130, 18.

108. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind* (London: James Currey, 1986), 8–33.

109. McNickle, *The Surrounded*, 216.

110. Ibid., 217.

111. Ibid., 212–13.

112. Ibid., 206–7.

113. Ibid., 217.
114. Ibid., 40, 137.
115. Ibid., 147.
116. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 44.
117. McNickle, *The Surrounded*, 117.
118. Vials, *Realism for the Masses*, xvii.
119. Jeri Zulli, "Perception in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded:* A Postcolonial Reading," in *Telling the Stories: Essays on American Indian Literature and Culture*, ed. E. H. Helson and M. A. Nelson (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 76.
120. McNickle, *The Surrounded*, 128.
121. Ibid., 146, 297.
122. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 44.
123. Ibid., 297.
124. Da Silva, "No-Bodies," 213.

## Chapter 3

1. Louis Althusser defined the conjuncture as a way to demarcate the specific overdetermined balance of power that distinguishes one historical epoch from another, but also as a specific structural contradiction that evokes a crisis in the social order. "Contradiction and Overdetermination: Notes for an Investigation," in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London, Verso, 2006).

2. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 22–43.

3. Ibid., 25.

4. "Our Union, the War, and National Defense," *UCAPAWA News* 1.8 (May–June 1940): 2–3; "Lewis Calls for No War; Demands Negro Rights, *UCAPAWA News* 1.8 (May–June 1940): 2–3.

5. "And then one fine day the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific boomerang effect: the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers standing around the racks invent, refine, discuss. . . . it is Nazism, yes, but before they were its victims they were accomplices; that they tolerated Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because before then it had only been applied to non-European peoples." Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 36–37. Aimé Césaire forcefully articulated the links between fascism and colonialism, but as I argue, this connection was made by many, if not as eloquently, as clearly by anti-imperialists as early as the 1930s.

6. J. Michael Dash, *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 1.

7. Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940* (Chapel Hill: University North Carolina Press, 2001), 247.

8. Ibid., 245–48.

9. Dash, *Haiti*, 34; Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 185–94.

10. I argue throughout my book that the 1930s witnessed major anti-imperialist movements in the United States that not only spread into the "common sense" of the cultural moment, but had impacts on mass culture and even government policy, such as

the Good Neighbor Policy, the Native American New Deal, and the reluctance to entire World War II. While the policies themselves are questionable, they are at least testimony to the presence of a push "from below."

11. Margaret Stevens, "Hands off Haiti: Self-Determination, Anti-imperialism, and the Communist Movement in the United States, 1925–1929," *Black Scholar* 37.4 (2008): 61–70.

12. Adi, "The Negro Question," 155; Kelley, *Race Rebels*; Kelley, "This Ain't Ethiopia."

13. "The Negros of Haiti Fought the Only Successful Chattel Slave Rebellion in History," *Western Worker* 3.22 (April 28 1934): 4, illustrated cartoon; "Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Struggle for Liberation," *Western Worker* 3.21 (April 21, 1934): 6. This article advocated celebrating May 20 as a "liberation day" in memory of the Haitian Revolution. Otto Hall and Martha Millet, "Toussaint L'Ouverture: The First of the Blacks, part 1," *Young Pioneer*, October 1934, 5–6, illustrations by William Siegel; Otto Hall and Martha Millet, "Toussaint L'Ouverture: The First of the Blacks, part 2," *Young Pioneer*, November 1934, 7–9, illustrations by William Siegel.

14. Guy Endore, "Haiti and U.S.A. Occupation," *Fight against War Fascism*, January 1934, 13–14. *Fight*, August 1934, 8–9, also ran an excerpt of Endore's novel of the Haitian slave trade and black resistance, *Babouk*.

15. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 108–9.

16. Adi, "The Negro Question," 165–67.

17. "What is the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers?" *Negro Worker* 3.2 (March 1932), back cover. *The* (*International*) *Negro Worker* was the public organ of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, a Communist Party–sponsored organization.

18. Harold Williams, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *Negro Worker* 3.8–9 (August–September 1933): 1–2; "The 143rd Anniversary of the Haitian Revolution," *Negro Worker* 4.4 (August 1934): 4–5.

19. "Committee for the Release of Jacques Roumain," Letter to William Pickins regarding a planned benefit concert, signed by Francine Bradley, on official committee stationary. Papers of the NAACP (microform), group 1, series C0000, 1936, University of Michigan, Hatcher Library.

20. Ibid.; Langston Hughes, "Free Jacques Roumain: A Letter from Langston Hughes," *Dynamo: A Journal of Revolutionary Poetry* 2.1. (May–June 1935), front cover.

21. Madelaine Simon, "Jacques Roumain: Poet in Chains: The Idol of the Haitian Masses Is Now 18 Months in a Dungeon," *Daily Worker*, February 28, 1936, 7.

22. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 21–28.

23. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 116.

24. The "[social democratic] concept of labor amounts to the exploitation of nature, which with naïve complacency is contrasted to the exploitation of the proletariat"; i.e., capitalism is a "natural" system that merely intensifies and attempts to solve human kind's struggle with the natural world, rather than a human-made system based on the exploitation of one class against another. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Shocken, 1955), 258–59.

25. Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic," 67.

26. Brett St. Louis, *Rethinking Race, Politics, and Poetics: C.L.R. James' Critique of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2007), 16–19.

27. Ibid.

28. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 12.

29. Ibid., 46.

30. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 107.

31. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 86.

32. Raymond Williams, "The Politics of the Avant Garde," in *Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989), 49–64.

33. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 86.

34. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 19.

35. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 28.

36. Ibid., 38.

37. Stuart Hall, "Breaking Bread with History: C.L.R. James and 'The Black Jacobins,'" interview by Bill Schwartz, *History Workshop Journal* 46 (Autumn 1998): 23.

38. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 349.

39. Theodore Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 2007), 362.

40. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 291–92.

41. Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 100.

42. Entin, *Sensational Modernism*, 17.

43. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 12, 38.

44. Ibid., 12–13.

45. Ibid., 9.

46. Ibid., 74.

47. St. Louis, *Rethinking Race*, 18.

48. Ibid., 40–41.

49. Sergei Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, trans. Jay Leyda (Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1975), 93. "The basis of this philosophy is the *dynamic* conception of objects: being as a constant evolution from the interaction between two contradictory opposites. Synthesis that *evolves* from the opposition between thesis and antithesis. It is equally of basic importance for the correct conception of art and all art forms. In the realm of art this dialectical principle of the dynamic is embodied in conflict."

50. Hall, "Breaking Bread with History," 28.

51. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 301.

52. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 37.

53. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 88.

54. Ibid., 361.

55. Ibid., 92–93.

56. Ibid., 24–26.

57. Ibid., 24–25.

58. Bolívar Echeverría, "Homo Legens," *New Left Review* 79 (January–February 2013): 119–26, 123–24.

59. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 265.

60. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 133.

61. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 288.

62. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 155.

63. Hall, "Breaking Bread with History," 18.

64. James Naremore, *The Magical World of Orson Welles* (Dallas: Southern Methodist Press, 1989), 114–15.

65. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 396.

66. Hallie Flanagan, *Arena* (New York: Limelight, 1969), 75. Flanagan quotes the *New York Amsterdam News* in her memoir.

67. Ibid., 65–67.

68. Clarissa Clò, "Italy in the World and the World in Italy: Tracing Alternative Cultural Trajectories," PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2003, 81.

69. Brooks Atkinson, "Headlines of 1935 in the Second Issue of the 'WPA Living Newspaper,'" *New York Times*, May 13, 1936, ProQuest Newspapers online.

70. Clo, "Italy in the World," 4.

71. Brooks Atkinson, "'Macbeth,' or Harlem Boy Goes Wrong, under Auspices of Federal Theater Project," *New York Times*, April 15, 1936, Proquest Newspapers online.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Wendy Smith, "The Play That Electrified Harlem," Federal Theater Project Collection, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fedtp/ftsmth00.htm.

75. Guerric DeBona, "Into Africa: Orson Welles and 'Heart of Darkness,'" *Cinema Journal* 33.3 (Spring 1994): 16–34.

76. Naremore, *Magical World of Welles*, 112–15.

77. Michael Valdez Moses, "Disorientalism: Conrad and the Imperial Origins of Modernist Aesthetics," in *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899–1939*, ed. Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 44.

78. Abdul JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (Autumn 1985): 70–71.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., 71.

81. Orson Welles, "The Heart of Darkness," Script Draft with Partial Storyboards, Orson Welles Papers, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan Special Collections, 1939, box 23.

82. Ibid., 17.

83. Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 3, 3–21.

84. Naremore, *Magical World of Welles*, 19–22; DeBona, "Into Africa," 31–32.

85. Welles, "The Heart of Darkness," 1.

86. Ibid., 1–4.

87. Ibid., 10–17.

88. Ibid., 10.

89. E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Gaze* (London: Routledge, 1997), 6–10.

90. Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4.

91. Ibid., 3–10.

92. Welles, "The Heart of Darkness," 10.

93. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 347.

94. Welles, "The Heart of Darkness," 26–27.

95. Ibid., 27–29.

96. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 36; Robin D. G. Kelley, "A Poetics of Anticolonialism," introduction to *Discourse on Colonialism*, 20; Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 22–25.

97. Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, 23.

98. Welles, "The Heart of Darkness," 38–39.

99. Perry Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution," *New Left Review* 1.144 (March–April 1984): 11, 96–113.

100. Peter Osborne, "Modernity Is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category," *New Left Review* 1.192 (March–April 1992), http://newleftreview.org/I/192/peter-osborne-modernity-is-a-qualitative-not-a-chronological-category.

101. Entin, *Sensational Modernism*, 16–18.

102. Moses, "Disorientalism," 66–67.

## Chapter 4

1. The Popular Front is traditionally defined as the 1935–39 coalition of Communists and liberals against the threat of fascism. While I don't wish to downplay the importance of the change in Communist Party policy or the election of Popular Front governments in Latin America and Europe, I prefer Michael Denning's broader historical definition, outlined in *The Cultural Front*, of a "social democratic electoral politics; a politics of antifascist and anti-imperialist solidarity; and a civil liberties campaign against lynching and labor repression" (9) that held cultural and occasional political hegemony in Europe and Latin America from the late 1920s to the beginning of the Cold War.

2. Carey McWilliams quoted in "Carey McWilliams Warns of Danger of Fascism," *Hollywood Now*, July 28, 1939, 3–4; Gold, "Migratory Intellectuals," 27. McWilliams makes a similar statement in *Factories in the Field: History of Migratory Farm Labor in California*: "In California . . . the mechanism of fascist control has been carried out to further lengths than elsewhere in America" (1939; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 9.

3. Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 2–7.

4. Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 267.

5. Leon Trotsky published a number of short essays prior to the Bolshevik revolution, arguing that the revolutionary value of "terror" is limited, as individuals and even organized civil groups lack the "bureaucratic hierarchy" necessary for terror campaigns to be effective: terror is a program for states, carried out against workers. Leon Trotsky, "On Terrorism" and "The Collapse of Terror and its Party," from *Marxism and Terrorism* (Reykjavik: Pathfinder Press, 2005), 14–15.

6. Trotsky, "On Terrorism" and "Collapse of Terror," 14–15.

7. Edward Spannaus, "'Shock and Awe': Terror Bombing from Wells and Russell to Cheney," *Executive Intelligence Review* 30.42 (October 31, 2003): 22.

8. Stephen Eisenman comments extensively on both of these images in *The Abu Ghraib Effect* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

9. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 263.

10. Ibid., 267–68.

11. "Lynch Terror in Vacaville," *Western Worker* 1.28 (December 12, 1932): 1; "Anti-alien Legislation Threatens All Progressive Organizations," *UCAPAWA News* 1.2 (August 1939): 2; "Deportation Terror against Mexican and Filipino Workers," *Western Worker* 1.11 (June 1, 1932): 1; Coresponsal Obrero (Worker Correspondent), "Ola de Terror Anti-Obrerista," *Lucha Obrera* 1.13 (October 1934): 1, trans. author and Jaime Posford; "El Terror en La America Latina," *Lucha Obrera* 1.9 (February 1934), 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford; "Demonstration against War on August 1, Despite Police Terror," *Western Worker* 1.16 (August 15, 1932): 1; "Reign of Police Terror in Seattle," *Western Worker* 2.10 (March 6, 1933): 1; "Sugar Workers Strike in Hawaii," *Western Worker* 2.27 (July 3, 1933): 1; "Lynch Terror in California," *Western Worker* 2.34 (August 21, 1933): 1; "SF Workers Defy Terror," *Western Worker* 3.33 (August 8, 2008): 1; "Two Shot as Salinas Lettuce Strike Grows; Terror Sweeps Entire State," *Western Worker* 3.40 (September 3, 1934): 1; "Mexican Workers Hunted Down as Authorities Launch New Terror," *Western Worker* 4.36 (May 5, 1935): 1. "Vacaville Vigilantes Attempt to Rule Town through Fascist Terror," *Western Worker* 4.39 (May 16, 1935): 2; "San Jose Vigilantes Threaten Farm Labor; Burn Fiery Crosses in Terrorism," *Western Worker* 5.48 (June 15, 1936): 1; "Terrorism—Weapon against the Working Class," *Western Worker* 5.81 (October 8, 1936): 4; "Terror Grows in Imperial Valley," *Western Worker* 5.38 (November 2, 1936): 1; "Vacaville Vigilantes Attempt to Rule Town through Fascist Terror," *Western Worker* 4.39 (May 16, 1935): 2; Tillie Olsen, "The Strike," *Partisan Review* 1.4 (September–October 1934): 3–9.

12. "I.L.A. Blocks War Shipment," *Western Worker* 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 1; "Labor Council at Los Angeles Raps Italy Aggression," *Western Worker* 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 1; "Sailors Union Backs Unity of Action Program," *Western Worker* 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 1; "American League to Hold Anti-war Rally," *Western Worker* 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 1.

13. "Three-Power Imperialists in Move to Carve Ethiopia," *Western Worker*, 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 2.

14. Beau Vincent, *Lynching . . .* , woodcut, *Western Worker*, 4.86 (October 28, 1935): 4.

15. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 120.

16. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*. See also Borstelmann, *Cold War*; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*; Robeson, *Paul Robeson Speaks*.

17. "How Italy Acts to "Civilize" Ethiopia," *Western Worker* 5.88 (November 2, 1936): 3.

18. "Murdered Picket Is Buried with Honors on May Day," *Western Worker* 4.36 (May 5, 1935): 1; "Terror Launched as Sakdal Coup Fails in the Philippines," *Western Worker* 4.36 (May 5, 1935): 1.

19. Rufino Deogracias, "Filipino Agricultural Workers Must Fight against the Contract System," *Agricultural Worker* 1.1 (December 20, 1933): 6.

20. "Labor Front between U.S. and Mexico Urged," *Western Worker* 5.44 (June 8, 1936): 1–2.

21. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; Josephine Fowler, *Japanese and Chinese Immigrant Activists: Organizing in American and International Communist Movements, 1919–1933* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007). Both works point to sizable communities of anti-imperialist activists in the United States from the 1920s up through the Cold War. Robin D. G. Kelley's work on the African American Communist Party

paper *The Liberator* also suggests that black nationalism and pan-Africanism were key elements of the 1930s African American Communist imaginary (*Race Rebels*, 103–22).

22. Carey McWilliams, introduction to *America Is in the Heart*, by Carlos Bulosan (1939; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), ix.

23. "Aug. 1 Meetings Show Growing Opposition to Bosses' Wars," *Western Worker* 2.33 (August 14, 1933): 1.

24. "'Hands off Cuba' is Demand at Long Beach Meeting," *Western Worker* 2.39 (September 25, 1933): 1.

25. "Independence No Break for Filipinos," *Western Worker* 5.72 (September 7, 1936): 5; "US Imperialism Tries to Crush Philippine Revolutionary Movement," *Western Worker* 2.11 (October 9, 1933): 4.

26. "El Terror en la America Latina," *Lucha Obrera* 1.9 (February 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford; "Ola De Terror Anti Obrerista En Ariz.," *Lucha Obrera* 1.13 (October 1934): 1, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

27. "Sheriff Asks Troops in Akron Strike," *Daily Worker* 8.49 (February 26, 1936): 1; "Marines Rushed to Puerto Rico to Back up Terror," *Daily Worker* 8.49 (February 26, 1936): 1.

28. Rabinowitz, *Labor and Desire*, 37.

29. Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 83–85.

30. Ibid., 97.

31. Jack Conroy, "Uncle Ollie's Spite Fence," *Progressive Weekly*, January 22, 1939, 4; Meridel Le Sueur, "A Hungry Intellectual," in *Salute to Spring*, 52, 57.

32. Jonathan Weinberg suggests that Hugo Gellert's expressionistic images of masculine, even erotic, power are a means to reconcile the "paradox" of labor under capitalism, both as a site of exploitation and as a socially productive force with revolutionary potential. "I Want Muscle: Male Desire and the Image of the Worker in American Art in the 1930s," in *The Social and the Real: Political Art in the 1930s Western Hemisphere*, ed. Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), 115–34. I would also suggest that Gellert's style is antirealist, suggesting that we are to read his images as projections into a revolutionary future.

33. Ibid., 119.

34. Kozol, "Madonnas in the Fields."

35. Ibid., 11.

36. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 267.

37. Kozol, "Madonnas in the Fields," 6.

38. "Mobs Act, While—," photograph, *Crisis*, June 1936, 172; "Ted Jordon Must Not Hang!" illustration, *Voice of Action*, September 11, 1933, 5.

39. "Worker Shot in the Face after Pixley Massacre," photograph, *Western Worker* 2.43 (October 23, 1933): 2; "The Great Cotton Strike of 1933," photograph, *Western Worker* 4.53 (July 4, 1935): 3; "Shot Down by Vigilantes," photograph, *Western Worker* 5.15 (February 20, 1936): 3; "Sperry and Olsen Fell," photograph, *Western Worker* 4.53 (July 4, 1935): 1; Otto Hagel, "Tear Gas, Guns—and Death," photomontage, in *Men and Ships: A Pictorial of the Maritime Industry*, ed. E. T. Jeffress (San Francisco: Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast, San Francisco Bay Area District Council No. 2, 1937), 5.

40. Entin, *Sensational Modernism*, 43–52.

41. Ibid., 52.

42. Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 45–46.

43. R. A. Emberg, "Fascismo Californianus," *Western Worker* 5.35 (April 30, 1936): 4.

44. Mieke Bal, "The Pain of Images," in *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain*, ed. Mark Reinhardt and Holly Edwards (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 95.

45. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 49–51.

46. "Worker Shot in the Face after Pixley Massacre," photograph, *Western Worker* 2.43 (October 23, 1933): 2; "The Great Cotton Strike of 1933," photograph, *Western Worker* 4.53 (July 4, 1935): 3; "Shot Down by Vigilantes," photograph, *Western Worker* 5.15 (February 20, 1936): 3.

47. "They Asked for Food, and Got This!" photograph, *Western Worker* 2.5 (January 30, 1933): 1; "Strike Leaders Beaten, Jailed," photograph, *Western Worker* 2.2 (July 3, 1933): 1; "Tortured by Military Police," photograph, *Western Worker* 3.65 (November 29, 1934): 1.

48. "Puerto Ricans Want Freedom," photograph, *Western Worker* 6.29 (April 12, 1937): 3; "Sperry and Olsen Fell," photograph, *Western Worker* 4.53 (July 4, 1935): 1; "Ethiopia—History's Most Savage Bloodbath," photograph, *Western Worker* 6.81 (October 11, 1937): 5.

49. Jacqueline Goldsby, *Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 24.

50. Gold, "Migratory Intellectuals," 27; "Onward Men, All Hell Can't Stop Us," cartoon, *Western Worker* 1.26 (July 28, 1932): 4.

51. "Nuestro Deber y los Linchamientos," *Lucha Obrera* 1.8 (January 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

52. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 6.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., 27.

55. "Facing the Bullpen," *Corcoran News*, October 20, 1933, quoted in Paul Taylor, *On the Ground in the Thirties* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1983), 53.

56. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 6.

57. Goldsby, *Spectacular Secret*, 250. Walter White, the chair of the NAACP, made a commitment to use the NAACP's resources to publish lynching photographs in 1931.

58. Leigh Raiford, "No Relation to the Facts about Lynching," in *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 29–66.

59. Paul Taylor especially extensively quoted local newspapers and editorials in his reportage, and McWilliams often quoted local officials in *Factories in the Field.* Taylor, *On the Ground.*

60. Goldsby, *Spectacular Secret*, 241.

61. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 28.

62. Taylor quoting the *Corcoran News* and the *Tulare Advance Register* in *On the Ground*, 52, 58.

63. "Temporizing with Disorder," editorial, *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1933, A4.

64. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 58.

65. Ibid., 224.

66. Da Silva, *Global Idea of Race*, 267.

67. Coresponsal Obrero (Worker Correspondent), “Ola de Terror Anti-Obrerista,” *Lucha Obrera* 1.13 (October 1934): 1, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

68. “Por la Lucha Unida contra Deportaciones,” *Lucha Obrera* 2.6 (June 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

69. “¡Luchese Contra las Deportaciones!” *Lucha Obrera* 1.9 (February 1934): 4.

70. “El Terror en la America Latina,” *Lucha Obrera* 1.9 (February 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

71. “Nuestro Deber y los Linchamientos,” *Lucha Obrera* 1.8 (January 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

72. Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West*, 34.

73. Ibid.

74. “¡Con Estas Armas Atacaremos!” cartoon, *Lucha Obrera* 2.3 (March 1934): 4, trans. author.

75. “Boss Tricks Cannot Break Workers Ranks,” cartoon, *Western Worker* 2.43 (October 23, 1933): 1.

76. Luis Gonzales, “Carta de México,” *Lucha Obrera* 1.9 (February 1934): 2, trans. author and Jaime Posford; Executive Committee of the Independent Union of Marine Workers, “Como la Clase Obrera Mexicana Apoyo la Huelga del Pacifico,” *Lucha Obrera* 1.12 (September 1934): 2, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

77. “Llamado de la CSUM a la TUUL para la Acción Conjunta,” *Lucha Obrera* 2.6 (June 1934): 4, trans. author and Jaime Posford.

78. Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 167–70.

## Chapter 5

1. “A Prize for the Writers on Joaquin Murrieta,” *Western Worker* 3.7 (February 12, 1934): 4.

2. Healey and Isserman, *California Red*, 44–45.

3. “Treasure Hunters Defy Murrieta’s Death Curse,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 25, 1939, 8.

4. For the term “spectral presence” see Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

5. “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger.” Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, 255.

6. Michael Denning quotes extensively from John Steinbeck’s pamphlet *Their Blood Is Strong*, in which Steinbeck openly declares California’s future lies in the hands of “white and American” farmers (*Cultural Front*, 267). See also John Steinbeck’s description of the conquest of California in *The Grapes of Wrath*, where he discusses the “laziness” of the Mexicans and the “American greed for land” (New York: Penguin, 1967), 297.

7. Mike Davis, “‘What Is a Vigilante Man?’ White Violence in California History,” in *No One Is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S-Mexico Border* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2006), 21.

8. Ibid., 18, 20–26.

9. Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Roots of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 33.

10. Ibid., 32–33; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 298.

11. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 47.

12. Historylink.org, *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, "Bulosan, Carlos (1911?–1956), Writer," http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=5202 (accessed June 28, 2008); Ricardo Ramos, "Review of 'On Becoming Filipino,'" epinion.com, http://www.epinions.com/review/On_Becoming_Filipino_Selected_Writings_of_Carlos_Bulosan_by_Carlos_Bulosan/content_137548959364 (accessed June 28, 2008).

13. H. E. Curtis, "Drums of Doom," *New Tide* 1.1 (October–November 1934): 7, Special Collections, Poetry Periodicals Collection, State University of New York, Buffalo.

14. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 193–94.

15. Forrest T. Frazier, "Only a Damned Nigger," *New Tide* 1.1 (October–November 1934): 19–20; H. L. Dickerson, "A Necktie Party," *New Tide* 1.1 (October–November 1934): 24–28.

16. Dickerson, "A Necktie Party," 27.

17. Frazier, "Only a Damned Nigger," 19–20; Dickerson, "A Necktie Party," 26–28.

18. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Agamben describes the *homo sacer* as a human being reduced to "bare life," legally excluded from rights and citizenship, paradoxically, as a function of law. Agamben gives the example of Jews stripped of citizenship before being sent to extermination camps, and others have interpreted the legal distinction of "enemy combatant" by the Bush administration as a legally defined *homo sacer.*

19. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Production of Capital," in *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2003), 36–39.

20. Chris Mensalvas, "Fifteen Farewells," *New Tide* 1.1 (October–November 1934): 21.

21. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 193.

22. Dorothy Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919–1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 15.

23. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 3–4.

24. Ibid., 69–70.

25. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power*, 164–67.

26. Vargas, "Tejana Radical."

27. Ibid., 562.

28. Ibid., 574.

29. Ibid., 560.

30. Ibid., 574.

31. David G. Gutiérrez, *Halls and Mirrors: Mexican-Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 109.

32. Tenayuca and Brooks, "Mexican Question," 258–59.

33. Ibid., 264, 263, italics in original.

34. Ibid., 266.

35. Ibid., 263.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 262, 257.

38. Ibid., 267.

39. Ibid.

40. Vargas, "Tejana Radical," 563.

41. Ibid.

42. Tenayuca and Brooks, "Mexican Question," 262.

43. Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 147.

44. Carey McWilliams, *The Education of Carey McWilliams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 78.

45. McWilliams, *Southern California Country*, 29.

46. Ibid., 47.

47. Larry Ceplair, *Under the Shadow of War: Fascism, Anti-fascism, and Marxists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 196.

48. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 273.

49. "Open Letter to the Socialist Party," *Southern Worker*, October 1934, quoted in Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, 120; Langston Hughes, "Letter from Spain," in *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, ed. Carey Nelson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 387.

50. "Minutes from California State Conference Against War and Fascism," in *American League Against War and Fascism*, December 12–13, 1936, Southern California Library Special Collections, box A.

51. Ronald R. Cooley, "California's Sun Kissed Hoodlums," *Western Worker* 5.23 (March 19, 1936): 6; Guy Endore, *Sleepy Lagoon Mystery* (Los Angeles: Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, 1944), 22–23, Southern California Library, Special Collections, box S.

52. Endore, *Sleepy Lagoon Mystery*, 12.

53. Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 33.

54. Ibid., 32–33; Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 298.

55. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 47.

56. Ibid., 22–23.

57. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 135.

58. Ibid., 135–36.

59. Ibid., 132–39.

60. Streeby, *American Sensations*, 274–87. See also Shelley Streeby, "Joaquín Murrieta and the American 1848," in *Post-nationalist American Studies*, ed. John Carlos Rowe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). My argument about the centrality of Joaquín Murrieta to imperial memory in California is of course deeply indebted to Shelley Streeby's work, in which she argues the reproduction of the Murrieta tale signals both the remembering and the forgetting of the annexation of California by the United States in 1848.

61. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 255.

62. Frank S. Nugent, "Concerning, among Others, 'Robin Hood of El Dorado,' at the Capitol, and 'Love Before Breakfast,'" *New York Times*, March 14, 1936, 10.

63. Joseph Gollomb, "The New Movie," *Daily Worker* 1.11 (March 22, 1936): 6.

64. *Within Our Gates*, an independent film directed by Oscar Michaeux, critically depicts lynching in a 1920 response to *Birth of a Nation* and the Chicago riots.

65. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 13.

66. Gold, “Migratory Intellectuals,” 27; “Onward Men, All Hell Can’t Stop Us,” cartoon, *Western Worker* 1.26 (July 28, 1932): 4.

67. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 6.

68. Samuel A. Peeples, *The Dream Ends in Fury* (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), 14.

69. *The Robin Hood of El Dorado*, directed by William A. Wellman, written by William A. Wellman, Joseph Calleia, and Melvin Levy, 85 min., MGM, 1936, film.

70. Dane Coolidge, *Gringo Gold: A Story of Joaquin Murrieta, the Bandit* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1939), 93, 176.

71. Ibid., 41.

72. Ibid., 223.

73. Ibid., 93; Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West*, 36. Gonzales-Day chronicles the ethnic cleansing of whole Californio towns immediately after annexation.

74. Jerold S. Auerbach, *Labor and Liberty: The LaFollette Committee and the New Deal* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 190.

75. “Along the N.A.A.C.P. Battlefront,” *Crisis*, January 1935, 28; “Public Enemy Number One!” *Crisis*, January 1935, 7.

76. Dr. A. A. Brill and Dr. Fritz Wittels, “Psychologists Analyze Neal Lynching,” *Crisis*, January 1935, 18.

77. “President Roosevelt Says,” *Crisis*, January 1937, 7.

78. Peeples, *Dream Ends in Fury*, 23.

79. Coolidge, *Gringo Gold*, 246.

80. Paul Buhle and David Wagner, *Radical Hollywood: The Untold Story of America’s Favorite Films* (New York: New Press, 2002), 136.

81. Streeby, *American Sensations*, 114, 121.

82. Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 27.

83. I am borrowing the definition of a popular culture romance from Amy Kaplan, *Anarchy of Empire*, 94–102.

84. Chon Noriega, “Birth of the Southwest: Social Protest, Tourism, and D.W. Griffith’s *Ramona*,” in *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 209.

85. Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” in *Anarchy of Empire*, 23–50.

86. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 115–17.

87. Suzanne Clark, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1–8.

88. Burke, “Revolutionary Symbolism in America,” 89, 91.

89. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 26.

90. “A cualquier americano / lo hago temblar a mis pies” and “Nadie me hizo ni un cariño,” from “Corrido de Joaquín Murrieta,” in *Los Madrugadores*, performed and arranged by Los Madrugadores, published by Arhoolie Folklyric, 2000, audio recording.

91. Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 22, 33.

92. Los Madrugadores, “Corrido de Joaquín Murrieta”; Walter Noble Burns, *Robin Hood of El Dorado* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1932), 5; John Rollin Ridge (Yellow Bird), *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murrieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 8.

93. Ridge, *Joaquín Murieta*, 36–38, 83–85.
94. Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 69.
95. Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 22.
96. Ibid., 33.
97. Ibid.
98. Clark, *Sentimental Modernism*, 1–16.
99. Rorty, *Where Life Is Better*, 272–73.
100. Ibid., 271, 12.
101. Wilson, *American Jitters*, 257.
102. Ibid., 260.
103. "Do Re Mi," in *Dust Bowl Ballads*, performed and written by Woody Guthrie, Buddha records, BMG Distribution, 2000.
104. Betty Bruce and Justin Melvin, "Fruit, Cotton, and Coal," *Partisan* 1.5 (April 4, 1934): 7.
105. Arnold B. Armstrong, *Parched Earth* (New York: Macmillan, 1934).
106. Ibid., 422.
107. Ibid., 164.
108. Ibid., 65.
109. Ibid., 69.
110. Ibid.
111. William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 59.
112. McWilliams, *Southern California Country*, 76.
113. Ibid., 81–82.
114. Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 52.
115. Ibid., 55.
116. Ibid., 65.
117. Lipsitz, *American Studies*, 44.

## Chapter 6

1. Herbert Biberman, *"Salt of the Earth": The Story of a Film* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 65. While *Salt of the Earth* is remembered as a Mexican American film, Herbert Biberman remarks in his memoir that several members of the union, including the leadership, were Native American and identified as such. Likewise, I use the term "Mexican American" over "Chicano/a" merely as a question of historical accuracy. However much I might argue that unions such as Mine-Mill 890 crucially prefigured the Chicano/a movement, it would seem careless to retroactively apply the term.

2. Ibid., 37.

3. Ibid., 38–41; George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 292–94; James Lorence, *The Suppression of "Salt of the Earth"* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 65–90; Tom Miller, "*Salt of the Earth* Revisited," *Cineaste* 13.3 (1984): 31–36; Michael Wilson, *"Salt of the Earth": Screenplay*, commentary by Deborah Rosenfelt (New York: Feminist Press, 1978). This narrative of the film's production can be found in print in most, if not all, of the authoritative sources on the film.

4. Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight*, 292.

5. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 229–30.

6. Rosenfelt, commentary, in Wilson, *Salt of the Earth*, 127. In her commentary, Rosenfelt very briefly mentions that the subplot was removed because of the suggestion of infidelity, but doesn't mention why several other references to the Korean War were removed, that the widow's husband died in Korea and was openly critical of the war, or why the scene could not be rewritten.

7. Crowther quoted in Biberman, *Salt of the Earth*, 172.

8. Buhle and Wagoner, *Radical Hollywood*, xv.

9. Passed in 1940, the Smith Act bans any individual or group from "advocating the overthrow" of the U.S. government by "force or violence." It was used first against the Socialist Workers Party during World War II, and later during the Cold War to arrest over a hundred members of the Communist Party. While the convictions were thrown out years later, the law is still on the books. Biberman, as one of the Hollywood Ten, served six months in jail under a Smith Act indictment.

10. Rosenfelt, commentary, in Wilson, *Salt of the Earth*, 107.

11. Biberman, *Salt of the Earth*, 55.

12. Antonio Negri, "Keynes and the Capitalist Theory of the State post 1929," in *Revolution Retrieved: Selected Writings on Marx, Keynes, Capitalist Crisis and New Social Subjects, 1967–1983*, trans. Ed Emery and John Merrington (London: Red Notes, 1988), 5–38.

13. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 77.

14. See Paul Jarrico, "Hollywood Blacklist, 1988–1990: Oral History Project," Transcipt, Oral History Collection, Department of Special Collections, University Library, UCLA, 1991, 120. Also see David E James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

15. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 224; Carey McWilliams, "News of the World," *Hollywood Now* 1.12 (April 11, 1937): 11; Gold, "Migratory Intellectuals," 27.

16. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Section, "Hollywood Anti-Nazi League," parts 1 and 2, File 100-6633 (1), February 1, 1941, 10, 64, online at http://foia.fbi.gov/hollywood_anti_naz_league/hollywood_anti_nazi_part01.pdf, and http://foia.fbi.gov/hollywood_anti_naz_league/hollywood_anti_nazi_part02.pdf (June 14, 2006).

17. Borstelmann, *Cold War*, 67.

18. *Viva Zapata!* a film directed by Elia Kazan, written by John Steinbeck, and produced by Darryl Zanuck, 113 mins., 20th Century Fox Productions, 1952.

19. Eduardo Galeano, *Century of the Wind* (New York: Norton, 1988), 25, 32–33. Likewise, Galeano writes that Madero was executed as a direct response to his attempt to impose a slight tax on U.S. oil corporations.

20. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 11.

21. Clinton Heylin, *Despite the System: Orson Welles versus the Hollywood Studios* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2005), 200.

22. *The Lady from Shanghai*, a film directed by Orson Welles, written by Orson Welles, 87 mins., Columbia Pictures, 1948.

23. Michael Davidson, "Phantom Limbs: Film Noir's Volatile Bodies," in *Concerto for*

*the Left Hand* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Naremore, *Magical World of Welles*.

24. E. Ann Kaplan, "The 'Dark Continent' of Film Noir: Race, Displacement and Metaphor in Tourneur's 'Cat People' (1942) and Welles' 'The Lady from Shanghai' (1948)," in *Women in Film Noir*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (London: British Film Institute, 1998), 183–201.

25. Welles quoted in Naremore, *Magical World of Welles*, 114.

26. Welles quoted in ibid., 115.

27. Welles quoted in ibid., 113.

28. Hughes, *I Wonder*, 354.

29. Kelley, "This Ain't Ethiopia," 124.

30. Denning, *Cultural Front*, 396.

31. Naremore, *Magical World of Welles*, 274.

32. Langston Hughes, "Letter from Spain," in Nelson, *Modern American Poetry*.

33. Michael Wilson, *Salt of the Earth,* Pre-Production Draft, Michael Wilson Papers, UCLA Film Archive, 1942–1977, box 36, folder 6, 48.

34. Ibid., 95.

35. Ibid., 65; Michael Wilson, *Salt of the Earth:* Film Treatment (annotated by Wilson), Michael Wilson Papers, UCLA Film Archive Papers, 1942–1977, box 36, folder 2, 57.

36. The Taft-Hartley Act, passed in 1947, is widely interpreted as at least a partial repeal of the Wagner Act of 1935. The Taft-Hartley Act declared the closed shop illegal and inaugurated the bureaucratic and often dangerous NLRB procedure for union elections. It also banned "sympathy strikes" and secondary boycotts, severely limiting the ability of labor to express cross-union solidarity. The act also introduced loyalty oaths for union leaders that required they affirm they were not members of the Communist Party. And as the central event in *Salt of the Earth*, the act gave the federal government the power to obtain a court injunction banning any strike it believes "imperils the national health or safety." In nearly every aspect, the Taft-Hartley Act continues to govern labor relations, weaken the power of unions, and force a centralized labor bureaucracy into the role of policing its own membership.

37. Wilson, Pre-Production Draft, 57.

38. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 19.

39. Charles Ramírez Berg, *Latino Images in Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 70–82.

40. Wilson, Pre-Production Draft, 141.

41. Ibid., 52.

42. Ibid., 7–8.

43. Ibid., 3–4.

44. Ibid., 154.

45. Ibid., 61.

46. Ibid., 6.

47. Rosenfelt, commentary, in Wilson, *Salt of the Earth*, 90.

48. Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 254–75.

49. Lorence, *Suppression*, 22–30.

50. Ibid., 26.

51. Stuart Jamieson as quoted by Gutíerrez, *Halls and Mirrors*, 100.

52. Lorence, *Suppression*, 24–25.

53. Ibid., 23.

54. Healey and Isserman, *California Red*, 94.

55. Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 202–5; Richard A. Garcia, "The Mexican-American Mind: A Product of the 1930s," *History, Culture, and Society: Chicano Studies in the 1980s* (Ypsilanti: Bilingual Press / Editorial Bilingue, Eastern Michigan University Press, 1983), 73. Both Acuña and Garcia cite LULAC as being anticommunist and essentially middle class in its outlook.

56. Curtis Marez, *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 126.

57. Lorence, *Suppression*, 59.

58. Ibid., 62.

59. Wilson, *Salt of the Earth: Screenplay*, 43.

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New York Public Library Humanities General Research Division
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State University of New York, Buffalo, Special Collections: Poetry Periodicals Collection
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University of California Film Archive: Michael Wilson Papers

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*Crisis* (Baltimore, Md.)
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*Fight Against War and Fascism* (New York, N.Y.)
*Hollywood Now* (Los Angeles, Calif.)
*International Negro Worker's Review* (Hamburg, Germany)
*Lucha Obrera* (San Francisco, Calif.)
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